To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, Harry L. Bittle, a citizen of the United States, residing at West Alexandria, in the county of Preble and State of Ohio, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Collapsible Mail-Racks; and I 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, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, and to the letters and figures of reference marked thereon, which form a part of this specification.

My invention comprises a collapsible mail rack which is especially designed for rural mail delivery purposes. Heretofore it has been the custom in delivering mail on rural routes to transport the mail in a non-assorted condition in the vehicle and to assort it for each delivery as the vehicle approaches each place along the road where mail was to be delivered. This required the consumption of considerable time on the part of the carrier and often required him to take his attention away from the vehicle for the purpose of assorting the mail for the next place of delivery. And, furthermore, mail that is assorted in this manner while the vehicle is traveling between farm houses and other rural points where mail is to be delivered is frequently delivered at the wrong place owing to the inconvenience of assorting the mail in transit or, in other words, while the vehicle is traveling along the road. Other well known obstacles to the assorting of mail in this way on rural routes might be incensed but the foregoing are believed to be sufficient to enable a just appreciation of the means hereinafter to be described and claimed. It is, therefore, the object and purpose of the present invention to provide a collapsible mail rack having the structural features hereinafter described and claimed into which the mail is assorted in the post office from which it is taken for delivery. These collapsible mail racks being thus supplied with assorted mail are conveniently folded in a comparatively small package, owing to their collapsibility, and are taken to the vehicle for rural delivery. In the vehicle they are placed in a convenient position, either by hanging them up on suitable hooks or by laying them down in a convenient manner to enable the mail-carrier to readily take the mail from each designated pocket or pigeon-hole.

With the above general statement in mind, reference is made to the accompanying drawings of which Figure 1 is a perspective view of my improved collapsible mail rack showing the same in an open vertical position and some of the pockets or pigeon-holes therein containing mail; Fig. 2 is a similar view showing the collapsible mail rack in a horizontal position; Fig. 3 is a perspective view showing the mail rack in a collapsed position; Fig. 4 is a detail view showing the means for uniting the back to the shelves; Fig. 5 is a similar view showing the means for arranging the vertical division walls and shelves; and Fig. 6 is a detail view of one of the name plates which designates the mail contained in the various pockets.

In a detail description of my invention, similar reference characters indicate corresponding parts.

The collapsible mail rack may of course be of any desired proportions; that is to say, it may contain as many pigeon-holes or pockets as can be conveniently handled by the carrier in conveying the filled racks from the post office to the vehicle. In the drawings I have shown a sufficient number of pigeon-holes or pockets to make clear the objects and purposes as well as the utility of the device. These individual pigeon-holes or pockets, it will be understood, are to contain the mail to be delivered to the addresses at the various stops or points of distribution. The horizontal partitions or shelves constituting the tops and bottoms of the various pigeon-holes or pockets are preferably constructed of rigid material such as strips of wood, metal, or they may be constructed of a suitable quality of stout straw-board. The side divisions or partitions are constructed necessarily of a suitable quality of fabric such as canvas, and of similar material as the back 4. These horizontal partitions or shelves are united in a manner to enable the tiers of shelves to collapse one upon the other, as shown in Fig. 3, owing to the side partitions and the back of the rack being constructed of fabric. In the drawings I have shown the canvas or fabric constituting the inner side or vertical partitions forming the pockets or pigeon-holes to be each of one continuous strip. These strips of canvas pass between the abutting edges.
of the shelves or horizontal partitions 2 and are united at their ends to the extreme upper and lower boards 5 and 6 which form the top of the uppermost tier of pockets and the floor of the lowermost tier of pockets, respectively. Convenient means for attaching the ends of said fabric strips consists of metal clamps or bars 12 which are secured to the boards 5 and 6 in any suitable manner such as by means of bolts and nuts 13, the edges of said canvas strips being held between said clamps and boards. The canvas strips constituting the outermost vertical partitions of the pockets are secured to the outermost edges of the horizontal partitions or shelves by means of a suitable number of finishing nails 14. Owing to the boards 5 and 6 forming the upper and lower inclosures of the series of pockets, they are necessarily each of one integral piece extending horizontally across the width of the device, while the intermediate shelves or horizontal partitions 2 are individual pieces which are united at their front edges by means of horizontal strips 7 and at their back edges by means of metal rods 8 which lie in grooves 9 in the back edges of said horizontal partitions or shelves, such rods lying on the outside of the back canvas and forcing the said canvas into said grooves. A series of staples 10 afford convenient means for uniting the rods in such positions. The front stripes 7 are also utilized to indicate or designate the mail contained in the various pockets, or in other words, the various deliveries of mail for each particular stop. The uppermost board 5 is conveniently provided with hooks 11 at the ends by means of which the rack may be suspended while being filled with mail by the post office distributors and may be likewise suspended in the vehicle in a convenient manner for the mail to be taken out of the various pockets or, as shown in Fig. 2, the collapsible rack may be opened after the manner of a book both to receive the mail and for the delivery of the mail therefrom.

Having described my invention, I claim:

A collapsible mail rack comprising top and bottom horizontal walls, a plurality of horizontal shelves, continuous strips rigidly uniting the front edges of the shelves, a series of continuous walls formed of canvas extending vertically between the adjacent ends of said horizontal shelves and forming therewith a plurality of collapsible pockets for the reception of mail, the ends of said canvas walls being united to the top and bottom horizontal walls which form the outer horizontal inclosures of the uppermost and lowermost tiers of shelves, the two outermost vertical canvas walls being united to the outer edges of the outermost horizontal shelves and the top and bottom horizontal walls, a continuous canvas wall forming the back closure of the entire series of pockets, and a series of horizontal rods extending across said continuous canvas wall and uniting the same to the rear edges of the horizontal shelves, substantially as specified.

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

HARRY L. BITTLE.

Witnesses:

MELLIE GALLOWAY,
MATTHEW SIEBLER.