Aug. 15, 1944. J. A. WESTERFIELD 2,356,020

MAIL BOX

Filed Aug. 26, 1942 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

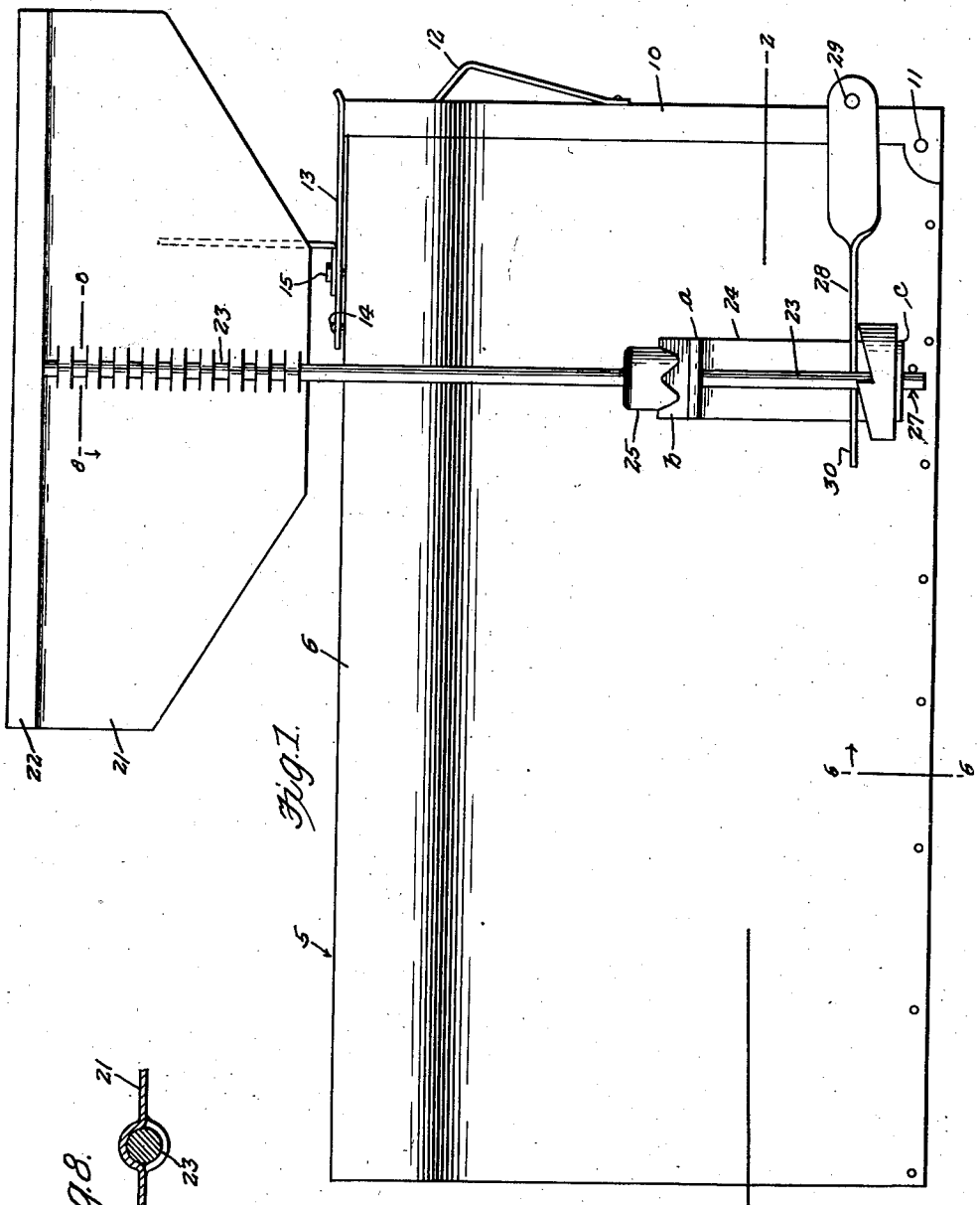


Fig. 1.

Fig. 8.

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MAIL BOX

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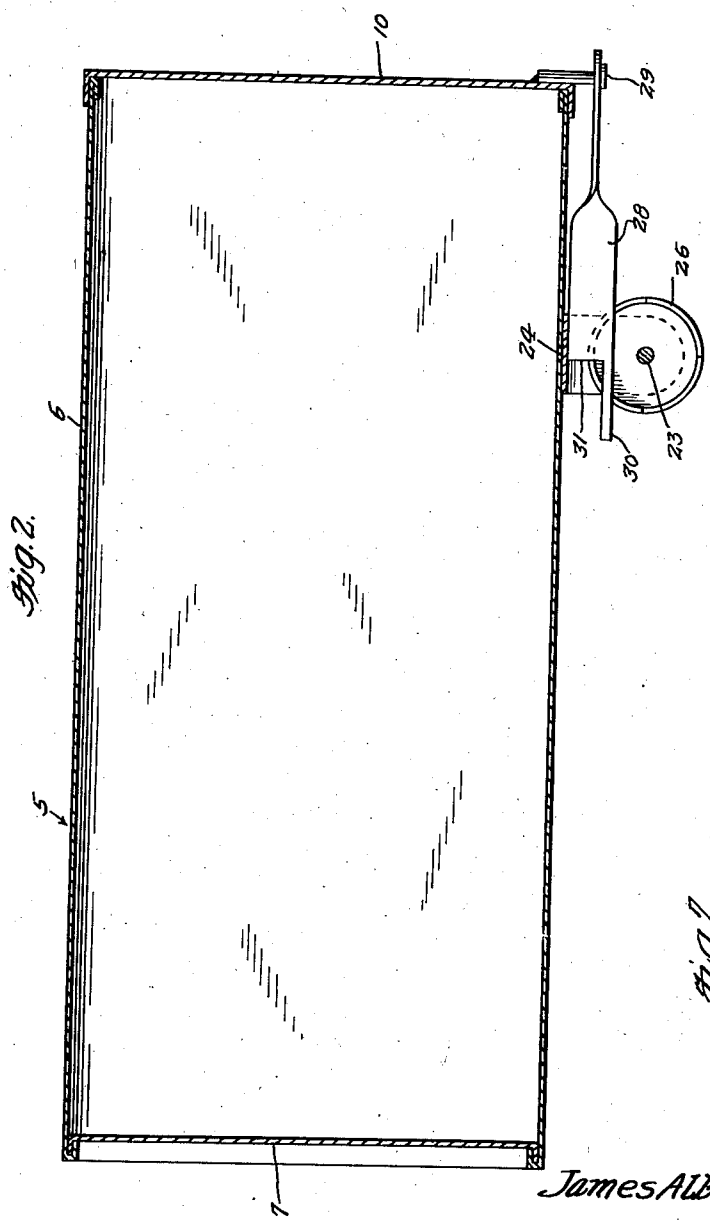


Fig. 2.

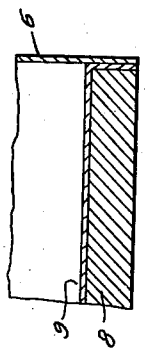


Fig. 6.

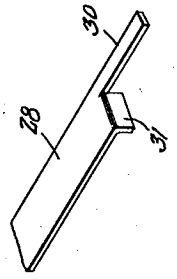


Fig. 7.

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Fig. 3.

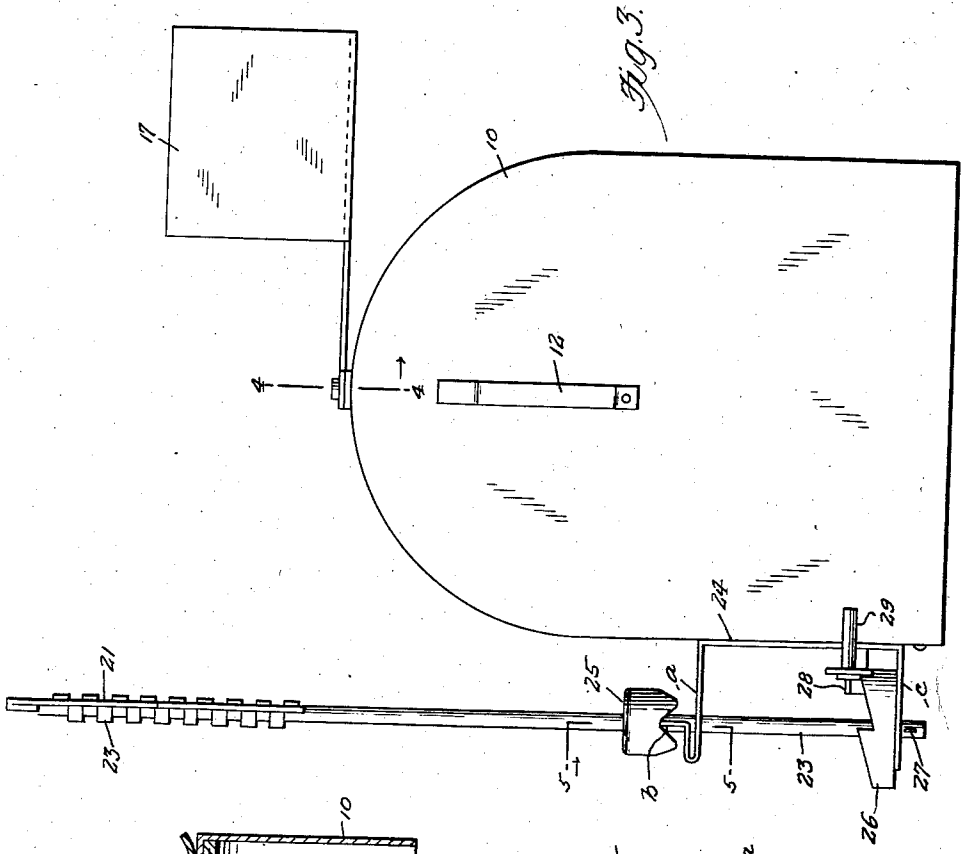


Fig. 4.

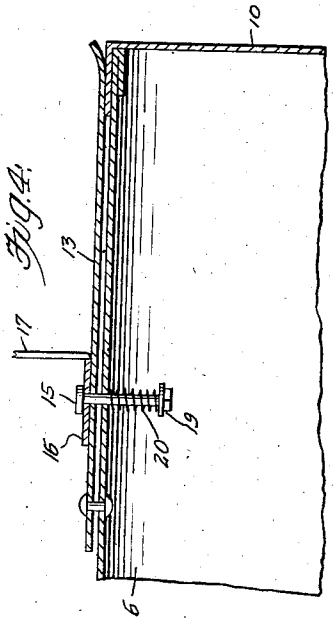
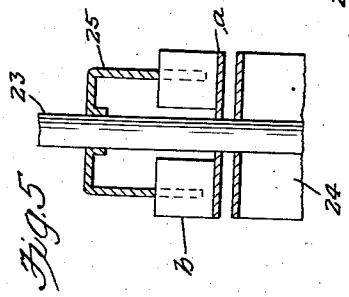


Fig. 5



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Patented Aug. 15, 1944 2,356,020

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,356,020

MAILBOX

James Albert Westerfield, Beaver Dam, Ky.

Application August 26, 1942, Serial No. 456,250

1 Claim. (Cl. 232—35)

This invention relates to new and useful improvements in mail boxes especially adapted for rural use.

The principal object of the present invention is to provide a mail box having a signal flag for indicating that mail has been deposited in the box by the mailman.

Another important object of the invention is to provide a mail deposited indication flag adapted to be automatically operated by the usual mail box closure.

These and other important objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent to the reader of the following description:

In the drawings:

Figure 1 represents a side elevational view of the mail box showing the large flag in position indicating that the box is empty.

Figure 2 is a horizontal sectional view taken substantially on line 2—2 of Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a front elevational view of the box.

Figure 4 is a fragmentary enlarged detailed sectional view taken substantially on line 4—4 of Figure 3.

Figure 5 is a fragmentary enlarged detailed sectional view taken substantially on line 5—5 of Figure 3.

Figure 6 is a sectional view taken substantially on line 6—6 of Figure 1.

Figure 7 is a perspective view of the ratchet arm.

Figure 8 is a fragmentary detailed sectional view taken substantially on line 8—8 of Figure 1.

Referring to the drawings, wherein like numerals designate like parts, it can be seen that numeral 5 generally refers to the box proper which comprises a hood-like shell 6 provided with a back end wall 7 and preferably a wooden bottom 8 having a sheet metal covering 9. Numeral 10 denotes a flanged closure for the front end of the shell 6 and this is swingably connected at its lower portion to the bottom 8, as at 11. A suitable handle 12 is provided for the closure 10 and the closure 10 is held in place by an elongated spring member 13 at the top of the box. This spring member 13 has one end riveted as at 14 to the top of the shell 6 while its free end is in a position to tensionally engage the flange of the closure 10, in a manner shown in Figure 1. A pin 15 extends downwardly through an arm 16 which supports a small signal flag 17 and also downwardly through an opening in the spring 13 and an opening in the top of the shell 6, the lower end of this pin 15 has a nut and washer 19 and between this and the inner side of the shell 6 is a compression spring 20. This tensioning assembly serves to hold the spring arm 13 snugly against the closure 10 in the manner shown in Figure 1, and also hold the flag 17 in any position desired by its arm 16. The flag 17 serves to indicate to the mail delivery man the fact that the box holder has mail to be sent.

The flag 17 is preferably of a color distinctive from the color of a second and larger flag 21, which is preferably in the form of an elongated plate having its upper edge portion reinforced by being bent upon itself as at 22. The intermediate portion of the flag 21 has a vertical row of horizontal slits defining straps which can be forced laterally to the end that the upper end of a rod 23 can be woven therethrough and to the end that friction alone will be sufficient to hold the flag 21 rigidly on the rod 23, or, if desired, spot welding may be resorted to.

A substantially U-shaped bracket 24 is secured to the lower portion of one side of the shell 6 with its leg portion disposed horizontally. The upper leg portion of the bracket 24, which is denoted by reference character *a*, has its free end portion disposed backwardly and upwardly to define a pair of lugs *b*, *b*, adapted to have rest thereon the crotchet portions of a toothed hollow collar 25.

A crown type ratchet wheel 26 is splined on the lower portion of the rod 23 and normally rests upon the lower leg portion *c* of the bracket 24. It will here be seen that a cotter key or the like 27, at the lower end of the rod 23, permits rising of the rod above the lower leg portion *c*.

Numeral 28 denotes a ratchet arm twisted at its forward end portion and secured to the closure 10 by a pin 29, which pin is preferably welded to the front side of the closure 10.

The rear end of the arm 28 is formed to provide an elongated guide leg 30 and a downwardly disposed ratchet wheel engageable tooth 31. The leg 30 is of sufficient length so that it always rides the top of the crown type ratchet wheel 26 in a manner so as to permit the tooth 31 to engage the shoulders of the ratchet wheel 26.

It can now be seen that in the event the box holder has a parcel or other mail matter to give to the postman, he simply turns the small flag 17 to align with the longitudinal disposition of the box.

When the postman arrives, he will find the flag 21 in the position shown in Figure 1. He opens the closure 10 and inserts the mail and in doing so the arm 28 moves forwardly, the tooth 31 engaging one of the shoulders of the ratchet

wheel 26 and rotating the rod 23 ninety degrees, thus setting the flag 21 at right angles to the disposition of the box 5 so that it can be clearly visible from the box holder's house. This saves many trips to an empty mail box.

While the foregoing specification sets forth the invention in specific terms, it is to be understood that numerous changes in the shape, size and materials may be resorted to without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as claimed hereinafter.

Having described the invention what is claimed as new is:

Signalling apparatus of the class described for use on a mail box having a swingable closure, said apparatus comprising a bracket adapted to be mounted on said box and having a pair of upper and lower horizontal arms, a post rotatably mounted in said arms and vertically slidable therein, a flag fast on said post for rotation into different positions by rotation of said post, a pawl and ratchet drive for rotating said post comprising a ratchet wheel on the post intermediate said arms, and a pawl arm adapted to be pivoted to said closure for operation thereby to operate said wheel, and devices on said post and the upper arm, respectively, co-acting under vertical sliding movement and rotation of the post to yieldingly detain the post in different angular positions.

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