

C. H. SEAWELL.  
Illuminating Signs.

No. 163,697.

Patented May 25, 1875.

FIG. 1.

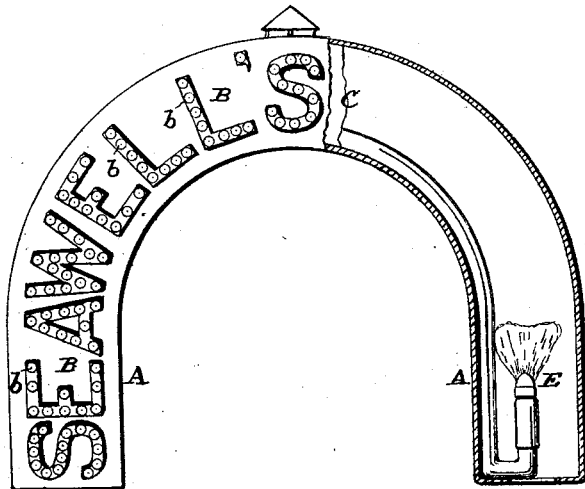


FIG. 2.

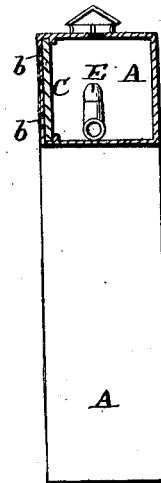
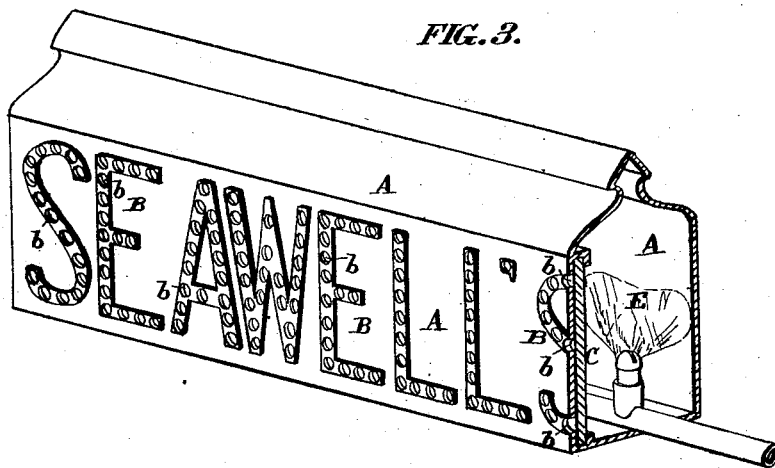


FIG. 3.



ATTEST:

*Robert Burns*  
*Henry Tamer*

INVENTOR:

*Charles H. Seawell*  
*By Knight & Co.*  
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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

CHARLES H. SEAWELL, OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

## IMPROVEMENT IN ILLUMINATING-SIGNS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **163,697**, dated May 25, 1875; application filed August 1, 1874.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, CHARLES H. SEAWELL, of St. Louis, St. Louis county, State of Missouri, have invented a certain new and useful Improvement in Illuminating-Signs, of which the following is a specification:

My improvement consists in a case or shell with a sign painted on its outer side or sides, and having the painted letters perforated, so that a light placed within the case will show the form of the letters in time of darkness. Within the case behind the outer shell, but in near proximity to or contact therewith, are plates of ground or frosted glass, colored or plain, which are preferably made to slide out to enable them to be washed. A reflector or reflectors are used behind the burners or lamps.

In the drawings, Figure 1 is a front elevation, with part broken away to show the interior. Fig. 2 is a transverse section at *xx*, Fig. 1. Fig. 3 is a perspective view of another form of sign.

A is the case, which may be made of any desired form, and which has a painted sign upon one or all of its sides. The letters of the sign (marked B) are perforated at *b*, so that the light shines through and shows the shape of the characters during the night-time. At the inner side of the perforated sides of the case are plates C of frosted or ground glass, which may be either colored or plain, and by which the light of the gas-burners or lamps E is diffused, so as to show evenly through the perforations *b*.

The glass plates C, wherever feasible, should be made to slide out, or be made otherwise removable, to enable them to be washed upon both sides.

The perforations *b* may have any shape, either circular, angular, or irregular, and may be associated together so as to represent other objects besides letters and numbers.

My improvement forms an effective sign by day and night, requiring simply the addition of the interior light for use at night-time.

This sign will be seen to possess all the advantages without the disadvantages of those in use, it being an ordinary painted sign, with the addition of perforations or drill-holes in the letters, a semi-transparent plate of glass,

and suitable illuminating-burners. The perforations or drill-holes are almost indistinct in day-time; but when the illuminating material behind them is lighted, they produce or indicate the outlines of the letters by permitting the light, whitened by passing through the semi-transparent medium, to be seen there-through, thus presenting a most distinct and pretty sign at night.

As it is a painted sign there are no projections, and the semi-transparent backing being removable, the whole is easily cleaned. This is an important advantage where many signs are used and have to be often cleaned.

Though very effective as a sign, the cost of construction is small and danger of breakage reduced to a minimum.

I am aware that the following devices have been used before, and therefore I lay no claim thereto.

In one class (1) the letters are painted on glass in semi-transparent colors; in another class (2) glass disks are inserted in the case to represent some object; in another class (3) block letters, or block letters having an interstitial surface of carved ornamental work, and provided with an illuminated or differently-colored background of corresponding shape; in another class (4) the letters are cut through the sign-board in such a manner as to present beveled or flaring edges; and in another class (5) the letters are stamped or cut out of metal, and both the letters stamped out and the metal stamped are placed over perforated metal or glass.

In the first class frequent loss occurs from breakage, and the letters are obliterated by the washing of the glass. In the second class the first cost of a sign is very great, and so precludes their common use, and the size of disk puts it out of question to represent any small object or letter by association of any number of them. In all, except the last class named, it is with difficulty that the signs are kept clean. In the last class the sign is not adapted for daylight.

I claim as new and of my invention—

1. As a new article of manufacture, the metallic plate or sign-board A, having letters B painted thereon, and backed by a semi-transparent glass plate, C, said letters having

perforations or drill-holes *b* to indicate or produce their outline at night, in combination with one or more illuminating-burners, as herein described.

2. In combination with a lantern, A, having the letters painted thereon, and perforations to indicate the outlines of said letters, the

semi-transparent glass plate C and one or more illuminating-burners, E, as set forth.

CHAS. H. SEAWELL.

Witnesses:

SAML. KNIGHT,  
ROBERT BURNS.