

W. A. AMBERG.
LETTER-FILE CABINET.

No. 171,495.

Patented Dec. 28, 1875.

Fig. 1.

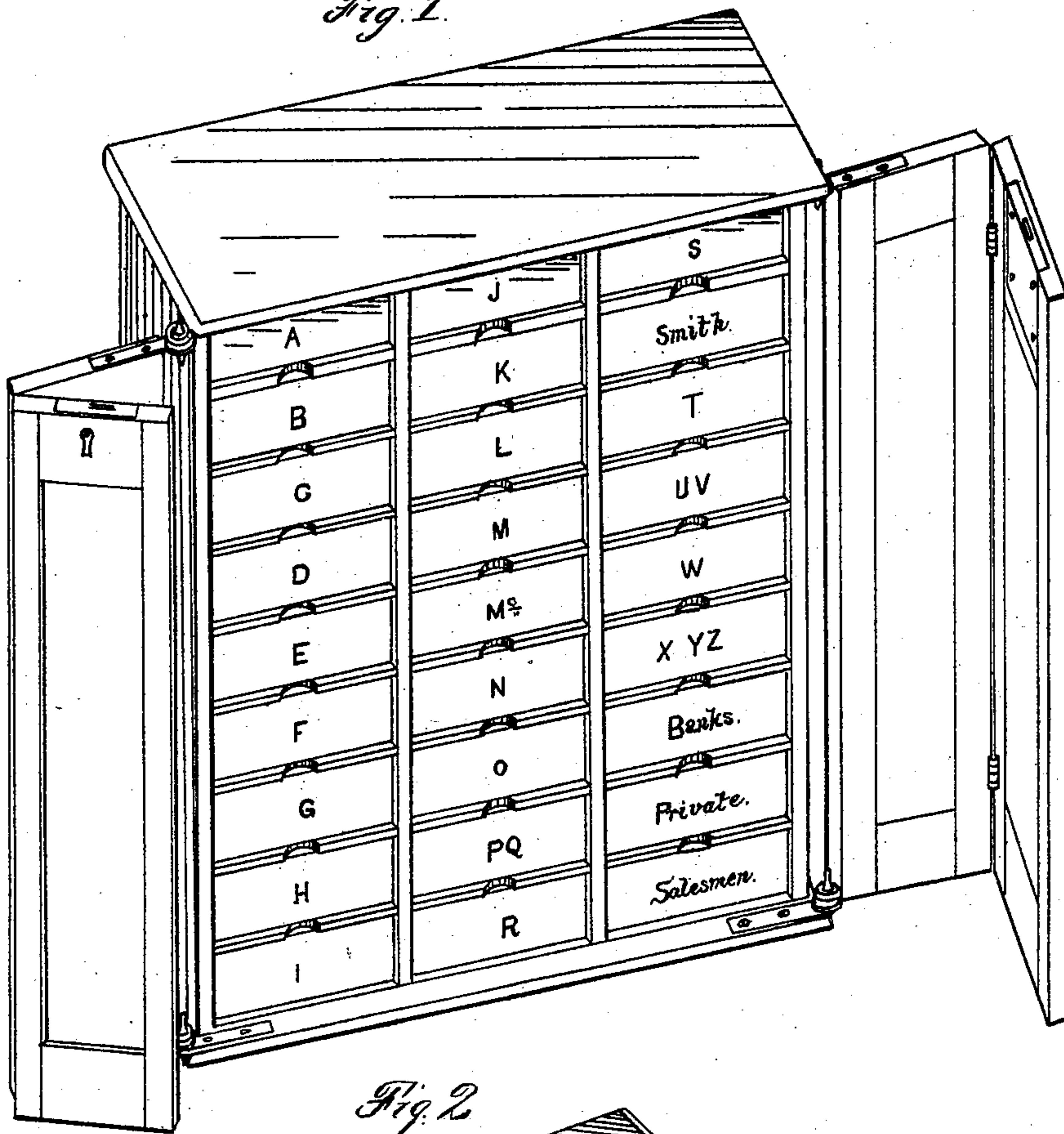
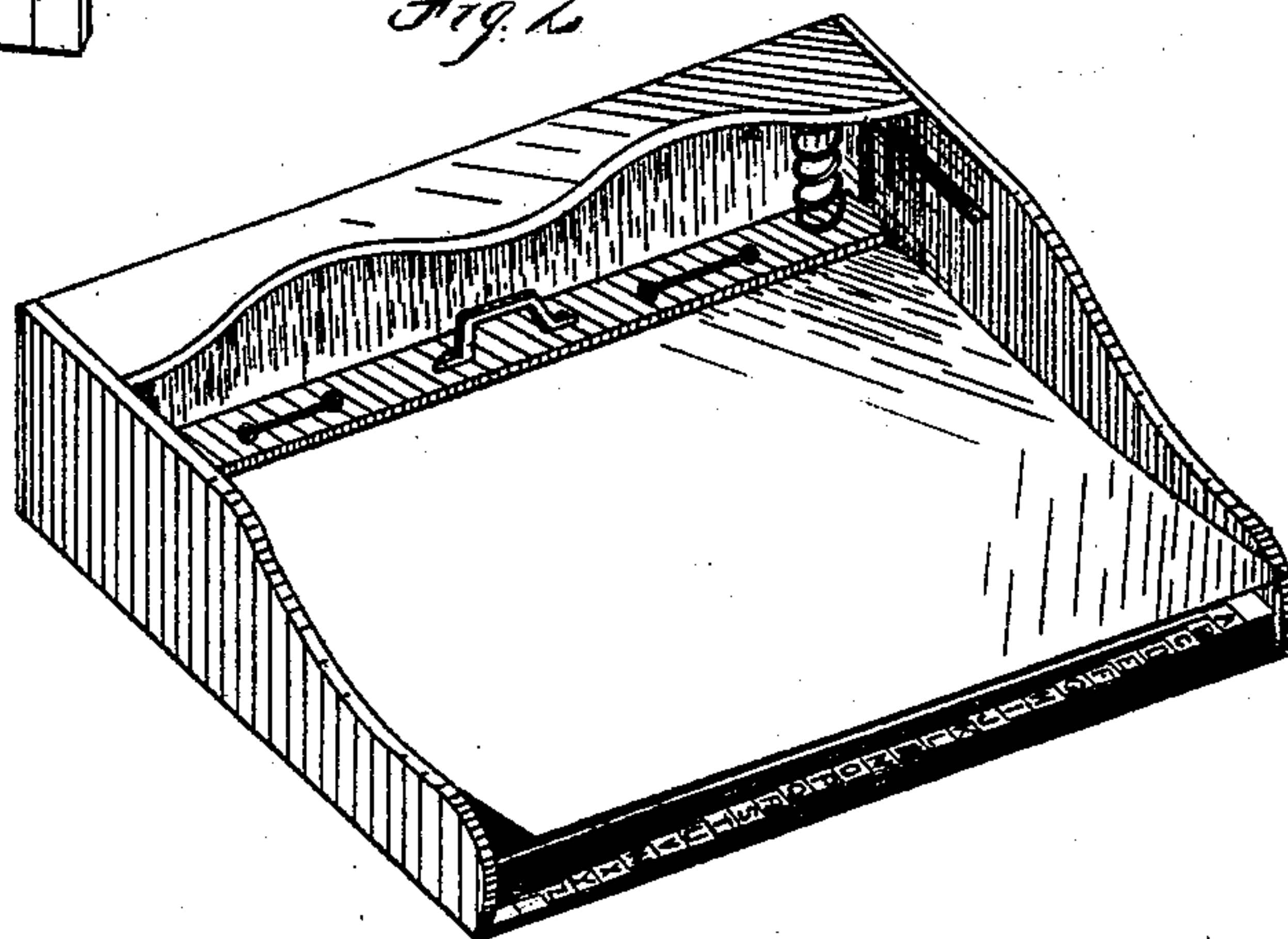


Fig. 2.



Witnesses

Geo. T. Smallwood Jr.
John Robey Jr.

Inventor.

William A. Amberg
By- John J. Halsted,
his Atty.

W. A. AMBERG.
LETTER-FILE CABINET.

No. 171,495.

Patented Dec. 28, 1875.

Fig. 3.

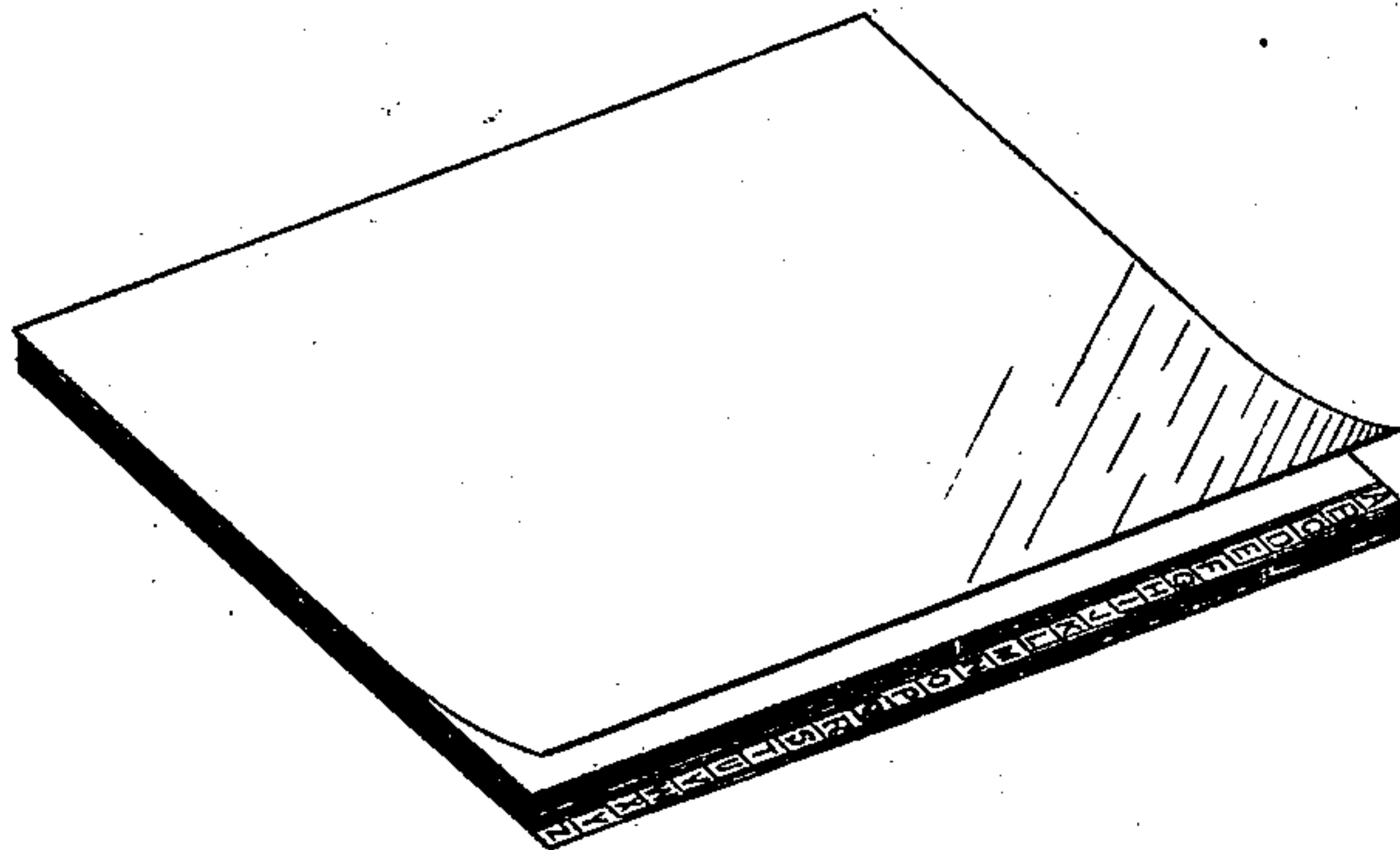


Fig. 4.

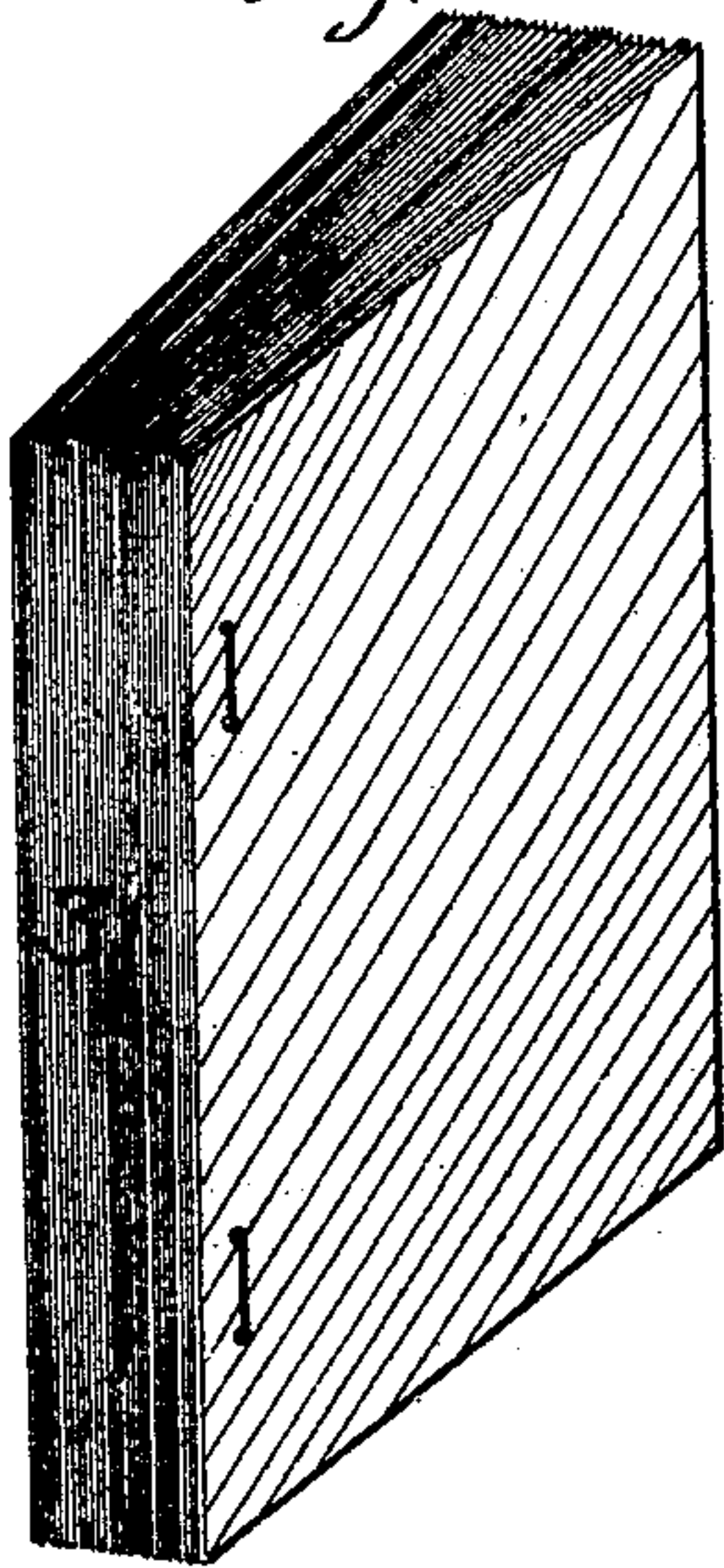
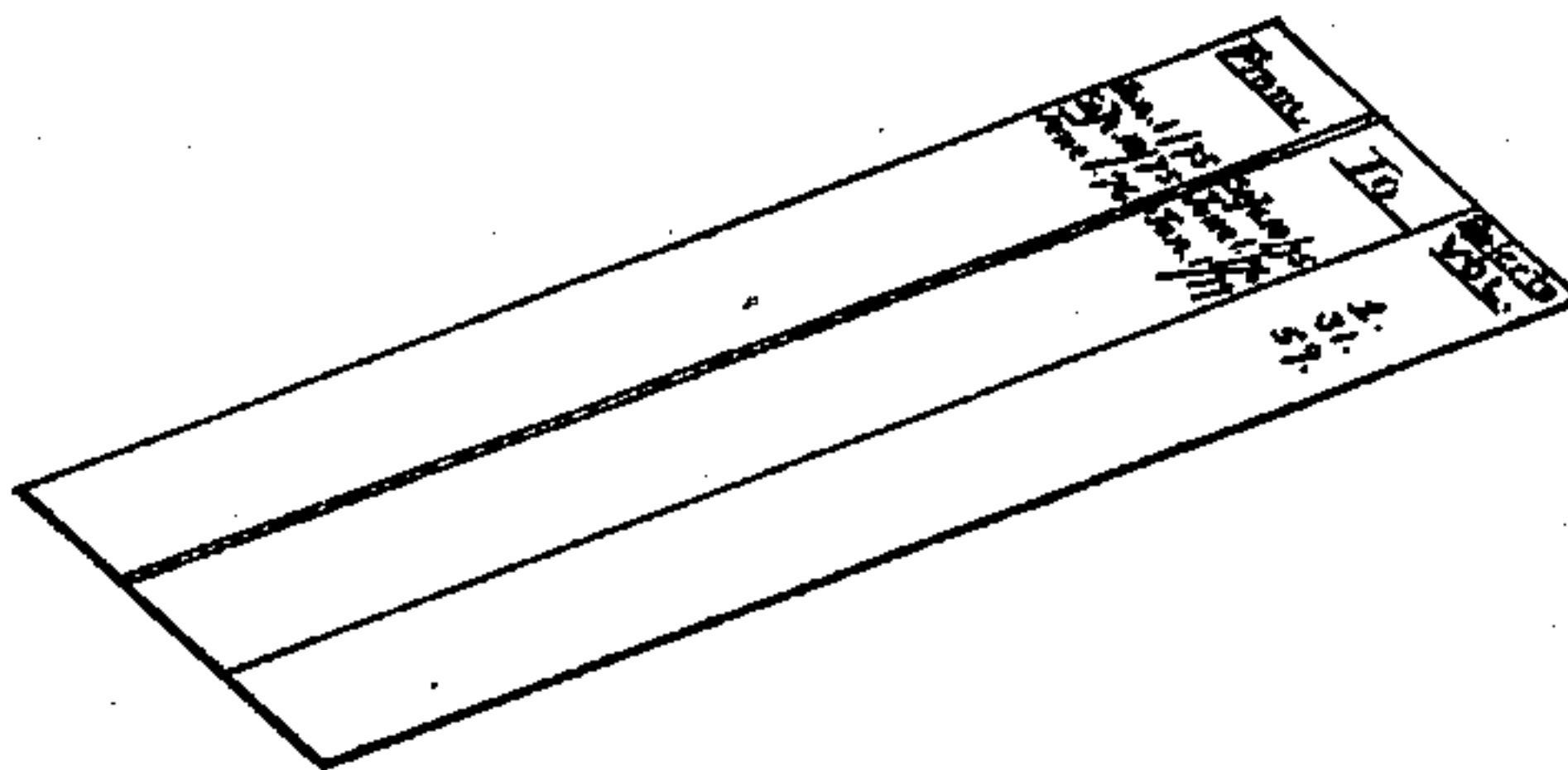
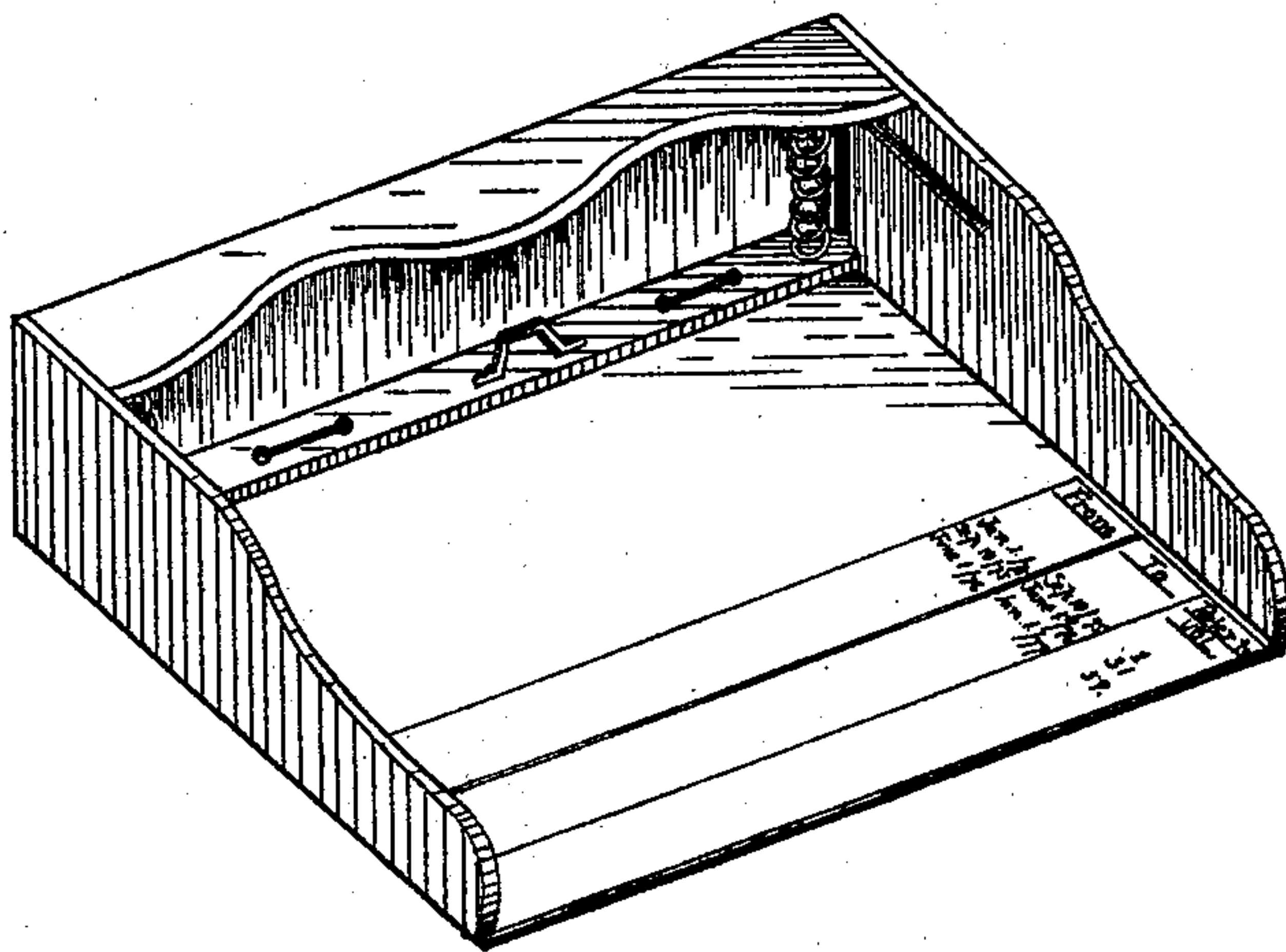


Fig. 5.



Witnesses.

Geo. T. Smallwood Jr.
John Robey Jr.

Inventor.

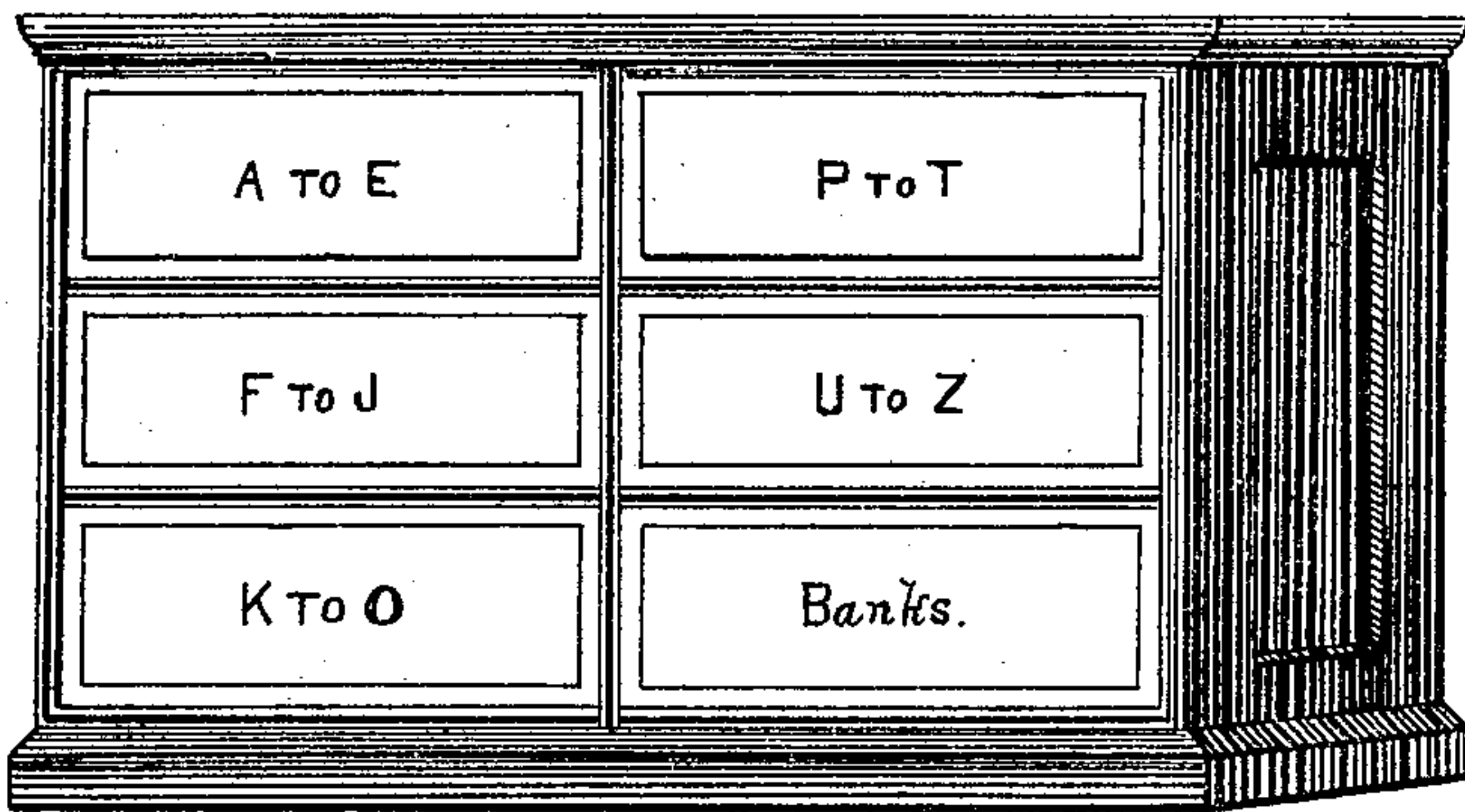
William A. Amberg.
By John J. Halsted,
his Atty.

W. A. AMBERG.
LETTER-FILE CABINET.

No. 171,495.

Patented Dec. 28, 1875.

fig. 6.



Witnesses.

Geo. T. Smallwood Jr.
John Robey Jr.

Inventor.

William A. Amberg
By John J. Halsed
his Atty.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WILLIAM A. AMBERG, OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

IMPROVEMENT IN LETTER-FILE CABINETS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 171,495, dated December 28, 1875; application filed July 24, 1875.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, WILLIAM A. AMBERG, of the city of Chicago, county of Cook and State of Illinois, have invented new and useful Improvements in Cabinet Letter-File, and method and system of filing letters, &c., therein; and I do hereby declare that the following, taken in connection with the drawings which accompany and form part of this specification, is a description of my invention sufficient to enable those skilled in the art to practice it.

My invention relates to a combination, with a series of self-indexing sheets arranged in file cases or boxes, of a cabinet adapted therefor, under a system or systems of arrangement hereinafter set forth, whereby letters and similar papers may be almost instantly found and referred to at any future time, however large or voluminous the correspondence may be.

The present invention has grown out of, and is to some degree based upon, the plan of filing in self-indexing cases or holders, as shown in my Patent No. 92,141, dated July 6, 1869, and reissued, No. 4,989, July 16, 1872; and in my application filed June 12, 1875, and allowed June 30, 1875.

Figure 1 illustrates a cabinet adapted for receiving self-indexing files and binders to the number of twenty-seven, most of them being marked with a single letter of the alphabet, and others with special indicating names or words, as convenience may demand. Fig. 2 represents one of my self-indexing files and binders detached from the cabinet. Fig. 3 illustrates an index, preferably made of loose leaves, prior to inserting between the leaves and under their appropriate indicating initials any letters, correspondence, postal cards, &c., to be filed in classified order. Fig. 4 illustrates a bound volume of letters after the same have been fastened together and removed from the file or holder. Fig. 5 represents one of the files or holders, having on it a tabular list indicating the bound volumes which have been removed therefrom, and the commencing and closing dates of the letters contained in such removed volumes; and Fig. 6, a cabinet with only six letter files or boxes.

The construction of the cabinet seen in Fig.

1 represents a case containing twenty-seven files, lettered with the letters of the alphabet, each file having, in addition, an index of loose leaves, thus forming a double index, or one index within another.

The methods of filing are simple, the usual way being to index both by surnames and Christian names in the case of individuals, and the initials of the first and second members or names in the case of firms or corporations. Correspondence from the following-named parties would be filed as shown below, the first column representing the files in which they are classified, and the second the letter in the indexes of the same files in which they are placed.

Individuals.	File.	Letter of index in file.
	Initial of surname.	Initial of Christian name.
Cameron, Daniel R..	C.	D.
Cross, Edwin.....	C.	E.
Brown, Robert.....	B.	R.
Amberg, J. H.....	A.	J.
Adams, W. F.....	A.	W.
Rowell, Thomas	R.	T.
McMullen, John	Mc.	J.

Firms and corporations.	Initial of first name.	Initial of second name.
	File.	Letter of index.
Cameron, Amberg & Co.....	C.	A.
Jones & Booth.....	J.	B.
Brainbridge & Co...	B.	C.
C. & N. W. Railway Co.....	C.	N.
*The Singer Mf'g Co.	S.	M.
Singer, Talcott & Co.	S.	T.
Smith & Brown.....	Smith.	B.

* The words "the," "and," "of," &c., are ignored in filing.

It will be seen that a cabinet, as shown, having twenty-seven (27) classified boxes or files, and a sub-classification of twenty-six or more compartments, by means of the alphabetized index (see Fig. 3) in each file, will make seven hundred and two (or more) different places or compartments in which to file letters.

The method of arranging is such that the letters are distributed in the most thorough manner. For instance, letters from parties whose surnames commence with "C" are all placed in the "C" file or box, and these are further subdivided into twenty-six divisions, separated by the index-leaves, each letter being arranged under the initial letter of the Christian name in the case of individuals, or of the second name in the case of firms or corporations.

Another way is to classify by towns in the indexes; as, for instance—

Names.	Correspondents' residences.	Initial of principal name.	Town.
		Letter-file.	Letter of index.
Cook, John.....	Boston.	C.	B.
Ellsworth, E. E.	Chicago.	E.	C.
Brown, Thos. H.	Chicago.	B.	C.
Perry & Co.	London.	P.	L.
Jameson, Wm ..	Liverpool.	J.	L.

This plan is very simple and readily understood, but is more especially applicable where the correspondence is very scattered, to give the full benefit of all the alphabet in the index.

Another way would be to reverse the table above given, filing towns by the alphabetical letters on the outside of the files or boxes, and filing by the parties' names in the index within the file.

A number of the boxes or files of the cabinet (as many as found necessary or convenient) may be devoted to special or peculiar correspondence, among which, by way of illustration, may be named, "Mc.," "Smith,"

"Agents," "Salesmen," "Orders," "First National Banks," "Banks," "Other National Banks," "Bankers," "Eastern," "Private," "Unfinished Business," "Strangers," &c.

Those marked above with a * require to be classified by towns in the index, under the plan or system of filing first above described.

In many cases I devote one of the files to two or more letters of the alphabet which are not much used, which does not interfere with either plan.

In the smaller cabinets of fifteen or less files or boxes, the system of classifying by towns with the outside letter of reference on the file is the best.

The filed papers are not all bound up at any given time; but as soon as any one of the

cases or boxes is full, its contents are bound up, as shown in Fig. 4, and if it is the first volume bound out of the entire cabinet, it is marked "1" on the back; no other indorsement whatever is necessary. Suppose this is taken from file or box "C," on the bottom of that file, (as well as in every other,) under the index, a sheet is pasted, (see Fig. 5,) on which is to be written the dates of commencing and ending of volumes of that particular file and the volume number. The next volume bound may be in the "B" file or box, in which are also written the dates comprised within the volume and the number "2." The next may be "G," which is likewise marked "3," and entered on the bottom of that file with the dates, and so on until the "C" file may be full again. In the meantime some thirty volumes may have been bound, and so this second volume in the "C" file would, in such case, be simply marked "31," and entered as before. The next volume in the "C" file might be "59." Supposing that a volume were bound out of each file every eight months on an average, and we had occasion to refer to Daniel Cameron's letters, we would turn to file "C," letter D, and perhaps find his letters for three months past in unbound shape. We then look under the index-sheets and find the following:

List of bound volumes of "C" file.

From—	To—	Refer to volume.
Jan. 1, 1875.	Sept. 10, 1875.	1.
Sept. 10, 1875.	June 1, 1876.	31.
June 1, 1876.	Jan. 1, 1877.	59.

It will now be perceived that his correspondence for two years and three months would all be contained in the three bound volumes, and a file only partly full, while at the same time there may have accumulated about seventy-five bound volumes on the shelves. We would, therefore, have occasion to handle only about one-twenty-sixth of these three volumes in order to find all his letters, instead of having to go over every volume.

The same remark as to facility and rapidity of finding any stored correspondence applies to a large as well as to a small correspondence.

Each file or case is also marked on its side, as well as on its front, with its proper indicating-letter, so that during the operation of sorting out a batch of letters to be filed the box may be placed endwise, with this side letter visible to the sorter, thus showing in which file or box a given paper or letter is to be placed.

None of the boxes need be disturbed except as a letter to be filed shall require it, and then it may remain with its end outward until the whole batch is assorted. This facilitates the rapid and loose placing of the correspondence in the appropriate boxes, before the

final sub-classification of those for each box, between the proper alphabetized leaves where each paper belongs. This second distribution or sub-classification serves as a sure check to discover and correct any errors that may have been committed in the sorting.

The advantages which attach to my cabinet and system of filing therein may be briefly and partially stated as follows: It insures rapid sorting and filing; it is doubly self-indexing, classifying each letter of the alphabet by means of twenty-six compartments in each file or box, a cabinet of thirty files giving seven hundred and eighty filing-spaces; no numbering of the papers is required, and no indorsing of dates or names thereon, and no writing thereon, is necessary; all folding of the papers is dispensed with; every man's letters are kept together for a long period in an unbound condition, easy to remove, but yet always in the order of their date; but few volumes require to be looked over when searching for old correspondence; there is a thorough distribution of the papers, and consequently the greatest facility of reference; the bound volumes are solidly-packed letters; postal cards, receipts, and papers of any kind or size do not alter the shape of the volume, and are as readily filed as other papers; no index-writing, or making of an index, in the common acceptation of the term, is necessary, as the papers, when rightly put away, are by that very act self-indexed; it is labor-saving and time-saving, requiring only one-fifth the time in filing, and from one-tenth to one-fiftieth the time in finding letters thus filed away; correspondence, including the oldest, can be found almost instantly; letters from parties having the same initials only come together between the same two of the index-sheets.

Additional advantage for reference may be gained by what I term a "directory classification"—that is, by placing all correspondence which comes in the same filing-space of the indexing-sheets in the same order of arrangement as the words in a dictionary or the names in a directory; and when two or more communications from the same party are filed together, (as they must, of necessity, be,) they should then be placed in their order of date.

The italicized letter in the names, or the italicized date, in the following table, indicates the order of preference in arrangement:

Letter-file C.	Index-letter D.	Date.
Caldwell,	David.	Aug. 3.
Cameron,	Daniel,	June 2.
Cameron,	Daniel,	June 20.
Cameron,	Daniel,	July 8.
Connor,	Daniel,	Aug. 25.
Crotty,	Dorothy,	Sept. 5.
Culver,	Demus,	June 1.
Cuyler,	D. Z.,	July 6.
Cuyler,	D. R.,	June 2.
Cuyler,	D. R.,	June 12.

In very extensive correspondence a separate cabinet may be used for one or more States or countries; or, if still more extensive—as, for instance, in Government matters—a cabinet for each letter of the alphabet, indicating the initial letter of the town or city from which the correspondence comes, placing the letters or correspondence in the files of the cabinet under the initial letter of the writer, as above shown. To illustrate: If James Ward, of Chicago, be the correspondent, his letter would be placed in cabinet "C," (indicating Chicago,) in file or box "W," (indicating Ward,) and under the index-letter "J," (indicating James,) besides employing the "directory" and the date classifications.

The cabinets may be made of any number of files by using a single file, or file and box, for any given number of alphabetical letters or special purposes—as, for instance, by way of illustration, in Fig. 6, in which six files only are employed, each one being used to hold correspondence under several initial letters or heads.

The cabinet should, for convenience, have its doors arranged to fold flat against the sides, so as to be out of the way when they are open.

I claim—

In combination with a series of file cases or boxes, severally containing a self-indexing series of sheets, a cabinet adapted for the reception of such cases, and within which they are arranged in alphabetical or similar order, in accordance with any of the within-described systems.

WM. A. AMBERG.

Witnesses:

JAMES H. WARD,

JOHN J. HALSTED.