

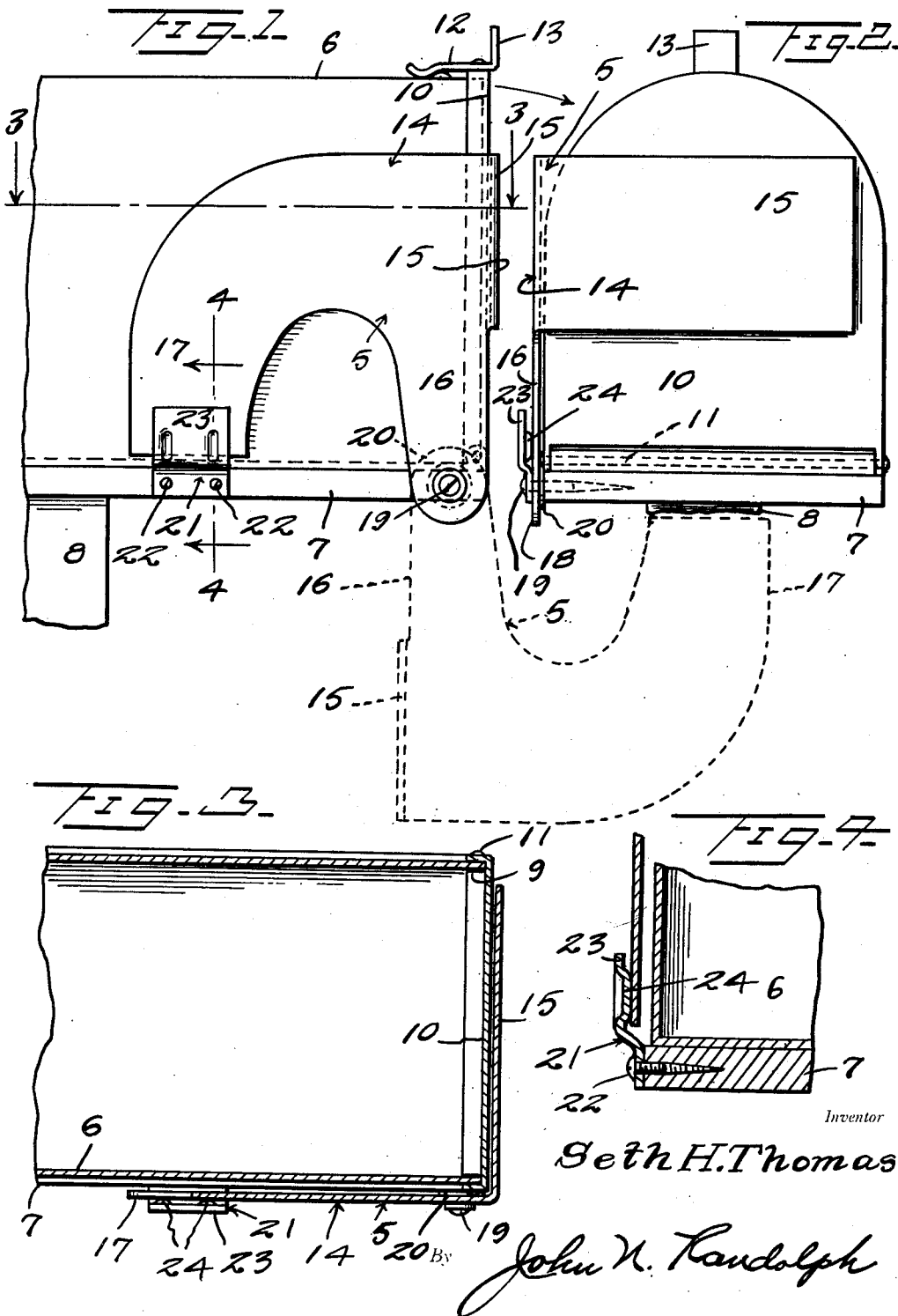
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RURAL MAILBOX SIGNAL

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RURAL MAILBOX SIGNAL

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This invention relates to an improved signal of extremely simple construction for use with rural mailboxes and has for a primary object to provide a signal capable of being mounted for operation in conjunction with a rural mailbox without being directly connected thereto thereby eliminating the necessity of forming openings in or otherwise defacing the metal mailbox.

Another object of the invention is to provide a signal which will assume a position below the mailbox when in an operative, signalling position so that the signal may be readily seen from any direction.

A further aim of the invention is to provide a signal including angularly disposed sides to enable the signal to be more readily seen from any desired direction and which sides are so disposed as to be completely concealed by the mailbox when the signal is in an inoperative, non-signalling position.

Another object of the invention is to provide a signal which is swingably disposed relatively to a mailbox and so supported as to have no sliding contact therewith so that the mailbox will not be marred or damaged by the signal.

A further object of the invention is to provide a signal for use with conventional mailboxes having a horizontally hinged downwardly swinging door or closure at one end thereof and wherein a part of the signal is disposed to be engaged by the door or closure when the latter is swung to an open position for displacing the signal downwardly to an operative, signalling position below the level of the mailbox bottom.

Another object of the invention is to provide a signal wherein the preponderance of the weight thereof is so distributed that the signal will maintain an inoperative position without the use of latch means.

Another object of the invention is to provide a signal which may be moved simultaneously with the mailbox closure to a non-signalling position as the closure is closed, which operation can be readily accomplished with one hand, leaving the other hand of the user free to hold mail or other articles removed from the mailbox.

Various other objects and advantages of the invention will hereinafter become more fully apparent from the following description of the drawing, illustrating a presently preferred embodiment thereof, and wherein:

Figure 1 is a fragmentary side elevational view of the front end of a conventional rural mailbox showing the signal associated therewith;

Figure 2 is a front elevational view thereof looking from right to left of Figure 1;

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Figure 3 is a horizontal sectional view taken substantially along a plane as indicated by the line 3—3 of Figure 1, and

Figure 4 is a fragmentary transverse vertical sectional view taken substantially along a plane as indicated by the line 4—4 of Figure 1.

Referring more specifically to the drawing for the purpose of illustrating the application and use of the improved signal, designated generally 5 and comprising the invention, the front end portion of a conventional rural mailbox is illustrated in the drawing and designated generally 6 and is shown mounted in a conventional manner on a supporting base 7 which is suitably secured in substantially a horizontal position on the upper end of an upright supporting post 8. The rural mailbox 6 is provided with the usual open front end 9 which is closed by a vertically swinging door 10 which is hingedly connected at its lower end to the sides of the mailbox adjacent its bottom by aligned pivot elements 11 which form a horizontal pivot for the door 10 which swings downwardly and outwardly of the open front of the mailbox moving from a closed position to an open position, in a clockwise direction as seen in Figure 1. The door 10 at its upper, free end is provided with the usual spring latch 12 by which the door is retained in a closed position and which is provided with an upstanding handle portion 13 by means of which the door is manually moved to and from its closed position. The parts 6 to 13, previously described are of conventional construction and represent a conventional mounting of a rural mailbox and have been illustrated and briefly described to afford a better understanding of the signal 5, hereinafter to be described in detail.

The signal 5 constitutes a single member preferably formed of sheet metal or other substantially rigid sheet material having two substantially flat sections 14 and 15 which are disposed at substantially a right angle to one another. The section 14 is substantially yoke-shaped and is provided with two legs 16 and 17. The leg 16 is disposed at one end of the section 14 and said section 15 is formed integral with and projects from said end of the section 14 but remote to the leg or extension 16 which constitutes the lower part of said end of the section 14. The leg 16 is preferably slightly longer than the leg 17 and is provided adjacent its terminal with a bearing opening 18 for receiving a headed driven fastening 19 which extends inwardly therethrough and which is driven into one side edge of the base 7, below the bottom of the mailbox 6 and adjacent the open end of said mailbox. A washer 20 is

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preferably interposed between the base 7 and leg 16 to space the section 14 from the adjacent side of the mailbox 6 and to prevent wear on the base 7. The leg 16 is journaled on the fastening 19 and has sufficient loose engagement with the washer 20 to permit the signal 5 to swing readily between its inoperative, full line position of Figure 1 and its operative, dotted line position of said figure. As seen in Figure 1, when the leg 16 is in an upright position and the section 15 is disposed against or substantially against the outer side of the closure 10, the lower end of the leg 17 will terminate preferably slightly above the base 7. With the signal 5 in this, its full line position of Figure 1, it will be noted that the pivot provided by the fastening 19 is located near the end of the section 14 from which the section 15 projects whereas a substantial portion of the section 14 including the leg 17 is located a considerable distance to the left of the pivot 19, as seen in Figure 1 whereas only a limited portion of the section 14 and the entire section 15 are located to the right of the pivot 19 and relatively close to the vertical center of the pivot. Accordingly, the weight of the portion of the signal 5 located to the left of the pivot 19 is adequate to readily maintain the signal in its full line inoperative position of Figure 1 and which constitutes a non-signalling position.

Assuming that the signal 5 is in its full line position of Figure 1 or its position as illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 with the door 10 closed, the mailman in opening the door 10 to insert mail into the box 5 will swing the closure 10 outwardly and downwardly in a clockwise direction as seen in Figure 1, after which he will return the closure 10 to its closed position. However, in opening the closure 10 the signal 5 will be caused to swing clockwise from its full line to its dotted line position of Figure 1 about the fastening 19 as a pivot due to the fact that the signal section 15 is disposed in the path of swinging movement of the door 10 to an open position so that it will be engaged by the door 10 to be swung outwardly and downwardly therewith. Accordingly, when the mailman returns the door 10 to a closed position, the signal 5 will remain in its operative signalling position as illustrated in dotted lines in Figure 1, in a depending position with the major portion of the signal 5 disposed below the level of the base 7, so that when the signal 5 is thus disposed it will be readily visible from a distance in any direction since it will be disposed below the mailbox 6 and base 7 and the sections 14 and 15 thereof by being disposed at a right angle to one another and in substantially vertical planes will assure that some part of the signal will be readily visible from any direction to visually indicate that mail has been placed in the box 5. The owner of the mailbox after opening the door 10 to remove the mail therefrom returns the closure 10 to a closed position and thereafter swings the signal 5 upwardly in a counterclockwise direction as seen in Figure 1 back to its full line position, in which position it will be retained due to the preponderance of the weight thereof being disposed to the left of its pivot 19, as previously pointed out. The signal when thus disposed will be substantially concealed by the mailbox. It will be noted that the same hand may be readily used for returning the signal to its inoperative full line position as was employed to close the door 10, thus leaving the other hand free to hold mail and packages removed from the mailbox 6. Further, it will be

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readily obvious that the signal section 15 may be initially engaged to swing the signal 5 upwardly to its inoperative position simultaneously as the door is returned to a closed position. It will also be noted that the signal does not engage and scrape the body of the mailbox in moving to and from its operative and inoperative positions and the only engagement of the signal with the mailbox is by the signal section 15 bearing against the door 10.

While as previously stated, the signal 5 due to its construction is maintained by gravity in either an operative or an inoperative position, if desired a spring latch member may be provided to more positively hold the signal in an inoperative, non-signalling position. The spring latch member, designated generally 21 includes a strip of relatively resilient metal, one end of which is disposed against the aforementioned side edge of the base 7 and secured thereto by driven fastenings 22. The latch strip 21 has an upwardly extending outwardly offset upper portion 23 provided with longitudinally extending indentations on the outer side thereof forming longitudinally extending ribs 24 on the inner side of the latch strip which are disposed to frictionally bear against the free end of the leg 17, as clearly illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, when the signal 5 is in an inoperative position and by which frictional engagement the signal is more readily retained in an inoperative position.

Various modifications and changes are contemplated and may obviously be resorted to, without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as hereinafter defined by the appended claims.

I claim as my invention:

1. A mailbox signal for use with a rural mailbox having a vertically swingable door pivoted at its lower end, said signal comprising a substantially rigid sheet-like member having angularly disposed sections, means pivotally mounting the signal beneath and adjacent the pivot of the mailbox door for vertical swinging movement between an operative, depending position in which both sections are disposed below the level of the mailbox and spaced therefrom and an inoperative position adjacent the door and a side of the mailbox and in which both sections are disposed above the level of the operative positions of the sections, said sections being relatively wide and each being disposed in substantially a vertical plane when the signal is in an operative position, one section of the signal being disposed at one side of the mailbox and out of contact therewith when in an inoperative position and the other section thereof being disposed in front of the mailbox door, the preponderance of the weight of the signal being disposed on the side of its pivot remote to the section of the signal which is disposed adjacent and in the path of opening movement of the mailbox door whereby the signal is maintained by gravity in an inoperative position.

2. A mailbox signal for use with a rural mailbox having a vertically swingable door pivoted adjacent its bottom edge, said signal consisting of a substantially flat relatively wide plate, means pivotally mounting said plate adjacent one corner thereof for vertical swinging movement, said pivot means being disposed beneath and adjacent the door pivot, a relatively wide flange projecting from said plate at substantially a right angle thereto and forming a door engaging section, said flange and pivot means being disposed adjacent

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one end of the plate, said flange being disposed nearer the pivot than the opposite end of the plate whereby the weight of said opposite plate end will normally maintain the flange against the outer side of the door when the latter is in a closed position to maintain the plate adjacent and substantially parallel to a side of the mailbox in an inoperative, substantially concealed position, the mailbox door engaging the flange when swung downwardly to an open position to cause the signal to swing about its pivot means in the same direction as the door whereby the preponderance of the weight of the signal initially passes over said pivot means and subsequently assumes a position below the pivot means for maintaining the signal in an operative exposed position below the level of the mailbox, said plate being disposed in a vertical plane and said flange being disposed in substantially a vertical plane when the signal is in an operative position.

3. The combination with a rural mailbox having a vertically swinging closure hinged adjacent its bottom edge and a base on which the mailbox is rigidly mounted, of a mailbox signal formed of relatively wide angularly disposed sections, one of said sections forming a door engaging section and being disposed on the outer side of the mailbox door when the latter is in a closed position and in its path of swinging movement to an open position when the signal is in an inoperative, substantially concealed position, the other, second section of the signal being disposed substantially parallel to and spaced outwardly from

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one side of the mailbox, pivot means pivotally connecting a corner of said second section to the base below and adjacent the door pivot and adjacent said door engaging section, said second section having a portion disposed remote to the pivot means and on the opposite side thereof to said door engaging section whereby the signal is gravity urged to swing in a direction for normally retaining the door engaging section against the door and said second section adjacent the side of the mailbox and above the base, said signal being swung to a depending operative position below the base by a swinging movement of the door downwardly and outwardly to an open position, both sections of the signal being disposed in substantially vertical planes when the signal is in a depending operative position.

4. A mailbox signal as in claim 3, said second section being substantially yoke-shaped and said pivot means engaging one leg thereof disposed adjacent the door engaging section.

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