

(No Model.)

2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

J. W. HENTZ.
LETTER BOX.

No. 572,893.

Patented Dec. 8, 1896.

Fig. 1.

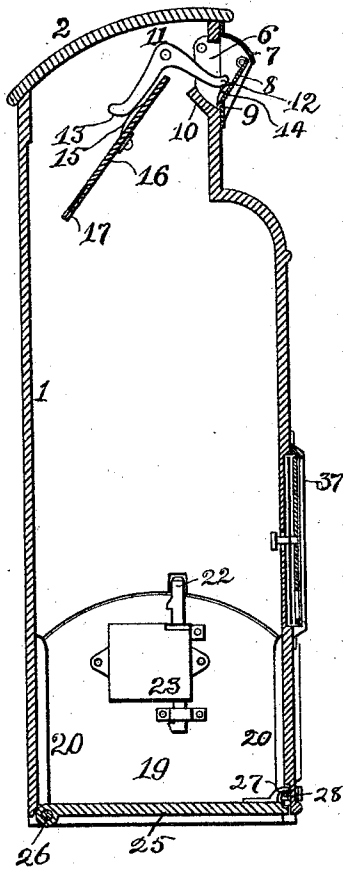


Fig. 2.

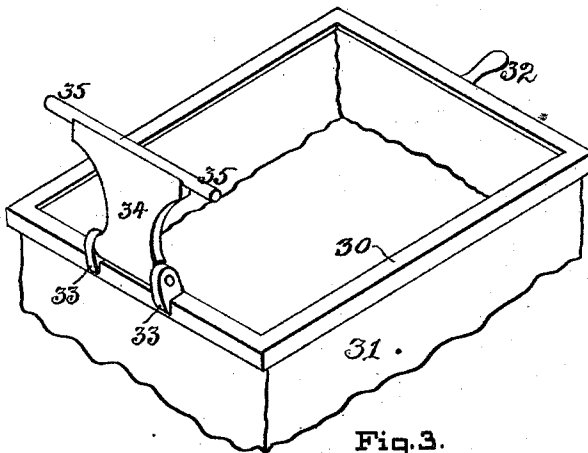
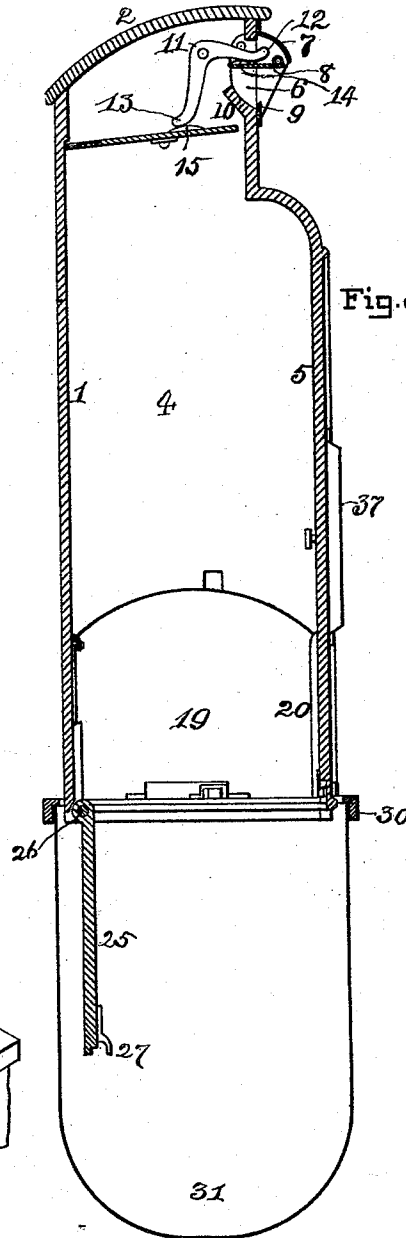


Fig. 3.

Witnesses:

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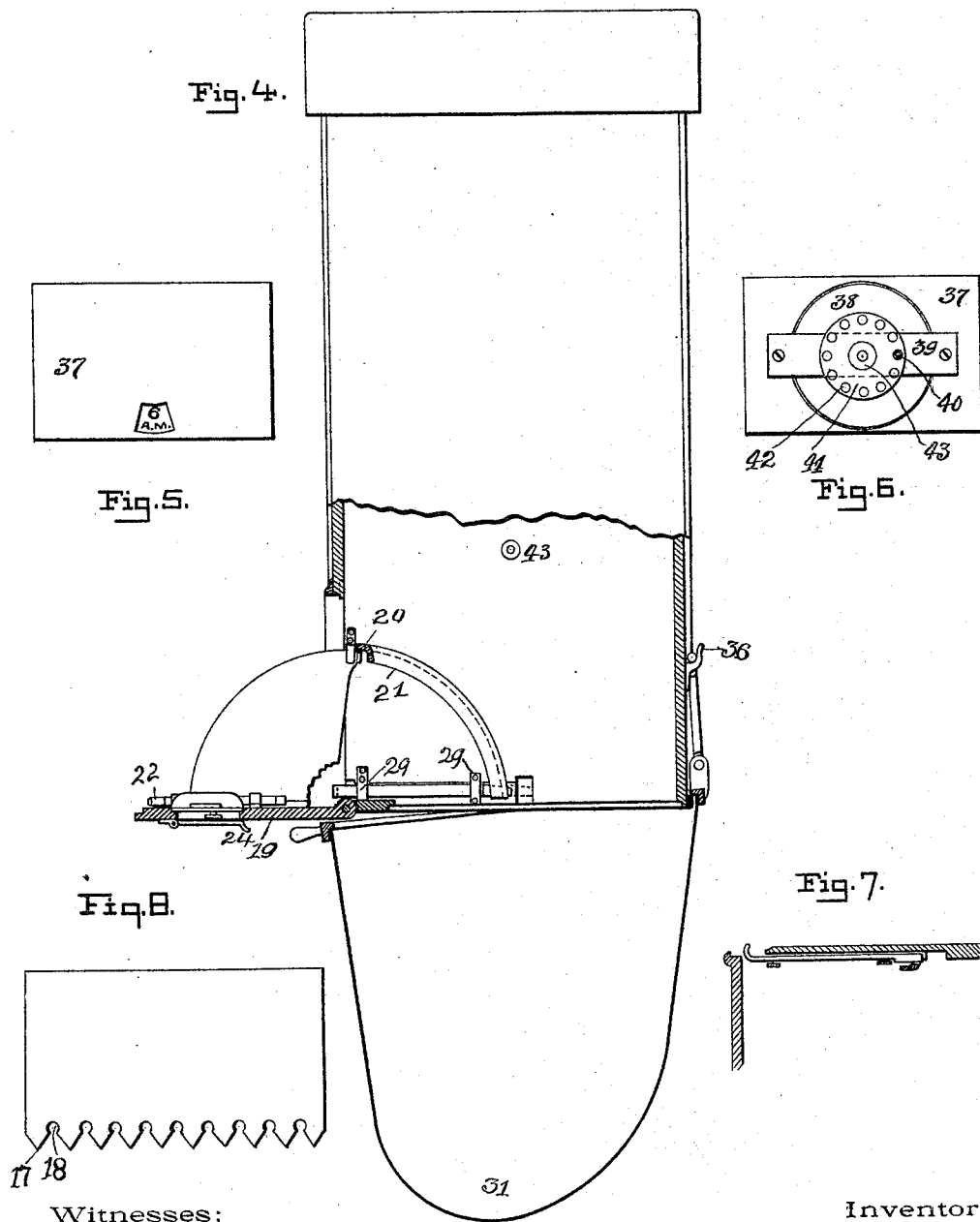
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2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

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Witnesses:

A. B. Deggs
L. D. Hinrichs

Inventor.

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by S. B. Brashear
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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JAMES W. HENTZ, OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.

LETTER-BOX.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 572,893, dated December 8, 1896.

Application filed February 28, 1894. Serial No. 501,804. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JAMES W. HENTZ, a citizen of the United States, residing at Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Street Letter-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.

My invention relates to improvements in street letter-boxes, such as are placed at street-corners or other prominent places, and wherein matter to be carried by mail may be placed by the public and from which such mail is collected by carriers or mail-collectors.

The objects of my invention are to generally improve such boxes, so that, first, a letter or other matter placed in the box can only be removed by properly unlocking and opening the box; second, the time of next collection will be clearly indicated; third, the mail may be removed from a side door which may be opened by the collector; fourth, the mail may also be removed from the bottom when desired, and the bottom cannot be dropped for such purpose except by first unlocking the side door; fifth, means are provided (and an improved collection-bag) whereby collection is greatly facilitated.

With these objects in view I have constructed the box which I shall now proceed to fully describe, the particular points of novelty in which I shall specifically point out in the claims hereto appended.

In the accompanying drawings, Figure 1 is a vertical section through my improved box from front to rear with the box closed. Fig. 2 is a similar view with the flap or door open ready to insert a letter and the bottom dropped ready to empty the box into an attached collector's bag. Fig. 3 is a perspective view showing the upper portion of the collector's bag, the lower portion being broken away. Fig. 4 is a view in rear elevation, the lower portion of the rear wall being broken away, the side door being opened, and the collector's bag being attached ready to receive the contents when the bottom shall be dropped. Fig. 5 is an outside view of the indicator removed from the box. Fig. 6 is an inside view of the indicator removed from the box. Fig. 7 is a

sectional view of the bottom-locking mechanism. Fig. 8 is a top plan view of the guard-table removed from the box.

Like numerals of reference mark the same parts wherever they occur in the various figures of the drawings.

Referring to the drawings by numerals, 1 is the rear, 2 the top, 3 4 the sides, and 5 the front, of my box, all of which may be of any suitable material. In the front, near the top, is a suitable opening 6, over which is formed or secured a hood 7, under which is pivoted a flap-door 8, opening inward and when closed resting against a ledge or stop 9. The front of the box at the lower side of opening 6 is curved inward and upward at 10, so that the flap-door 8, at its lower edge, will barely clear this curved portion, the result being that the opening remains closed until the flap has been moved a considerable distance inward.

Pivoted inside the box, to one or both sides, as desired, is an elbow-lever 11, the ends of which are rounded off or curved, as at 12 and 13, the end 12 bearing against a cam-surface 14 on the inside of the flap 8 and the end 13 on a similar cam 15 on the upper rear surface of a guard-table 16, pivoted inside the box and having teeth 17 at its rear edge with a nearly circular opening 18 between the roots or bases of adjacent teeth. When it is desired to deposit a letter in the box, the flap is pressed inward with one hand, (generally by resting the fingers on top of the box and pressing the flap inward with the thumb,) and when opened far enough the letter is passed through the opening with the other hand. As the flap begins to move inward it immediately begins to press arm 12 of elbow-lever upward, which causes arm 13 to move downward, bringing guard-table 16 into position, as shown in Fig. 2, in which position it receives the letter, and as soon as the flap is released from inward pressure it drops to its closed position, as in Fig. 1. This return is facilitated and accomplished by the weight of the flap, the weight of the letter, and the hanging of the guard-table in front of its center. As soon as the guard-table drops, the letter drops inside the box, from whence it cannot again be removed through the entrance, the teeth on the guard-table prevent-

ing the successful use of wires or similar articles for such purposes.

At the lower edge of one side of the box is hinged a door 19, having side guards 20, working under flanges 21 on the inside of the box and secured by any suitable bolt, as 22, manipulated by means of a lock and key, as at 23, over which is hinged a guard or protector 24.

The bottom 25 of the box is hinged at its rear edge, at 26, and is provided at its front edge with a catch 27 to engage a bolt 28, working in keepers 29, secured to the front of the box. This bolt is so arranged that it can only be withdrawn when the door 19 is open, so that the locking of the door locks the bottom also. It is, however, so far as the opening and closing are concerned, independent of the door, so that the door may be opened without dropping the bottom and the box emptied through the door. This will generally be the method of procedure when a carrier on foot collects the mail, but when the carrier with a wagon comes to the box he will be supplied with any improved collection-bag, as shown particularly in Fig. 3. This bag consists of a rectangular frame 30, preferably made of wood or light metal, with a canvas or leather bag 31 secured thereto. Projecting from one end bar of the frame 30 is a handle 32, while on the opposite end are formed or secured two legs 33, between which is loosely pivoted a suspension bar or plate 34, having projecting from each of its upper corners a pintle 35. On one end of the box, outside, are attached two improved projecting hooks 36.

When it is desired to empty the box into this bag, the collector unlocks the door and allows it to drop to its normal open position, as in Fig. 4. This leaves his hands free, so that he can now hook pintles 35 over hooks 36 and swing the bag into position where he can hold it with one hand. With the other hand he withdraws bolt 28, allows bottom to drop, as in Fig. 2, thus emptying the contents of box into bag.

To the front of the box is attached an indicator-plate 37, recessed on the inside to receive a circular plate 38, which contains the necessary figures to indicate the time of the next collection, such circular plate being rotatable to bring the proper announcement opposite an opening in the indicator-plate 37, as in Fig. 5. Secured across the inside of the indicator-plate, inside the circular plate 38 also, is a strip of metal 39, having an inward-projecting point 40, Fig. 6. Inside of this strip is a circular plate 41, having a series of perforations 42, in number and position corresponding with the announcements on circular plate 38. This plate 41 is connected to cir-

cular plate 38 and has on it, inside the box, a button 43, by which it may be turned. (See Fig. 4.) When turned to proper position, one of the perforations 42 will engage point 40 and will be held in engagement therewith by the elasticity of circular plate 41, thus holding in position and showing the proper figures, which will remain exposed until changed by the collector.

Having thus fully described my invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent of the United States, is—

1. A letter-box having a slot-opening, a flap, to close said opening pivoted at its upper edge and opening inward, a guard-table pivoted inside the box and an elbow-lever pivoted inside the box having one end engaging the flap and other end engaging the guard-table as set forth.

2. A letter-box having a slot-opening, a flap to close said opening pivoted at its upper edge, swinging inward and having a cam on its inner surface, a guard-table pivoted inside the box also provided with a cam and an elbow-lever pivoted inside the box, having its ends engaging the cams on the flap and the guard-table, substantially as set forth.

3. A letter-box having a slot-opening, a flap to close said opening pivoted at its upper edge, swinging inward and having a cam on its inner surface, a guard-table pivoted inside the box also provided with a cam and an elbow-lever pivoted inside the box, having curved ends, one of which engages the cam on the flap while the other engages the cam on the guard-table, substantially as set forth.

4. A letter-box having a slot-opening, a flap to close said opening pivoted at its upper edge and opening inward, a guard-table pivoted inside the box and having its inner edge formed into teeth with their bases separated by circular openings and an elbow-lever pivoted inside the box having one end engaging the flap and the other end engaging the guard-table, as set forth.

5. The indicator mechanism herein described comprising the outer recessed plate with opening, the circular plate in the recess and having announcements thereon, the cross-strip inside the circular plate having an inward-projected pin, and the elastic circular plate inside said strip, connected with the announcement-plate and having perforations to engage the pin on the cross-strip, substantially as set forth.

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

JAMES W. HENTZ.

Witnesses:

S. BRASHEARS,
C. R. WEAVER.