(No Model.) 2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

E. A. FOSTER.

MAIL BAG CATCHER.

No. 570,468. Patented Nov. 3, 1896.

Fig. 1

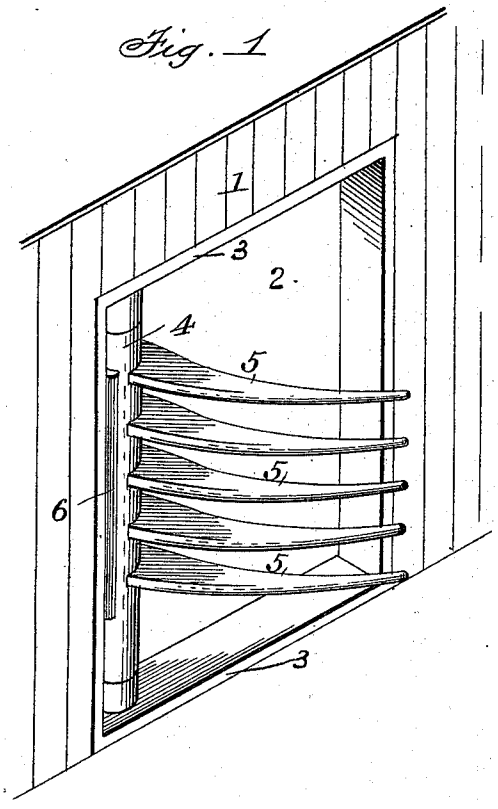


Fig. 5.

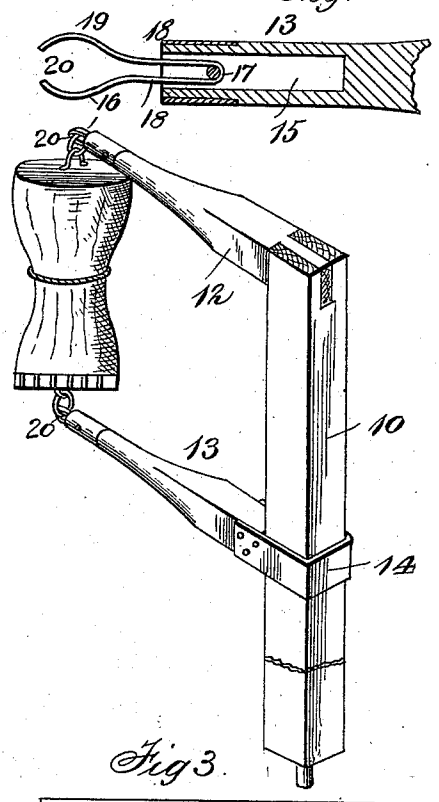


Fig. 2.

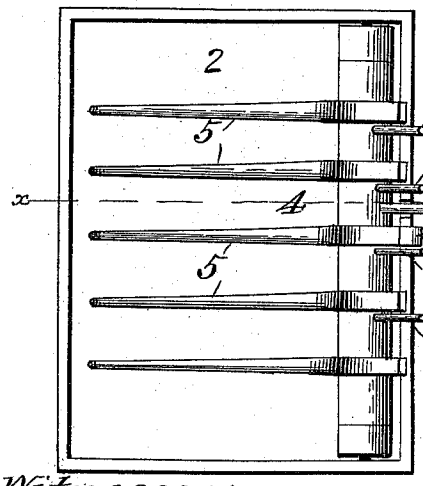
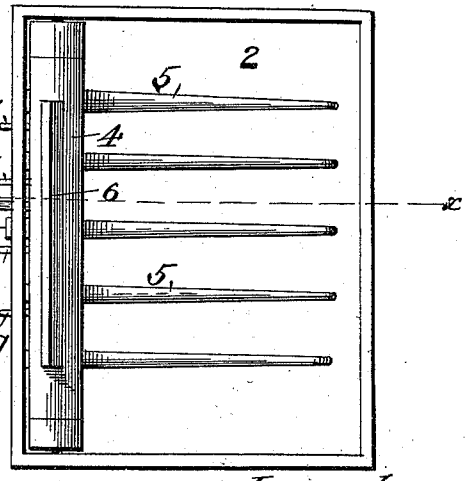


Fig 3.



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(No Model.) 2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

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Fig. 4.

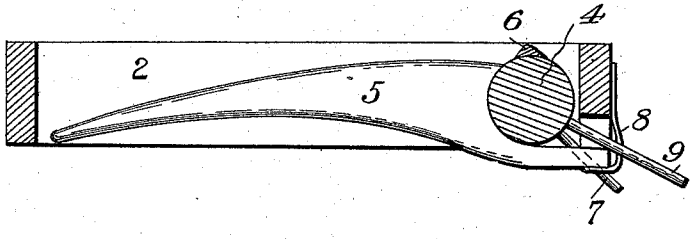
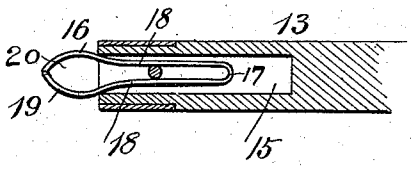


Fig. 6.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

EPHRIAM A. FOSTER, OF PORT CLINTON, OHIO.

MAIL-BAG CATCHER.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 570,468, dated November 3, 1896.

Application filed February 25, 1896. Serial No. 580,640. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, EPHRIAM A. FOSTER, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Port Clinton, in the county of Ottawa and State of Ohio, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Mail-Bag Catchers; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, which will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, which form a part of this specification.

My invention relates to mail-pouch catchers for mail-cars and in mail-cranes to be used in connection therewith; and its object is to provide an improved construction of the catcher whereby after it has seized and detached a mail-pouch from the crane it will be automatically closed or turned in toward the car.

It is also an object to provide an improved construction of holder for a mail-pouch which is carried by the crane-arms, and which, while it will securely hold the pouch and prevent accidental disengagement, will allow the latter to be readily detached when it comes in contact with the catcher of a mail-car.

The invention consists in the novel construction and combination of parts hereinafter fully described and claimed.

In the accompanying drawings, Figure 1 is a perspective view of a portion of a railway mail-car and a mail-crane sufficient to illustrate my invention. Fig. 2 is an elevation of the catcher, looking from the inside of the car, the catcher being closed. Fig. 3 is a similar view looking from the outside of the car. Fig. 4 is a horizontal section of the catcher on the line *x x*, Fig. 3. Fig. 5 is a longitudinal sectional view of one of the crane-arms, showing the spring-holder open. Fig. 6 is a similar view, the holder being closed.

In the said drawings the reference-numeral 1 designates a mail-car of any ordinary or suitable construction provided with the usual doorway or opening 2, through which the mail-pouch is drawn into the car. Journaled to the frame 3 of this doorway, at one side thereof, is a vertical rotatable standard 4, provided with one or more curved arms 5, (five being shown in the present instance,) which catch and detach the pouch from the crane. Secured to this standard, on the outside thereof, is a strip 6, preferably of rubber or other elastic material, which forms a stop for the standard by coming in contact with the door-frame, and thus limits the rotation or movement of the standard. Secured to the said standard, on the inner side thereof, are a number of pins 7, which are at an angle to the plane of the said arms, so that the pouch when it is detached from the crane and slides along the arms will come in contact therewith and rotate the standard to close the catcher. A spring-catch 8 is secured to the door-frame, having its free end bent at a right angle, so as to engage with the inner end of one of the arms and hold the catcher in its closed position.

The numeral 9 designates a handle or lever for turning the standard to open the catcher.

The numeral 10 designates a vertical rotatable crane-post, which is placed alongside of the track at any suitable point. 12 is an upper horizontal arm secured thereto, and 13 is a similar arm, which, instead of being fixed to the post, is provided with a sleeve 14 at its inner end, which embraces the post and is capable of sliding vertically thereon, so as to accommodate the arms to different sizes of mail bags or pouches. The said arms 12 and 13, intermediate their ends, are formed with longitudinal slots 15, in which work the inner ends of pouch-holders 16. Each of these pouch-holders consists of a strip of spring metal bent over near the center, forming a vertical portion 17, and two outwardly-extending arms 18. Near their outer ends these arms are curved inwardly toward each other and then extended outwardly in a horizontal direction, forming lugs 19, which are bent outwardly or in opposite directions near the ends, forming bends or loops 20.

The manner of operating or turning the vertical post to bring the mail-pouch into position to be caught by the catcher on the mail-car forms no part of the present invention, and may, therefore, be of any ordinary or suitable construction, which it is not necessary to here describe.

The operation is as follows: The spring-holders of the crane-arms are drawn outwardly, as seen in Fig. 5, when the arms 18

will spring outward, so as to separate the lugs at the ends and allow the rings on the top and bottom of the mail-pouch to be engaged with the bends or loops. The holders are then pushed inward, the vertical portion 17 working in the slots in the crane-arms and the staples or guides 21 causing the arms 18 to be contracted or forced inward toward each other, when the bends of the lugs will clamp the pouch-rings and securely hold the pouch in a vertical position between the crane-arms, as seen in Fig. 6. The post is then rotated to bring the pouch into position to be caught by the catcher of the mail-car. As the car approaches the crane the holder is swung outward by means of the lever until it occupies about the position shown in Fig. 1, the movement being limited by the stop 6, the elasticity of which will also take up the shock caused by the arms of the catcher striking the pouch. As the said arms come in contact with the pouch the latter will be detached from the holder, the spring-arms thereof yielding for such purpose, and the pouch will slide inward along the curved arms of the holder, and, coming in contact with the pins on the standard, will turn the latter and close the holder or swing it inward, when the spring-catch will engage with the inner end of one of the arms and retain the holder in its closed position.

Having thus fully described my invention, what I claim is—

1. The combination with a mail-car, of the vertical rotatable standard, the curved arms secured thereto and the pins also secured to said standard at an angle to said curved arms, substantially as described.

2. The combination with a mail-car, of the door-frame, the vertical rotatable standard, the arms secured thereto at an angle, the pins and the elastic stop secured to said standard; substantially as described.

3. The combination with a mail-car, of the door-frame, the vertical rotatable post, the curved arms, the pins at an angle thereto, and the elastic stop secured to said standard, of the spring-catch secured to said frame; substantially as described.

In testimony that I claim the foregoing as my own I have hereunto affixed my signature in presence of two witnesses.

EPHRIAM A. FOSTER.

Witnesses:
P. B. COURCHAINE,
SCOTT STAHL.