

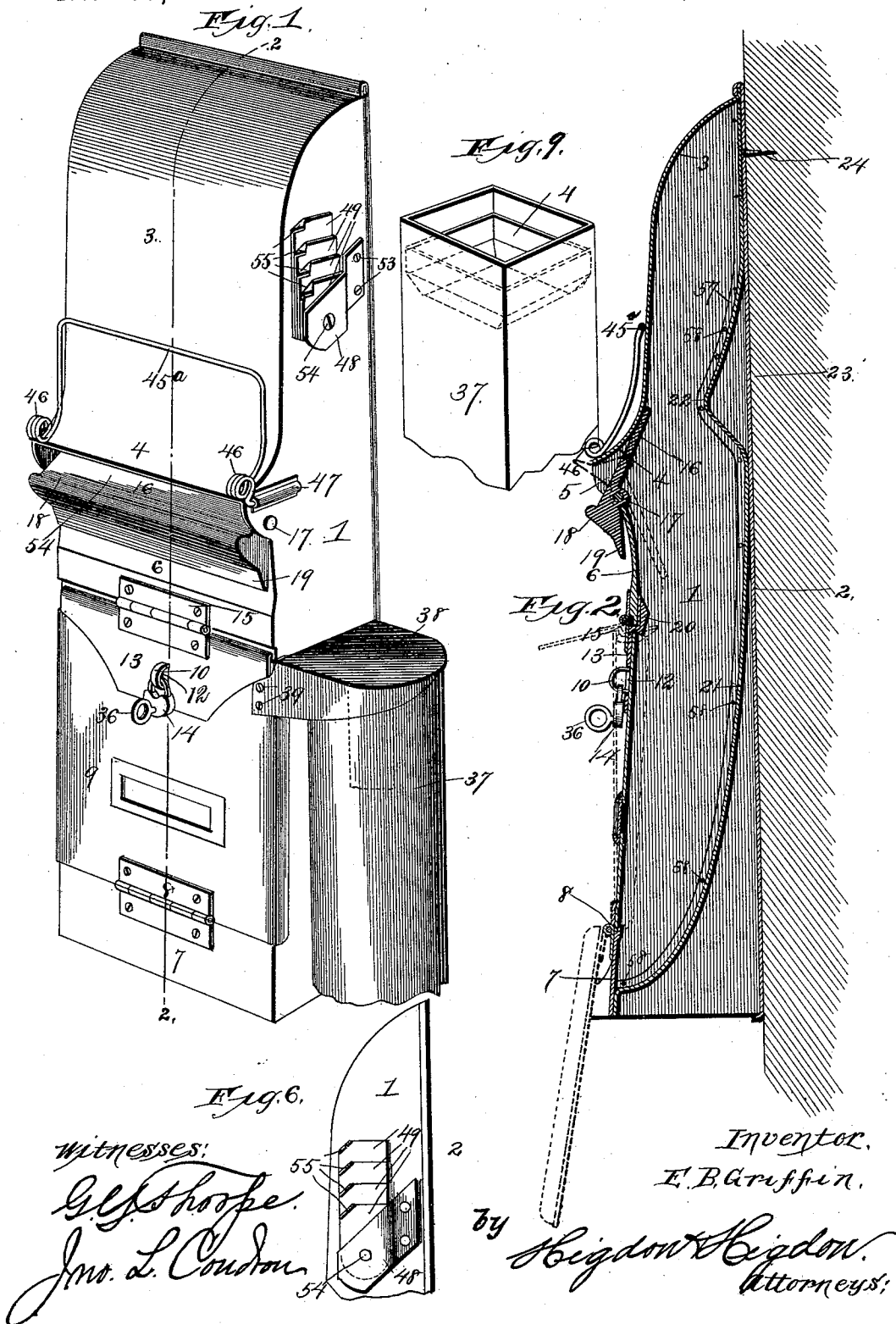
(No Model.)

3 Sheets—Sheet 1.

E. B. GRIFFIN.
LETTER BOX.

No. 465,524.

Patented Dec. 22, 1891.



(No Model.)

3 Sheets—Sheet 2.

E. B. GRIFFIN.
LETTER BOX.

No. 465,524.

Patented Dec. 22, 1891.

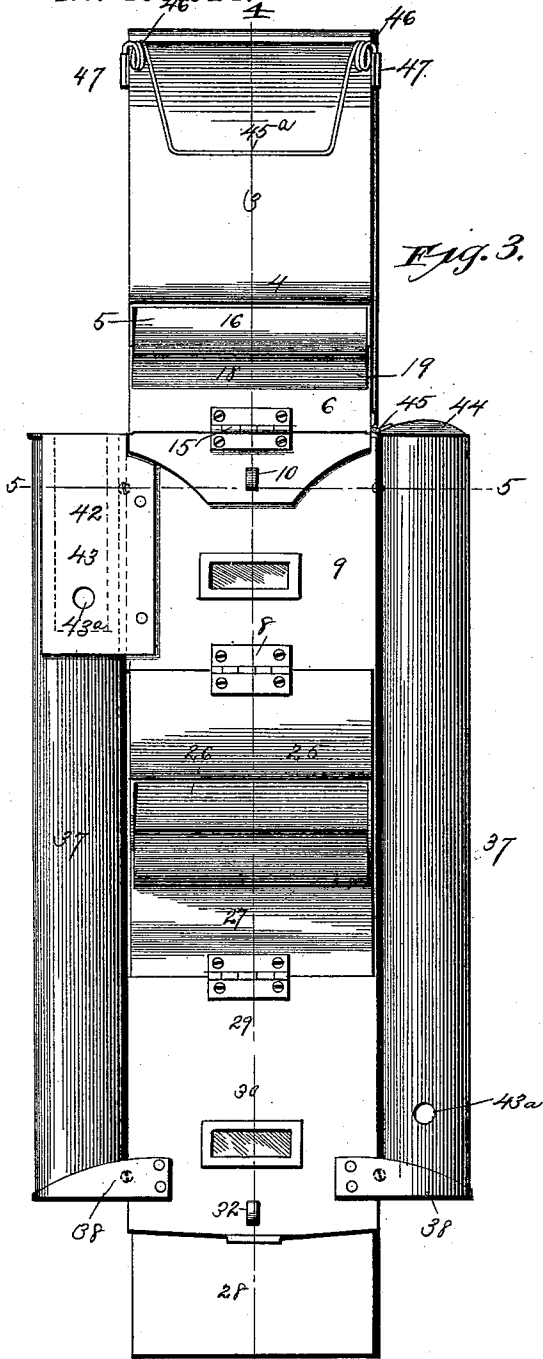


Fig. 3.

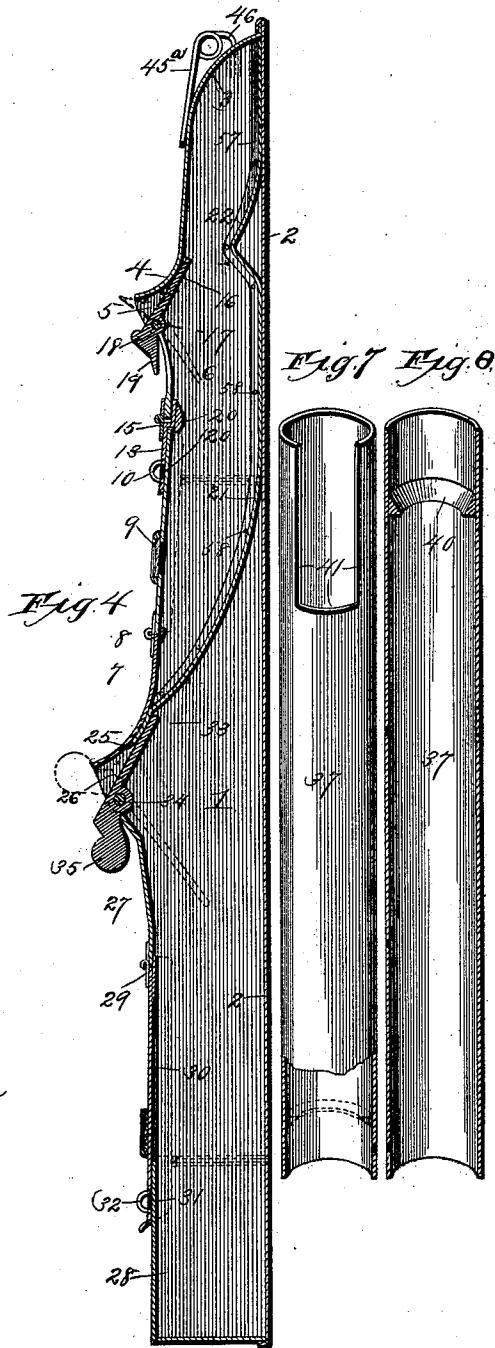


Fig. 4.

Witnesses: 4

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(No Model.)

3 Sheets—Sheet 3.

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Fig. 13.

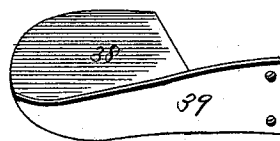
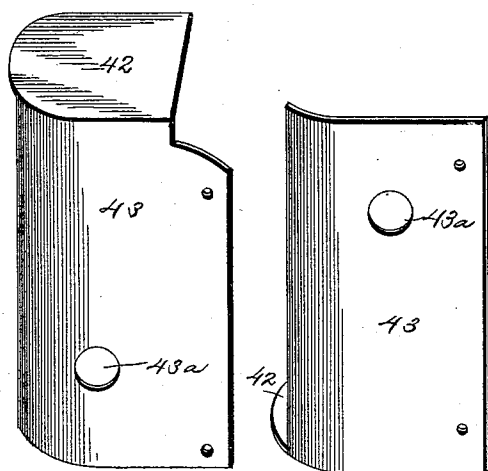


Fig. 14.

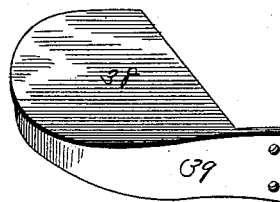


Fig. 10.

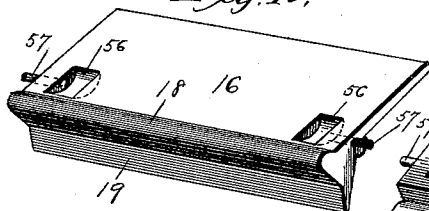


Fig. 11.

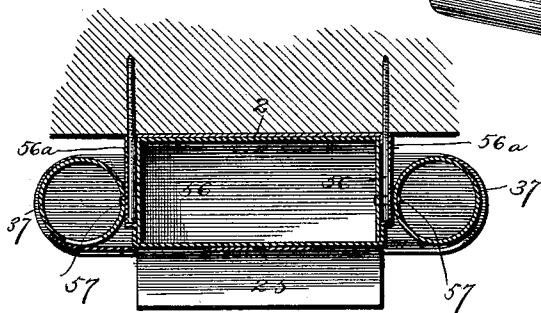
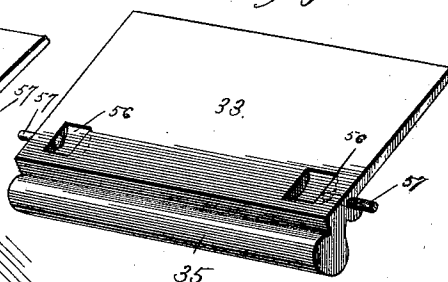


Fig. 12.

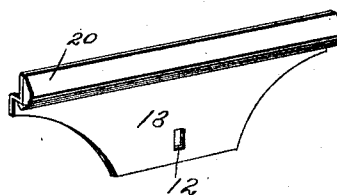


Fig. 5

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

EMERY B. GRIFFIN, OF ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI.

LETTER-BOX.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 465,524, dated December 22, 1891.

Application filed June 23, 1891. Serial No. 397,224. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, EMERY B. GRIFFIN, of St. Joseph, Buchanan county, Missouri, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Mail Boxes, of which the following is a full, clear, and exact description, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, forming a part hereof.

My invention relates to mail-boxes which are designed to be used at residences, offices, stores, and other similar locations; and the objects of my invention are to produce a mail-box which shall be simple, durable, ornamental, and inexpensive in construction, and by means of which the collection and delivery of mail-matter, as well as the various other features of the business, shall be greatly expedited and facilitated.

A further object of my invention is to produce a mail-box which shall securely protect the mail-matter against injury by the weather and also against all possible loss by thieves or other dishonest persons.

A still further object of my invention is to produce means whereby the postman and the occupant of the residence, office, store, or other place can readily signal to each other when either desires to communicate personally with the other, thus avoiding all annoying delays in finding the person to be communicated with.

To the above purposes my invention consists in certain peculiar and novel features of construction and arrangement, as hereinafter described and claimed.

In order that my invention may be fully understood, I will proceed to describe it with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the single form of mail-box embodying my invention. Fig. 2 is a central transverse vertical section of the same on line 2 2 of Fig. 1. Fig. 3 is a front elevation of the double form of mail-box embodying my invention. Fig. 4 is a transverse vertical section of the same on the line 4 4 of Fig. 3. Fig. 5 is a horizontal cross-section of the same on the line 5 5 of Fig. 3. Fig. 6 is a side elevation of the upper part of a mail-box provided with my improved signaling apparatus. Fig. 7 is a detached perspective of one of the tubes for receiving rolls and similar mail-

matter. Fig. 8 is a central longitudinal section of the same. Fig. 9 is a detached perspective view of the upper part of a modified form of the roll-holder. Fig. 10 is a detached perspective view of one form of the drop-plate. Fig. 11 is a similar view of another form of drop-plate. Fig. 12 is a detached perspective view of the locking-plate. Fig. 13 comprises two detached perspective views of one form of the closing-caps for the roll-holders. Fig. 14 comprises two perspective views of a modified form of closing-cap for the roll-holder.

I will first proceed to describe the single form of the mail-box, then the double form of the box, then the roll-holders, the signaling devices, and finally the several details of construction embodied in my invention.

In Figs. 1 and 2, 1 designates the casing of the single mail-box, said casing being of vertical elongated form, preferably rectangular at its lower end, and constructed, preferably, of metal, although the body of the box may be of any other suitable or preferred material. The rear of this box is preferably closed by a backing-piece 2, which is strongly united at its ends and sides to the sides and to the upper and lower ends of the front of the body portion, as shown. The upper portion 3 of the front of the box curves upward and rearward and the lower part 4 of this portion 3 curves outward and downward, as shown. Across the front of the box, immediately below the terminus of the outwardly and downwardly curved portion 4, is formed a horizontal slit or opening 5, and from the lower margin of this opening or slit the front of the box extends downward a short distance, as shown at 6. The front of the box is permanently closed from its lower end to a point some distance above said lower end, as shown at 7, and to the upper part of this closed portion 7 is attached, by a suitable hinge 8, the lower edge of a door 9. This door 9 extends upward to within a short distance of the lower margin of the closed portion 6, and is provided on its outer side, at the upper part thereof, with an outwardly-extending staple 10. This staple is designed to pass outwardly through a slot 12 in the lower part of a retaining or closing plate 13, and to receive the hasp of a suitable padlock 14, by means of which the door 9 is retained securely in closed

position until a person authorized to unlock the padlock desires to do so and thus open the door. The upper margin of this retaining-plate 13 is connected to the lower margin of the closed portion 6 of the box-body by a suitable hinge 15, and this hinge, as also the hinge 8, may be either of the precise form shown or any other type which will respectively permit a free gravity action of the retaining-plate and a ready opening of the door, and at the same time securely connect the plate and door to the adjacent parts of the box. The upper portion 20 of this retaining-plate 13 extends inward at right angles from the body portion, and this latter upwardly-extending portion thus lies against the inner surface of the portion 6 of the box-front and is also made heavy, so as to counterbalance the body of the plate and to throw said plate outward and upward automatically as soon as the padlock is removed from the staple 10. This inward and upward extending portion 20 serves also to prevent the entrance of rain, snow, dust, or other substances into the box, and thus prevents any injury of the mail-matter therein.

Within the opening or slot 5 is placed a tilting and closing plate 16, which is of a length corresponding with the length of the slit or opening and which is retained in said opening or slit by a pivotal support 17, entering the sides of the casing. The outer part 18 of this tilting and closing plate is enlarged in such a manner as to counterbalance the inner part of the plate and to retain the latter in elevated position, and the form of this enlarged portion is such as to leave at its outer margin an outwardly-projecting lip or flange 19, for a purpose to be presently explained.

Upon the inner sides of the casing of the box is secured a false backing-piece 21, the sides of said backing-piece having flanges 57, through which are passed rivets 58, as shown. The upper edge of this false backing-piece 21 rests against the upper part of the back 2, and preferably extends upward to the upper end of said backing 2, and the lower edge of said false back is also preferably suitably secured to the inner surface of the lower portion 7 of the front 25 of the box. From its upper end this false back 21 curves gradually downward and outward to an integral forwardly-projecting V-shaped portion 22, for a purpose to be presently explained. At the termination of the lower part of this V-shaped portion 22 the false backing extends downward for a short distance in contact with the inner surface of the true backing 2, and from this point the false backing curves gradually downward and forward to the described connection of its lower edge with the front portion 7 of the box-front. This box is shown as secured to a wall or door or other preferred vertical portion 23 of a building by one or more screws 24, or equivalent devices, passing through the upper part of the backing 2, and it is to be

understood that these fastening devices may also pass through other portions of the backing of the box in any desired part thereof, so as to firmly secure the box to the support 23.

In Figs. 3 and 4 I have shown a double form of mail-box, which also embodies in its construction the essential principles of my invention. The upper portion of this box is constructed precisely like the single box just described, and similar parts of these two structures are designated with like numerals for reference—that is to say, the rear portion of this double box is closed at its upper part by a backing-piece 2 and is provided with a false backing-piece 21, as before. This false backing-piece is provided, also, with the flanged sides 57, through which pass the rivets 58, which secure the false backing to the sides of the box-body, as before, and the said false backing-piece is formed near its upper end with a forwardly-projecting V-shaped portion 22, and curves thence, after having extended some distance in contact with the backing 2, gradually downward and forward until its lower end comes into contact with and is secured in this instance to the inner surface of the portion 25, hereinafter described, of the front of the box. The upper part of the front of this box is also formed with the upwardly and rearwardly curved portion 3, and beneath said portion 3 said front is formed with the outwardly and downwardly curved portion 4, beneath which is the transverse slit or opening 5. Within this slit or opening is located the tilting and closing plate 16, which is secured therein by the pivotal connection 17, entering the sides of the box-body, as before. This tilting and closing plate is, as before, provided at its outer portion with an enlargement 18, which counterbalances the inner portion of the tilting and closing plate, so that its inner surface stands normally adjacent to the inner surface of the portion 4 of the box-front, and said enlargement is of such a shape as to form the lip or flange 19, before described. The door 9 is likewise here employed and is connected at its lower margin to the upper margin of the portion 7 by a suitable hinge 8, and the upper portion of this door is also provided with a staple 10, which is designed to pass through the opening 12 of the retaining-plate 13. In this instance the plate 13 is also secured at its upper part to the portion 6 of the front by a suitable hinge 15, and its upper margin 20 extends inward at right angles and then upward, and is enlarged to counterbalance the body portion of the plate 13, as before. In this present instance, however, the true back 2 of the box is extended downward to a noticeable distance, and the lower part of the portion 7 of the front is curved downward and forward, as shown at 25, and the lower end of the false backing 21 is secured to the inner surface of this portion 25, as above mentioned. Immediately beneath this portion 25 is formed a transverse slit or opening

26, and from the lower margin of this slit or opening extends downwardly for some distance a closed portion 27. From the extreme lower end of this box extends upward for some distance a closed portion 28, while the lower margin of the front portion 27 is connected by a suitable hinge 29 to a dropping or gravity-actuated door 30. The upper margin 30^a of this door extends upwardly against the inner surface of the portion 27 and the lower portion of this door is formed with a slit or opening 31, through which passes a staple 32, projecting outwardly from the upper part of the front portion 28, just referred to, said staple being designed to receive a suitable padlock for retaining the door 30 in closed position. It will thus be seen that, while the box shown in Figs. 1 and 2 has but a single compartment, the box now being described is provided with two compartments located the one beneath the other.

Within the slit or opening 26 is located a second tilting and closing plate 33, which is secured in said opening by a pivotal connection 34, entering the sides of the box. The outer portion 35 of this tilting and closing plate is enlarged so as to counterbalance the body portion of said plate, and thus retain said body portion normally in upwardly-inclined position, with its inner surface in engagement with the lower surface of the lower part of the false backing 21 at the point of the attachment of the latter to the portion 25 of the box-front, as shown in solid lines in Fig. 4.

The operations of the boxes above described are as follows: When the postman wishes to deposit mail-matter in the box shown in Figs. 1 and 2, he thrusts the mail-matter into the slit or opening 5, pushing the mail-matter against the tilting and closing plate 16, such mail-matter being pushed upward and entering the box above the projection 22. With the same hand with which he inserts the mail-matter the carrier now lifts the outer portion 18 of the closing plate 16 upward, so as to bring the lip or flange 19 of the closing plate into contact with the margin of the projecting portion 4 of the box. This movement throws the body or inner portion of the closing plate 16 downward, as shown in dotted lines in Fig. 2, and permits the mail-matter to drop past the tilting and closing plate 16 and V-shaped portion 22 of the false backing 21 and to fall into the lower part of the box. As soon as the postman releases the plate it automatically resumes its normal upward position, closing the slit 5. Now when the occupant of the building or apartment which is served by the box desires to obtain his mail he unlocks the padlock 14 with a suitable key, as 36, and draws the hasp of the padlock out of the staple 10. As soon as this is done the retaining-plate opens outwardly automatically by the action of the weighted upper margin 20, and the user opens the door 9 and removes the mail-matter from the box, sub-

sequently closing the door, depressing the outer part of the retaining-plate 13, and securing the two with the padlock.

The operation of the upper parts of the box shown in Figs. 3 and 4 is virtually the same as that just described; but in this instance the occupant of the building or apartment inserts his mail into the slit or opening 5, pressing it against the tilting and closing plate and causing the mail-matter to enter upwardly, and then depresses the plate 16, tilting and closing, allowing the mail-matter to drop past the plate 16, as before, and finally releasing the tilting and closing plate 16 and allowing it to automatically resume its normal upward position. The postman, desiring to obtain the occupant's mail, unlocks the door 9, the retaining-plate swinging outward automatically, as before, and allowing the door 9 to be opened, so as to permit the removal of the mail-matter in the box. The postman now closes the door 9 and locks the same. In this instance when the postman desires to deliver mail for the occupant of the building or apartment he inserts the mail-matter into the opening or slit 26 in the lower part of the box, pushing the mail-matter against the plate 33, so as to operate the same, and then with the same hand lifts the outer portion 35 of the tilting and closing plate 33 upward, so as to depress the inner portion of said plate, as shown in dotted lines in Fig. 4, and allowing the mail-matter to drop past the plate 33 into the bottom of the lower compartment of the box.

When the occupant of the building or apartment desires to obtain his mail from his box, he unlocks the door 30, raises the same, and removes his mail-matter from the lower compartment of the box, finally closing and locking the door 30. It is obvious that, if desired, the lower compartment may be used by the occupant of the building or apartment while the postman delivers the mail into the upper compartment; but the use just fully described is that which is the more advantageous for rapid and easy delivery by the postman, as well as equally convenient for the occupant of the building or apartment.

In Fig. 10 I have shown the tilting and closing plate 16 as provided with two recesses or cavities 56, through the outer end of each of which is inserted a rivet 57, the outer part of which passes into the side of the box at the point shown at 17 in Fig. 2. The plate 33 (shown in Fig. 11) may obviously be provided with similar cavities and rivets, and by virtue of such construction the insertion and attachment of the plates are greatly facilitated and as strong a connection is made as has been previously described.

Upon one side of the box shown in Figs. 1 and 2 is mounted a tubular receptacle 37, which is designed to receive rolled mail-matter, such as newspapers in wrappers, drawings, plans, &c., and the upper end of which is closed by a cover or cap 38. This cover or

cap is secured at one side to the upper part of the door 9, as shown at 39. The box shown in Figs. 3 and 4 is provided with two of these receptacles, one of which is located at either side of the box. The precise construction of these receptacles will be clearly understood by reference to Figs. 7, 8, and 9 in connection with the ensuing description. Each of these receptacles may be provided near one end with an integral flange 40, the outer surface of which inclines inwardly, and the purpose of which is to permit the roll to be inserted past the flange and inwardly through the receiving end of the receptacle and to prevent the withdrawal of the roll excepting through the discharge end of the receptacle, as presently described. These receptacles may also be each provided at one end with a longitudinal opening or recess 41, formed in one side of the receptacle, and this recess may be either at the upper or lower end of the receptacle, as preferred.

The receptacle 37, applied to the box shown in Figs. 1 and 2, is provided with the internal flange 40, and this flange is located near the lower end of the receptacle and is inverted, as indicated in dotted lines in Fig. 7, the arrangement being such that when the carrier delivers the mail, if a roll is to be delivered it is to be inserted upward through the open bottom of the receptacle until its lower end passes beyond the flange 40, and is thereby prevented from dropping out of the lower end of the receptacle 37. Now when the occupant of the apartment or building opens the door 9, as before described, to obtain his mail the cap 38 will be carried by the door off of the upper end of the receptacle, and thus permit the occupant to draw the roll out through the upper end of the receptacle. In this instance the upper end of the receptacle is preferably provided at its upper end with the recess 41, as shown in dotted lines in Fig. 1, thus facilitating the withdrawal of the roll. The left-hand receptacle 37 in Fig. 3 may be the receptacle into which the occupant of the building or apartment places the roll to be taken out by the postman, and in this event the lower part of the receptacle is provided with the inverted flange 40, as just described, the lower end of the receptacle being closed by the cap 38, which in this instance is connected to the lower door 30 of the box. In this instance the upper end of the receptacle is closed by a cap 42, which is secured to the upper door 9, and which, in case the upper end of the receptacle is provided with the recess 41, is provided with a downwardly-extending face-plate 43, covering the recess 41 and provided with a slight opening 43^a. Now when the occupant is taking his mail from the box he will uncover the upper end of the left-hand receptacle 37 when he opens the door 9 and can then insert a roll into the upper end of the receptacle. While the carrier is collecting the mail from the box he will, by opening

the lower door 30, uncover the lower end of the receptacle, and if by looking through the opening 43^a he discovers a roll in the receptacle he can readily remove the roll from the lower end of the receptacle. The receptacle 37 at the right-hand side of the box may have its upper end closed by a weighted lid 44, that closes automatically, and which is hinged, as at 45, to the corresponding side of the box. In this event the lower end of this receptacle is closed by a cap 38, which is secured to the lower door 30; and it will be seen that when the postman delivers mail he will, if he have a roll to deliver, lift the lid and drop the roll into the upper end of the receptacle, the flange 40 being at the upper end of the receptacle. When the occupant is obtaining his mail, he will, by opening the lower door 30, uncover the lower end of the receptacle, and can thus readily remove the roll through such lower end. In this instance the sight-opening 43 is preferably placed or formed near the lower end of the right-hand receptacle. If desired, the cap 42 may be located at the lower end of the receptacle 37.

As shown in Fig. 9, the receptacle 37 may be square or angular in form, instead of cylindrical, as shown in other figures of the drawings, and in this event the flange 40 is of correspondingly angular form, instead of circular form, as before.

In order to securely attach the mail-box to its support 23 and to prevent the box from being stolen bodily, I preferably attach the box by means of strong screws 56, which lie between the sides of the box and the receptacles 37, the backing 2 being turned outward against the sides of the box, as shown at 56^a, and the outer parts of the screws being concealed between the sides of the box and the outturned parts of the back 2. Thus it will be seen that the screws are effectually concealed and protected against surreptitious removal. The receptacles 37 are also preferably secured to the box by rivets or screws 57, which pass through the sides of the box and the outturned portions 56^a of the back 2, and also through the adjacent sides of the receptacles. It will thus be seen that the attaching devices of these receptacles are effectually concealed from view and their surreptitious removal rendered impossible.

The box shown in Figs. 1 and 2 is shown as provided with a U-shaped spring 45^a, the lower ends of which are formed with coils 46 and the extremities of which are inserted rearwardly into holders 47, one of which is suitably secured to each side of the box adjacent to the attachment of the pivotal connection 17 to such sides. The box shown in Figs. 3 and 4 is shown as provided with a similar U-shaped spring 45^a, having like coils 46 at its ends; but in this instance the spring occupies an inverted position and the holders 47, into which its extremities are inserted, are suitably secured in vertical position to the upper

ends of the sides of the box. In either instance the spring presses upon the front of the box and loose newspapers can be inserted between the spring and the front of the box and will be retained securely by the spring until removed.

In Figs. 1 and 6 I have shown a signaling attachment, by means of which the postman can communicate with the occupant or the occupant with the postman when the business of either with the other requires a personal meeting of the two. 48 designates an angular metal strap or hanger, which is secured to one side of the box by screws or rivets 53, or equivalent devices, and 54 designates a screw or rivet, which is inserted through the front end of the strap or hanger and which enters the side of the box. Upon this screw or rivet 54 are pivoted a number of plates 49, preferably of different lengths, and provided with outwardly-turned corners 55. It is intended to designate these plates by different colors, each color to signify a particular message. Thus, for example, assuming that there are four of these plates, as shown, and that said plates are colored, respectively, red, yellow, blue, and white, now if the carrier or postman has delivered the wrong mail the occupant moves the red plate into horizontal position; if the occupant is to leave town and desires the delivery of mail to cease until further notice, the blue plate is moved into horizontal position; if the occupant desires to speak personally to the postman for any purpose, the yellow plate is moved into horizontal position, and when the carrier desires to communicate personally with the occupant—as, for example, when delivering a registered letter—he moves the white plate into horizontal position.

From the above description it will be seen that I have produced a mail-box which is simple, durable, and ornamental in construction, and by means of which all the business connected with the delivery, collection, receipt, and dispatch of mail-matter is greatly facilitated, and by means of which also the mail-matter is fully protected against theft or injury by the weather.

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

1. An improved mail-box comprising a body portion or receptacle having a slit or opening in its front, a tilting plate located in said slit or opening and having an enlarged counterbalancing outer portion, and a backing-piece having a forwardly-extending angular portion, adjacent to which the inner edge

of the plate passes when the mail is being dumped into the box, substantially as set forth.

2. An improved mail-box comprising a front portion having a door hinged in its lower part, and a hinged retaining-plate located above the door and provided with an inwardly-extending counterbalancing upper margin, substantially as set forth.

3. An improved mail-box comprising a suitable casing or receptacle, a curved backing dividing said casing into two compartments, a pair of slits or openings in the front of the casing and communicating with the upper and lower compartment, respectively, a pair of tilting plates located one in each opening and having counterbalancing outer enlarged portions, a pair of doors hinged to the front of the casing and also communicating with the two compartments, and a retaining-plate hinged in the front of the casing and having an enlarged inwardly-extending upper margin and engaging at its body portion with one of said doors, substantially as set forth.

4. An improved mail-box comprising a suitable box or casing, a tubular roll-receptacle, and a hinged front door carrying a cap for covering one end of the receptacle, substantially as set forth.

5. An improved mail-box comprising a suitable casing, a pair of doors hinged at the front of the casing, a pair of tubular roll-receptacles secured to opposite sides of the box, and caps or covers attached to said doors and arranged to close the ends of the tubular receptacles, substantially as set forth.

6. An improved mail-box comprising a suitable box or casing, a door hinged at the front of the casing, a tubular roll-receptacle provided at one end with a longitudinal recess and having also an internal flange formed with an inclined outer side, and a cap or cover secured to the door and arranged to close the end of the tubular receptacle, substantially as set forth.

7. An improved mail-box comprising a suitable casing, a pair of holders secured to opposite sides of the upper part of said casing, and a spring extending across the top of the casing and normally pressed downward thereon and having coiled end portions and having also its extremities inserted into said holders, substantially as set forth.

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

EMERY B. GRIFFIN.

Witnesses:

JNO. T. JOHNSON,

C. C. KING.