(No Model.) 2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

J. E. WELLS.

MAIL POUCH.

No. 458,955. Patented Sept. 1, 1891.

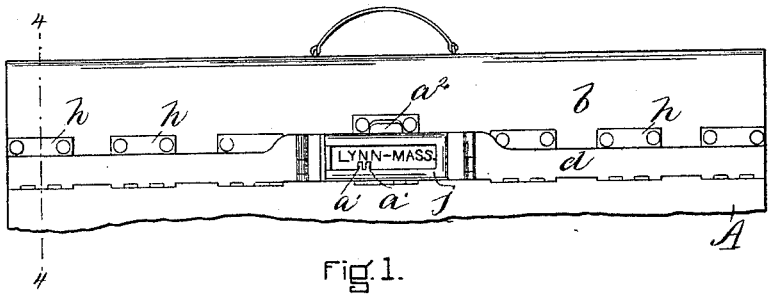

Fig. 1.

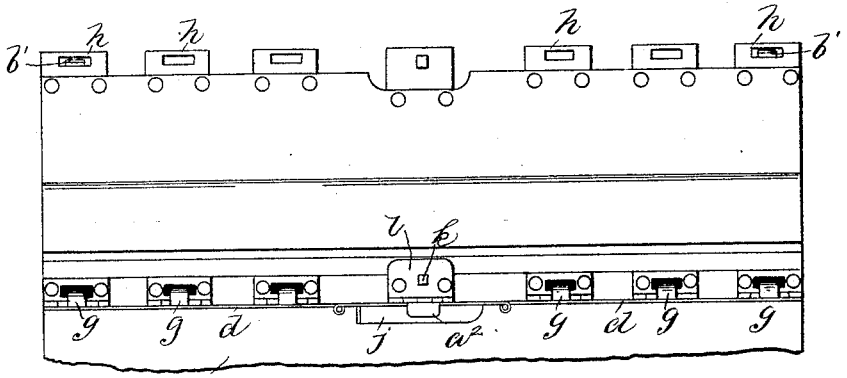

Fig. 2.

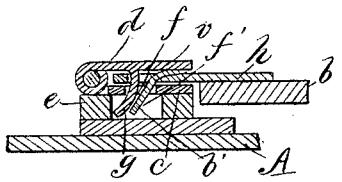

Fig. 4.

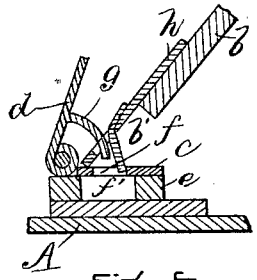

Fig. 5.

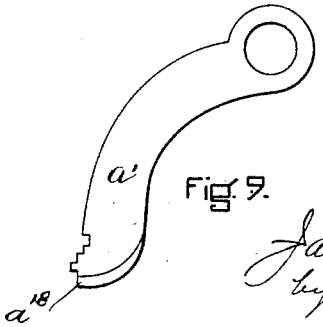

Fig. 9.

WITNESSES.

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(No Model.) 2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

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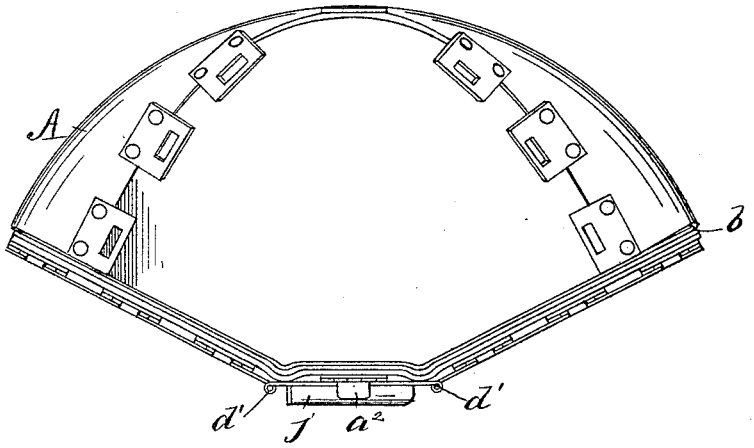

Fig. 5.

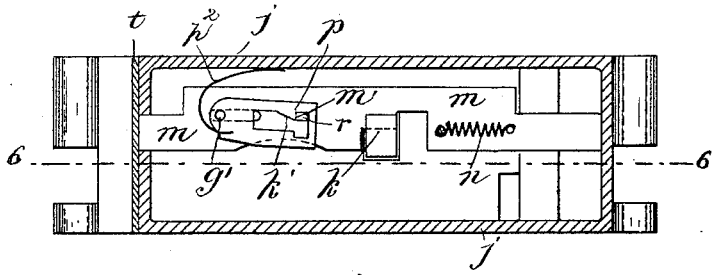

Fig. 7.

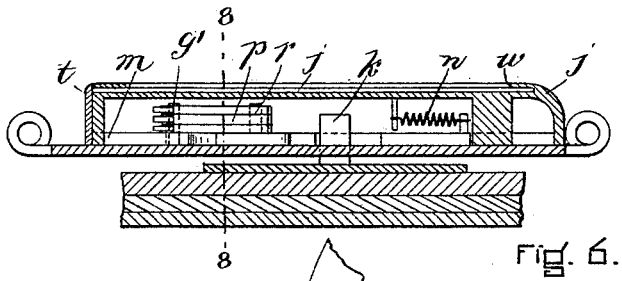

Fig. 6.

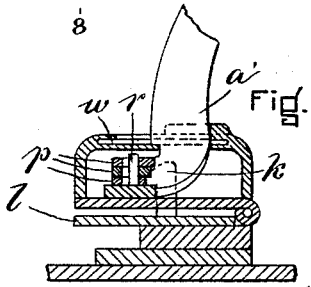

Fig. 8.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JAMES E. WELLS, OF AUBURN, NEW YORK.

MAIL-POUCH.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 458,955, dated September 1, 1891.

Application filed June 5, 1891. Serial No. 395,257. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JAMES E. WELLS, of Auburn, county of Cayuga, State of New York, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Mail-Pouches, of which the following is a specification, reference being had to the drawings accompanying and forming a part hereof, in which—

Figure 1 is a view of the upper portion of the pouch closed and locked. Fig. 2 is a similar view showing the pouch unlocked and the flap thrown back. Fig. 3 is a plan view showing the mouth of the pouch wide open. Fig. 4 is a section on line 4 4, Fig. 1. Fig. 5 is a section of the same parts shown in Fig. 4 in a different position. Fig. 6 is a section lengthwise of the lock to illustrate the operation of the interlocking projections on the plates. Fig. 7 is a plan of the lock with the front of the case removed. Fig. 8 is a section on line 8 8, Fig. 6. Fig. 9 is a detail of the key.

My invention has for its object to produce a mail-pouch of simple and durable construction, which may be quickly closed and opened, and which when closed may be securely locked and sealed, so that any attempt to tamper with the pouch by unauthorized persons will be readily detected. It will first be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, and the features thereof then will be particularly pointed out in the claims at the close of this specification.

I will describe my invention as shown in the accompanying drawings, which embody the best form thereof now known to me.

A represents the pouch, which is preferably of leather, although, as will be clear, any suitable material may be employed, and it may be here noted that my invention may be readily applied to the form of mail-pouch which is now in use.

Across the front of the pouch, near the top, I secure by means of hinge-plates *c* the metallic strip *d*. Underneath the hinge-plates *c* I place the supplementary strip *e*, which may be of leather, and which serves to hold the hinge-plates up from the pouch. The hinge-plates and supplementary strip are securely riveted to the pouch. Each hinge-plate is provided with a perforation or slot *f*, and the supplementary strip *e* is preferably cut away, as shown at *f'*, under each of said perforations to permit the tongues or projections *g* to pass into the slots of the hinge-plates when the metallic strip *d* is closed in locking the pouch. On the flap of the pouch are riveted a series of slotted plates *h*, the slotted portions of said plates projecting beyond the edge of the flap, (see Figs. 4 and 5,) and being so set that their slots will coincide with the slots on the hinge-plates *c*, as also with the tongues *g* of the hinged strip. The pouch is closed by simply throwing the plates *h* down on the hinge-plates *c*, so that the slots in each will coincide, and then closing the hinged strip *d*, forcing the tongues thereon through the slots in the plates *h*, as also through the slots in the hinge-plates *e*. It will be clear that if the hinged metallic strip *d* is then locked in its closed position the pouch will be securely fastened. For the purpose of thus locking said strip *d* I provide it with a lock, the case of which is shown at *j*, the bolt of said lock cooperating, when the pouch is locked, with a notched post or projection *k*, which is rigidly secured to the plate *l*, (see Fig. 8,) which also serves as a hinge-plate, and is riveted, as are the other hinge-plates, to the top of the pouch.

The lock is of simple construction, and consists of a bolt *m*, arranged to slide in the case *j* lengthwise thereof. This bolt may be provided with a spring *n*, (see Fig. 7,) which tends to throw it out, and by this means the lock may be more quickly unlocked, although, as will be obvious, such a spring may or may not be employed. I prefer to use it, however, as by its use the lock is more quickly unlocked, the bolt flying back instantly when the key is applied. The bolt is secured in its locked position by means of tumblers or wards *p*, of which three are shown, but which may be increased or diminished in numbers, as desired. These tumblers are pivoted in the case at *g'*, (see Figs. 6 and 7,) and are slotted in the shape shown, the slots receiving a pin *r*, which is fast to the bolt. When the tumblers are thrown up to the proper position by the use of a key of the proper shape, the pin *r* is free to travel lengthwise of the slots and the bolt is free to be thrown back by its spring.

In locking the punch it is only necessary to

shove the bolt inwardly with the fingers, which may be readily done, owing to the peculiar shape of the slots in the tumblers, which are curved, as shown at k', Fig. 7, to permit the pin r to travel inwardly, pressing back the tumblers p until the bolt reaches the locking position, when the pin r snaps into place behind the retaining-shoulders m' of the wards. The bolt is actuated in one direction by the spring, as heretofore explained, and in the other by the fingers of the operator, or it may be moved in both directions by the operator if a spring is not employed. The operation of locking cannot be performed with a key, the key not actuating the bolt in either direction, as will be clear. The end of the bolt which projects beyond the end of the case is provided with a plate t, which serves to close the recess w in the front of the case, which is provided for the reception of a card which may have the destination of the pouch printed thereon or other information. It will be noted that this card covers the key-hole, and that it cannot be removed when the bolt of the lock is shoved in because the retaining-plate t then closes the opening by which the card is inserted or withdrawn. The card can only be withdrawn when the pouch is again unlocked, and to unlock the pouch the key must be inserted in the key-hole, thus puncturing the card. As will be clear, a new card is required each time the pouch is used. To indicate where the key-hole is located, two projections a' (see Fig. 1) are provided, which are secured to the lock-case and project over the face of the card. Between these projections the key may be inserted. To further provide against any attempt to open the pouch by prying up the extreme ends of the metallic strip d, the plates h opposite the ends of said strip d, or all of the plates h, if desired, may be provided with tongues or projections b', (see Figs. 4 and 5,) which project inwardly from the edge of the slots in said plates, and which pass into the slots in the hinge-plates in the same manner as do the tongues g. By this arrangement if the ends of the metallic strip d should be forced back part way, as illustrated by Fig. 5, the plates h could not be raised sufficiently to clear their tongues or projections b' from the slots in the hinge-plates, or if they were raised sufficiently for this purpose the tongues g would then be in the slots, so that the plates h could not be withdrawn. The plates h can only be withdrawn and the pouch opened by unlocking and throwing back the locking strip or bar d.

As it is desirable to hang the pouch up with its mouth wide open when it is receiving mail-matter, the strip d is pivoted at one or more points, as shown at d', so that the mouth of the bag may be extended into the position shown in Fig. 3.

The key is preferably of the shape shown in Fig. 9, and is rounded at its operative end, the rounded end being sharpened or brought to an edge, so that it may puncture the card on the face of the lock readily and without detaching a portion of the card and forcing it into the lock, which might operate to clog the lock and render it inoperative. The key is not turned in the lock in the ordinary way to operate the tumblers; but it is simply used as a lever, the handle being thrown down, causing the tumblers to be thrown up against the action of their springs p^2 into the unlocking position. This facilitates the unlocking of the pouch, because the key, which hangs where the operator may readily seize it, requires only to be inserted in the key-hole and pressed slightly downward, when the lock flies open and the key falls out. When the key has been forced downward sufficiently to open the lock, the flat face a^{18} on the edge of the key beyond the bits thereof comes against the edge of the bolt which lies directly under the tumblers, as shown in Fig. 8, and the bolt is thus made a part of the combination.

It will be noted that the tumblers may be so arranged as to require a key of any peculiar shape, and the combination may be thus varied as much as in the lock of the well-known Yale or other standard type.

A curved projecting lip (shown at a^2, Figs. 1, 2, and 3) is provided on the edge of the lock, which facilitates the unlocking and opening of the pouch and greatly increases the speed with which the operation may be performed.

What I claim is—

1. A mail-pouch provided on one side of the mouth thereof with a locking post or projection and having hinged to the said side of the mouth a flat strip provided on one side thereof with projecting tongues, the said strip carrying a lock having a bolt for engagement with the locking post or projection, the pouch having secured to the opposite side of the mouth thereof plates slotted for the passage therethrough of the said tongues and locking post or projection, substantially as described.

2. A mail-pouch provided on one side of the mouth thereof with a locking post or projection and having hinged to the said side of the mouth a flat strip provided on one side thereof with projecting tongues, the said strip being jointed at one or more points and thereby rendered flexible to permit the pouch to open wide, and carrying a lock having a bolt for engagement with the locking post or projection, the pouch having secured to the opposite side of the mouth thereof plates slotted for the passage therethrough of the said tongues and locking post or projection, substantially as described.

3. A mail-pouch provided with a hinged metallic closing-strip secured to one side of the mouth or opening thereof and provided with tongues or projections and slotted co-operating plates to receive said tongues or projections, said plates being secured to the flap of said pouch, one or more of said co-operating

plates being provided with an inwardly-projecting lip adapted to lock into a slot or recess in the hinge-plate of said metallic strip, as and for the purpose described.

4. A mail-pouch provided with a lock secured to a hinged metallic strip, said lock having a recess in the front of the case to receive an address-card, said recess being closed by a plate secured to the bolt of the lock, whereby when the pouch is locked the address-card cannot be removed without unlocking the pouch and puncturing the card, substantially as shown and described.

5. A mail-pouch having a metallic strip hinged thereto, said strip being provided with tongues or projections, slotted hinge-plates with which said projections co-operate, and slotted plates secured to the flap thereof, whereby when the hinged strip is closed the projections thereon will pass through the slotted plates and through the hinge-plates, substantially as shown and described.

6. A mail-pouch provided with a lock having a recess in the face thereof to receive a card and having the bolt thereof provided with a retaining-plate, which closes the opening to said recess when the lock is locked, substantially as shown and described.

7. A mail-pouch having on one side of the mouth thereof a perforated plate and having on the other side of the mouth a locking post or projection to pass through the perforation of said plate, and also a lock hinged to the pouch and provided with a bolt for engagement with the post or projection, and also with tumblers co-operating with the bolt to retain it in locked position, the said bolt projecting through the case of the lock and thereby being operable to move it to its locking position independently of a key, substantially as described.

8. A mail-pouch having on one side of the mouth thereof a perforated plate and having on the other side of the mouth a locking post or projection to pass through the perforation of said plate, and also a lock hinged to the pouch and provided with a bolt for engagement with the post or projection, with tumblers co-operating with the bolt to retain it in locked position, the said bolt projecting through the case of the lock and thereby being operable to move it to its locked position independently of a key, and with a key taking a fulcrum against the case to cause it to act by a straight tilting movement to shift the tumblers to their unlocking position, substantially as described.

JAS. E. WELLS.

Witnesses:
WM. A. MACLEOD,
CHARLES R. WELLS.