Feb. 19, 1957 J. LEDGERWOOD 2,781,964

MAILBOX STRUCTURE

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FIG. 1

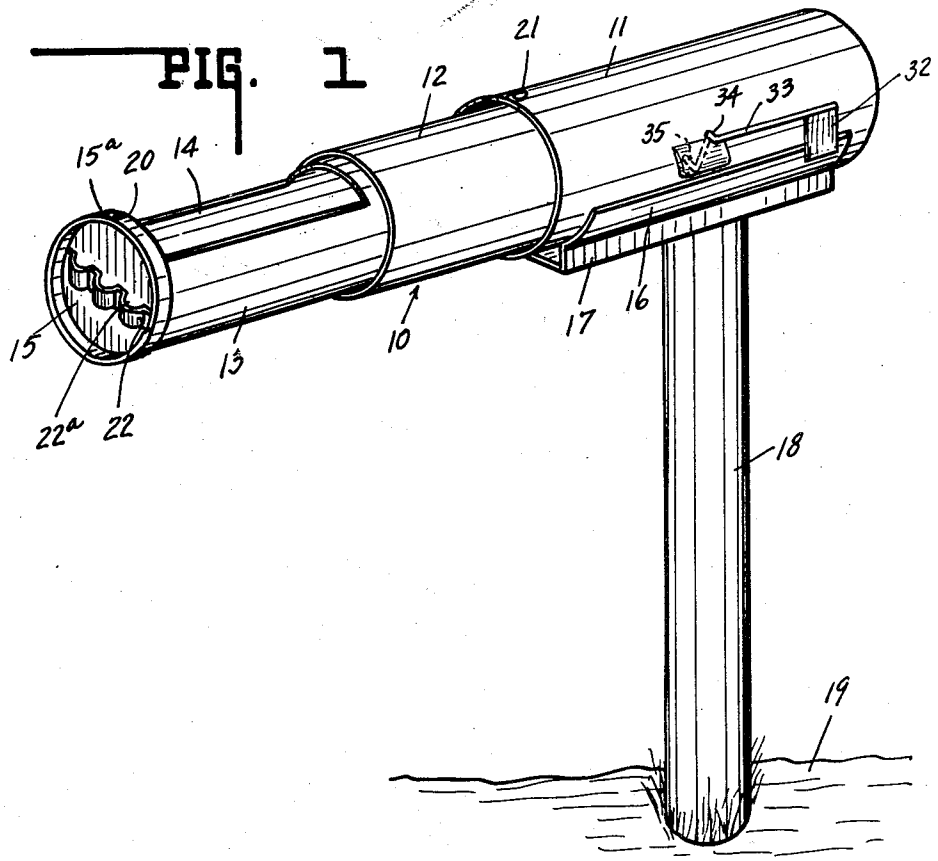
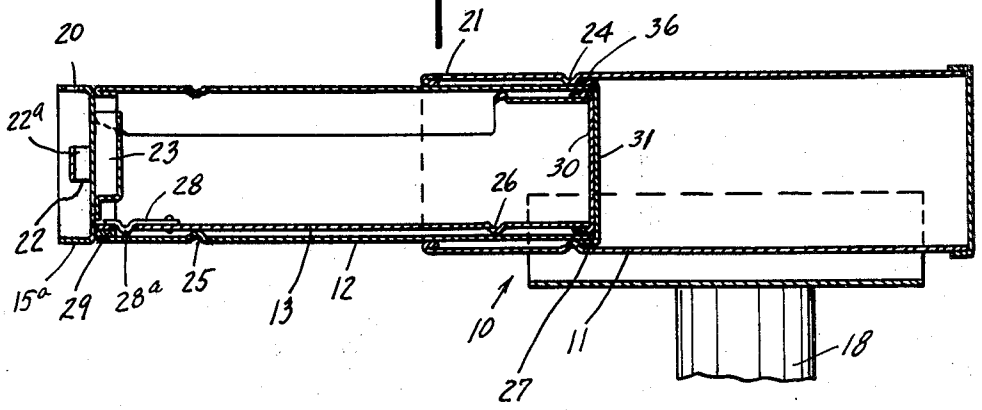


FIG. 2



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MAILBOX STRUCTURE

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1 Claim. (Cl. 232—17)

This invention relates to a mail box structure, and more particularly to one designed for use in rural areas.

It is the primary object of this invention to provide a mail box which will simplify the problems of a rural mail carrier which have been created by the conventional rural mail boxes. As is well known, it is common practice for rural mail carriers to sit as far as possible towards the right side of the front seat while driving their automobiles on the route. In so doing they reduce the amount of sliding or shifting that is necessarily involved in moving from behind the wheel to the right side of the car, but at the same time they substantially increase the hazards of driving because of their awkward driving position. With the present invention it is possible for the carrier to drive in the only safe and proper position, i. e. behind the wheel, and yet open the mail box and deposit the mail therewithin or remove it therefrom in a ready, easy and facile manner. Thus the present invention facilitates safe driving on the highway.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a mail box structure wherein the mail or any other article deposited therein may be removed in a way that will save the carrier considerable time. For example, in the conventional boxes, when money is deposited for a money order it is sometimes difficult for the carrier to remove it all or to make sure that he has all that is deposited in the box. With the present invention the inner sleeve or box may be rotated sufficiently to enable the carrier "to spill" the money into his hand thereby making it unnecessary to reach blindly for it.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide an assembly of such character and construction that the mail or other articles will be completely protected from the elements thereby cutting down the number of illegible names and addresses appearing on letters, packages or the like. This protection not only exists after the box has been closed, but as well during the sliding movement of the mail receiving section of the box by the carrier to and from a position within his car where he removes or deposits the mail.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide a structure which will eliminate the damage done to the carrier's car door paint by conventional devices wherein the lid drops down and strikes the door frame, frequently chipping the paint therefrom.

It is a still further object of the present invention to save the upholstery of the carrier's car by eliminating the necessity for him to slide back and forth from the side of the car at which he makes his deposit within or withdraws the mail from the box. As previously stated, he can remain behind the wheel and yet effectively operate the structure.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide a mail box of such character that its operation by the carrier or by the owner automatically actuates a flag which indicates that the box has mail deposited therein.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide a structure having all of the aforementioned objectives and advantages and yet which is nonetheless capable of being manufactured with a minimum of effort and cost.

The full nature of the invention will be understood from the accompanying drawings and the following description and claims:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of the invention with the three telescopically associated sections in partially extended position.

Fig. 2 is a vertical section view thereof.

In the drawings the mail box structure is shown generally at **10**, it comprising the outer housing or casing **11**, an intermediate sleeve **12** and an inner sleeve or mail receiving receptacle **13**. Each of these members is preferably cylindrical or tubular and may be formed of metal or any other satisfactory material.

As will be observed, the casing and intermediate sleeve are open at one end for telescopic reception of their adjacent sections, while the receptacle is closed at both ends but open at the top **14** for reception of the mail. The end wall **15** of the receptacle is provided with the flange **15***a* which has a diameter slightly less than the inside diameter of the intermediate sleeve **12**. The end wall thus serves as a closure to keep out the elements when the entire assembly is in its retracted or closed position.

The casing is reinforced at **16** and is seated upon member **17** which in turn is secured in any satisfactory manner to the upright pillar or post **18** which is driven into the ground **19**. The flange **15***a* has a hole **20** formed in the upper portion thereof for reception of a padlock which will also be extended through the hole **21** formed through the casing.

Closure member or end wall **15** has formed in the outer face thereof the handle **22**, there being three separate openings **22***a* therethrough shown in the embodiment of Fig. 1. This handle is for reception of an elongated hook which will be part of the mail carrier's standard equipment, and which will be extended by him through the car window into hooking engagement with the handle whereupon the receptacle section can be pulled into the desired position within the car. On the opposite side of the closure member from the handle is a money box **23** for use in securing money orders or the like from the carrier.

In order to facilitate the reading sliding of the sleeves relative to the casing and to each other and to stop that movement at the desired point, the casing is annularly crimped at **24**, the intermediate sleeve at **25** and the receptacle at **26**. As will be observed from Fig. 2, the rearward end of the intermediate sleeve has the annular projection **27** formed therein in such manner that as the sleeve slides outwardly it will abut the inwardly directed crimp **24** of the casing whereupon further outward movement of the section will be stopped. By the same token the outward sliding movement of the inner sleeve or receptacle will be stopped when its crimped portion **26** engages the crimp **25** of the intermediate sleeve. Any other suitable stop means may be used.

It is important that the upwardly exposed opening of the receptacle be shielded or protected from the elements as the carrier draws it from a retracted position within the casing to its extended position within the car. Otherwise the addresses on letters, packages and the like might become illegible. This shielding action is accomplished by providing means for detachably holding the receptacle and intermediate sleeve together in overlapping relationship until that sleeve is extended to its outermost position, i. e. until stops **27** and **24** are in abutment.

To this end a spring latch **28** is provided, it being connected to the receptacle adjacent its closure-serving end. The downwardly extending catch **28***a* will normally be in locking association with the bead **29** formed at the open or outer end of the intermediate sleeve. Thus as the carrier pulls with his hook upon the receptacle handle, both the receptacle and its overlapping sleeve will be drawn towards him, i. e. will move together relative to the casing. At about the time the outward movement of the sleeve is stopped by crimp **24**, both the sleeve and the receptacle will be within the car whereupon, as the carrier pulls further with the hook the spring catch will be released by the pulling pressure from locking engagement with the bead, thereby permitting the receptacle to slide outwardly relative to the sleeve. Thus the contents of the receptacle will be exposed to the carrier who can then proceed to remove them.

By the same token as the carrier pushes the receptacle away from him towards the casing it will first move relative to the sleeve until the rear end **30** of the receptacle abuts the back end **31** of the sleeve and the catch is once again in locking engagement with the bead, whereupon with further pushing movement by the carrier, both the receptacle and the sleeve will slide to retracted, telescoped position within the casing.

In order to afford a signal to the carrier that mail has been deposited within the box for "pick up" by him there is provided a flag **32**. This flag includes the elongated staff **33** and the inwardly directed pivot pin **34** which extends through the housing to a point intermediate that housing and the sleeve **12**. Depending from the inner end of the pivot pin is the pawl **35** which lies within the path of the outward movement of, and is arcuately swung by, the crimped or flange portion **36** formed at the end of the intermediate sleeve. When the housewife or other party deposits mail within the receptacle she will lift the flag to an elevated or upright position. This affords a signal to the carrier that there is mail to be picked up. In those instances, of course, where he has mail to be delivered in the box it is of no significance whether the flag is employed or not for he will obviously be stopping anyway. However, in those cases where he has no mail to be delivered to that particular box it will be unnecessary for him to take the time to stop unless the flag signals that there is mail to be picked up.

By reason of the construction of the flag mechanism, once the carrier opens the box as hereinbefore described, the flange or crimped portion **36** will engage the pawl

and move it forwardly to the position shown in Fig. 1, thereby causing the flag to be tripped into the horizontal position shown. This will also signal the housewife or other resident that the mail has been picked up and perhaps that mail has also been delivered.

While the invention has been illustrated and described in detail in the drawings and foregoing description, the same is to be considered as illustrative and not restrictive in character, it being understood that only the preferred embodiment has been shown and described and that all changes and modifications that come within the spirit of the invention and the scope of the claim are also desired to be protected.

The invention claimed is:

In a mail box structure, a cylindrical housing open at its outer end and affixed in substantially horizontal position, a stop on the inner surface of said housing spaced inwardly from the open end thereof, an intermediate cylindrical sleeve closed at its inner end slidably mounted in said housing, a bead projecting laterally from the closed end of said intermediate sleeve to engage said stop and limit the outward movement of said intermediate sleeve, an annular bead on the inner surface of said intermediate sleeve spaced inwardly from the outer end of the latter, a cylindrical receptacle sleeve closed at its inner end mounted for longitudinal and rotary movement within said intermediate sleeve, an annular bead on the exterior surface of said receptacle sleeve spaced from the closed end thereof to engage said intermediate sleeve bead to limit the outward sliding movement of said receptacle sleeve, said receptacle sleeve having an elongated opening in its cylindrical wall extending substantially from the annular bead thereof to the outer open end of said sleeve, a yieldable latch mounted at the open end of said receptacle sleeve for locking engagement with the adjacent end of said intermediate sleeve when the sleeves are in complete nested relationship, and a cover for the open end of said receptacle sleeve.

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