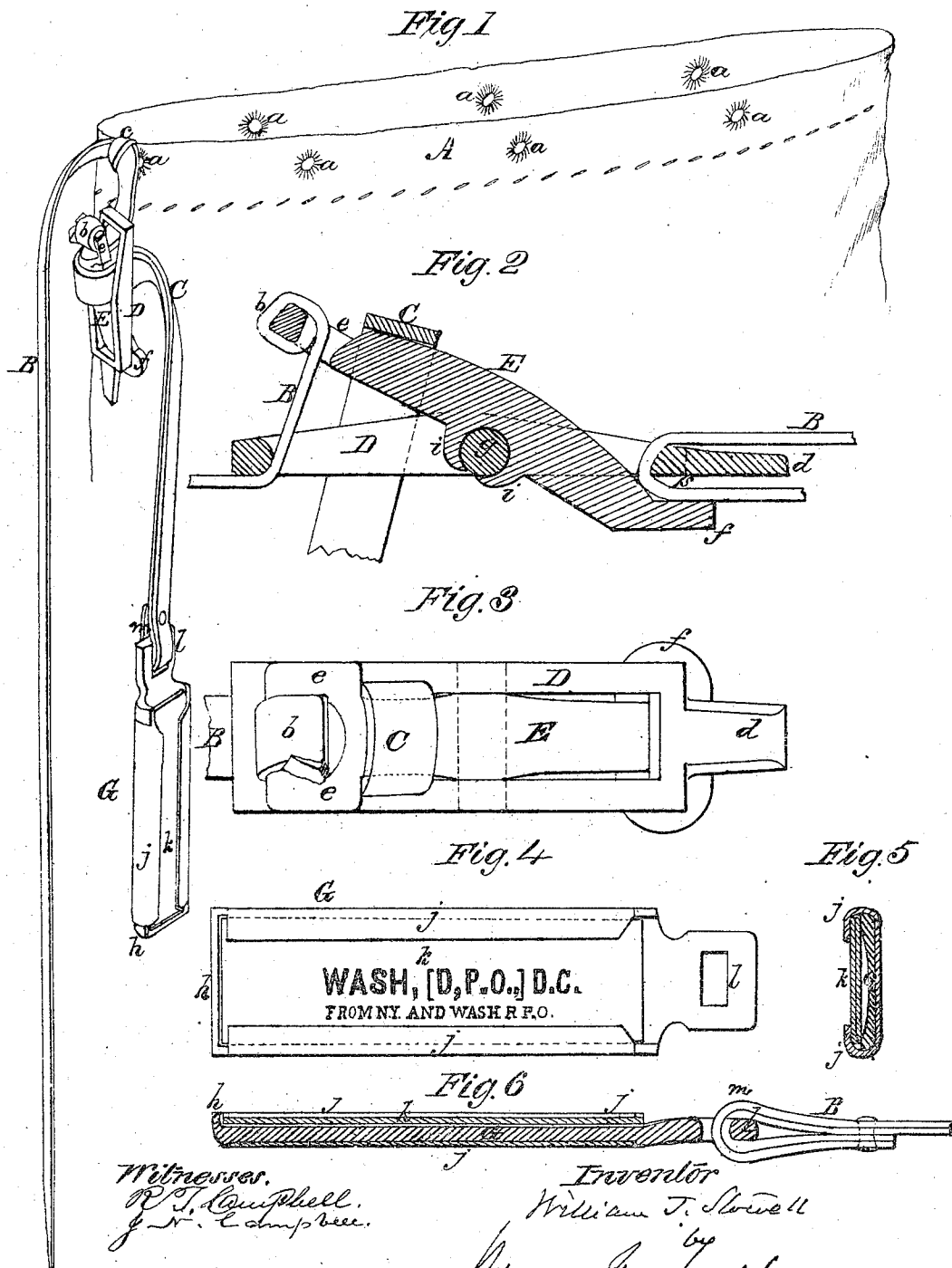


W. J. STOWELL.
Fastening Mail-Bags.

No. 134,571.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WILLIAM J. STOWELL, OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.

IMPROVEMENT IN FASTENING MAIL-BAGS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 134,571, dated January 7, 1873.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, WILLIAM J. STOWELL, of the city and county of Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, have invented an Improved Means for Fastening and Labeling Mail-Bags; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description thereof, reference being had to the accompanying drawing making part of this specification, in which—

Figure 1 represents the open end of a mail-bag with my improved fastening and label applied to it; Figs. 2 and 3 show the construction of the fastening clamp or buckle; and Figs. 4, 5, and 6 show the construction of the label.

Similar letters of reference indicate corresponding parts in the several figures.

This invention relates to an improved mode of fastening and labeling mail-bags, which are usually made of canvas, and designed for containing printed matter.

The mode of fastening these bags, as hitherto adopted, consists in lacing them with pieces of hemp rope, which are tied around the bags, and which have wooden labels attached to them. The ends of the ropes are left bunchy, and cannot be quickly inserted through the lacing-holes. The ropes are generally cut and wasted in the hurry of opening the bags, and the labels, which are written on with a pen or pencil, require to be planed off every time they are used, all of which is objectionable on account of expense and loss of time.

The nature of my invention consists, first, in the employment of a thong of leather or other flexible substance, which is tied permanently into one of the lacing-holes of a bag, in combination with a clamping-buckle; as will be hereinafter explained; second, in the combination with a buckle hereinafter described of a label and label strap, the latter being so applied to the buckle that when the bag is lifted by it the lacing-thong will be gripped more firmly, as will be hereinafter explained.

The following description of my invention will enable others skilled in the art to understand it.

In the accompanying drawing, A represents the upper or open end of a mail-bag for printed matter, which bag is made in precisely the same way as those at present in use by the Post-Office Department—that is to say, with

eyelets *a a* for receiving a lacing-thong, B. The thong B, which I prefer to make of leather, has one end pointed. The other end is attached to a clamping-buckle; and this thong is tied to the bag in one of the eyelets at *c*, as shown in Fig. 1. The thong is of such size as will readily pass through the eyelets *a* for lacing up the bag when it is quite full; but when the bag is not full then it will not be necessary to lace its end, as the thong can in this case be passed around the bag between its ends. The buckle or thong clamp consists of a rectangular frame, D, across which is a bar, *g*, to which is pivoted a clamping-lever, E, as shown in Fig. 2. The lever E has a loop, *e*, formed on one end, and a flat gripping-jaw, *f*, on the other end. One end of lever E is above the frame, and the other end is below it. Thus it will be seen that the said lever passes obliquely through the frame. The thong B is secured fast to the looped end *e* of the lever E in any suitable manner, and is passed through the frame D, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2, so as to draw on one of the cross-bars of this frame. The other end of the buckle receives the thong B through it and between the jaw *f* and a row of teeth or serrations, *s*, as shown in Fig. 2.

It will be seen that when the thong is passed around a bag and buckled it will be held firmly, and the more the bag expands the tighter will the strap be gripped.

For convenience in constructing the buckle, and cheapness, I prefer to cast the frame, the cross-bar, and a tang, *d*, of one piece, and connect the lever E to the bar *g* by pressing the lips *i i* around it. The tang *d* on the gripping end of the buckle-frame, and the wide jaw *f* on the lever E afford hold for the fingers when it is desired to open a bag. Around the lever E, between its looped end and pivot, a strap, C, is passed, to which a tag or label holder, G, is attached by means of a loop, *m*, of said strap, and an eye, *l*, on the holder G. The strap C is applied to the lever as described for two reasons, to wit: It is the most secure and convenient point for the attachment of the strap; and when so attached it affords a ready and convenient means for handling a bag without liability of loosening the thong from the buckle.

The label or tag holder is preferably made in the following manner: G represents the body of the holder, which is made with an eye,

l, on one end, a concave upper surface, and a ledge, *h*, on three sides. The back of this portion *G* is recessed, and receives a thin sheet-metal plate, *j*, the side edges of which are bent over the side ledges *h*, and form grooves for receiving one or more labels or tags, *k*, on which proper directions are printed or written. These labels *k* are inserted under the lips of plate *j* by slightly bending them, and after they are thus inserted the leather loop *m* of strap *B* will serve as a shoulder, and prevent their casual detachment from the holder.

After practical trial in the transportation of the United States mails it has been demonstrated that a very large saving of money and time results from the use of the within-described improvements over the old method of fastening mail-bags of the kind herein referred to.

• Having described my invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. The lacing and buckling device *B D E*, applied, as at *c*, permanently to the upper edge of a mail-bag, *A*, which is made with lacing-holes *a a*, all constructed and operating in the manner and for the purpose herein described.

2. The attachment of the strap *C* of the label-holder to the bag by securing it to the part *E* of the lacing-thong buckle in the manner shown and described.

WILLIAM J. STOWELL.

Witnesses:

R. T. CAMPBELL,
JOS. T. K. PLANT.