

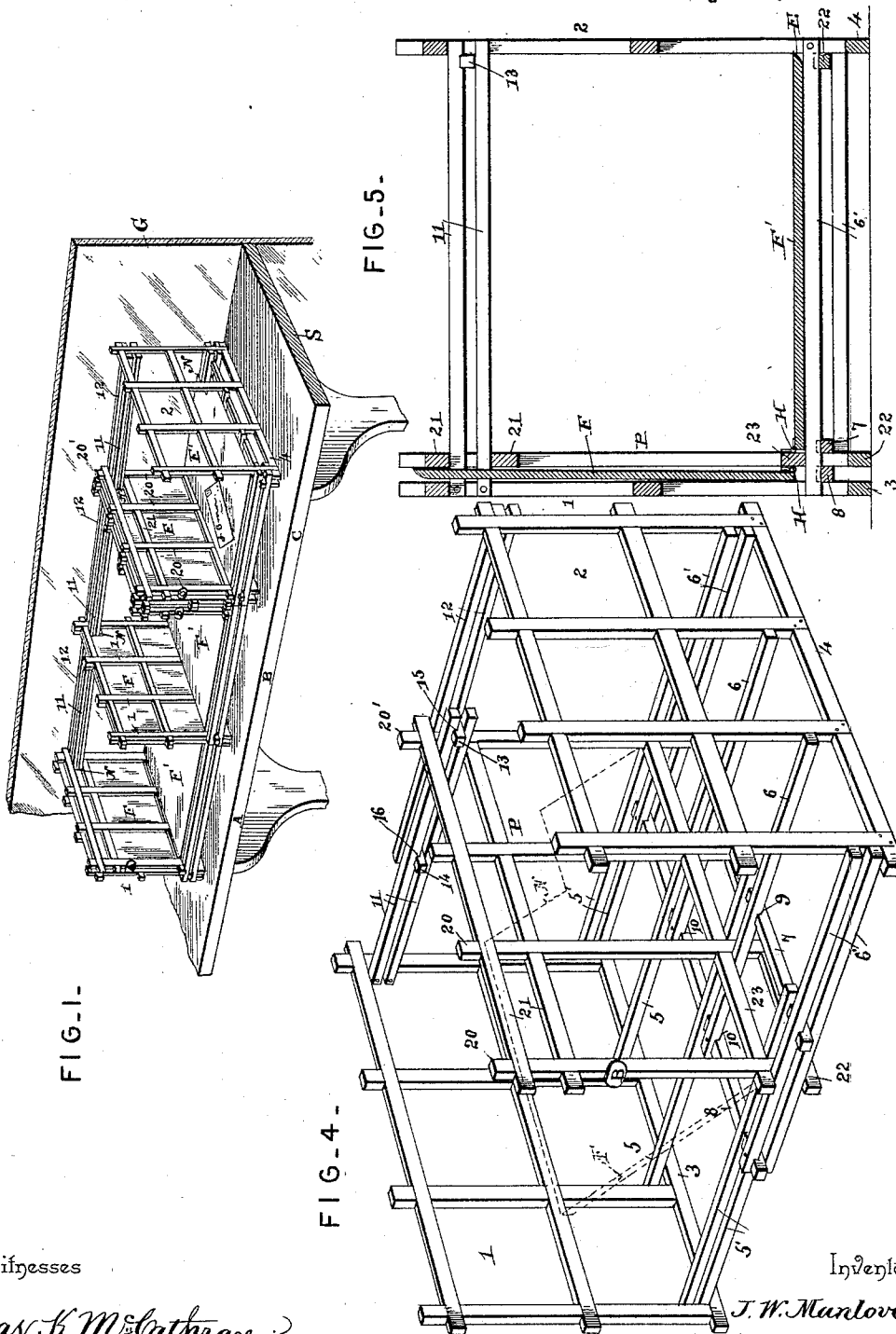
(No Model.)

2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

J. W. MANLOVE.
LETTER BOX.

No. 475,694.

Patented May 24, 1892.



Witnesses

Jas. K. McElathran

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Inventor

J. W. Manlove

By his Attorneys,

Chas. Snow & Co.

(No Model.)

2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

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FIG. 2.

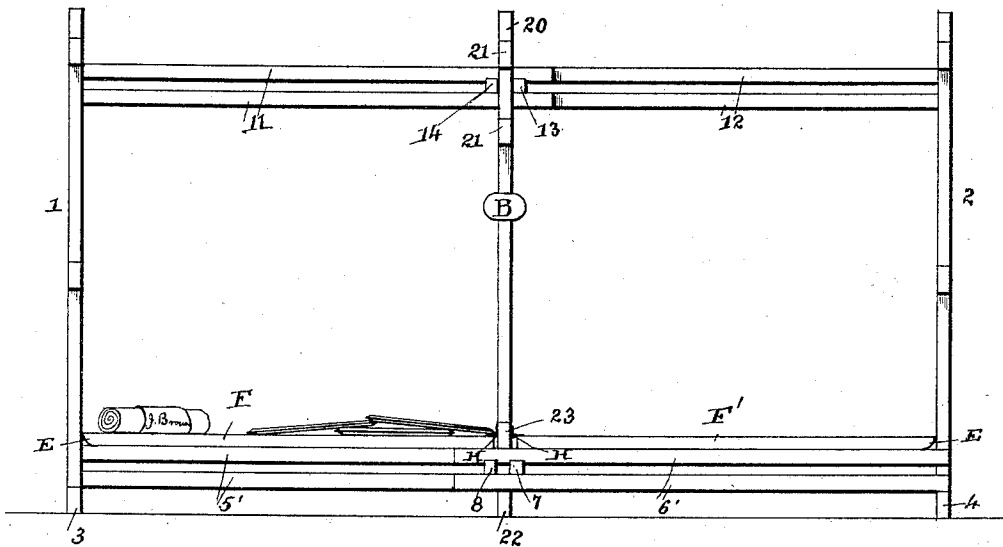
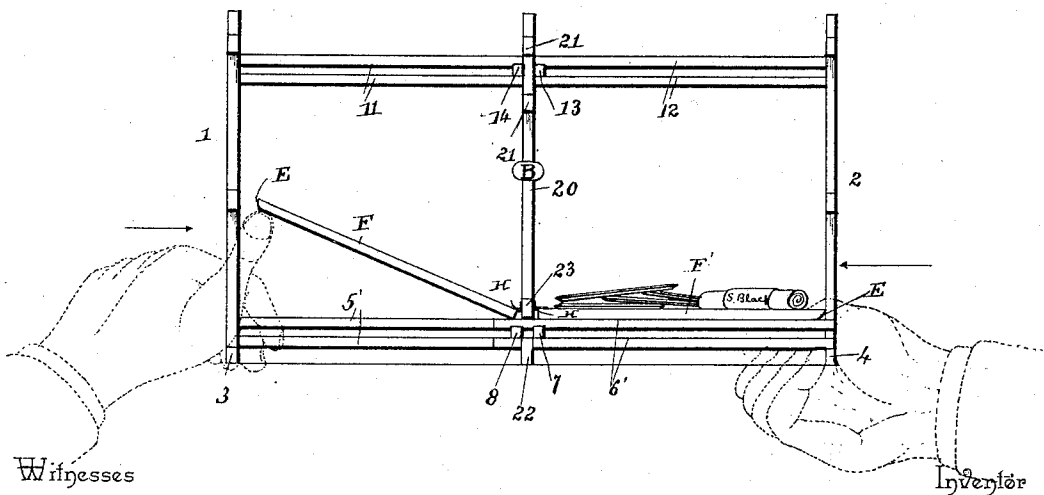


FIG. 3.



Witnesses

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOSEPH W. MANLOVE, OF FOSTER, MISSOURI.

LETTER-BOX.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 475,694, dated May 24, 1892.

Application filed August 15, 1891. Serial No. 402,736. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOSEPH W. MANLOVE, a citizen of the United States, residing at Foster, in the county of Bates and State of Missouri, have invented a new and useful Letter-Box, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to telescoping wooden boxes of that class of packing and storing vessels which are adapted for use as letter-boxes in the manner stated below; and the object of the same is to produce certain improvements in boxes of this character.

To this end the invention consists in the construction substantially as hereinafter more fully described and claimed, and as illustrated on the accompanying two sheets of drawings, wherein—

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a shelf in a country post-office with several of my improved letter-boxes thereon. Fig. 2 is an inner end elevation of one box, showing it opened or extended and with one half partially filled with mail. Fig. 3 is a similar elevation showing the mail as having been removed to the other half of the box, the operator's thumb beneath the floor of the then empty half and slightly raising it, and the box as in the act of being telescoped or closed. Fig. 4 is a perspective view of the complete box partially closed or telescoped, the then horizontal floor being omitted and the oblique floor being shown in dotted lines. Fig. 5 is a transverse vertical section with the box closed.

Referring to the said drawings, the letter S designates a shelf, whose edge toward the public may be closed by glass G, so that they can look through the glass into the boxes B, which constitute the present invention, or a number of such boxes may be arranged on a shelf in rear of the postmaster, in which case no glass will be necessary, because the boxes are out of reach of the public. Each of said boxes is of the following construction:

1 and 2 are the sides, which are of light sticks connected as shown and respectively mounted on sills 3 and 4, and from the latter cross-bars 5 and 6 lead inwardly past each other and are connected at their inner ends by stop-bars 7 and 8, the former moving with the sill 3 between the stop-bar 8 and the sill

4, and both the stop-bars being provided with notches 9 and 10 for the reception of the cross-pieces of the opposite sill. The front and rear cross-pieces 5' and 6' are double and the two members of each move astride the stop-bar of the other half of the box, as shown. From the upper front corners of the sides 1 and 2 braces 11 and 12 extend inwardly past each other, these braces being double, as shown, and carrying at their inner ends blocks 13 and 14, having notches 15 and 16, respectively engaging between the members of the opposite braces. With this construction it will be seen that the halves of the box can be telescoped or withdrawn.

The letter P designates a partition comprising vertical members 20, connected at their upper ends by longitudinal bars 21, their lower ends passing between the cross-bars 5 and 6 and mounted in a sill 22 and their bodies being preferably connected just above said cross-bars by a horizontal bar 23. The front vertical bar 20' of this partition passes between the blocks 13 and 14 and between the braces 11 and 12. By this construction it will be seen that as the halves of the box telescope upon each other their transverse bars move through the partition, so that the latter is connected with both halves, yet not attached to either.

The letters F F' designate floors hinged, as at H, to the horizontal bar 23 of the partition, each floor being of the length of the box and of the width of its half when opened, having its outer edge E beveled and having a notch N in its front outer corner, as shown.

The operation of this device is as follows: If the post-office be of sufficient importance, there is one of these boxes for each letter of the alphabet, and the boxes provided with designating-letters, as shown by the reference-letter B in the present case, are arranged upon a shelf, as above stated, the open end being toward the postmaster and the end with the braces 11 and 12 from him. The mail as it comes in and is poured from the pouch is distributed into these boxes by letter in a well-known manner, and thus the box "B" would contain the mail of all the families in town whose names commenced with "B," and

"Baker," "Bell," "Brown," "Bull," &c., would be indiscriminately mixed. Supposing, now, Mr. Brown calls and asks for his mail. The postmaster takes down the "B" box and opens its halves, setting the whole box on the table. He then takes the mail from the half of the box containing it and looks it over, picking out Mr. Brown's letters and papers and laying them aside, while he throws the balance into the other half of the box. In this way he empties the first half, and yet removes from the "B" box nothing but Mr. Brown's mail, which he delivers. The postmaster then places his hands against the sides of the box, with one thumb beneath the floor of the empty half, and, raising this floor slightly, as seen in Fig. 3, he presses the sides of the box toward each other. This motion causes the edge E of the inclined floor to slide up that side of the box and finally to assume an upright position between the partition and that side, as seen in Fig. 5, the several transverse members of the box sliding on each other to permit this telescoping. The box with the mail is then replaced upon the shelf in its proper position. Of course the next time a patron calls whose name commences with "B" the operation will be repeated; but the mail in the box will then be moved over into the other half thereof, as will be understood.

I preferably make these boxes of light wood sticks suitably braced, connected, and ornamented, though I do not limit myself to the exact details of construction, as considerable change can be made without departing from the spirit of my invention. The latter avoids the hitherto disagreeable custom of taking from a rigid box all the "B" mail, holding it in the hand, and sorting it over to pick out a patron's share, which left no hand to select such share and afforded no place to put the mail that had been sorted, which therefore resulted often in the dropping of mail and in loss of time and patience and which always involved the danger of carelessly replacing the "B" mail in the "A" or the "C" box or in the box above or below "B."

Although I have not shown it, it will be understood that the floors might be omitted entirely, especially if the cross-pieces were placed nearer together, so that the mail could not drop through the bottom of each half, and the braces at the end of the box might be duplicated vertically, so as to form quite an end piece, whereby as the mail is thrown into the box it would not fall out of the farther end.

This box, as will be readily seen, is highly useful for filing away papers in offices and elsewhere, and hence I do not confine its employment to post-offices. Neither do I limit myself to making it of wood, as other suitable materials might be employed.

What is claimed as new is—

1. The herein-described box, the same comprising a central partition, two halves, each

sliding through said partition, and a hinged floor in each half, as and for the purpose set forth.

2. The herein-described box, the same comprising a central longitudinal partition, two halves telescoping into each other and sliding through said partition, and hinged to each side of the partition an outwardly-opening floor of a size to close the bottom box of the half-box on that side when open, as and for the purpose set forth.

3. The herein-described box, the same comprising two sides, inwardly-projecting cross-bars extending from the sides out of alignment with each other and lapping at their inner ends, and stop-bars connecting said inner ends and having notches engaging the bodies of the cross-bars of the other half, as and for the purpose set forth.

4. The herein-described box, the same comprising two sides, inwardly-projecting cross-bars extending from the sides out of alignment with each other and lapping at their inner ends, stop-bars connecting said inner ends, and a partition whose vertical bars each stand between two adjacent cross-bars of opposite halves and between the stop-bars, as and for the purpose set forth.

5. The herein-described box, the same comprising two sides, cross-bars extending from the lower edges of the sides inwardly out of alignment with each other and lapping at their inner ends, a stop-bar connecting the inner ends of the cross-bars of each half, double braces extending inwardly from one end of the sides and lapping at their inner ends, and a block secured in each brace and having a notched body sliding between the members of the other brace, as and for the purpose set forth.

6. The herein-described box, the same comprising two sides, cross-bars extending inwardly from the lower edges thereof out of alignment with each other, a stop-bar connecting the inner ends of the cross-bars of each half, double braces extending inwardly from an upper corner of the sides and lapping at their inner ends, a block secured in each brace and sliding between the members of the other brace, and a partition, each of whose vertical bars stands between two adjacent cross-bars of opposite halves and between the stop-bars and one of whose vertical bars also stands between the double braces and their blocks, all as and for the purpose set forth.

7. The herein-described box, the same comprising two sides, cross-bars extending inwardly from the lower edges thereof and lapping, a stop-bar connecting the inner ends of the cross-bars of each half, braces extending inwardly from the upper front corners of the sides and lapping, a block on each brace having a notched body sliding on the body of the other brace, a partition, each of whose vertical bars stands between two adjacent cross-

bars of opposite halves and between the stop-
bars and one of whose vertical bars also stands
between the braces and their blocks, and floors
hinged to the sides of said partition above the
5 cross-bars, the front outer corners of the floors
being notched, all as and for the purpose here-
inbefore set forth.

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

JOSEPH W. MANLOVE.

Witnesses:

W. W. RUSSELL,
M. D. RUSSELL.