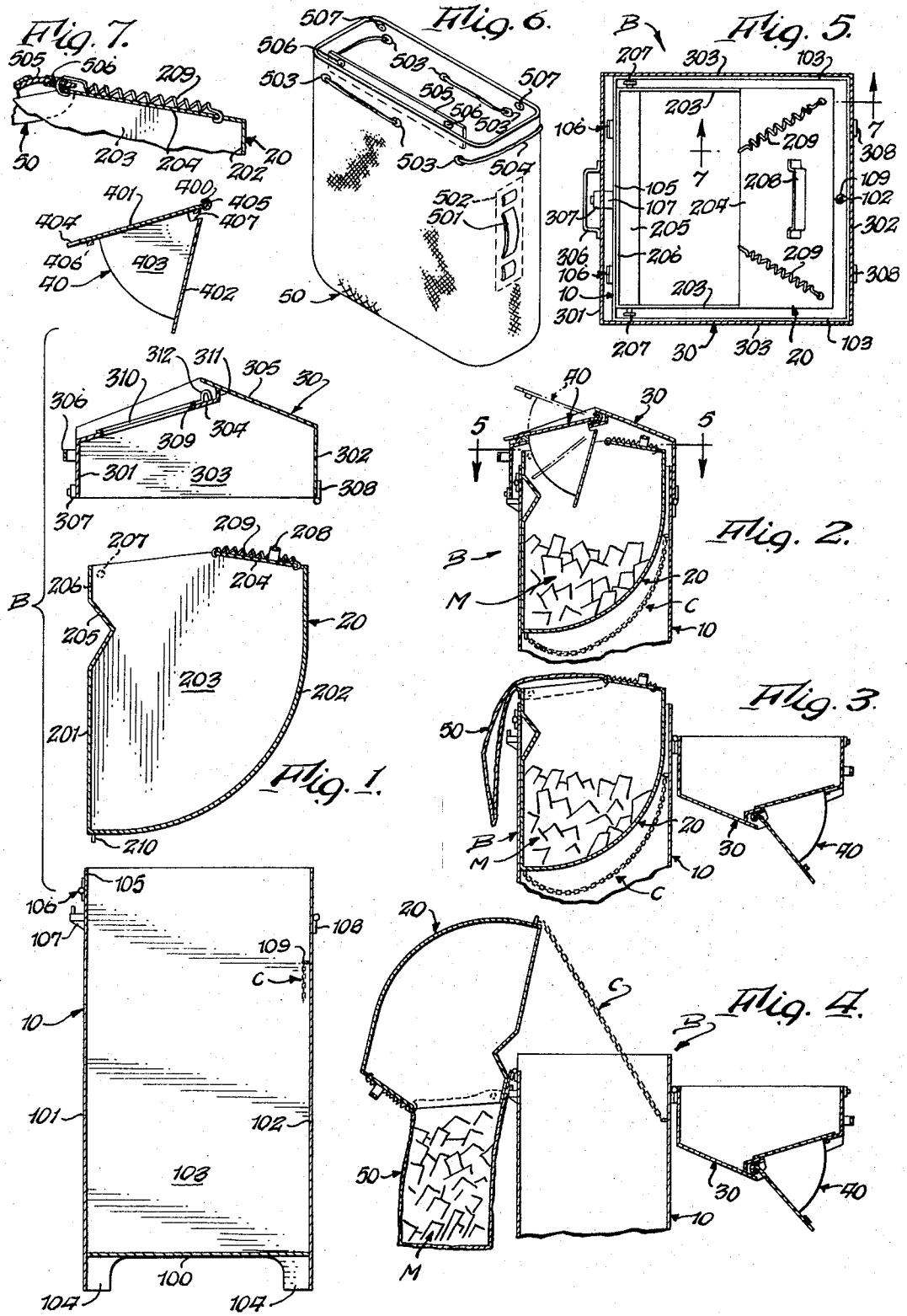
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MAIL DEPOSIT BOX

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MAIL DEPOSIT BOX

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This invention relates to improvements in mail box manufacture, and more particularly to a new and improved mail deposit box.

Conventional mail deposit boxes of the type adapted to be supported directly on the ground, and often seen on street corners in metropolitan areas, are usually of a height convenient for deposit of mail. However, it is difficult for postal personnel to remove mail from these conventional boxes because they usually have a door near the bottom, requiring the postman to stoop or squat down in order to scoop out the mail and place it in a pouch.

While efforts have been made in the past to solve this problem, they have not been altogether successful for a number of reasons. For example, as disclosed in United States Patents 462,092 and 1,364,126, it has been proposed to design a mail container which is pivotal outwardly from its enclosure to permit the mail therein to fall into a mail bag attached to the bottom of the pivotal container and the bottom of the enclosure. However, this requires the mail box to be mounted on a separate support high enough above the ground to permit placing the mail bag beneath the box, and thereby making it less convenient for the public to deposit mail in the top of the box. In addition, because of the design of the containers in these prior art devices, there is always a possibility that the mail might become wedged in between the containers and their enclosures, with the undesirable results of damage to or loss of the mail and fouling of the boxes. Moreover the lock mechanisms used in these boxes are subject to increased wear because the weight of the mail container bears against such mechanisms.

Accordingly, a primary object of the present invention is to provide a new and improved mail deposit box which is so designed and of such height as to permit not only the convenient deposit of mail into the box, but also the attachment of an upright bag or pouch adjacent thereto for the convenient emptying of mail from the box into the bag.

Another object is to provide such a box wherein the mail container is adapted to be inverted readily to ensure removal of all the mail therein.

A further object is to provide such a box wherein the lock is unaffected by the weight of the mail container for minimum wear.

Still another object is to provide such a box which is so designed as to prevent tampering with the mail in the container, while permitting ready removal of the mail by authorized personnel.

A still further object is to provide such a box which is so designed as to effectively seal the box and prevent damage to mail therein by moisture during inclement weather, while still permitting ready deposit and removal of mail at such times.

Yet another object is to provide such a box which is so designed as to be useable readily as a storage box, as well as a mail deposit box.

Additional objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent upon consideration of the following detailed description and accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is an exploded vertical sectional view of the structural elements making up a mail deposit box embodying the invention;

FIG. 2 is a reduced partial vertical section of the upper portion of the box, with the mail container in stowed condition and the lid closed;

FIG. 3 is a view similar to FIG. 2, but with the lid open and an empty mail bag attached over the top of the container prior to emptying the latter;

FIG. 4 is a view similar to FIG. 3, but showing the container pivoted to an inverted position for emptying mail into the bag;

FIG. 5 is a horizontal section through the top of the box taken on line 5—5 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of a mail bag especially adapted for use with the inventive box, and

FIG. 7 is an enlarged fragmentary section taken on line 7—7 of FIG. 5 and illustrating the details of one of the springhook devices for clamping the bag in place.

Referring to the drawings, and particularly FIG. 1, the inventive mail deposit box is generally indicated at B, and the various structural elements of the box are preferably made of suitable gauge metal unless otherwise specified. These elements are a stationary, upright hollow base **10** which is open at the top and is of generally rectangular cross section, a pivotal mail container **20** adapted to be arranged within base **10**, a pivotal lid **30** designed to close and expose both base **10** and container **20**, and a pivotal mail deposit chute **40** adapted to be mounted on lid **30**.

Continuing with FIG. 1, base **10** is closed adjacent its lower end by a floor **100**, and includes a front wall **101**, a rear wall **102**, and side walls **103**, the lower junctures of these walls forming supporting feet **104**. Front wall **101** is provided at its upper end with a flange **105** hinged at **106** and a latch **107** spaced below the flange and hinge. Rear wall **102** is provided on its outer surface with a pair of lower hinge portions **108** adjacent its upper end, and on its inner surface with a loop or hook **109** spaced below hinged portion **108** and adapted to be connected with an elongated flexible member such as chain C, for a purpose to be described below.

Mail container **20** includes a front wall **201** and a rear wall **202** having a lower arcuate portion forming the bottom of the container and merging with front wall **201** at its lower end. These front and rear walls are connected by side walls **203** which are slightly peaked at their upper ends and the open top of the container is partially closed by a rear top wall portion **204**. Front wall **201** is provided with an angular re-entrant clearance portion **205** terminating at its upper end in a vertical flange portion **206** which is rigidly secured, such as by welding, to flange **105** on base **10**. Adjacent its juncture with front wall **201**, rear wall **202** is provided with an outstanding loop or hook **210** for attachment with chain C, and each of side walls **203** is provided adjacent its front upper end with outstanding buttons or lugs **207** (also seen in FIG. 5) to retain a mail bag. Rear top wall portion **204** is provided with an upstanding handle **208** for pivoting container **20** and a pair of tension springs **209** having their rear ends hooked through top wall portion **204** and their front hook portions engaged over the front edge of the top wall portion and adapted to retain a mail bag, as shown in FIG. 7.

Lid **30** includes a front wall **301** and rear wall **302** connected by peaked side walls **303**. The top of the lid is partially closed by an inclined front top wall portion **304** and an oppositely inclined rear top wall portion **305** overlapping the rear upper end of front top wall portion **304**. Front wall **301** is provided with a handle **306** for pivoting lid **30** and a spring type, key-operated lock **307** spaced below the handle and engageable with latch **107** on base **10** for locking box B. Rear wall **302** is provided with a pair of upper hinge portions **308** which mate with lower hinge portions **108** on base **10** for pivotal movement of the lid. Front top wall portion **304** is provided

with a through, mail receiving opening or slot 309 surrounded by a resilient seal 310 on its upper surface, and an upwardly turned rear portion 311 forming a frontwardly open recess at its juncture with the overlapping front end of rear top wall portion 305. A pair of brackets 312 (only one shown) are suitably fastened to the rear of top wall portion 304 adjacent side walls 303 for a purpose described below.

Mail deposit chute 40 includes a top wall 401 and a bottom wall 402 converging rearwardly toward the top wall and connected thereto by segmental side walls 403 which are adapted to pass through opening 309 in lid 30, as best seen in FIG. 2. At its outer end, top wall 401 is provided with an outstanding rib or flange 404 for pivotal movement of chute 40, and at its rear end with an upwardly turned and frontwardly open hook or pivotal portion 405 fixed on an elongated cylindrical rod 400 adapted to be pivotally arranged within such recess in lid 30 by inserting the rod ends in brackets 312 during assembly. The underside of top wall 401 is provided with a resilient seal 406 designed to surround and mate with seal 310 on lid 30 to prevent moisture from entering box B, and side walls 403 are each provided at their rear ends with a notch 407 adapted to receive the rear inner edge of opening 309 in the lid.

As best seen in FIG. 6, a mail bag, which is especailly adapted for use with the inventive box, is generally indicated at 50 and is made of any suitable flexible material such as canvas, for the intended purpose. Bag 50, of course, is open at its upper end and closed at its lower end and is of generally rounded rectangular cross section throughout its length. Bag 50 is provided with a preferably leather handle 501 which is firmly anchored thereto on one of its narrower sides by a preferably leather stiffener 502 sewed or clamped in place. Circumferentially spaced around its upper end portion are grommets or eyelets 503 through which a rope 504 is threaded for closing the bag in the usual manner, and along one of its wider sides, the bag is provided with an outwardly projecting flange 505 having spaced eyelets 506, and alined with these eyelets are another pair of eyelets 507 in the opposite side of the bag. As will be evident from FIGS. 3, 4 and 7, the flange 505 is adapted to fit over the front edge of container top wall portion 204 and the eyelets 506 in such flange are adapted to be engaged by the front hook portions of springs 209, while the eyelets 507 are adapted to be engaged over buttons 207 on the container for removably attaching the open end of the bag over the upper open end portion of the container.

As shown in FIG. 2, the assembled box B is so designed that mail may be deposited readily therein while mail in container 20 cannot be tampered with or removed by any unauthorized person. To deposit mail, the depositor merely lifts chute 40 by grasping flange 404, thereby pivoting the chute about lid 30 to provide ingress to the chute. At the same time, opening of the chute also raises lower wall 402 thereof to substantially close the upper end of container 20 and thereby prevent the depositor from reaching into the container. Upon release of the chute, the mail drops into the container.

At this point it is to be noted that box B is designed to be of such a height as to make it convenient for the deposit of mail, and hence base 10 is preferably three feet tall while the box has an overall height only slightly greater than three and one-half feet. At the same time, box B is so designed as to facilitate removal of the mail M from container 20, as best illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 4.

When the postman is ready to remove mail from the box, he unlocks spring lock 307 with a key, freeing the front wall 301 of lid 30 from latch 107, and then by grasping handle 306, he pivots the lid to the open position shown in FIG. 3. Next he hooks retaining springs 209 through eyelets 506 of bag 50 and mounts eyelets 507 over buttons 207, whereby the upper open end of the bag is stretched over the upper open end portion of

container 20. Following this, as best shown in FIG. 4, the postman grasps handle 208 on container 20 to pivot the container to the inverted position outside base 10, in order to permit all of the mail M to fall into the now upright bag 50. The chain C is of such a length that pivotal movement of container 20 is limited to the inverted position shown, and hence flange 105 of base 10 and flange 206 of the container do not bear against latch 107. After removal of the bag, it is but a simple matter for the postman to return container 20 and lid 30 to their original positions of FIG. 2, whereupon box B is locked and once again ready for deposit of mail.

In the event that the postman wishes to temporarily store mail in box B, he merely opens lid 30 and drops the mail to be stored into container 20 through the upper open end thereof, instead of having to deposit individual or small bundles of mail through chute 40. Thus, the inventive box is useful not only as a mail deposit box but also as a mail storage box.

It will now be seen how the present invention accomplishes its various objectives, and additional advantages of the invention likewise will now be evident. For example, in addition to being designed so as to make it convenient not only for deposit but removal of mail, the box is also designed so that its locking mechanism is not effected by the weight of the mail container for minimum wear and increased service life of such locking mechanism. Likewise, the pitch of the front top wall portion 304 of lid 30 and the mating seals 310 and 311 effectively prevent entrance of moisture into the container during inclement weather. At the same time, the entire operation of opening the box, removing the mail and reclosing the box can be performed in a matter of about 15 seconds, with minimum exposure of the mail to the weather.

While the present invention has been described and illustrated herein by reference to a single embodiment, it is to be understood that various changes and modifications may be made therein by those skilled in the art, without departing from the inventive concept, the scope of which is to be determined by the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A mail deposit box comprising an upwardly open hollow base adapted to rest upon a supporting surface such as the ground and being of such height as to permit not only the convenient deposit of mail into the upper end of said box but also the attachment of an upright mail bag adjacent thereto for the convenient emptying of mail from said box into the bag, and an upwardly open mail receiving container having means adjacent its upper end for detachably retaining the open end of the bag and being pivoted to said base adjacent its upper end for movement between an upright position within said base for receiving mail to an inverted position outside said base for emptying mail into the bag.

2. The box of claim 1 wherein said base includes front, rear and side walls forming at their lower junctures supporting feet, said front wall being provided adjacent its upper end with hinge means.

3. The box of claim 2 wherein said container includes a front wall, a rear wall forming the bottom of said container, side walls and a rear top wall portion closing the upper rear end portion of said container, said front wall being provided with a re-entrant clearance portion terminating at its upper end in vertical flange means fixed to said hinge means on said base, said side walls being provided adjacent their front upper ends with outstanding lug means for detachably retaining the mail bag, and said rear top wall portion being provided with handle means for pivoting said container and resilient hook means for detachably retaining the bag.

4. The box of claim 1 including a hollow downwardly open lid having a mail deposit opening in its upper end and being pivoted to the upper end of said base opposite to the pivotal connection between said base and container for movement between an upright position closing said

base and container therein and an inverted position outside said base for permitting movement of said container to said mail emptying position, interengageable means on said base and lid for removably locking said lid in said closed position.

5. The box of claim 4 including a mail deposit chute pivoted to said lid for movement through said opening between an upper open position permitting deposit of mail into said chute through said opening while preventing access to said container and a lower closed position sealing said opening from the top while permitting the deposited mail to fall from said chute into said container.

6. The box of claim 5 wherein said base includes front, rear and side walls forming at their lower junctures supporting feet, said front wall being provided at its upper end with a hinged flange and a latch spaced below said flange, and said rear wall being provided with lower hinge means adjacent its upper end.

7. The box of claim 6 wherein said container includes a front wall, a rear wall having a lower outwardly convex arcuate portion forming the bottom of said container and merging with the lower end of said front wall, side walls, and a rear top wall portion closing the upper rear portion of said container, said front wall being provided with an angular re-entrant clearance portion terminating at its upper end in a vertical flange portion fixed to said flange on said base, said side walls being provided adjacent their front upper ends with outstanding lug means for detachably retaining the mail bag, and said rear top wall portion being provided with a handle for pivoting said container and resilient hook means for detachably retaining the bag.

8. The box of claim 7 wherein said lid includes front and rear walls, peaked side walls and front and rear top wall portions, said front wall being provided with a handle for pivoting said lid and a lock engageable with said latch on said base, said rear wall being provided with upper hinge means mating with said lower hinge means on said base, said front top wall portion being provided with said mail deposit opening and a seal surrounding said opening, and the juncture of said top wall portions forming a frontwardly open recess.

9. The box of claim 8 wherein said mail deposit chute includes rearwardly converging top and bottom walls arranged respectively above and below said opening in said lid and connected by side walls extending through said opening, said top wall being provided at its rear end with outstanding pivot means pivotally arranged in said recess, at its front end with outstanding flange means for pivotal movement of said chute and on its underside with a seal adapted to surround and mate with said seal on said lid in said closed position to prevent moisture from entering said box, said chute being movable between said upper open position with said top wall raised above said opening and said bottom wall raised to substantially close the front upper end portion of said container and said lower closed position with said top wall lowered to seal said opening and said bottom wall lowered into said container.

10. The box of claim 9 wherein said container and said base are connected by an elongated flexible member which permits pivotal movement of said container between said upright mail receiving and inverted mail emptying positions, but prevents said container from bearing against said latch in said inverted position.

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