No. 693,770. Patented Feb. 18, 1902.

J. E. WRIGHT & L. J. EDWARDS.

RURAL DELIVERY MAIL BOX.

(Application filed Aug. 24, 1901.)

(No Model.) 3 Sheets—Sheet 1.

Fig. 1

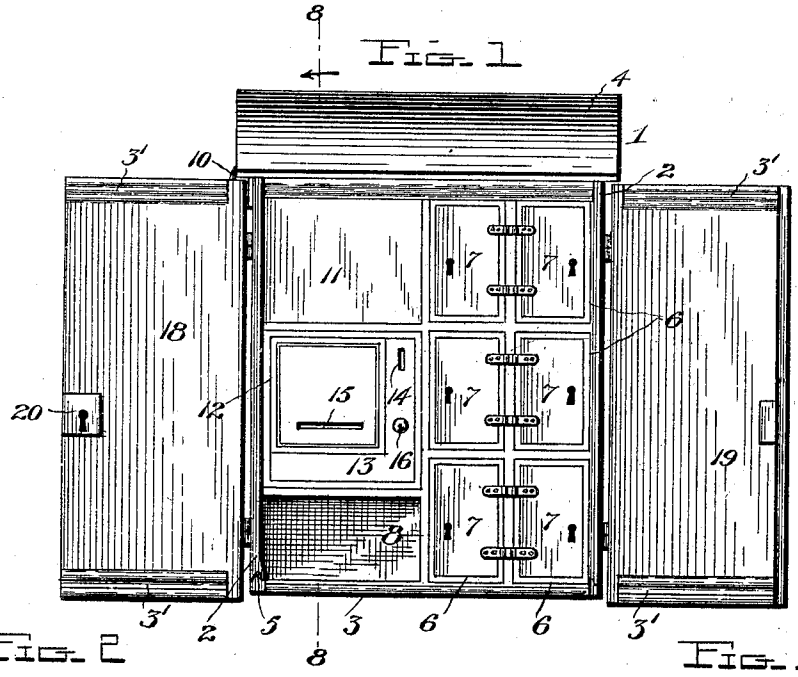


Fig. 2

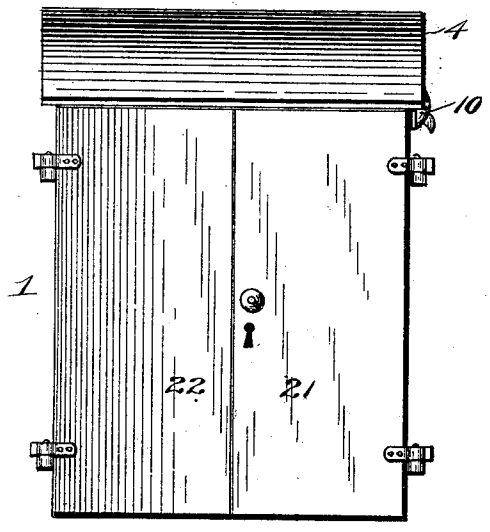
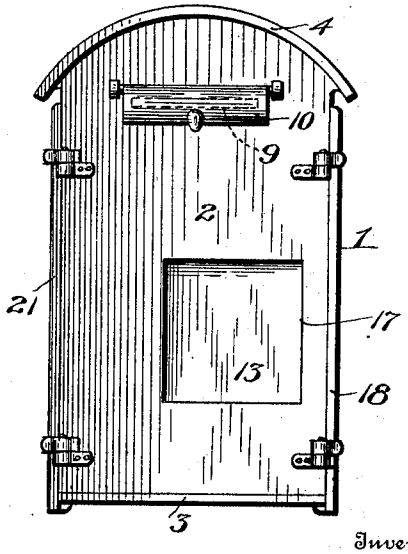


Fig. 3



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Fig. 8

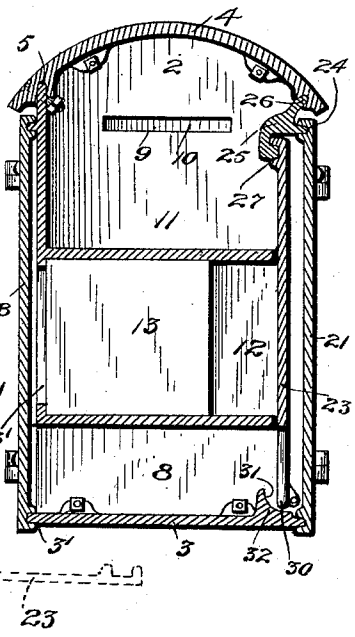


Fig. 4

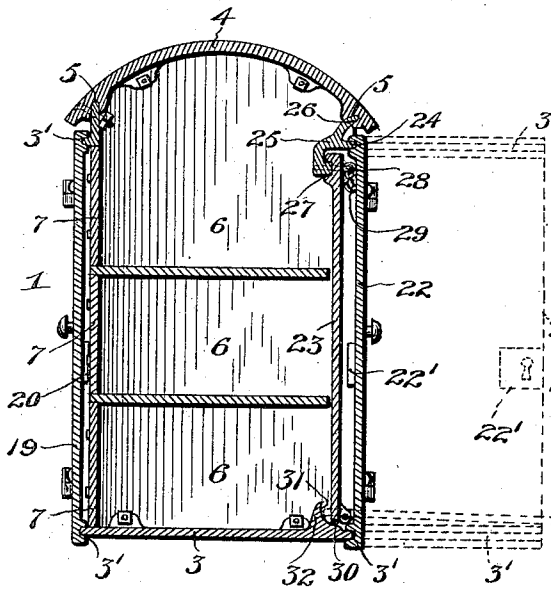
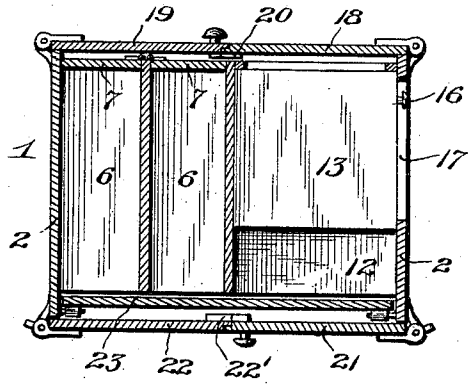


Fig. 5



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Fig. 6

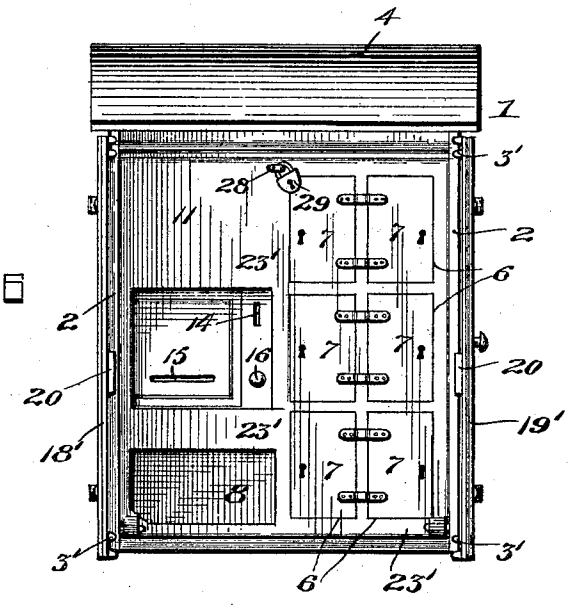
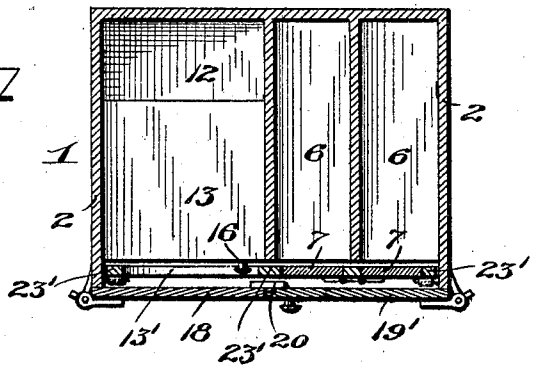


Fig. 7



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JAMES E. WRIGHT AND LEWIS J. EDWARDS, OF OMAHA, NEBRASKA.

RURAL-DELIVERY MAIL-BOX.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 693,770, dated February 18, 1902.

Application filed August 24, 1901. Serial No. 73,199. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, JAMES E. WRIGHT and LEWIS J. EDWARDS, citizens of the United States, residing at Omaha, in the county of Douglas and State of Nebraska, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Rural-Delivery Mail-Boxes; and we do 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 improvements in rural-delivery mail-boxes designed for the use of farmers and others living at points more or less distant from the route of the carrier, such boxes being arranged at proper points along the route for the reception of mail-matter to be collected and delivered by the carrier.

The object of the invention is to provide a mail-box of this character which is simple of construction and dust and weather proof and which is adapted to be used by a number of persons, each person having a separate and distinct receptacle for his or her mail to which he or she alone has access, a common receptacle being provided for the deposited mail to be collected by the carrier, who alone has access to all the individual receptacles, so that liability of theft of the contents of the box will be reduced to the minimum.

A further object of the invention is to provide means for the sale of stamps, postal cards, &c., which may be confined solely to the benefit of those using the box or exposed for the general convenience of the public, and to generally simplify and improve the construction and increase the practical efficiency and range of usefulness and convenience of mail-boxes designed for the stated purpose.

With these and other objects in view the invention consists of certain novel features of construction, combination, and arrangement of parts, as will be hereinafter more fully described, and particularly pointed out in the appended claims.

In the accompanying drawings, Figure 1 is a front elevation of a mail-box embodying our invention, showing the doors thrown open. Fig. 2 is a rear elevation of the same. Fig. 3 is a side elevation. Fig. 4 is a vertical front to rear section showing in dotted lines one of the outer storm-doors swung open and the inner door let down. Fig. 5 is a horizontal section showing the stamp-box arranged for the use of the general public. Fig. 6 is a front elevation showing the storm-doors swung open and the inner door closed and illustrating a modification, and Fig. 7 is a horizontal section of the same. Fig. 8 is a vertical section taken on the line 8 8 of Fig. 1.

Referring now more particularly to the drawings, the numeral 1 designates the mail-box, which may be supported in any approved manner and which preferably comprises in its construction side plates 2, a bottom plate 3, and a hood or cover 4, secured together by bolts or other suitable fastening devices. In order to render the box proof against dust and moisture, we preferably provide the lower ends of the side walls and the lower edges of the cover 4 with grooves or recesses 5 to respectively receive the side edges of the bottom plate or wall and the upper edges of said side wall. The bottom plate or wall and the cover are also provided with grooves or recesses for the reception of corresponding tongues upon the doors and one or more joint-plates, as will appear more fully hereinafter, the joints formed by the interfitting parts being tightly sealed by the use of putty, plaster, or some other suitable water and dust proof packing material.

The interior of the box is subdivided by partitions to form one or more tiers of individual boxes or receptacles 6, one for the exclusive use of each person using the box, each of said receptacles being arranged to extend from front to rear of the box and closed at the front by a hinged door 7 and open at the rear for the deposit of mail therein by the carrier. The boxes or receptacles 6 may be of the ordinary lock-box type, the doors thereof being provided with locks adapted to be operated by separate and distinct individual keys, each owner being supplied with a key adapted to operate only the lock upon his particular box. In addition a compartment 8 to receive letters or packages of too large a size to be placed within the boxes 6 is preferably formed within the box and is open at each end, so as to be accessible to both the carrier and the owners of the boxes. One of the side walls of the box is provided with a slot or opening 9,

closed by a door or closure 10 of any approved type and communicating with a compartment 11, which compartment is designed to receive the mail-matter deposited through said slot and to be collected by the carrier. This compartment 11 is closed at the front and open at the rear of the box, so as to be accessible only to the carrier. At any suitable point, furthermore, we may provide a third compartment 12 to receive a box 13, containing stamps and postal cards to be sold, said box being provided with a slot 14 for the insertion of the coin, a slot 15 for the discharge of the stamps or postal cards, and a knob or other similar device 16 for operating any preferred construction of coin-controlled mechanism governing the discharge of the stamps or other matter to be vended. The coin-controlled mechanism preferably used in connection with this box forms no part of the present invention and need not therefore be herein shown. The front end of the box 13, which contains the slots 14 and 15, may be made to face toward the front of the box and to be exposed only upon the opening of the front door, so that only those receiving mail-matter from the box and using the compartments 6 may have access to said box 13 for the purchase of stamps and postal cards or other matter vended thereby; but in order to enable the box 13 to be placed in position for the convenience of the general public in purchasing stamps, &c., we provide the adjacent side wall of the box 1 with an opening 17, through which the front end of said box 13 containing the slots and coin-actuating mechanism may be had access to. The compartment 12 and box 13 are preferably made of rectangular or other corresponding form, so that said box may be turned to face either toward the front or the side of the box 1 for either use, as required, and to fit snugly within said compartment when adjusted to said position. The box 13 may be made of metal or other strong and durable material, so as to safely guard the contents thereof, and will be preferably provided with a money-drawer, which will be sealed and removed by the carrier each time a collection is made and a similar drawer substituted therefor for use until the next collection is made.

The front of the box 1 is closed by hinged doors 18 and 19, adapted to open outwardly toward opposite sides of the box and to be closed by a lock 20, to which each party using or owning one of the receptacles 6 will have a key. When these doors are swung open, the front ends of the receptacles 6, which are closed by the door 7, as well as the package-compartment 8 and the front of the stamp-box 13, when the latter is so disposed as to be used only by the parties having accesss to the box 1, will be exposed; but the adjacent end of the compartment 11, which serves as a common receptacle for the letters deposited for collection by the carrier, will be closed, so that none of the parties having access to the box through the doors 18 and 19 may have access to said compartment 11. The rear of the box 1 is closed by two sets of doors—namely, outer storm-doors 21 and 22 and an inner door 23. The doors 20 and 21 are hinged like the doors 18 and 19 to swing laterally in opposite directions and are adapted to be held closed by a suitable form of lock 22′, to which only the carrier shall have a key. Between these doors and the adjacent ends of the mail receptacles and compartments is the inner door 23, which is hinged or pivoted to the box at its lower end and is adapted to swing downwardly and outwardly to a horizontal position to expose the series of boxes or receptacles and compartments and to serve as a shelf or table on which the carrier may rest the mail while it is being sorted or collected. The door 23 is thus adapted to serve as an additional safeguard to prevent access to the mail contained within the box and as a support for the mail-matter, leaving the hands of the carrier free for use. The open ends of the boxes or receptacles 6 and the chambers or compartments 11, 12, and 13 face the doors 21, 22, and 23, so that when said doors are open the carrier may have convenient access to all of the said receptacles and compartments, as well as to the stamp-box 13 for the removal of the money-drawer. The lower edges of the doors 18 and 19 and 21 and 22 are provided with grooved cleats or ledges 3′ to receive corresponding tongues formed by the edges of the bottom plate or wall of the box 1 and with corresponding grooves in their upper edges for the reception of a tongue 24 on a joint-plate 25, which plate is also provided with a tongue 26 to enter a groove in the hood or cover 4 and a boss 27 to enter a groove in the upper rear portion of the door 23, said boss carrying a staple 28, which projects through the door 23 and has applied thereto a padlock 29 for holding said door closed. The joint-plate 25 may be connected with the side walls of the box in any approved manner. The lower edge of the door 23 is provided with a tongue 30, which moves within a groove 31, formed in a rib 32, provided upon the bottom plate of the box. By this construction of the parts it will be seen that the joints between the sections of the box will be made tight and proof against the entrance of dust and moisture. The doors 21 and 22 are mounted upon stop-hinges, which allow them to swing outwardly to a position in line with the sides 2, but not beyond the same, so that when the door 23 is let down it will rest upon the cleats 3′ and be supported thereby in a horizontal plane, so as to relieve the hinges of said door 23 of undue strain.

The time of arrival and departure of the mail may be printed or otherwise placed upon the box, if desired. We also contemplate placing upon the box the name and point of location of the farm of each party renting the boxes 6, such as "Davis Farm, ½ mile south," &c., so as to provide a directory of those residing in the vicinity of the box for ready

reference. If desired, the inner door may be dispensed with and single doors may be used in place of the double outer doors at front or back, or both points.

In the modification shown in Figs. 6 and 7 the rear of the box is closed and the front is provided with the two outer storm-doors 18' 19' and an inner door 23', which latter is hinged as before at its lower end to turn down to a horizontal position and rest upon the cleats 3'. The boxes 6, 8, and 11 are open only at their front ends, which are closed by the inner door 23', which carries the doors 7, one for each of the boxes 6 and one for the box 8, although, if desired, an opening may be formed in the door to register with said box 8. The door 23' also is provided with an opening 13' to expose the face of the box 13, provided with the vending mechanism; but access is afforded to the boxes 11 and 13 only by opening said door 23', which is held closed as before described, which is designed to be under the sole control of the mail-carrier. Each party renting a box 6 carries the key to the outer doors 18' 19' and the key to his own box, and has access to the box 8, but not to the box 11 nor to the interior of the box 13, nor either of the other boxes 6. When the door 23' is opened by the carrier, access to all the boxes is afforded for collecting and distributing the mail and replenishing the supply of stamps, &c., in the vending-box and taking up the receipts therefrom. The outer doors may be dispensed with and the inner door alone used when the box is placed in a building, and in this case the compartment 8 will necessarily be provided with a door.

From the foregoing description, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, the construction, mode of operation, and advantages of the invention will be readily understood, and it will be seen that the invention provides a box which is simple of construction and adapted to be used by a number of persons, each person having a separate and distinct receptacle for his or her mail, together with a common receptacle for the deposited mail to be collected by the carrier, and means for the sale of stamps, postal cards, &c., which may be confined solely to the benefit of those using the box or exposed for the general convenience of the public, the construction being such that the carrier alone has access to all the individual receptacles and compartments, so that liability of theft of the contents of the box will be reduced to the minimum.

Changes in the form, proportion, and minor details of construction may be made within the scope of the invention without departing from the spirit or sacrificing any of the advantages thereof.

Having thus described our invention, what we claim, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. A mail-box having a number of separate mail-compartments, a series of small doors closing said compartments at one of their ends for the use of the renters of the boxes, a single door closing the other ends of the boxes for the use of the postman, laterally-swinging outer storm-doors for concealing and guarding the series of small doors, and an inner storm-door adapted to be turned down to a horizontal position between said outer storm-doors, and supports upon the outer storm-doors for said inner storm-door, substantially as set forth.

2. A mail-box containing a vending apparatus for the sale of stamps and the like, with means permitting of the adjustment of said apparatus so as to be accessible to the general public or to the users of the box alone, substantially as described.

3. A mail-box provided with a door giving access thereto, a wall of said box having an opening, and a chamber or compartment communicating with the doorway and opening, combined with a vending apparatus for the sale of stamps and the like, the same being adjustable so as to be accessible either through the door or opening, substantially as described.

4. A mail-box comprising an inclosing casing having a slot for the deposit of mail-matter therein, a series of interior individual lock-boxes, each being open at the back and having an independent door at the front, a compartment for the reception of mail-matter to be collected which is deposited therein through said slot, a second compartment open at the front and at the exterior through an opening in a wall of the box, a stamp-vending apparatus occupying said compartment and adjustable so as to face the open end of said compartment or the opening in the wall of the box, a door at the front of the casing for concealing and guarding the doors to the individual lock-boxes and the vending mechanism and adapted to be opened only by the users of said lock-boxes, laterally-swinging outer storm-doors at the back of the casing, and an inner door at the back of the casing for closing the open ends of the individual lock-boxes and the compartment in which mail is deposited for collection, said door being adapted to be turned down to a horizontal position between said storm-doors, substantially as described.

5. A mail-box having compartments, outer storm-doors, supports upon the storm-doors, and an inner door guarding the compartments and hinged so as to be turned down to rest upon said supports, substantially as described.

In testimony whereof we have hereunto set our hands in presence of two subscribing witnesses.

JAMES E. WRIGHT.
LEWIS J. EDWARDS.

Witnesses:
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CLIFFORD DANIELS.