

(No Model.)

E. OSGOOD.
POST OFFICE BOX.

No. 296,772.

Patented Apr. 15, 1884.

Fig. 1.

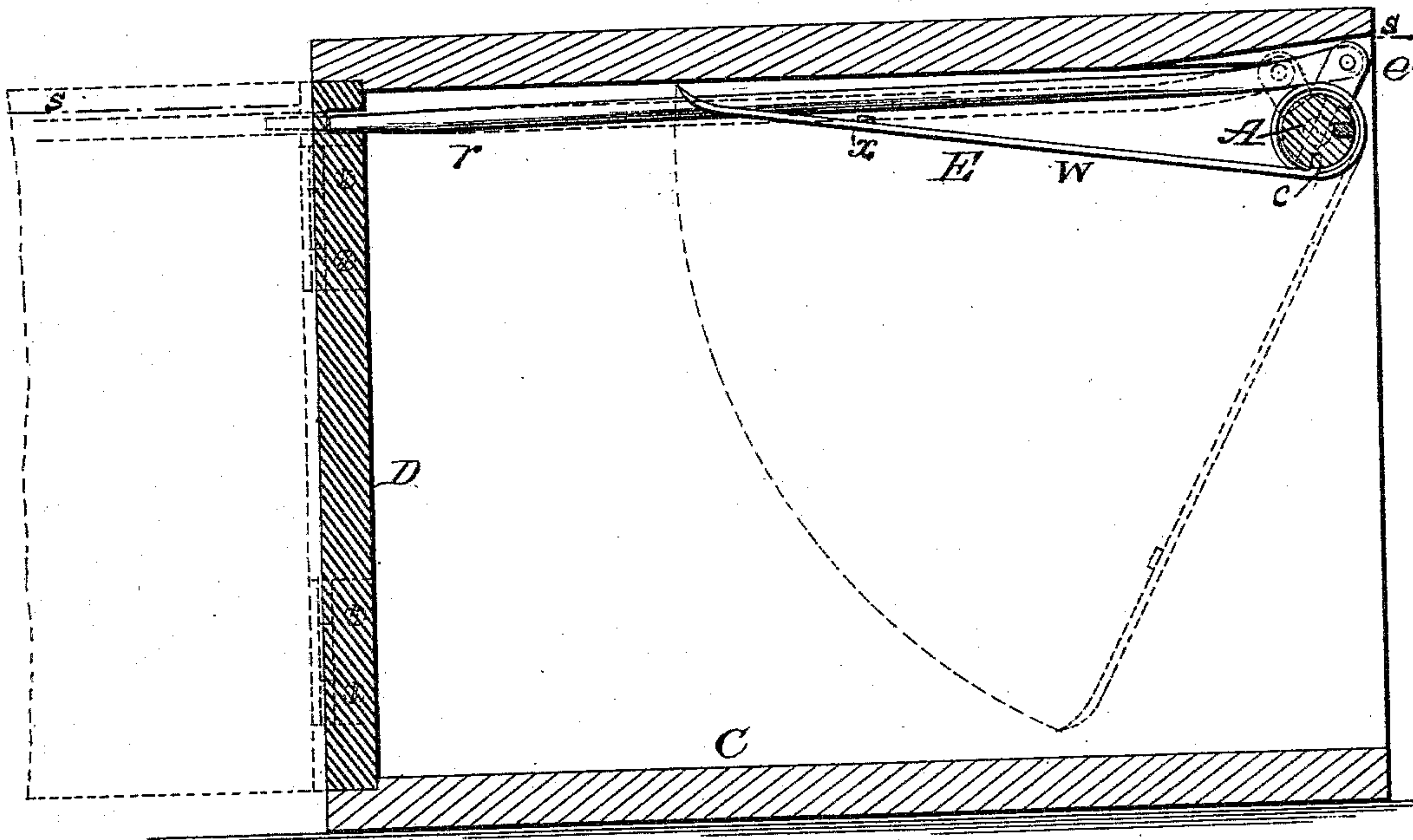
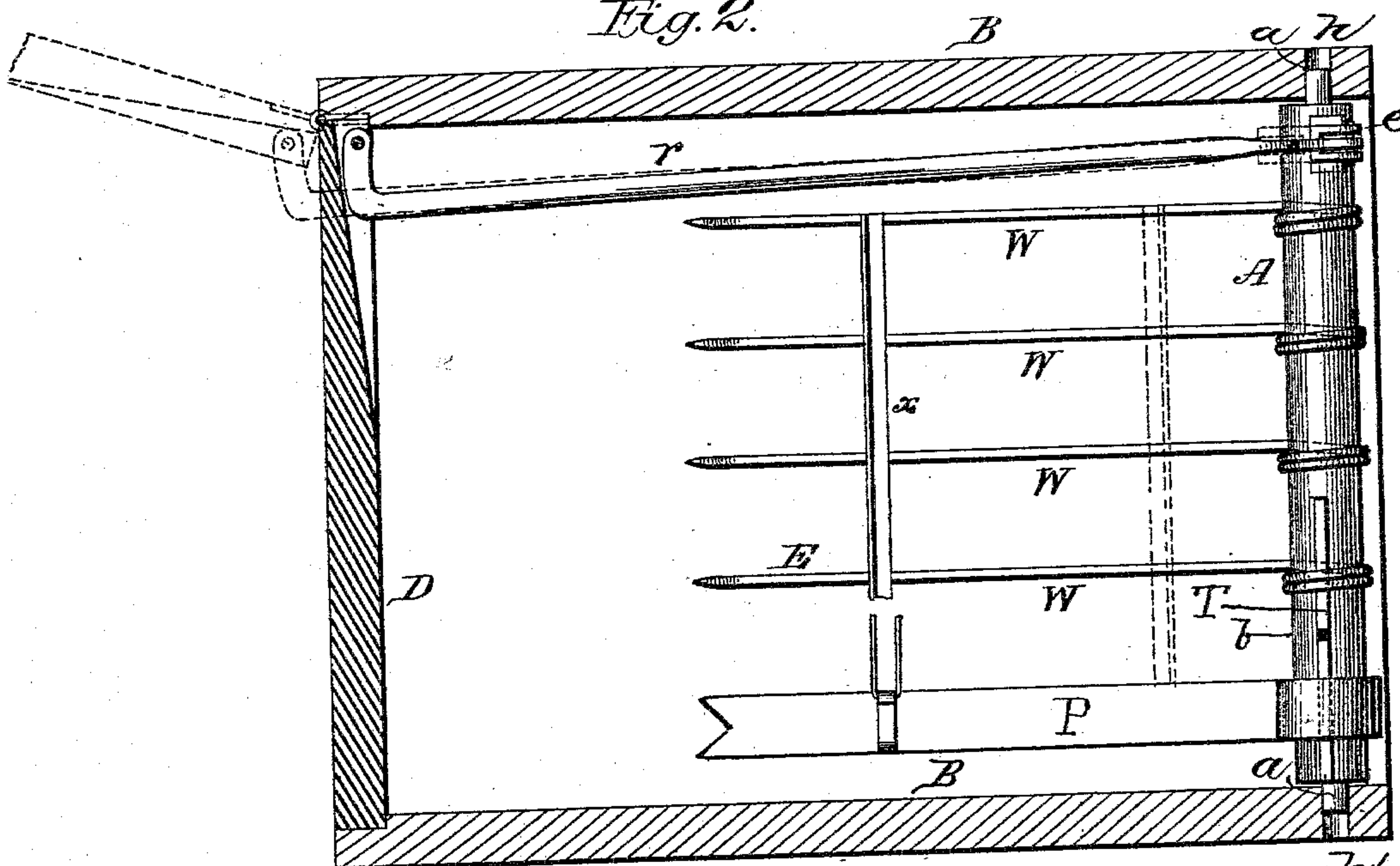


Fig. 2.



Witnesses:
Mothilda Peterson
H M Notik

Inventor: *W*

Enoch & Good

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ENOCH OSGOOD, OF WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

POST-OFFICE BOX.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 296,772, dated April 15, 1884.

Application filed October 26, 1880. Renewed October 16, 1883. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, ENOCH OSGOOD, a citizen of the United States, residing at Washington, District of Columbia, have invented certain new and useful improvements in automatic guards to prevent parties from thrusting their hands through post-office boxes to abstract letters and other mail-matter from other boxes; and I do declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, such as will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, and to the letters and figures of reference marked thereon, which form a part of this specification.

My invention relates to post-office boxes for the distribution of letters and other mail-matter to the rightful owners. Post-office boxes of the present day are so constructed that when the door of a box is opened there is nothing to prevent any one from thrusting his hand through the box and abstracting the contents of other boxes. To prevent this pilfering, I have constructed an automatic rack or guard.

In the accompanying drawings, Figure 1 is a longitudinal sectional view through a post-office box to which my invention is applied, showing its different parts and their relative positions. Fig. 2 is a horizontal sectional view through it on line *s s* of Fig. 1.

As ordinarily constructed, post-office boxes have their rear or inner ends open for the reception of the mail-matter distributed by the officials in charge of the office, and the front or outer ends closed by hinged doors. This construction is such that there is nothing to hinder a person able to open the door of one box from thrusting the hand and arm through the open box and abstracting letters and other mail-matter contained in adjoining boxes.

The object of my invention is to so improve the interior of the boxes as to provide against this opportunity for dishonesty; and it consists in the means hereinafter described by which the rear or inner end of the box is automatically closed by the opening of the door at the front or outer end of the box. A shaft or arbor, *A*, (see drawings,) of any suitable material, metal being preferred, is provided with a reduced journal, *a*, on each end, of a

length equal to half the thickness of the sides *B* of the box, so that it can be duplicated in all the boxes. Through this shaft I drill five holes, *c*, more or less, and firmly secure five spring-wires, more or less. I then wind the spring-wires around the shaft three times, more or less, to give them sufficient spring, so as not to bend by use in springing from top to bottom of the box. I then cut them off long enough to strike the bottom *c* of the box at an angle of about forty-five degrees when the shaft *A* is rocked in the necessary direction.

In the rocking shaft *A*, I cut a groove, *b*, its whole length, when I use the spring-strips *P*, made of brass or any other suitable metal, instead of drilling holes, as when spring-wires are used. The outer ends of the spring-strips *P* are bifurcated or serrated, and are made sharp. I then firmly secure crosswise to them and on the inner or coiled ends of these strips *P*, a cross-bar, *T*, that will fit into the groove *b*. The bars *T* are made a little longer than the width of the spring-strips *P*, so as to leave a desired space between them when they are put onto the shaft *A*. I then place the cross-bars *T* into the groove *b* in the shaft *A* and wind the spring-strips *P* around it a sufficient number of times to allow them to easily spring up and down the height of the box without bending, which will, by the coils of the spring *P*, secure the cross-bar *T* in the groove *b*, so that they will not turn on the shaft *A*, not unlike the manner in which the drum-arbor is secured to a watch-spring.

Through the end of the shaft *A*, near the side of the box on which the door is hung, I drill another hole to secure a stud or arm, *e*, with a slotted head, through which a hole is drilled to receive a pin for securing the connecting-rod *r* and making a loose joint. I then bore a hole, *h*, through each side of the box near the top, the size of the journals *a a*, (see Fig. 2,) and slot every other hole, (both holes may be slotted;) or a metal socket may be secured to the edge of the box *B* to receive the journals *a a*, instead of making holes through it. I then put the shaft *A*, when furnished with the spring-wires *w*, or the strips *P* with connecting-rod *r*, attached in the hole and slot when the metallic journal-boxes are not used, and fasten a cap over the journals *a a* to keep the shaft *A* in

place, and attach the connecting-rod *r* to the door D of the box, at any point desired, by a pivot-pin, after the rod *r* has been properly bent to fit its place. The outer ends of the
 5 wires *w* are sharpened and bent forward toward the door, and are secured together as to lateral motion by a bar, *x*.

To connect the spring-strips P together as to lateral motion, I use links hooked onto hooks
 10 secured to the spring-strips P, thus forming a guard, E, which will have a more uniform bearing on uneven surfaces. All post-office boxes are to be similarly provided with guards, according to the form and size of the box, which
 15 will produce the same results.

The operation of the device is obvious, as will be seen. When the door is closed, the guard is held up to the top of the box, and leaves its inner end open and unobstructed, as shown in
 20 full lines on the drawings. When the door is opened, the guard is thrown down to or on the bottom of the box, and prevents the putting of a hand through the box. Any lifting of the guards will tend to close the door of the box.
 25 Other appliances may be used, which will produce the same result, that will cover the whole surface of the inner end of the box, but they are not as practicable.

This invention not only acts as a protection
 30 against thieves, but it also prevents letters or other mail-matter from being blown back into the post-office when the door of the box is open, as is often the case when the wind blows in the outer halls, requiring many clerks to strictly

attend to the boxes at business hours. It 35 makes no difference whether there is but one letter in the box or a box full, as it is all open at the inner end when the door is closed, and all closed when the door is open, unless there
 40 is some mail-matter in the box of such form as to prevent the guard E from springing down, which it will do as soon as the mail-matter is drawn out.

Having described my invention, what I claim, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, 45 is—

1. In a post-office box, a rocking shaft mounted at the rear end thereof, and provided with a suitable guard device, said shaft being connected to the door, substantially as set forth, 50 whereby when the door is opened the shaft will be rocked to throw down the guard device and close the rear end of the box, substantially as set forth.

2. In a post-office box, a rocking shaft provided with a series of spring wires or strips, 55 said shaft being mounted as described, and connected to the front door by a rod, whereby when the door is opened, said shaft will be rocked to throw down the guard-strips and 60 close the rear end of the box, substantially as herein set forth.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature in presence of two witnesses.

ENOCH OSGOOD.

Witnesses:

GEO. M. LOCKWOOD,
 J. W. BABSON.