June 20, 1950 C. B. GALLAGHER 2,512,423

FASTENER FOR ENVELOPES

Filed Sept. 23, 1947

FIG. 1.

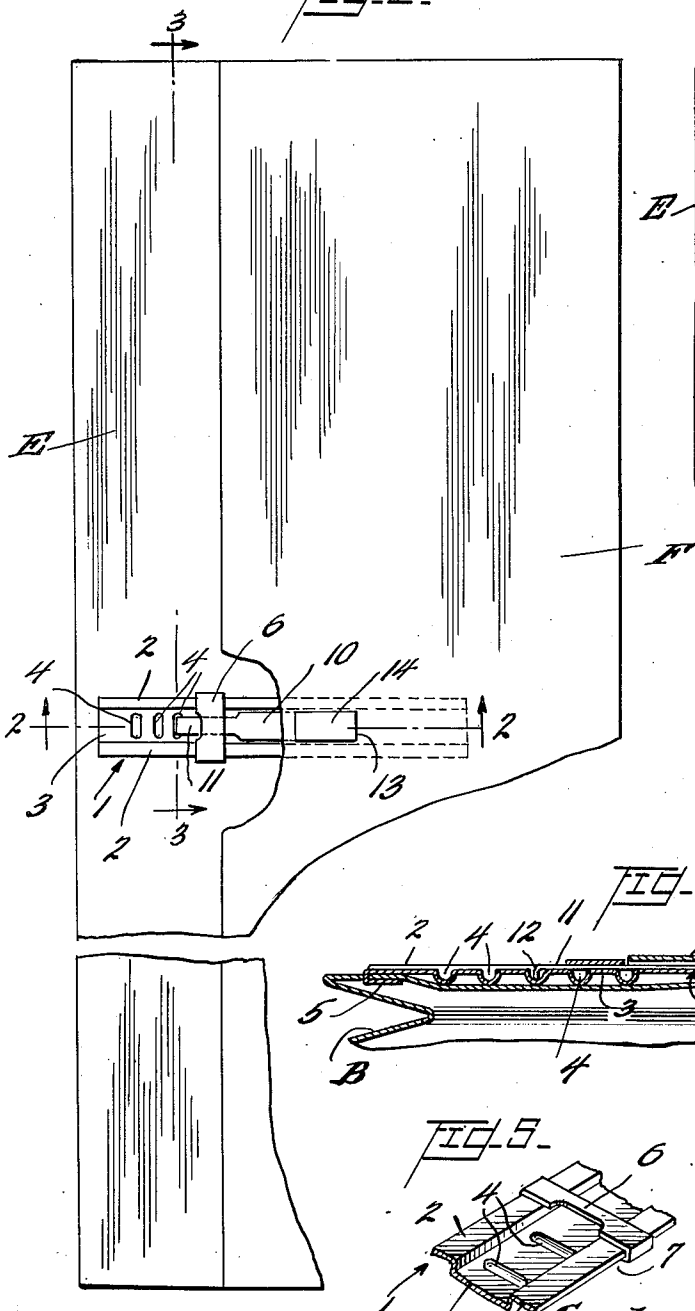


FIG. 3.

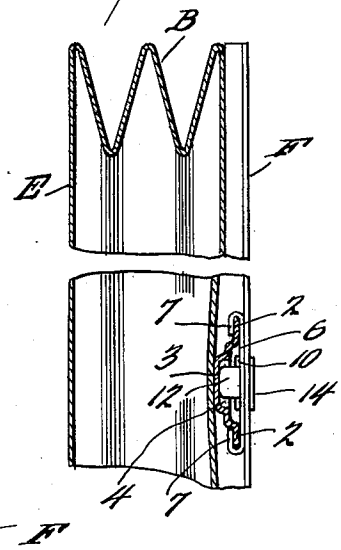


FIG. 4.

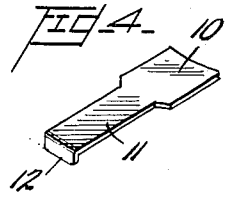


FIG. 2.

FIG. 5.

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FASTENER FOR ENVELOPES

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4 Claims. (Cl. 24—206)

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This invention relates to a latch for envelopes, and more particularly to a latch for expansible envelopes such as commonly used for holding legal and other important documents.

An object of the invention is to provide an improved and simplified latching device for envelopes of the type indicated which is adapted to securely hold the flap in closed position regardless of the extent to which the expansible envelope has been expanded.

A further object of the invention is to provide a latch of the type indicated in which the accidental unlatching of the device is effectively prevented.

A further object of the invention is to provide a latching device of the type indicated of improved and simplified structure adapting it to large scale economical manufacture and ease of application to the envelope.

Further objects will more particularly appear in the course of the following detailed description.

The invention consists in the novel construction, arrangements and combinations of parts hereinafter more particularly described and claimed.

One sheet of drawings accompanies this specification as part thereof, in which like reference characters indicate like parts throughout.

In the drawings:

Figure 1 is a back plan view partly broken away of an expansible envelope with the present invention applied;

Figure 2 is a transverse cross section taken on line 2—2 of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a fragmentary longitudinal cross section taken on line 3—3 of Figure 1;

Figure 4 is a fragmentary perspective of the tongue end of the flap carried element; and

Figure 5 is a fragmentary perspective of the guide member carried by the envelope body with its associated slide.

In the use of expansible envelopes such as are commonly used for handling legal and other important papers, various expedients have been resorted to and a number of mechanical devices contrived to permit the effective latching of the envelope to secure the flap closed at different stages of expansion of the envelope, but none of these devices has proven entirely satisfactory for various reasons.

The present invention, a preferred embodiment of which is illustrated in the accompanying drawings, has been found to eliminate most of these objectionable features and to provide a

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highly efficient, easily applied and easily manipulated means for effectively fastening the flap of the envelope with respect to the body of the envelope regardless of the number of documents contained and the extent to which the body of the envelope has been expanded.

In the drawings a conventional expansible envelope E is shown provided, as is customary, by end bellows structures B permitting the expansion of the distance between the front and rear walls of the envelope to accommodate a varying number of documents, and having a flap F formed by a fold line with respect to the front panel of the envelope, and extending as herein illustrated, lengthwise of the envelope, although it will be appreciated that the present invention is equally applicable to expansible envelopes of other proportions and shapes.

To effectively latch and secure the flap F with respect to the rear face of the body of the envelope E, I provide an elongated strip indicated generally by 1, which elongated strip is formed with a medial longitudinally extending depression 3 which is preferably formed by depressing the central longitudinally extending medial portion of the strip below the plane of the opposed marginal portions 2—2 the depth of the thickness of the sheet of metal or the like from which the strip is formed, thus providing the marginal portions 2—2 as effective longitudinally spaced guideways for a slide member 6 which is formed as a short strip of similar sheet material having its end portions 7 bent under the marginal guideway portions 2—2 of the strip 1 so as to be freely slidable lengthwise of said strip. The bottom portion 3 or longitudinal guideway formed in the strip 1, is further formed with a plurality of spaced transversely extending depressions 4 in its bottom portion, and the ends of this strip 1 are herein illustrated as being turned downward through suitable slots in the body portion of the envelope E and crimped thereunder as at 5 to rigidly associate the strip 1 with the envelope, or any economical and satisfactory method of fastening strip 1 with the envelope.

The strip 1, it will be observed, is secured to the envelope E at right angles to the line of bend between the body of the envelope and the flap F, and preferably midway of the length of the flap, although it will be understood that if desired a plurality of these fasteners may be used and positioned at any portions of the envelope desired.

For each of the rigid strips 1 secured to the body of the envelope a second strip 10 is asso-

ciated with the flap member F in alignment with the strip 1 and secured by one end to the flap in such manner as to maintain this strip in rigid association with the flap, this being secured as illustrated herein by bending the strip 10 through a suitable slot in the flap as at 13, and then reversely bending the strip over itself as at 14, and bending its end inwardly through a second slot in the flap and crimping same under and between the body 10, and the portion 14, as is well illustrated in Figure 2. Other economical and satisfactory connections between the strip 10 and flap may be adopted. The free end of this strip 10 is formed as a tongue 11 of a width corresponding to the width of the depressed guideway 3 in the strip 1, and this tongue 11 is formed with a transverse depressed portion 12 of a size adapted to seat in one of the transverse depressions 4 formed in the guideway 3 of the member 1.

The operation of the device is simple inasmuch as the flap F is folded over the filled envelope and the slide 6 positioned at the left end of the strip 1, permitting the insertion of the tongue 11 in the longitudinal guideway 3 with its depressed portion 12 engaging the most conveniently positioned transverse slot 4 of the strip 1, after which the slide member 6 is moved toward the flap to overlie the tongue 11, and thus firmly secure the tongue 11 and flap with respect to the body of the envelope E.

It will be apparent that any disposition or tendency of the tongue 11 to rise in the guideway 3 to disengage the depressed portion 12, will increase the pressure on the slide member 6, thereby more effectively locking the assembled parts in the desired relationship and precluding the unintentional unlatching of the device. The unlatching of course is equally simple when desired, by merely sliding the slide member 6 away from the flap and thus releasing the tongue member 11.

Various modifications in the precise size and structure and materials from which the device is made, will readily suggest themselves to those skilled in the art.

Having thus described the invention, what is claimed is:

1. In an expansible envelope comprising a body portion and a flap portion hinged with respect thereto, a latching device for adjustably securing said portions together comprising complementary strip members secured to the back face of said body portion and to said flap portion, respectively, at right angles to the hinged axis of said flap portion, one of said strip members formed with a longitudinally extending depressed guideway, a slide member engaging the marginal portions of said member bridging said depressed guideway and freely slidable longitudinally thereof, the other strip member being formed with an elongated tongue of width and thickness to seat in the guideway beneath the slide member, said tongue and guideway formed respectively with complementary interengaging parts, said interengaging parts on one of said members being spaced apart lengthwise of the guideway and tongue.

2. In an expansible envelope comprising a body portion and a flap portion hinged with respect thereto, a latching device for adjustably securing said portions together comprising a strip secured to one of said envelope portions and formed with an elongated guideway, said guideway formed with a plurality of longitudinally spaced transverse depressions, a slide on said strip bridging the guideway, a second strip secured to the other of said envelope portions and having a tongue extending in alignment with the guideway in the first strip, said tongue formed with a depressed part formed to seat in a selected transverse depression in the guideway.

3. Device recited in the preceding claim in which the first mentioned strip has the medial longitudinal portion of the strip positioned below the plane of the opposed marginal parts, which latter parts constitute guideways for the slide, and which slide comprises a strip disposed transversely of the guideway with its end portions extended under said marginal parts.

4. Device recited in claim 2 in which the first mentioned strip has its medial longitudinal part in a plane below the adjacent marginal parts intermediate the end portions of the strip and constitutes the guideway, and in which the tongue formed on the second strip is proportioned in width and thickness to be embraced between the medial depressed portion and the marginal parts of the first strip when the depressed portion of said tongue is engaged in one of the transverse depressions formed in said medial guideway.

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