

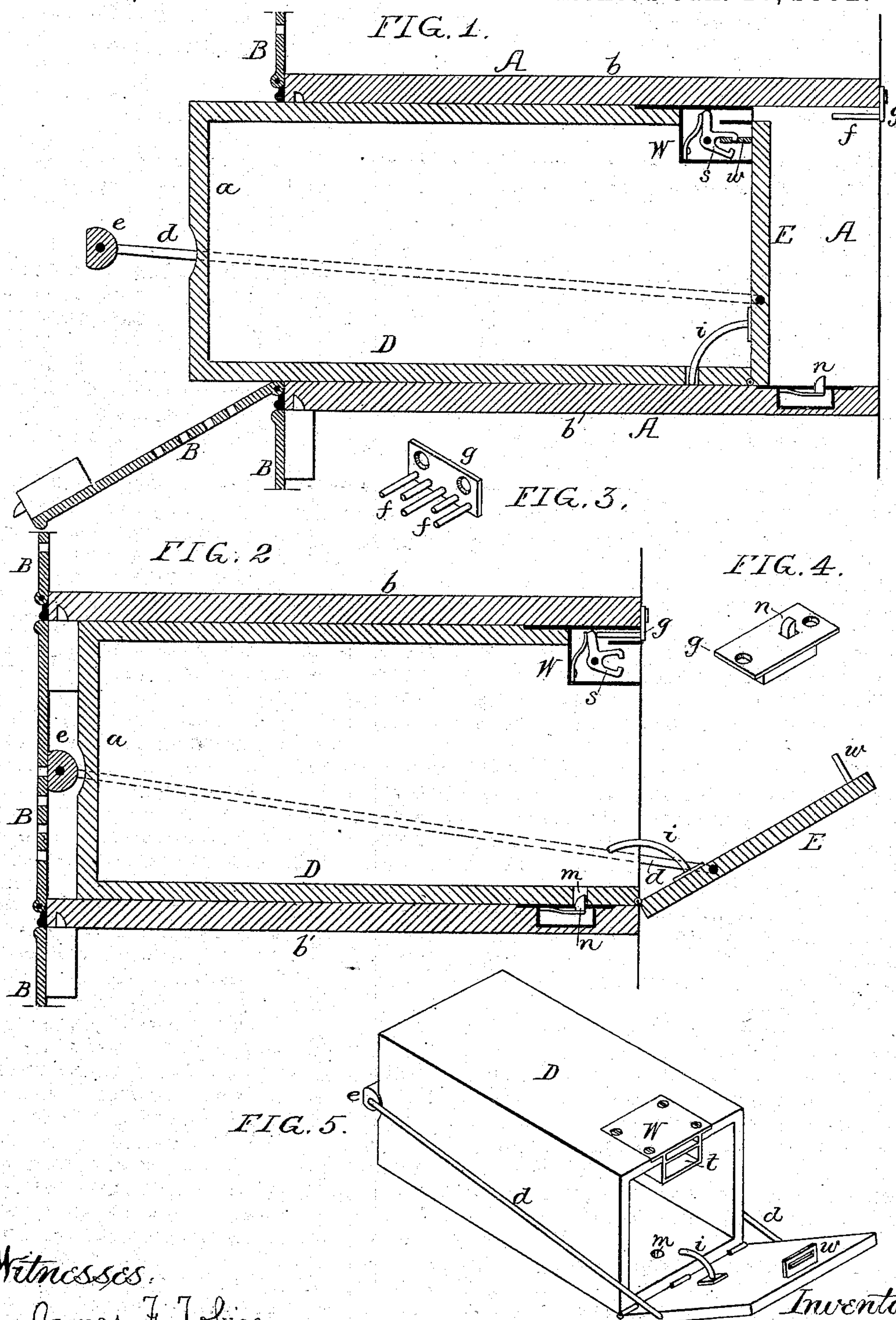
(No Model.)

S. THOMPSON.

POST OFFICE BOX.

No. 252,301.

Patented Jan. 10, 1882.



Witnesses.

James J. Tobin.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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POST-OFFICE BOX.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 252,301, dated January 10, 1882.

Application filed March 12, 1881. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, CHARLES S. THOMPSON, a citizen of the United States, residing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, have invented certain
5 Improvements in Letter-Boxes, of which the following is a specification.

The object of my invention is to prevent the theft of valuable letters by messengers who are intrusted with the conveying of such letters
10 from the post-office; and this object I attain by means of a box in which the letters are carried, the box being so constructed for adaptation to a lock-box compartment of a post-office, and being provided with such appliances that
15 the box, having been locked by the owner or his confidential employé, will be opened when it has been properly introduced into the post-office compartment, and cannot be withdrawn therefrom without being locked, the messenger being thus unable to gain access to the
20 contents of the box.

I am not the inventor of such a box, broadly, but my invention is limited to the improvements upon such a box hereinafter claimed.

25 In the accompanying drawings, Figures 1 and 2 are sectional views of a letter-compartment of a post-office, showing the safety-box in two positions; Figs. 3 and 4, detached views of devices connected with the box; and Fig. 5,
30 a perspective view of the box detached from the compartment, but opened for the reception or removal of letters.

A box, D, closed at one end, *a*, and having a hinged door, E, is arranged to fit snugly but
35 slide freely in one of a series of compartments, A, such as are usually arranged in post-offices, the compartment being contained between the upper and lower partitions, *b b'*, and being open at one end for access by the post-office employés only, and furnished at the outer end
40 with a hinged door, B, provided with the usual lock.

When the box is in its proper position in the compartment it is retained therein by a spring-
45 catch, *n*, contained in a case fitted into a recess in the bottom partition, *b'*, of the compartment, and adapted to an opening, *m*, in the bottom of the box, the catch being depressed by the box during the act of pushing

the same into the compartment, and the projection of the catch taking its place in the opening *m* of the box when the latter has reached its proper position in the same and the door E has been opened. This self catching device, which may be varied in construction without
55 departing from the main features of my invention, cannot be unlocked from the box D without first closing the door E, which is provided on the inner side with a segmental projection, *i*, the latter, on closing the door, entering the
60 opening *m* and depressing the spring-catch.

The door E is connected by rods *d d*, Fig. 5, to a handle, *e*, against which bears the door B of the compartment A when the said door is closed, as shown in Fig. 2. When the box
65 has to be withdrawn from the compartment the door B is unlocked and opened, the handle *e* seized and pulled outward; but as the box D is retained by the catch *n*, the first pull on the handle must be exerted on the door, and the
70 latter will be closed simultaneously with the releasing of the box from the catch *n*, after which the box can be withdrawn from the compartment. It is essential to my invention, however, that before the box is withdrawn the door
75 E should be locked, and while many different locking appliances may be adopted in carrying out this part of my invention, I prefer the device which I will now proceed to describe.

In a case, W, attached to the box, are a series of spring-tumblers, *s*, lips on which are adapted to a slot in a projection, *w*, secured to the inside of the door E, this projection being arranged to enter the lower compartment, *t*,
80 Fig. 5, of the case when the door is closed, the upper compartment admitting bits or pins *f* on a plate, *g*, which is secured to the end of the upper partition, *b*, of the compartment A. When the box is being introduced into its place the tumblers come in contact with the bits *f*,
85 and are so operated thereby that the door E will be released and will assume the position Fig. 2, owing to the efforts exerted on the handle *e* to push the box into its place, and the door E will be retained in this position by the
90 door B when the latter is closed and locked.

As described above, the first effort to withdraw the box will result in the closing of the

door E and depressing the catch *n*, the slotted projection *w* meanwhile entering the compartment *t* of the lock-case. As the box is being drawn outward the spring-tumblers will recede from, and cease to be controlled by, the stationary bits or pins *f*, and will enter the slot of the projection *w* of the door E, and will catch on the edge of the slot, thereby locking the door, which cannot be unlocked while the box is out of the compartment, except by a key having bits or pins corresponding in shape and arrangement with the pins on the plate *g*.

It will be seen without further description that the messenger whose duty it is to convey the box from an office or store to the post-office cannot slide the box into the compartment A and close and lock the door B, the key of which is in his possession, without opening the door E, in order that the post-office authorities can gain access to the box, and the messenger cannot withdraw the box without first locking the door E, nor can he gain access to the box while it is in his possession, the key for opening the door E being in the possession of the proprietor or confidential employé to whom the messenger has to convey the box.

I claim as my invention—

1. The combination of the post-office compartment A and its hinged door B, having

locking attachment, the box D, adapted to the said compartment, and the door E, hinged to the open end of the said box at the lower edge of the same, in combination with mechanism, substantially as described, whereby the door E of the box is retained in an open condition by the door B of the compartment, as set forth.

2. The post-office compartment A, its hinged door B, and spring-catch *n*, the box D, its hinged door E, and the handle *e*, connected to the said door and rendered inoperative by the door B of the compartment as long as the latter is closed, in combination with a self-locking device on the box and its door, and with a device on the same for operating the said spring-catch, all substantially as set forth.

3. The combination of the box D and its door E with the handle *e* at the closed end of the box and with rods *d d* outside the said box for connecting the door to the handle, as specified.

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

C. S. THOMPSON.

Witnesses:

JAMES F. TOBIN,
HARRY SMITH.