E. M. SHIPP.

MAIL BOX.

APPLICATION FILED JAN. 7, 1909.

920,194. **Patented May 4, 1909.**

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

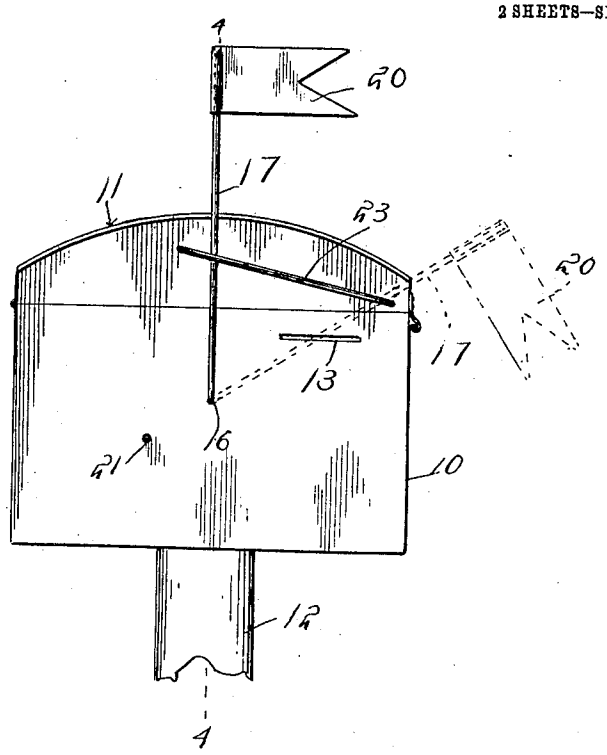
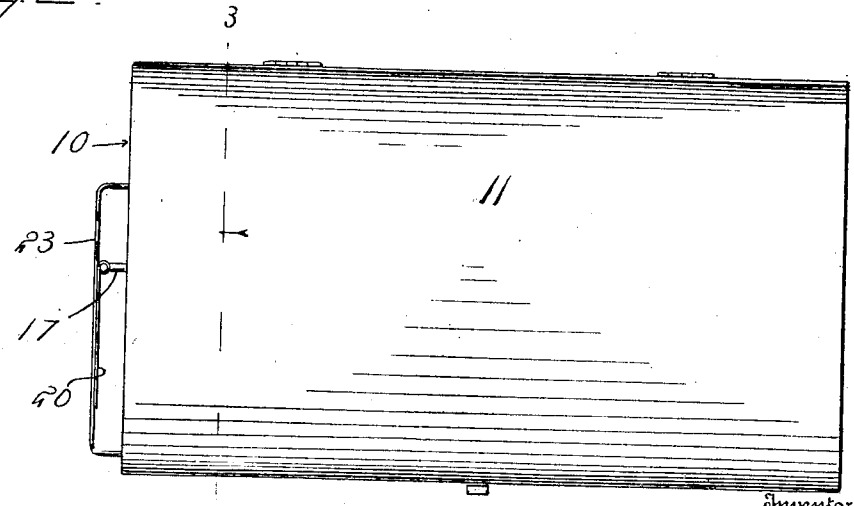


Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.



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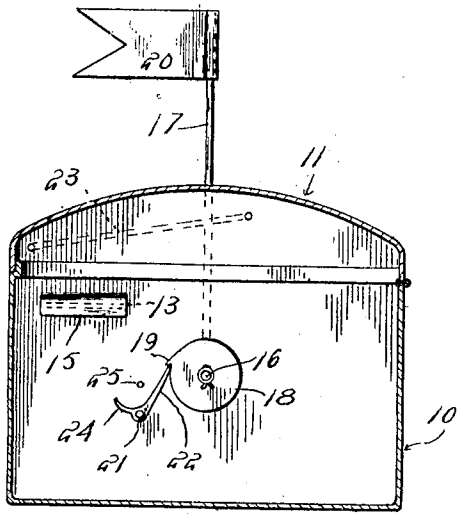


Fig. 3

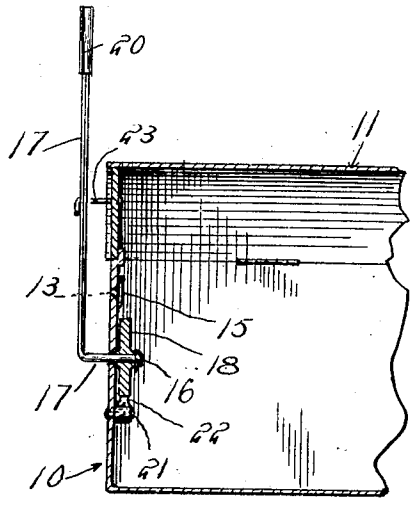


Fig. 4.

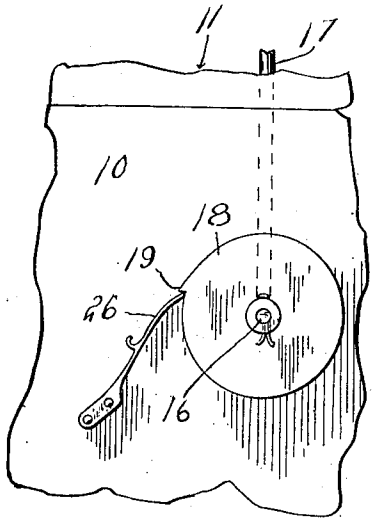


Fig. 5.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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MAIL-BOX.

No. 920,194. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented May 4, 1909.

Application filed January 7, 1909. Serial No. 471,161.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, EDWARD M. SHIPP, a citizen of the United States, residing at New York, in the county of New York, State of New York, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Mail-Boxes; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, such as will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same.

This invention relates to mail boxes, more particularly to devices of this character employed in connection with the rural free delivery service, and has for one of its objects to provide a simply constructed device of this character wherein a signal flag or target is automatically set by the action of depositing the mail in the box.

With this and other objects in view the invention consists in certain novel features of construction as hereafter shown and described and then specifically pointed out in the claims, and in the drawings illustrative of the preferred embodiment of the invention, Figure 1 is an end view of the improved device with the signal flag or target in its elevated position. Fig. 2 is a plan view of the same. Fig. 3 is a section on the line 3—3 of Fig. 2, looking in the direction of the arrow. Fig. 4 is a sectional detail on the line 4—4 of Fig. 1. Fig. 5 is a detail illustrating a modification in the manner of constructing the locking pawl.

The improved device comprises a receptacle represented as a whole at 10, which may be of any required form or of any required size, but will preferably be provided with a hinged closure 11 having a rounded top so that it will shed water or snow and prevent injury therefrom to the contents of the box. The receptacle 10 is mounted in any suitable manner to any suitable stationary structure, but will preferably be connected to a post in the usual manner, the post indicated at 12.

Formed in one end of the receptacle 10 is a slit 13 through which the mail matter is inserted, the slit having a hinged protecting flap 15 within the receptacle, the flap thus serving to protect the contents of the box from rain or snow, which might otherwise be driven through the slit.

Mounted for rotation in the same end of the receptacle which contains the slit 13 is a stub shaft 16 having an arm 17 attached to its outer end outside the receptacle, and with a wheel or disk 18 carried by the shaft within the receptacle, the disk having an offset 19 at one side. The arm 17 is preferably offset so that it does not move close to the end of the box 11 to prevent danger of ice or snow clogging the arm and preventing its free movement. The arm 17 is provided at its outer end with a "flag" or "target" 20, which will preferably be large enough to be seen at a distance, and will also be colored to render it conspicuous.

Swinging at 21 within the receptacle 10 is a catch or pawl 22 adapted to engage by its free end beneath the projection 19 of the disk 18, when the arm 17 and its target 20 are in vertical position, as shown in Fig. 3, and thus maintains the arm and its target in vertical position. A stop pin 25 is arranged to limit the outward movement of the pawl, to prevent it from being thrown into an inoperative position. A spring pawl 26 may be substituted for the gravity pawl 22, if preferred.

Attached to one end of the closure 11 is a guard 23, preferably of wire, and forms a guideway for the arm 17, so that when the closure 11 is opened the member 23 will carry the arm 17 into its vertical position, and cause the projection 19 to engage over the pawl 22, and thus automatically "set" the signal, as hereafter explained. The pawl 22 is preferably provided with a small projecting knob 24 to enable the pawl to be released by the thumb or finger of the letter carrier or the owner of the box, so that the signal arm may be automatically set or released manually, as hereafter explained.

With a device thus constructed the operation is as follows: When the arm 17 and its target 20 are in their downward or withdrawn position as shown in dotted lines in Fig. 1, the arm extends transversely of the slit 13, so that mail cannot be inserted into the box through the slit without first elevating the arm, which action causes the projection 19 to be engaged with the pawl 22 and thus maintains the arm in its elevated or "set" position. Thus when the owner of the box deposits mail therein, he is compelled to set the signal for the letter carrier before he can deposit outgoing mail in the box. When the flag is in its vertical position, the letter carrier is thereby notified

that mail matter has been deposited in the box for him to collect, and when the letter carrier opens the box to collect the mail, he pushes downwardly upon the knob 24 to release the arm and its target and thus permit them to drop into their inoperative position, thus signaling to the owner that the mail has been collected. If the letter carrier has mail to deposit in the box at the same time that he collects mail therein, he does not operate the pawl 22 as above noted, but leaves the flag in its vertical position, thus notifying the owner that mail has been deposited for him in the box. If the owner finds the flag elevated and has no outgoing mail to deposit, he simply actuates the pawl 22 and releases the signal arm which action permits the signal arm to fall into its inoperative position when he closes the box, thus notifying the letter carrier that there is no mail to collect.

It will be obvious that a simply constructed device is produced, which is easily manipulated and will be found mutually convenient for the owner of the box and the letter carrier, and will avoid many annoying mistakes and fix the responsibility for the failure to collect or deposit mail where it belongs.

The improved device may be applied to any of the various mail boxes now in use by making slight alterations therein, or applied to new boxes when constructed.

What is claimed is:—

1. A device of the class described comprising a mail box having a mail receiving slit, a movable closure to said box, a shaft operating through one of the walls of said box, an arm carried by said shaft externally of the box and extending transversely of said slit when in depressed position, a guard device having inturned ends connected to the movable closure and inclosing said arm and operating to elevate the arm when the closure is moved into open position, and means carried by the shaft within the box for maintaining said arm in elevated position.

2. In a mail box having a movable closure, an arm swinging from said box and carrying a signal element, a rod carried by said closure and spaced therefrom and forming a guideway for said arm, said rod having inturned ends extending into the path of the arm whereby said arm is elevated by the opening of the closure, and automatic means accessible only from within the box for maintaining said arm in elevated position.

In testimony whereof, I affix my signature, in presence of two witnesses.

EDWARD M. SHIPP.

Witnesses:
E. KELLY,
C. I. COBB.