

T. H. BROWN, Jr.
Letter-File.

No. 196,558

Patented Oct. 30, 1877.

FIG. 1.

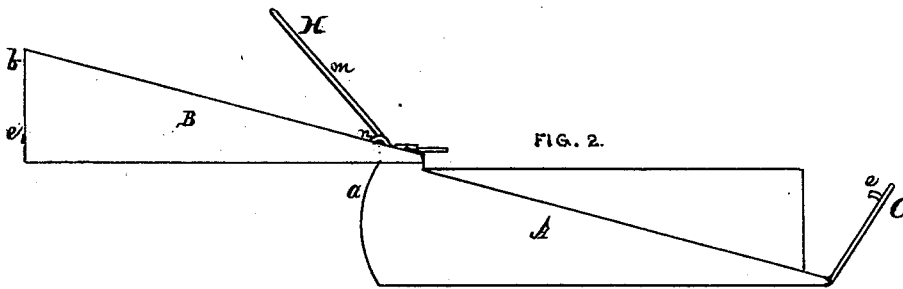
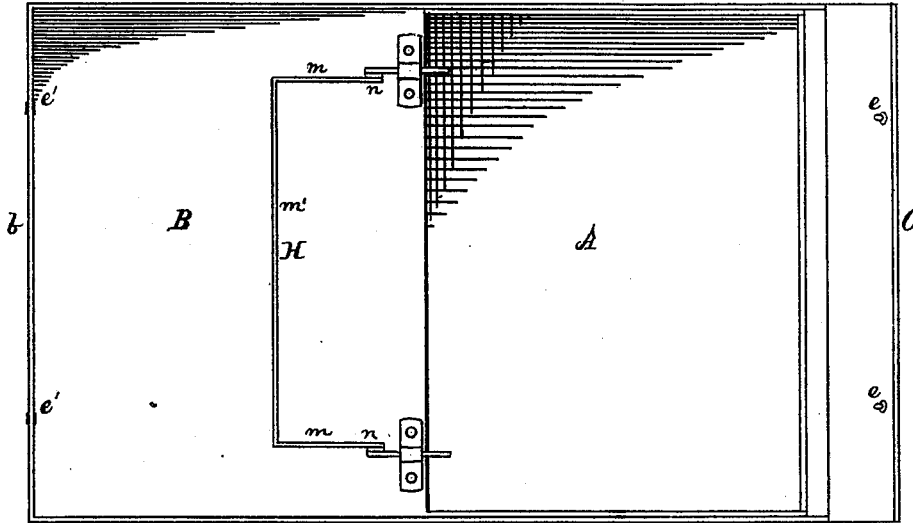


FIG. 2.

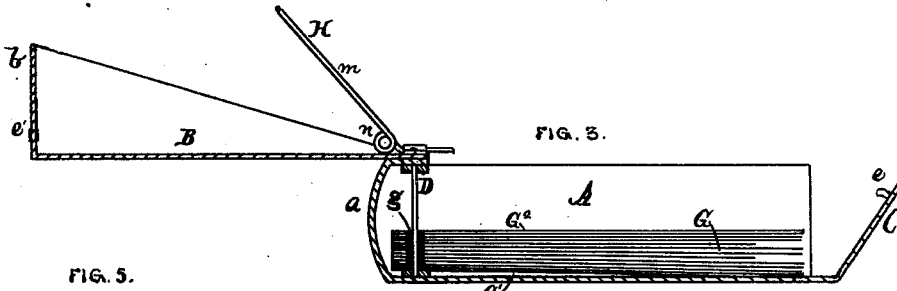


FIG. 3.

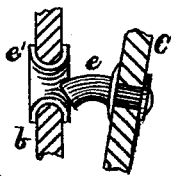


FIG. 4.

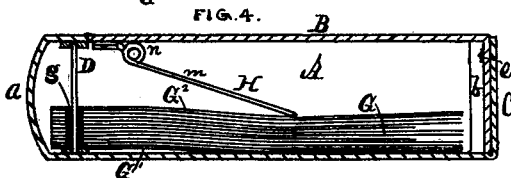


FIG. 5.

Witnesses
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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

THOMAS H. BROWN, JR., OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, ASSIGNOR TO STEPHEN CLARY, OF SAME PLACE.

IMPROVEMENT IN LETTER-FILES.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **196,558**, dated October 30, 1877; application filed June 9, 1877.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, THOMAS H. BROWN, JR., of Chicago, in the county of Cook and State of Illinois, have invented certain Improvements in Letter-Files, of which the following is a specification:

In practicing this invention I construct a box in form something like a book, and so made that it may be fully opened at one of the lids and in front, or wholly closed, to guard the contents from dust. Inside of this box, and quite near the book-back, are fitted one or more rods, running from one lid to the other. These rods may be permanently fixed to the box, or they may be so secured as to be taken out at pleasure. Such removability, however, if given, is merely a convenience of the manufacturer, and does not relate particularly to the use of the file, so that, so far as concerns the file as a file, the rods may be called permanent, even if they are removable. Upon these rods are placed the leaves of an alphabetical index or portfolio. These leaves are perforated with smooth-cut equal-sized holes at the back edge, to slide loosely up and down upon the rod or rods, and the perforation is made large enough so that each leaf may be turned up from the front edge, as though hinged loosely at the back. An extra leaf, preferably of somewhat heavier material than the index-leaves, is applied for convenience at each side of the index. It is, however, not absolutely necessary.

In order to hold the contents of the alphabetical portfolio from being displaced, some contrivance is desirable, because the letters to be filed are simply placed in loosely. For this purpose I apply to the lid of the box a spring, which, when the lid is closed, presses against the leaves of the index or alphabetical portfolio, and thus secures the contents against displacement. When the lid is opened the spring is thus removed out of the way, and the letters are loose and free to be removed for examination.

There are some minor peculiarities, which will be best understood from the detailed description, with reference to the drawing.

The file thus constructed keeps the letters all the time clean and free from dust. When it is full of letters it may be placed upon a

shelf, like a book, with a label of its contents upon the back, with the assurance that the letters will remain in the order given them, and always readily accessible, overcoming one of the disadvantages of the old style of index-files, in the use of which it is customary to sew the index-leaves to the letters filed therein when the file is full, after which the letters cannot be removed separately for examination, and are frequently in part so concealed and covered in by the back part of the index that they cannot be read in the file.

In the accompanying drawing, which forms a part of this specification, Figure 1 is a plan view of the file opened. Fig. 2 is an end view of the same. Fig. 3 is a section of the same on line *x x* of Fig. 1. Fig. 4 is a similar section of the file closed. Fig. 5 is a sectional view of the fastening of the box, somewhat enlarged from the other figures.

Like letters of reference made use of in the several figures indicate like parts wherever used.

In the said drawing, A represents the box, containing and inclosing the alphabetical portfolio or index. B is the lid, made with the part *b*, which comes down to inclose the front of the box. This lid is hinged at the back to the part *a* of the box, being the part that represents, in appearance, a book-back. The hinged flap C, from the lower front edge of the box, folds up against the part *b* of the lid when said lid is closed, and, by means of hooks *e* upon the flaps and eyelets *e'* in the part *b*, secures the lid closed.

It will be noticed that the face of the hook is beveled off, so that when said part or bevel strikes the lower rim of the eye it will wedge the lid down and direct the hooks into perfect engagement. When engaged, the friction and the spring of the lid will be enough to prevent the book from withdrawing accidentally, but will not be sufficient to prevent the ready opening of the box.

Within the box, at the back, are wires D, which connect and keep the index-leaves in place. The index-leaves G are pierced at the back edge with smoothly punched or cut equal-sized holes *g*, considerably larger in diameter than the wire, so that they will not only freely

slide up and down said wires, but also so large that they will permit said leaves to be turned up freely, as though upon a hinge. G^1 G^2 are stiffer leaves at the bottom and top of the index, and pierced in like manner with large holes. The leaves G are marked successively at the front edge with an alphabet or with numbers or characters in such manner as may be desired, or as will best facilitate the classification of the contents of the file. The letters or documents to be filed are placed loosely between the index-leaves.

A spring, H , consisting preferably of a piece of wire bent into the two arms $m m$, connected by a cross-bar, m' , and having spring-coils $n n$, is secured to the inside of the box-lid in such manner, as shown, that the part m' will come down upon the index-leaves when the lid is closed, and will press said leaves somewhat in front of the center.

When the index is entirely full of papers filed the file may be put upon the shelf without any further preparation than simply closing it, and at any time thereafter a single document may be taken out for examination and returned, or when all of the documents have become old and out of date they may all be removed by simply turning up the file when open and shaking them out, after which the file is in condition to receive a new charge.

The spring H , when the box is closed, permits it to be placed on end like a book, or carried about and handled without danger of disarranging the contents. The file itself is so cheap and easily made that I find the best

way to use it is to fill it and file it away for good, whereby the box forms a binding or inclosure for the contents, which do not need other binding or protection, and which are thereby rendered always accessible and removable.

Having described my invention, I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent—

1. The combination of the perforated index-sheets, the rigid rod or rods upon which they are hinged to rise and fall, and the close inclosing box provided with a hinged lid, having attached thereto the spring device, which presses upon the index when the lid is closed and is released when the lid is opened, substantially as specified.

2. The box, the index-sheets, and the hinged box-lid, in combination with a spring device attached to the lid, which presses upon the index-sheets when the box is closed and is released when the box is opened, substantially as specified.

3. The letter-file box, the lid of which is provided with a downward flange at the front, and having a flap from the lower portion of the box, constructed to close upon the outside of the lid-flange and to be there secured, substantially as specified.

4. In a letter-file box, the flap of the box having the bevel-faced hook, in combination with the flange of the lid provided with the eye, substantially as specified.

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Witnesses:

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