C. F. HEATH.

LETTER CARRIER'S DESK.

APPLICATION FILED FEB. 6, 1917.

1,258,004.

Patented Mar. 5, 1918.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

Fig. 1.

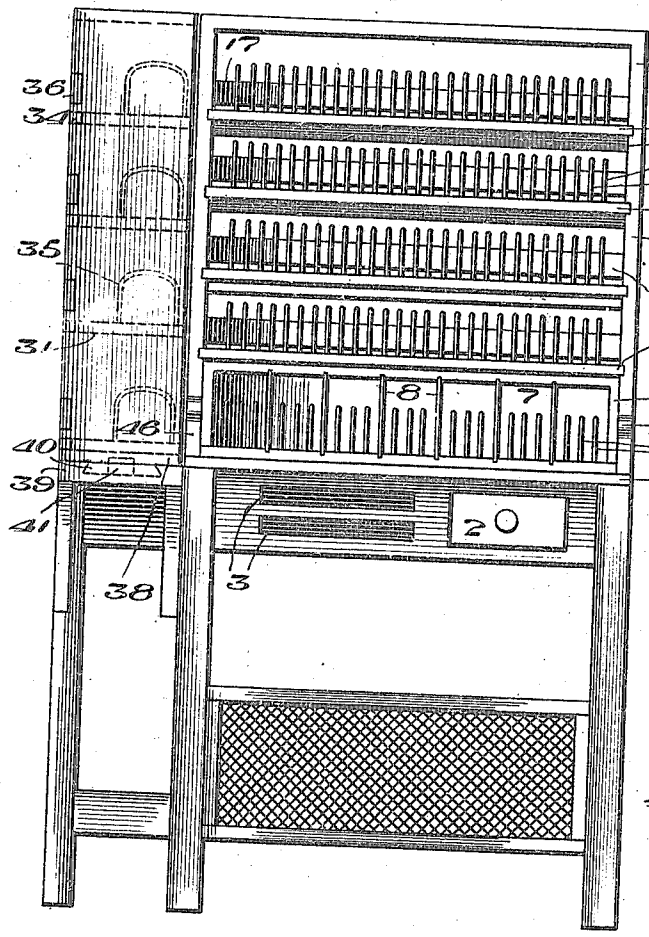


Fig. 2.

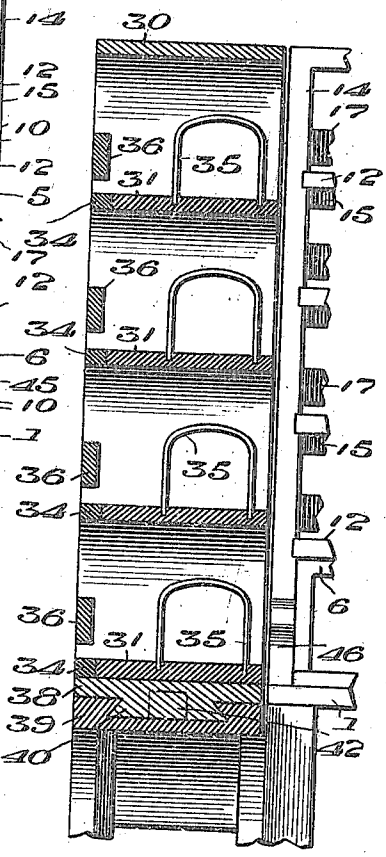
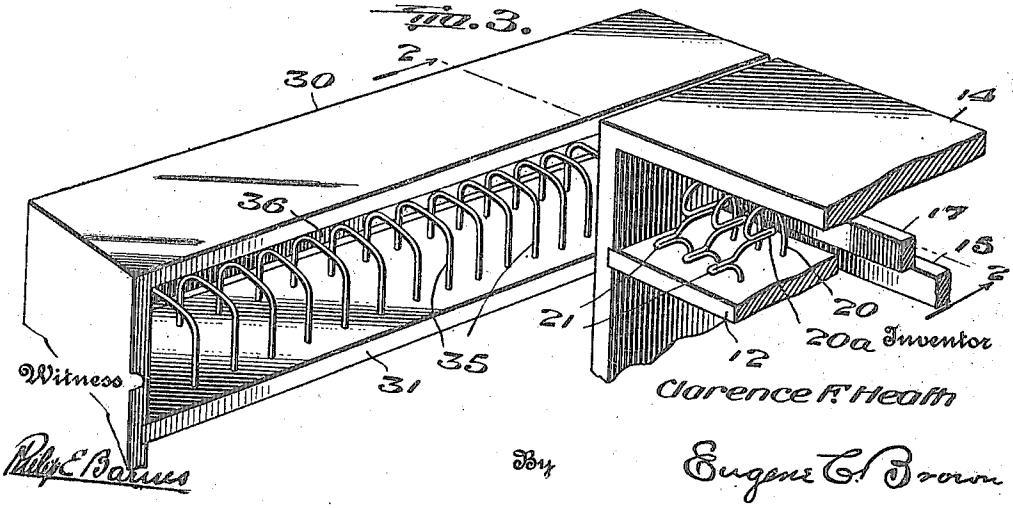


Fig. 3.



Witness

Ridley E. Barnes

Inventor

Clarence F. Heath

By Eugene C. Brown

Attorney

C. F. HEATH.

LETTER CARRIER'S DESK.

APPLICATION FILED FEB. 6, 1917.

1,258,004.

Patented Mar. 5, 1918.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 2.

Fig. 4.

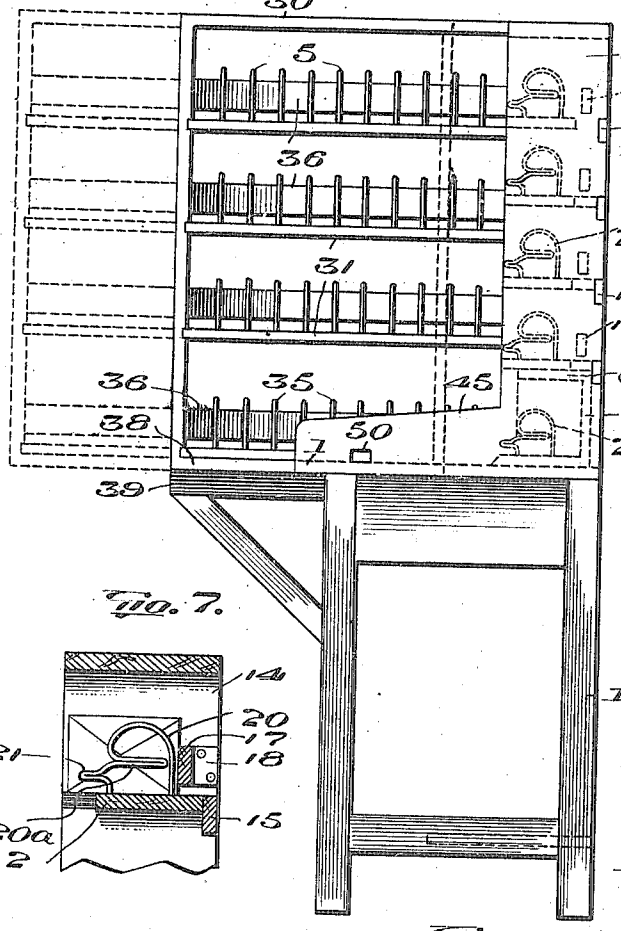


Fig. 5.

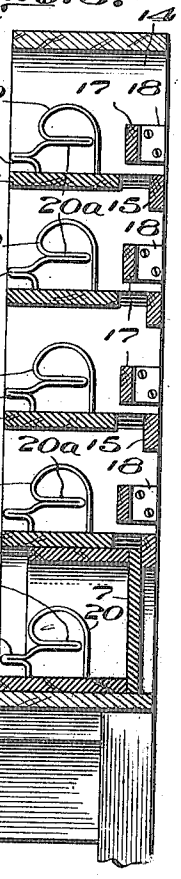


Fig. 7.

Fig. 8.

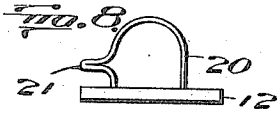
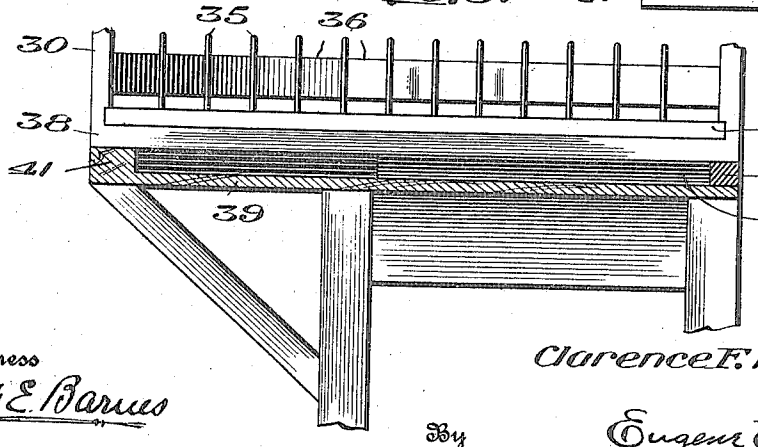


Fig. 6.



Witness

Willy E. Barnes

Inventor

Clarence F. Heath

By Eugene C. Brown

Attorney

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

CLARENCE F. HEATH, OF WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

LETTER-CARRIER'S DESK.

1,258,004. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Mar. 5, 1918.

Application filed February 6, 1917. Serial No. 146,947.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, CLARENCE F. HEATH, a citizen of the United States, residing at Washington, in the District of Columbia, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Letter-Carriers' Desks, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to post-office furniture and especially to letter carriers' desks which are used for sorting and routing mail preparatory to being delivered.

The main object of my invention is to provide an improved desk and routing case which will greatly facilitate the sorting and routing of the mail. To this end I provide separate compartments or sections of the desk for letters and for papers and I make the desk exceedingly compact by having the paper receiving section perpendicular to the letter receiving section and arranged to slide forwardly into operative position and rearwardly at the side of the other section when not in use. The shelves are open at the front and back in order that the desk may be easily cleaned and kept strictly sanitary. The wire-formed partitions are carried by the shelves and those in the letter section are preferably removable and are provided with a forwardly projecting guiding nose or lip to assist in guiding the letters into the proper pigeon-hole or compartment and indicating the separating line between adjacent compartments. I may also provide the partitions with an intermediate horizontal bar, formed by bending the wire back upon itself, to constitute a lateral support for very small envelops which are liable to fall over sidewise into the adjacent box. Furthermore I make the shelves slidable so that after the mail has been sorted the shelves may be pushed back until the letters project and overhang the front edges of the shelves which permits them to be more readily grasped. This feature results in a very great saving of time.

The several features above referred to, together with other improvements will be understood from the following description in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which Figure 1 is a front elevation of a letter carrier's desk embodying my invention; Fig. 2 is a vertical section through the paper section upon a larger scale; Fig. 3 is a fragmentary perspective view looking down upon the top of the paper and letter sorting sections; Fig. 4 is an end elevation taken from the side opposite the paper sorting section; Fig. 5 is a vertical section through the letter sorting section; Fig. 6 is an enlarged fragmentary longitudinal section through the lower part of the paper sorting section and the table top; and Figs. 7 and 8 are detail views showing different forms of the wire partitions.

The table 1 is of some suitable or usual construction on which the mail is received while it is being sorted, and may be provided with a drawer 2 and pockets 3 to receive the carriers' directories.

The routing or sorting case comprises two sections, one for the letters and the other for the papers and packages, each consisting of a series of shelves divided into compartments by wire partitions. I prefer to make the bottom tier of compartments in the letter section 5 in the form of a unitary box or section 6, open at the front and back and divided into a number of pigeon-holes by fixed partitions 8, which preferably extend from the back to within a short distance of the front. This pigeon-hole box or section is removable and can be taken out when desirable to add to the space on the top of the table. I prefer to close the case at the back of the section by a solid board 7.

Each pigeon-hole and also each shelf 12, is divided into a number of compartments by wire partitions 10, which are removable, the vertical ends of the wires fitting into holes in the shelves. If the mail for any building or to any firm or individual on the carrier's route is quite large, the compartment assigned to that building, firm or individual, may be enlarged by removing one or more of the partitions. In fact an entire pigeon-hole may be made into a single compartment by removing all of the partitions therefrom.

Each of the shelves 12, slides in grooves in the upright ends 14, and is readily removable. The side uprights 14 are connected at the rear by cross brace members 15, which are preferably let into the wood of the uprights for the purpose of giving strength and rigidity to the case. Bars 17, fastened by cleats 18, or in any suitable manner, are placed slightly above the shelves and at a short distance from the back to serve as stops against which the letters abut as they are slid into the compartments.

The partitions consist of wires 20 bent into a loop and formed with a tongue or

nose 21, projecting horizontally toward the front, the ends of the wire being inserted in holes in the top of the shelf. The parts are so proportioned that the tongues 21 project beyond the front ends of the letters when the shelves are in their forward position as shown in Figs. 3 and 5, serving to indicate the division lines between the compartments and also as guides for the letters as they are inserted in the compartments. The lower ends of the loops adjacent the top of the shelves prevent the letters from sliding into the adjacent compartments. For the purpose of guiding the envelops as they are being shoved back into the compartments and preventing them from passing over into an adjacent compartment I provide an intermediate horizontal bar or guard 20^a, which may conveniently be formed by bending the wire from the front toward the rear and back upon itself as shown in Figs. 3, 5 and 7. This intermediate guide bar 20^a effectually prevents an envelop from shifting over into the adjacent compartment, which is very liable to happen, especially when the carrier inserts the envelop in a diagonal direction to the compartment or pigeon-hole. This intermediate guard 20^a also affords a lateral support for small envelops and prevents them from falling over.

In prior sorting and routing cases or desks, a single rack has been employed for both letters and papers. In some instances the lower shelves have been used for letters and the upper shelves for papers, but in any event, this necessitated a higher rack than is convenient or desirable in order to provide sufficient space for the mail, especially upon heavy routes. In my sorting and routing desk, I provide a separate rack for papers which is arranged at one end of the desk. If desirable, another paper rack could be placed at the other end, but I have only found it necessary to supply one such rack. The paper rack comprises a case 30 provided with a number of removable shelves 31 which slide in grooves in the end uprights of the case and abut at their rear edges against transverse stops 34. The shelves are divided into compartments by means of wire loop partitions 35 having their ends secured in holes in the top sides of the shelves. If desired, these wire loops may be removable for the purpose of providing enlarged compartments when the necessity arises. Transverse horizontal stops 36 serve as back stops for the papers and also serve to brace the uprights and make the case more rigid. The bottom member 38 of the paper rack is provided with means for slidably engaging the top of the table extension 39 and which also serves to securely hold the rack when it is slid into its forward position, indicated in dotted lines in Fig. 4 with the forward end overhanging the table extension 39. As one means of accomplishing this function I have shown the bottom member 38 provided with a depending dovetail projection 40 which is adapted to slide in a dovetail groove in the table 39. The dovetail piece 40 may extend partially along the bottom of the member 38 as indicated in Fig. 6 so that it may be positioned in the forward and rearward positions by abutting against the front stop 41 and the rear stop 42 respectively. The desk arm 45 at the right hand end of the table may extend the full width of the table top but the arm 46 upon the other side which is adjacent the paper rack is shorter and of a width to extend from the letter-rack to the rear end of the paper-rack when the latter is drawn outwardly into its forward position, in order that the arm may not interfere with access to the compartments on the lower shelf of the paper-rack.

The operation of my letter and paper sorting and routing desk will be understood from the foregoing detailed description of the construction. When it is desired to sort the mail which has been laid upon the table of one of the desks, the paper-rack is drawn forward into the position shown in Fig. 5 and indicated in dotted lines in Fig. 4, the front end of the dovtail member 40 being then in engagement with the front stop 41. The entire set of racks, both for the letters and for the papers and packages are thus within easy reach of the letter carrier, none of the shelves being so high as to be difficult to reach. I have found that this arrangement greatly facilitates the sorting and distribution of mail and results in a considerable saving of time. Moreover by bringing all of the shelves within easy reach, less effort is required and the work is correspondingly less tiresome. During the sorting operation, the shelves 12 of the letter-rack remain in their forward position, the front edges of the shelves being substantially flush with the front of the letter-case as indicated in Figs. 3 and 5. As previously stated, the horizontally projecting nose or lip portions 21 serve to indicate the position of the separating partitions and also assist in guiding the letters into the compartments. The rear ends of the letters are arrested by the stops 17 and ordinarily leave the nose members 21 projecting in front of the forward ends of the letters. Letter carriers especially will appreciate the advantages of this arrangement. When the partitions are provided with an intermediate bar 20^a, there is no danger of the unusually small envelops falling sidewise into adjacent compartments. I prefer to place the nose member 21 below this horizontal bar 20^a and in a position where it will strike the lower part of the letters as they are inserted into the compartments, since in

this position the guides 21 will strike the envelops when their lower edges are adjacent the bottom of the compartments and they will remain in a vertical position, whereas if the guides were located higher up they would have a tendency to cause the letters to turn over into an oblique position. A very material advantage, and perhaps the most important reason for locating these projecting guides 21 below the center and adjacent the bottom of the compartments is that this position does not interfere with the envelops as the carrier swings them rapidly across the front of the compartments until the desired compartment is reached. For the same reason I prefer to make the guide members 21 very narrow since a broad projecting vertical member would interfere with the free space which is desirable and facilitates the rapid distribution of the mail. It will be observed that while the narrow guiding tongue member 21 extends substantially flush with the front of the case or rack, the front part of the main body of the loop 20 is spaced back a considerable distance therefrom to thus leave the front part of the space between the shelves unobstructed. These features are quite important and will be appreciated by letter carriers and mail clerks.

After the mail has been assorted the carrier usually pulls it from the shelves and lays it in proper order and then ties it into a bundle by means of a strap. It is customary to first extend the strap across the table 1 and in order that the buckle on the strap will not be in the way, I may provide a hole 50 in the arm 45, through which the buckle may project. The shelves 12 are then pushed rearwardly until they engage the back strips 15 and are in a position indicated in Fig. 7. The letters, however, will be held by the stops 17 so that the shelves will slide beneath them and be left with their front ends overhanging the shelves and projecting in front of the guide 21. This greatly facilitates the withdrawal of the letters as their front ends may much more readily be grasped when the shelves and guides 21 have been pushed back out of the way.

After the mail has been withdrawn from the racks, the paper-rack may be pushed back into the position shown in Figs. 3 and 4, the movement being arrested by the dove tail 40 striking the rear stop 42.

I have described in detail the particular construction illustrated in the accompanying drawings for the purpose of clearly disclosing an embodiment of my invention but it will be evident to engineers and skilled mechanics that the various changes and modifications may be made within the scope of my claims and without in any manner departing from the spirit of my invention.

I claim:—

1. In post-office furniture, the combination with a table, of a routing case situated above the table and comprising uprights, shelves slidably supported by said uprights, said shelves being narrower than the uprights so that they may slide rearwardly from the front of the case, partitions carried by said shelves to divide the space above the shelves into compartments, and stops secured to the uprights above the shelves and projecting forwardly from the rear of the case for positioning the mail matter and permitting the shelves to slide thereunder, whereby the forward ends of the mail matter may be caused to project over or overhang the front edges of the shelves to facilitate its withdrawal.

2. In post-office furniture, the combination with a table, of a routing case situated above the table and comprising uprights, said shelves being narrower than the uprights so that they may slide rearwardly from the front of the case, shelves slidably supported by said uprights, partitions carried by said shelves to divide the space above the shelves into compartments, said partitions being provided with forwardly projecting lips or guide-portions, stops secured to the uprights above the shelves and projecting forwardly from the rear of the case for positioning the mail matter and permitting the shelves to slide thereunder until the front edges of the shelves and said lips are in the rear of the front face of the case, to thereby cause the mail matter to overhang the front edges of the shelves to facilitate the easy withdrawal of the mail matter.

3. In post-office furniture the combination with a frame or routing case, of shelves supported thereby, and partitions dividing the space above the shelves into compartments, said partitions comprising loop members having their ends secured in the upper side of the shelves, and provided with a guiding lip or tongue projecting horizontally in front of the loop and an intermediate horizontal bar portion extending between the uprights of the loop to serve as a lateral support for the upper portion of small envelops, the upper portion of the loop forming a lateral support for envelops of the usual size, and the lower ends of the loop member preventing the envelops from shifting into an adjacent compartment.

4. In post-office furniture the combination with a frame or routing case, of shelves slidably supported thereby, partitions dividing the space above the shelves into compartments, said partitions comprising loop members having their ends secured in the upper side of the shelves, and provided with a guiding lip or tongue projecting horizontally in front of the loop and an intermediate horizontal bar portion extending between the uprights of the loop to serve as

a lateral guide for the envelops as they are inserted and also as a lateral support for small envelops, the upper portion of the loop forming a lateral support for envelops of the usual size, and the lower ends of the loop member preventing the envelops from shifting at the bottom into an adjacent compartment, stops secured to the frame above the shelves to hold the envelops in position and permit the shelves to be moved thereunder until the front edges of the shelves are in the rear of the forward ends of the envelops.

5. In a routing case, the combination with a plurality of shelves, of partitions therefor dividing the shelves into compartments, each partition comprising a wire bent into substantially U-shape, the ends being inserted into the upper side of the shelves, the front leg of the partition member being formed into a horizontally extending narrow tongue projecting in front of said leg to serve as a guide for the mail matter, the lower ends of the wire preventing the mail matter from sliding at the bottom into the adjacent compartments.

6. In a routing case, the combination with a plurality of shelves, of partitions therefor dividing the shelves into compartments, each partition comprising a wire bent into substantially U-shape, the ends being inserted into the upper side of the shelves, the front leg of the partition member being formed into a horizontally extending narrow tongue projecting in front of said leg to serve as a guide for the mail matter, the lower ends of the wire preventing the mail matter from sliding into adjacent compartments, one leg of the partition being bent to form an intermediate horizontal support and guide between the legs of the partition.

7. In post-office furniture, the combination with a table, of a letter routing rack or case having shelves provided with partitions separating the space thereabove into compartments and a paper rack provided with shelves having separating partitions, and means for slidably supporting said paper rack at one end of said letter rack and substantially perpendicular thereto, so that it may be moved outwardly until the rear end is in front of the letter rack or moved rearwardly until it is flush with the back of the letter rack.

8. In post-office furniture, the combination with a table, of a letter routing rack or case having shelves provided with partitions separating the space thereabove into compartments, and a paper rack provided with shelves having separating partitions, and means for slidably supporting said paper rack at one end of said letter rack and substantially perpendicular thereto, so that it may be moved forwardly or rearwardly, and stops for limiting the sliding movement of the paper rack in either direction.

9. In a routing case, the combination with a plurality of shelves, of partitions therefor dividing the shelves into compartments, each partition comprising a wire bent into substantially U-shape, the ends being inserted into the upper side of the shelves, the front leg of the partition member being formed into a horizontally extending narrow tongue projecting in front of said leg to serve as a guide for the mail matter and one leg of the partition member being formed into a horizontally extending bar member adapted to guide the mail matter as it leaves said guiding tongue and prevent it from entering an adjacent compartment, the lower ends of the wire preventing the mail matter from sliding at the bottom into adjacent compartments.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature.

CLARENCE F. HEATH.

Copies of this patent may be obtained for five cents each, by addressing the "Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D. C."