2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

J. TATHAM.

Indicator for Freight-Cars.

No. 205,151. Patented June 18, 1878.

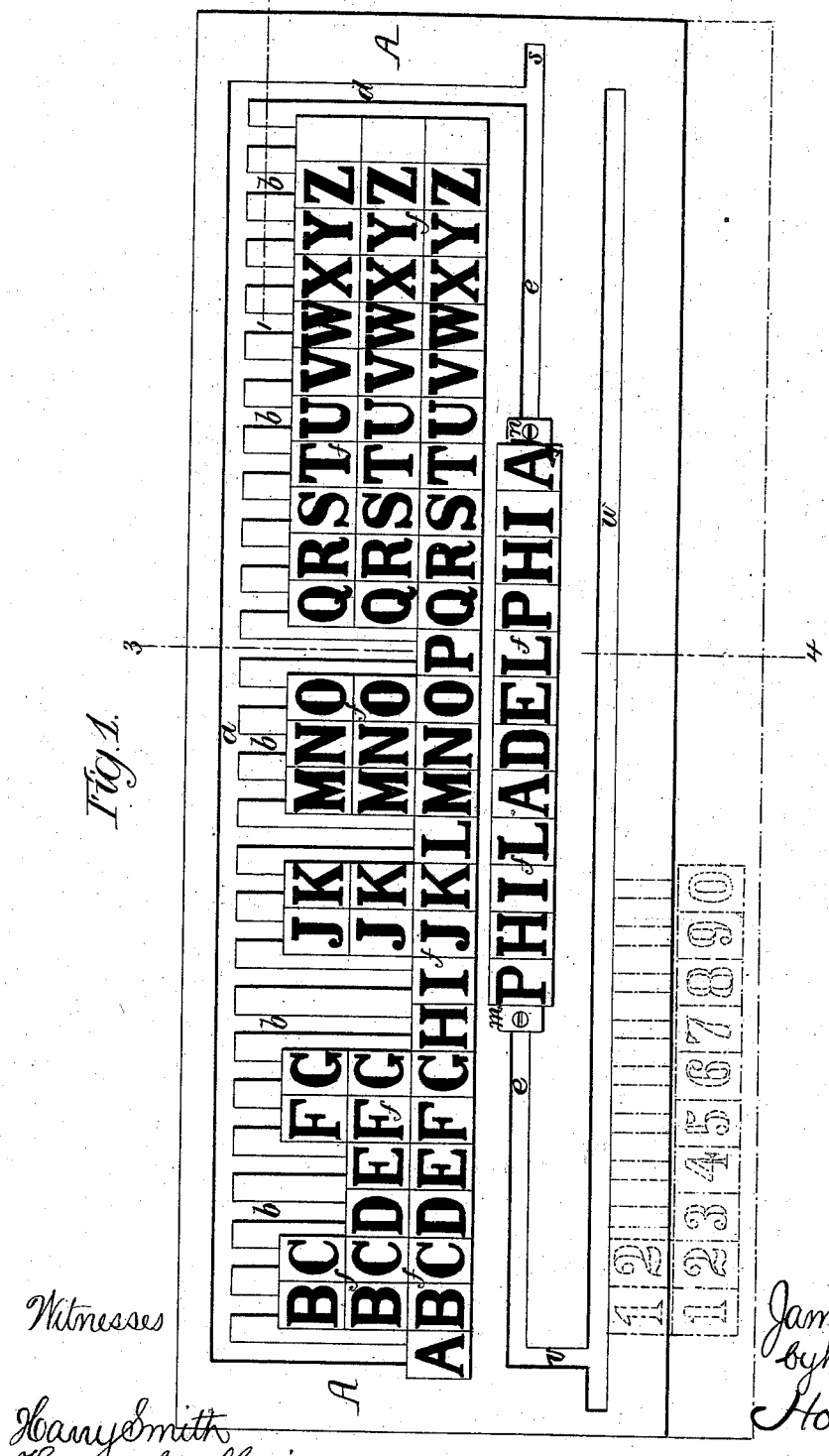


Fig. 1.

Witnesses
Harry Smith
Thomas McIlvain

Inventor
James Tatham
by his Attorneys
Howson & Son

2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

J. TATHAM.

Indicator for Freight-Cars.

No. 205,151. Patented June 18, 1878.

FIG. 2.

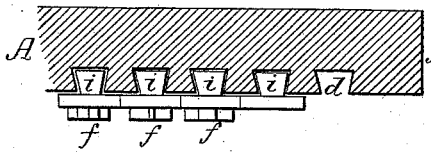
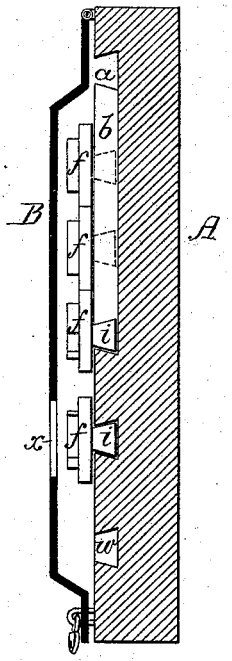


FIG. 3.



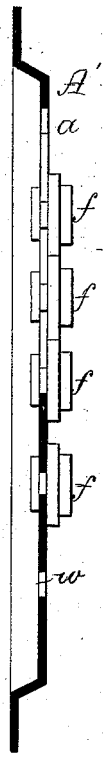
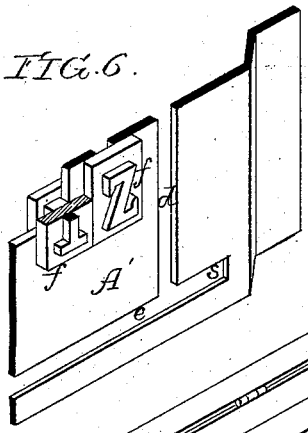


FIG. 5.

FIG. 6.



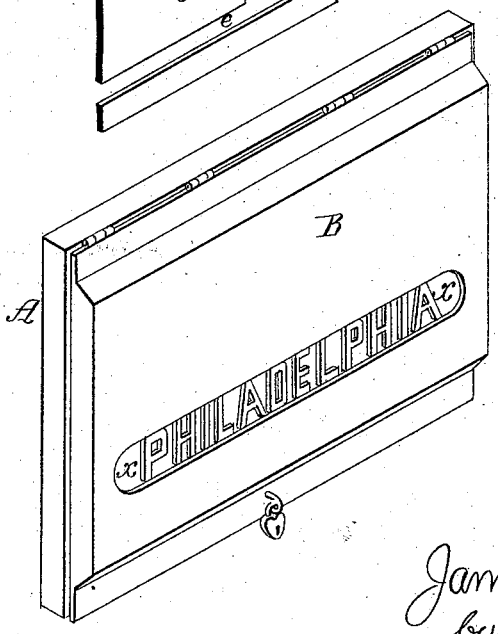


FIG. 4.

Witnesses,
Harry A. Crawford
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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JAMES TATHAM, OF PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA.

IMPROVEMENT IN INDICATORS FOR FREIGHT-CARS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **205,151**, dated June 18, 1878; application filed December 29, 1877.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JAMES TATHAM, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Indicators for Freight-Cars or other purposes, of which the following is a specification:

The main object of my invention is to provide a freight-car with movable and interchangeable letters and figures, which can be arranged to accord with the destination of the car, and for other purposes for which cars are usually marked.

In the accompanying drawings, Figure 1, Sheet 1, is a front view of my improved indicator for freight-cars; Fig. 2, Sheet 2, a sectional plan on the line 1 2, Fig. 1; Fig. 3, a vertical section on the line 3 4, Fig. 1, with the addition of a cover-plate; Fig. 4, a perspective view of the indicator shown in Fig. 3; and Figs. 5 and 6, views illustrating a modification of my invention.

The present method of indicating the destination of freight-cars by marking the same with chalk or similar material is objectionable, owing to the fact that the marks are apt to be obliterated—an objection which I have effectually overcome by my invention.

In Figs. 1, 2, and 3, A represents a frame, of wood or metal, arranged for attachment to the side of a freight-car in any desired conspicuous position.

In this frame A, near the upper edge of the same, is a horizontal dovetailed slot, *a*, which communicates with a number of vertical and similarly-shaped slots, *b*, and terminates at one end in a vertical slot, *d*, the latter communicating at the lower end with a horizontal slot, *e*.

To the slots *b* are adapted projections *i*, formed on the rear of a number of lettered blocks, *f*, blocks representing three complete alphabets being shown in the present instance.

The projections *i* of the blocks *f* are beveled on all four edges, so that they cannot be removed from the slots, but can slide freely therein.

When it is desired to mark the destination upon a car with the above-described device, a block, *m*, is first secured in position in the slot *e*, and the letters necessary to form the desired name are, in their regular order, moved from the slots *b* to the slot *a*, moved longitudinally through the latter, and then down through the slot *d*, and longitudinally through the slot *e*.

When the name has been completed, the blocks are locked in position in the slot *e* by means of a block, *n*, which is secured by a screw or other fastening.

While the name was being set up this block *n* rested in an offset, *s*, at one end of the slot *e*, so as not to interfere with the proper movement of the blocks *f*.

I have shown, in the present instance, beneath the slot *e*, another slot, *w*, which communicates with the slot *e* through a vertical slot, *v*, at one end. This slot *w* is intended for the reception of letters and numbers to form a date. The numbered blocks may be arranged in slots adjacent to the slots *b*, or may be placed adjacent to the slot *w*, as shown by dotted lines in Fig. 1.

In order to permit the introduction of the projections *i* of the blocks in the slots of the frame, an opening of a size sufficient to permit the passage of said projection *i* through it should be made in the frame at some point, this opening communicating, of course, with one of the slots, and being closed after all the blocks have been inserted.

I prefer, in most cases, to hinge to the frame, near one edge, a cover-plate, B, Figs. 3 and 4, this cover-plate being suitably locked to the frame, and having a slot, *x*, through which the name, or the name and date, can be observed, the lettered blocks in the slots *b* being hidden from view, so that they will not confuse the eye and detract from the prominence of the name or date.

In Figs. 5 and 6, Sheet 2, I have shown a modification of my invention, the frame in this case consisting of a raised plate, A′, of metal, having an arrangement of slots similar to the frame A, the projections of the blocks being recessed on all four sides, so as to form shanks adapted to the slots and heads to prevent the withdrawal of the blocks.

I claim as my invention—

1. The combination of the lettered or numbered blocks *f* and the clamping-blocks *m* and *n* with the frame A, having slots *a*, *b*, *d*, and *e*, and an offset, *s*, all as set forth.

2. The combination of the slotted frame and its lettered or numbered blocks, as described, with the slotted cover-plate B, as set forth.

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

JAMES TATHAM.

Witnesses:
RICHARD L. GARDINER,
HARRY SMITH.