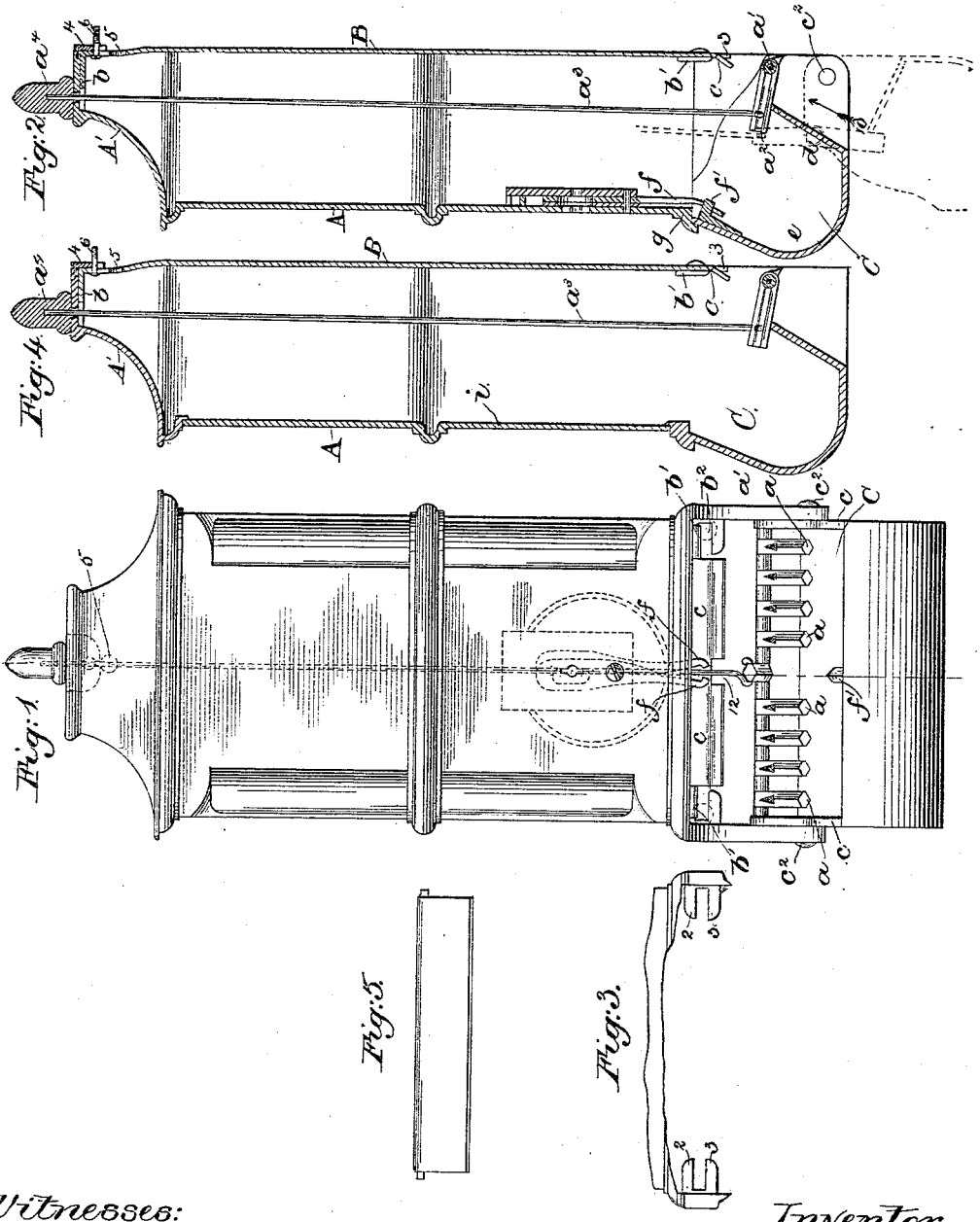
(No Model.)

# W. O. TAYLOR.

## HOUSE DOOR LETTER BOX.

No. 457,497. Patented Aug. 11, 1891.

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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WILLIAM O. TAYLOR, OF MALDEN, ASSIGNOR TO J. S. MASON & CO., OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

## HOUSE-DOOR LETTER-BOX.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 457,497, dated August 11, 1891.

Application filed July 1, 1890. Serial No. 357,460. (No model.)

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, WILLIAM O. TAYLOR, of Malden, county of Middlesex, State of Massachusetts, have invented an Improvement in Mail-Boxes, of which the following description, in connection with the accompanying drawings, is a specification, like letters and figures on the drawings representing like parts.

This invention has for its object the production of a novel and simple mail-box, especially adapted for individual use at houses and offices. Boxes of this class as commonly constructed have covers at or near their upper ends, which the carrier has to lift before inserting letters, papers, &c, constituting the mail-matter. This operation requires either the use of both hands or else two movements of one hand, thus causing loss of time and annoyance. These covers are seldom tightly fitted, and consequently water will readily enter between the box and cover, thus rendering such boxes unsuited for exposed positions. Also in this class of box, in order to insure greater security, the lid or cover is adapted to be but partially raised, for otherwise the box could be readily picked; and when the cover is but partially raised it is obvious that a straight and unobstructed entrance cannot be had, so that the mail-matter being inserted must frequently be bent, to its injury.

In the production of the box to be herein described it has been my aim to provide a box in which the mail-matter may be passed through a straight and unobstructed passage and may be inserted quickly without requiring the carrier to, by his hand, engage and lift the cover, and the construction is such that a paper or letter already in the box will not present its end to an incoming letter, or otherwise obstruct the mail-receiving passage, and with the construction herein to be described it is impossible to pick the box. I have also provided the box with an indicator which will indicate to the owner of the box whether or not mail-matter has been deposited therein, the indicator being set by the mail-matter being deposited in the box and restored to its normal position by the act of opening the box.

Figure 1 in front elevation represents a mail-box embodying my invention, the bottom of the box being represented as partially open, as indicated by dotted lines in Fig. 2. Fig. 2 in full lines shows a vertical section of the box represented in Fig. 1, the bottom being closed. Fig. 3 is a detail showing part of the inner side of one of the side pieces; Fig. 4, a vertical section of the modification to be referred to, and Fig. 5 a detail to be referred to.

The body A of the box (see Figs. 1 and 2) comprises the front and two sides and the top A′, and for cheapness is preferably cast in one piece, and may be of any desired design externally.

Each side of the box at its inner side is shown as provided with a slotted lug having two arm 2 3.

The back B of the box will preferably be of thin metal, such as sheet-iron. The upper end of the back B is shown as flanged over, as at *b*, and near the lower end the back piece is slitted at each side to form two lips *b′*, which are folded up over the arms 2 2, the said lips and arms serving to retain the lower part of the back in place. The back near its upper end fits behind an ear 4, which is secured to or forms part of the top of the box, and near the said ear the back has formed through it an elongated hole 5, the shape of which is shown by dotted lines in Fig. 1, the said hole being larger at its lower end than at its upper end, so as to fit over a headed pin or stud 6, (shown in Fig. 2,) which is supposed to be connected to the wall. In practice the space between the arms 2 and 3 will receive suitable screws $b^2$, (represented by dotted lines in Fig. 1,) the said screws being inserted into the wall to which the box is to be attached. The lower end of the back has two lips *c c*, with a space, as 12, between, the lips being inturned to act as stops for a series of finger-bars *a*, which are mounted loosely upon a rod *a′*, riveted up at its ends in the side piece of the box or otherwise secured to the box. This rod has an arm $a^2$, mounted loosely thereon, to which is jointed a link $a^3$, having at its upper end, as represented, a knob $a^4$, or equivalent, the said arm, link, and knob, or it might be the upper end of the link, constituting an indicator.

The box has on its bottom a compartment or receptacle C, having at each side an ear $c'$, through which studs $c^2$ pass, which serve as pivots for the compartment. This compartment or receptacle serves as the mail-holding compartment, and its front and rear walls are parallel and inclined, as best shown in Fig. 2. The arm $a^2$ of the indicator and the fingers $a$ normally rest upon the upper end of the inclined rear wall or portion $d$, thus closing the opening between it and the lower end of the back B, through which the mail-matter to be deposited in the mail receiving and holding compartment passes. This rear wall $d$ serves as a means for holding the mail deposited in the box free from the mail-receiving opening, to thereby continually afford a free and unobstructed entrance for the mail-matter until the box is full, and, so far as this part of my invention is concerned, I do not desire to limit myself to the construction of the mail-holding compartment, except so far as one wall of said compartment is arranged to accomplish this result. As herein represented, it is placed between the compartment and the mail-receiving opening, in which location I consider it as most effective.

By referring to Fig. 4 it will be seen that the mail-holding compartment C is rigid, and that a door, as $i$, is provided, which may turn on hinges at one side.

The carrier on his arrival at a box pushes the paper, letter, or whatever he may have to deposit up into the box through the mail-receiving opening, which is obstructed only by the pivoted fingers $a$ and the arm $a^2$, the stops $c$ preventing too great upward movement of the fingers in the direction of the arrow 10 when lifted by the upper end of the letter, paper, or card meeting the said fingers and arm. (See dotted lines, Fig. 2.) As soon as the mail-matter is so far inserted that its lower end arrives at the top of the wall $d$, the fingers $a$ act to move said mail-matter over the wall, and, so far as this function of the fingers is concerned, a solid or one-piece plate (see Fig. 5) may be employed. The fingers $a$, however, subserve an additional purpose—namely, for closing the mail-receiving opening by a series of independent lids, so that in order to pick the box the entire series must be held in elevated position, which operation would require a tool substantially filling the opening. So far as these independent fingers are concerned, it does not matter at what part of the box the opening may be placed. The arm $a^2$, when lifted by insertion of mail-matter, is turned over the pivot-rod, so that it passes its dead-center and enters the slot 12 between the two stops $c$ $c$ and remains there, leaving the indicator elevated above the top of the box, thus indicating that a paper, letter, or some article has been deposited in the box.

When the mail-holding compartment C is unlocked and dropped on its pivots $c^2$ into the dotted-line position shown in Fig. 2, the pivot-rod $a'$ is moved in the arc of a circle about the pivot $c^2$ as a center, carrying with it the fingers $a$ and also the arm $a^2$. During this movement of the compartment C, if the indicator was set, the upper end of the arm $a^2$ would bear against the rear side of the box until the knob $a^\times$ rested on the top of the box, and as the compartment continues to move the arm $a^2$ will be raised on its pivot until the said arm is in a direct line with the rod $a^3$, or substantially so. As the compartment C is restored to its normal position, the arm $a^2$ will resume its normal position.

The space in the rear part of the box at the rear of the wall $d$ is sufficient to allow the operator's fingers to come up substantially to the fingers $a$.

When the letter, paper, or card is deposited, it rests in the mail-holding compartment, and the mail-receiving opening being located at a point above the bottom of the said compartment, and also at a point below the top of an ordinary letter, additional mail-matter may be added, as that which is first deposited, being held by the mail-holding wall. In this manner it will be understood that the end of a paper, letter, or a card cannot close the mail-receiving opening or obstruct an incoming letter or paper.

The body of the box has a lock of suitable construction. The lock herein shown consists, essentially, of two spring-arms $f$ $f$, adapted to engage a projection $f'$ on the box-bottom. Any usual or suitable form of lock may be employed, as the lock is not herein considered as a part of this invention.

The box described has a suitable flange $g$ at its lower end at the front to overlap the upper end of the compartment C, and rain cannot enter the box. Consequently the contents are kept dry.

By the term "mail-holding wall" herein used I desire it to be understood that it is intended to cover any form of wall or equivalent means which serves to keep the mail-matter deposited in the box free and clear from the entrance thereto.

I claim—

1. In a mail-box, a mail-receiving opening, a mail-holder extended below said opening and which holds the mail-matter free and clear from obstructing the mail-receiving opening when inserted therethrough, and means for automatically directing the inserted mail-matter into position to be engaged and held by said mail-holder, substantially as described.

2. In a mail-box, a mail-holding compartment, a mail-receiving opening near one end of said compartment and above the bottom thereof, and a mail-holding wall extended from the bottom of the compartment to the inner edge of the opening to separate the said compartment and opening, substantially as and for the purposes specified.

3. In a mail-box, a mail-holding compartment, a mail-holding wall separating said compartment from the mail-receiving open-

ing to keep the mail-matter deposited in the box free and clear from the said opening, and means for automatically moving the mail-matter across the top of the wall into the compartment, substantially as and for the purposes specified.

4. In a mail-box, a mail-receiving opening and a mail-holding wall at the bottom of the box contiguous to said opening, combined with independently-movable fingers normally resting upon the top of said wall and closing said opening, substantially as and for the purposes specified.

5. In a mail-box, a mail-receiving opening and a mail-holding wall at the bottom of the box contiguous to said opening, combined with several independently-movable weighted fingers normally closing said opening and adapted to move the mail-matter below the top of said wall, substantially as described.

6. In a mail-box, a mail-receiving opening, combined with an indicator the actuating member of which normally lies in the path of and is actuated by the mail-matter passed through said opening, whereby the indicator is moved into its abnormal position, means for opening the box to remove the deposited mail-matter, and pivoted connections between the closure for said opening and the indicator to restore the indicator to its normal condition by the act of opening the box, substantially as described.

7. A mail-box having a pivoted mail-holding compartment and a mail-receiving opening at the bottom of the box, substantially as described.

8. A mail-box having a mail-holding compartment and a mail-receiving opening at the rear of said compartment, substantially as described.

9. The body *a* of the box, the pivoted mail-holding compartment having a wall *d*, and mail-receiving opening leading up from the bottom of the box, substantially as described.

10. The body *a* of the box, the pivoted mail-holding compartment having a wall *d*, and a mail-receiving opening leading up from the bottom of the box, combined with a series of fingers *a*, to operate substantially as described.

11. The body *a* of the box, the pivoted mail-holding compartment having a wall *d*, and a mail-receiving opening leading up from the bottom of the box, combined with a series of fingers and an indicator, to operate substantially as described.

In testimony whereof I have signed my name to this specification in the presence of two subscribing witnesses.

WILLIAM O. TAYLOR.

Witnesses:
BERNICE J. NOYES,
EMMA J. BENNETT.