J. H. RUNKLE, JR.

MAIL BOX SIGNAL DEVICE.

APPLICATION FILED FEB. 10, 1920.

1,346,789.

Patented July 13, 1920.

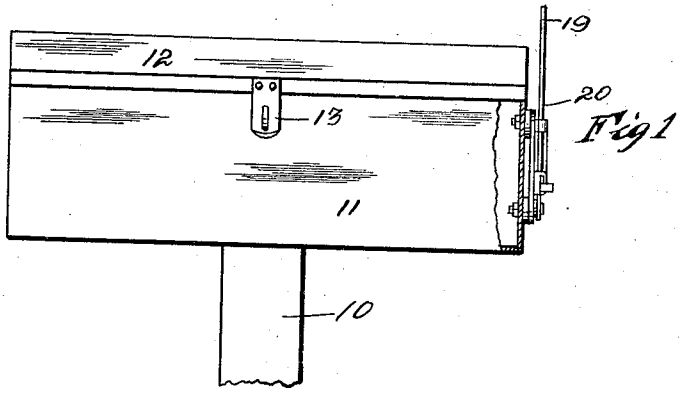


Fig 1

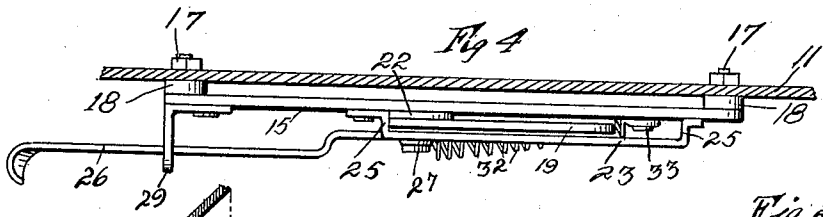


Fig 4

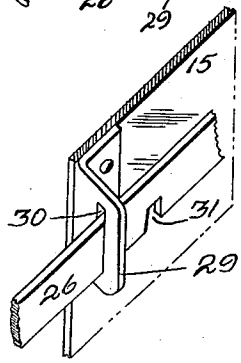


Fig 5

Fig 2

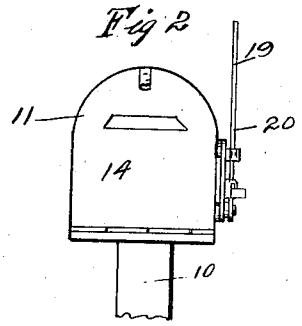
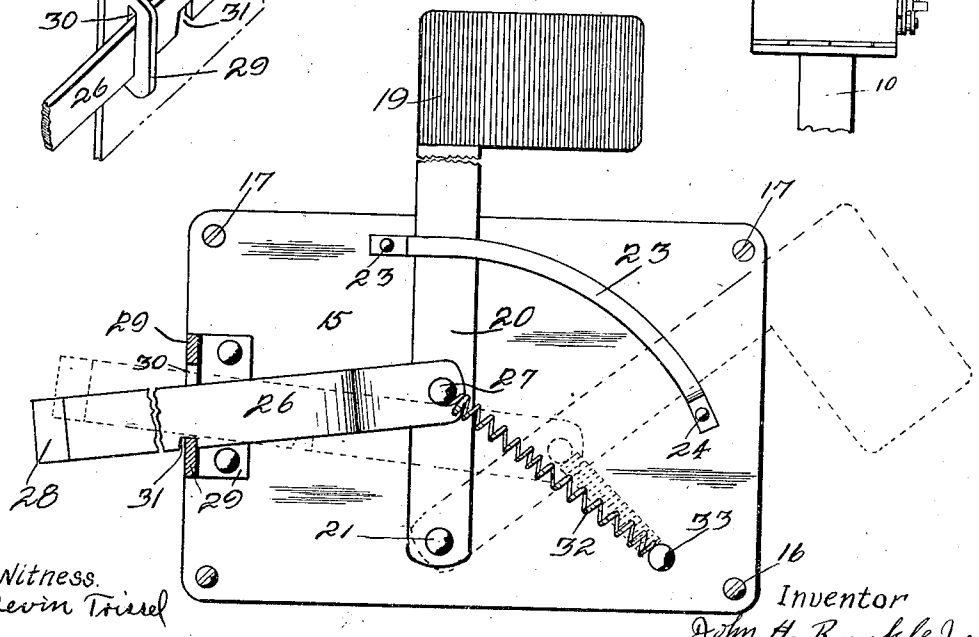


Fig 3



Witness.
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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOHN H. RUNKLE, JR., OF ROSSIE, IOWA.

MAIL-BOX SIGNAL DEVICE.

1,346,789. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented July 13, 1920.

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To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOHN H. RUNKLE, JR., a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Rossie, in the county of Clay and State of Iowa, have invented certain new and useful Mail-Box Signal Devices, of which the following is a specification.

The object of my device is to provide a signal adapted to be attached to a mail box, whereby it may be operated by the mail carrier to indicate whether a letter is in the box or not.

More particularly it is my object to provide a signal device, especially adapted for use in connection with rural mail boxes.

It will be understood that in the rural routes mail boxes are placed along the road, and when a mail carrier drops a letter in the box, he places the signal member in the upright position. This indicates that a letter is in the box. When the person owning the box desires to mail a letter, that is he desires to have the mailman collect the mail matter, he places the letters in the box and then raises the signal member to its upright or vertical position, and this informs the mail carrier that a letter or the like is in the box.

When the box is empty in either case, the signal member is lowered or moved to the position shown in dotted lines in Figure 3 of the drawings.

Another object of my invention is to provide a signal device for mail boxes, which may be locked in its vertical position and held there and provided with a spring for returning it to its inoperative position, as soon as the locking device is unlatched.

Still another object is to provide a signal device, for mail boxes, which may be readily and easily operated by the passing mailman, and which requires only slight attention in order to operate or render it inoperative from the operative position.

With these and other objects in view, my invention consists in the construction, arrangement and combination of the various parts of the device, whereby the objects contemplated are attained, as hereinafter more fully set forth, pointed out in my claim and illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 shows a front elevation of a rural mail box with my improved signal device attached thereon, parts being shown in section to better illustrate the construction.

Fig. 2 shows an end elevation of a slightly modified form of a mail box with my device attached thereon.

Fig. 3 shows an enlarged, front elevation of my improved signal device.

Fig. 4 shows a top view of the same; and

Fig. 5 shows a detailed, perspective view of the latching or locking device.

In the accompanying drawings, I have used the reference numeral 10 to indicate the ordinary post or support, upon which is fastened the rural mail box 11, which may be of any of the ordinary present types used.

In Fig. 1, I have shown the type of mail box, which is provided with a hinged top 12 and a locking latch 13. In this type of box the signal device is placed upon the end.

In Fig. 2, I have shown the type of box, which is provided with a hinged door member 14 in one of its ends. In this type of box, the signal device is placed upon the side.

My device comprises a support 15, which is provided with a series of openings 16. The openings 16 are designed to register with suitable openings in the mail box 11, whereby a bolt or the like 17 may be used for securing the supporting member 15 to the side or end of the box 11.

In order to slightly space the supporting member 15 from the wall of the box 11, I have provided washers 18, which are received between the box 11 and the supporting member 15. I have provided the washers 18, so that when rain or snow come in between the support 15 and the mail box 11, it will pass through and quickly dry and thus prevent corrosion.

Pivoted to the supporting member 15 is the signal member 19, which is flag-shaped and provided with a bar 20. The bar 20 is pivoted to the support 15 by means of the rivet 21.

In order to slightly space the signal member from the support 15, I have provided a washer 22, which passes around the rivet 21.

In order to limit the pivotal movement of the signal member 19, I have provided a guide device 23, which is riveted to the support 15, by means of the rivets 24. The guide device 23 is provided with the ends 25, which form a stop for the signal member, when it is moved in either direction.

The signal member 19 is shown in solid lines in Fig. 3 of the drawings, which indicates that a letter or other mail matter is in

the box. The dotted lines of the same figure show the signal member in the position it is in when there is nothing in the box.

A link 26 is pivoted to the bar 20 by means of the pivot 27. The link 26 is provided with a handle or hand engaging portion 28. Extending forwardly from the supporting member 15 is the flange 29, which is provided with the slot 30.

The link 26 is adapted to be received and slide through the slot 30 of the flange 29.

In the lower edge of the link 26, I provide a notch 31, which when in one position will register with the flange 29 and thus hold the signal member in its vertical or upright position, and when the notch 31 does not register with the flange 29, then the signal member will rest in the position shown in dotted lines in Fig. 3, that is the inoperative position.

From the foregoing, it will be seen that when the signal member is in its vertical position in order to remove it from that position, it is necessary to engage the handle member 28 slightly raising the link 26, and by giving it a slight push or shove, the signal member will be removed to its inoperative position.

When it is desired to move the signal member from its inoperative to its raised position, the handle member 28 is engaged and by drawing it until the notch 31 registers with the flange 29, the signal member will then be locked in its raised position.

I have provided a spring 32, which is secured to the pivot 27 and to the supporting member 15 at 33.

It will be understood that when this spring 32 is used, by the mere raising of the handle member 28 forwardly, the spring will then tend to draw the signal member to its inoperative position.

When the notch 31 registers with the flange 29, it will counteract the action of the spring 32, and thus lock the signal member 19 in its raised position, but as soon as the handle member 28 is engaged and raised slightly upwardly until the notch 31 disengages the flange 29, then the spring 32 will immediately return the signal member to its inoperative position.

It will be seen from the foregoing, that when the signal member is in its raised position, it will be absolutely locked against accidental displacement, and thus indicate that a letter or mail matter is in the box, and yet as soon as the mail matter is removed from the box, and the operator moves the handle member 28 upwardly, the spring will then draw the signal member to its inoperative position and hold it in that position.

Some of the advantages of my device are that I am able to hold the signal member in either limit of its movement, and yet it is provided so that it may be easily operated.

At present there are all sorts of contrivances adapted for use by the rural mailman for indicating whether a letter is in the box or not. All of these devices require some special attention on the part of the mailman for manipulating them.

When the signal member is in its inoperative position, that is the position shown in dotted lines in Fig. 3, the drawing of the handle member 28 forwardly will register the notch 31 with the flange 29 and thus lock the signal member in its raised position. When the signal member is in this position, all that is required to move it to the other position is to slightly raise the handle member 28 and the spring will then return to its inoperative position.

It will be understood that my device may readily and easily be attached to the various mail boxes, which are commonly used in rural communities without the changing of the box.

Some changes may be made in the details of the construction and arrangement of the various parts of my device, without departing from the real spirit and purpose of my invention, and it is my intention to cover by my claim any modified forms of structure or use of mechanical equivalents, which may be reasonably included within their scope.

I claim as my invention:

In a device of the character described, a support adapted to be fixed to a mail box having a signal member pivotally mounted thereon, a guide device for limiting the pivotal movement of said last described member in either direction, a spring having one end fixed to the signal member and its other end to the support for yieldingly holding the signal member in its inoperative position, a link having one end pivoted to the signal member intermediate of its ends and having the free end formed so that it provides a hand engaging portion, whereby it may be gripped for moving the signal member to the other limit of its movement, a guide device for said link including a flange having a slot therein, extended forwardly from said support, said link being provided with a notch in its lower side and adapted to be slidably received in said slot, whereby movement of the link to position where the notch and slot register with each other will cause the notch to engage the flange and lock the link against accidental movement in position where the signal member will be rendered operative.

Des Moines, Iowa, February 4, 1920.

JOHN H. RUNKLE, JR.