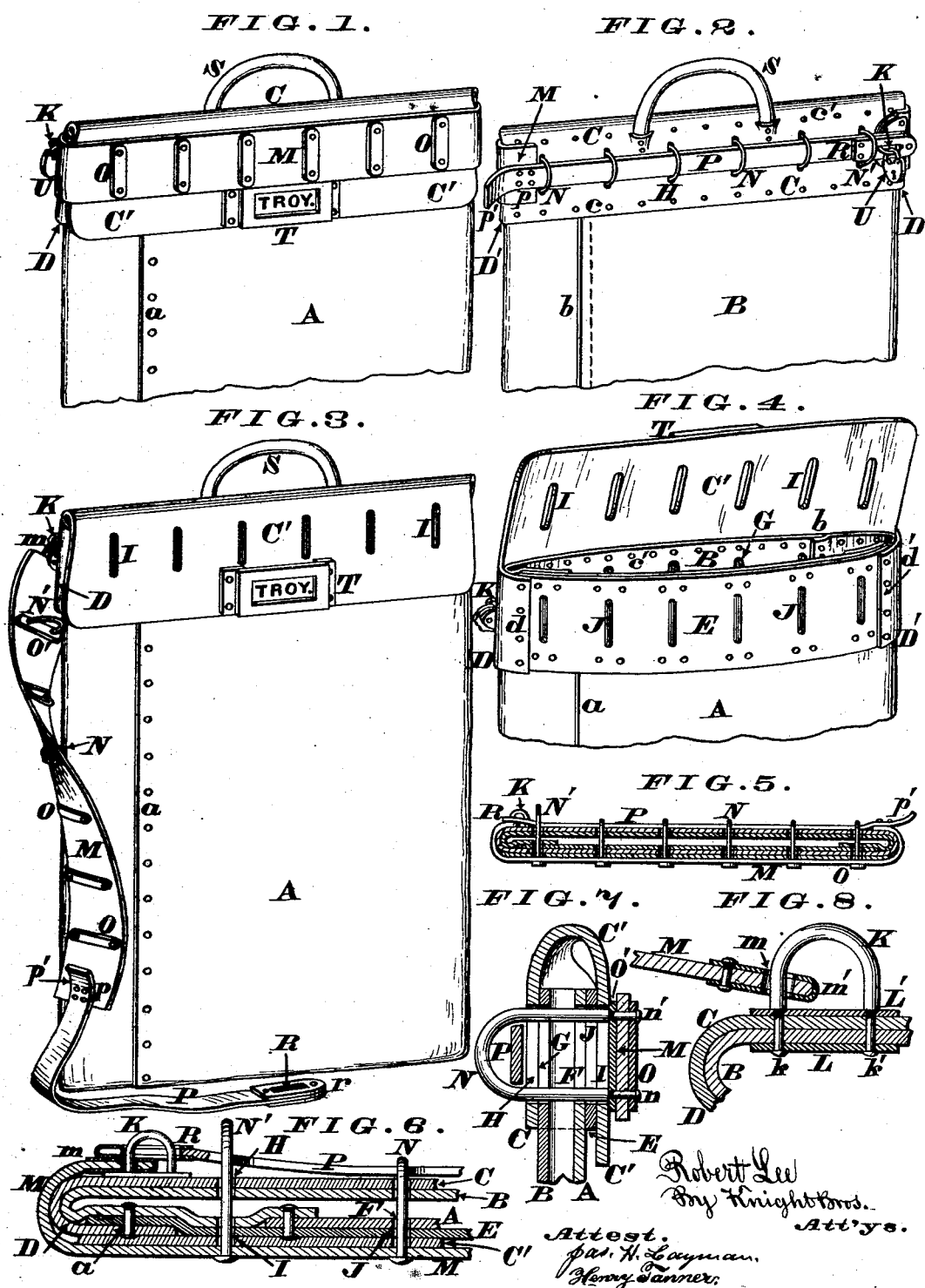


R. LEE.
Mail-Bag Fastener.

No. 163,789.

Patented May 25, 1875.



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IMPROVEMENT IN MAIL-BAG FASTENERS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 163,789, dated May 25, 1875; application filed May 5, 1875.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, ROBERT LEE, of Cincinnati, Hamilton county, Ohio, have invented a new and useful Mail-Bag Fastener, of which the following is a specification:

The object of my invention is to afford a provision for closing the mouth of a mail-bag or pouch in such a secure manner as to effectually prevent the contents being abstracted without cutting the bag, while, at the same time, the proper official is enabled to open the mouth in a few moments, after having released the padlock or other appropriate lock or catch. This result I accomplish by a fastener consisting of a flap, a girth studded with staples, and a strap that is rove through the staples in the act of closing the bag, as hereinafter fully described.

In the accompanying drawing, Figure 1 is a perspective view (front) of a mail-bag closed with my improved fastener. Fig. 2 is a rear perspective view of the same. Fig. 3 is a perspective view, showing the bag after the girth and retaining-strap have been disengaged. Fig. 4 is a perspective view, showing the flap turned up, so as to permit access to the bag. Fig. 5 is a horizontal section through the top of the closed bag. Fig. 6 is a horizontal section through a portion of the closed bag. Fig. 7 is a vertical section through the retaining devices in the plane of one of the staples. Fig. 8 shows the manner of securing the girth to the back of the bag.

Of the above illustrations, Figs. 6, 7, and 8 are on a larger scale than the others.

A represents the front, and B the rear, of a mail-bag, pouch, or sack of any suitable size or shape, and these two members may be composed of leather or canvas, or rubber cloth, or other appropriate material. The said front and rear pieces are securely seamed together, either by stitching or by riveting, as shown at *a b*.

Secured to the upper portion of the rear of the bag by a double row of stitching or rivets, *e e'*, is a stout strip of leather, C, which is turned over the top of the bag, and hangs down far enough in front to form a flap, C', as more clearly shown in Figs. 1 and 3. This leather backing C has wings D D', which embrace the sides of the bag, and are riveted to

the front of the same, as represented at *d d'* in Fig. 4.

Securely riveted to the front of the bag is a re-enforce, E, of the same width as the overlap of the backing C, which re-enforce is concealed when the flap C' is turned down over it.

The front A, rear B, backing C, flap C', and strengthening-band or re-enforce E are provided, respectively, with corresponding vertical slots or incisions F G H I J, for a purpose which will presently appear.

K is a staple, whose shanks *k k'* are riveted to two plates, L L', between which are clamped a portion of the rear, B, of the bag and of the backing C, as more clearly shown in Fig. 8. Engaging with the staple K is an eye, *m*, of a girth, M, this end of said girth being strengthened by a binding-plate, *m'*. This girth is long enough to surround the front and sides of the bag, and is studded with a number of rearwardly-projecting staples, loops, or rings, N, each of which is adapted to pass through its proper members of the slots F, G, H, I, and J when the bag is closed. (See Figs. 6 and 7.) The shanks *n n'* of these staples are riveted to the plates O O', of which plates the plate O is secured to the exposed side of the girth, while the other plate, O', is secured to the inner side of said girth M. By this arrangement the staples are easily and cheaply attached to the girth, and in such a secure manner as to effectually prevent their accidental separation therefrom. Of these staples, the one, N', nearest the eye of the girth is made somewhat longer than the others, for a purpose explained in the sequel.

Riveted at *p* to the free end of the girth M is one end of a strap, P, whose other end is provided with a slot or eye, R, that is adapted to engage with the staple K when the bag is fastened. This slotted end of strap P is strengthened with a binding-plate, *r*, as shown in Fig. 3. In attaching the strap P to the girth M a stub or loop, *p'*, is allowed to project from the end of the strap, so as to afford a convenient means of disengaging it for opening the bag.

S is a suitable handle, which is securely attached to the backing C. T is a clip or other appropriate retaining device, for holding a card or label to indicate the destination of

the bag, said clip being securely attached to the flap C'. U represents the customary padlock.

To fill the bag, it is first placed in an erect position, and the flap C' turned back, thereby affording an ample and unobstructed mouth or opening, into which the letters or other mail matter may be poured in the most expeditious manner. This opened condition of the bag's mouth is clearly represented in Fig. 4, and a reference to this illustration will show that there are no inwardly-projecting staples or other obstructions to prevent the free entrance and exit of letters, &c.

As soon as the bag is filled the operator turns down the flap C', and passes the girth M completely around the front of the bag, and in so doing he, at the same time, inserts the staples N in the slots F, G, H, I, and J. This act causes said staples to pass completely through the various plies A, B, C, C', and E of the bag, as clearly shown in Fig. 7. The staples N project a sufficient distance through and beyond the backing C, to allow the strap P to be rove through them, which is accomplished by simply pushing said strap toward the staple K, the stiffened end R r of the strap enabling its rapid insertion in the retaining devices N.

As the staple N' is somewhat longer than its fellows N the free end of strap P can be bent back far enough to enable its eye R to engage over the staple K, after which the application of the padlock U to the staple K at once secures the fastener in its closed condition. When thus secured it will be noticed that the mouth of the bag is protected by no less than seven plies or thicknesses of leather, which are so arranged and bound together as to render it impossible to abstract any of the contents without first cutting or otherwise injuring the bag. Of the above thicknesses the two members C and E serve in particular to strengthen the bag proper, A B, at the portion weakened by the slots.

On arrival of the bag at the place indicated on the label T the proper official has simply to unlock the padlock U, and disengage it from the staple K. The eye R is then released from said staple, so as to leave the strap P free to be withdrawn from the staples N, which act is readily accomplished by first pulling upon the stub p' until the strap has been drawn out far enough to enable it to be grasped, when a quick jerk withdraws it from all the staples, after which the girth M is unwound from the front of the bag, so as to withdraw the staples

N successively out of their several slots. The girth and strap then depend from the staple K, as seen in Fig. 3, which leaves the flap C' at perfect liberty to be opened, as shown in Fig. 4, so as to afford an entirely unobstructed mouth to the bag, which may then be inverted, if desired, so as to spill out its entire contents at once.

The secure manner in which the girth and its attached continuation or back strap P surround the bag's mouth acts to relieve the latter of all strain, and therefore such pouches or sacks will prove to be much more secure and durable than any now in use; besides which, the rapid manner of applying and disengaging the fastener will save much time in making up and assorting the mails.

Another advantage is, that my fastener can be secured around a full bag as readily as around an empty one.

If desired, the binder r may be of spring-steel, and be carried nearly or quite the full length of the strap P, so as to more effectually stiffen the same without impairing its necessary flexibility.

Light bags may be constructed without the re-enforce or front band E J, because even then the bag's mouth will be composed of six thicknesses of material.

It is evident that a less or greater number of staples may be employed than those here represented, according to the size and purposes of the bag.

I claim as new and of my invention—

1. A bag-fastener consisting of a girth, M m, secured by one end to the bag at K, and having a series of rearwardly-projecting staples, N, arranged to pass from the side next the mouth or opening through appropriate slots in the bag's mouth, so as to allow the back strap P to be rove through them, said strap being a continuation of the girth M, and adapted to be coupled to the staple K, or its equivalent, substantially as herein described, and for the purpose set forth.

2. The stub or loop p' at the junction of the girth M with the back strap P, as and for the object stated.

3. The combination of shanked and riveted staples N n n', girth M, and guard-plates O O', for the purpose designated.

In testimony of which invention I hereunto set my hand.

ROBERT LEE.

Attest:

GEO. H. KNIGHT,
JAMES H. LAYMAN.