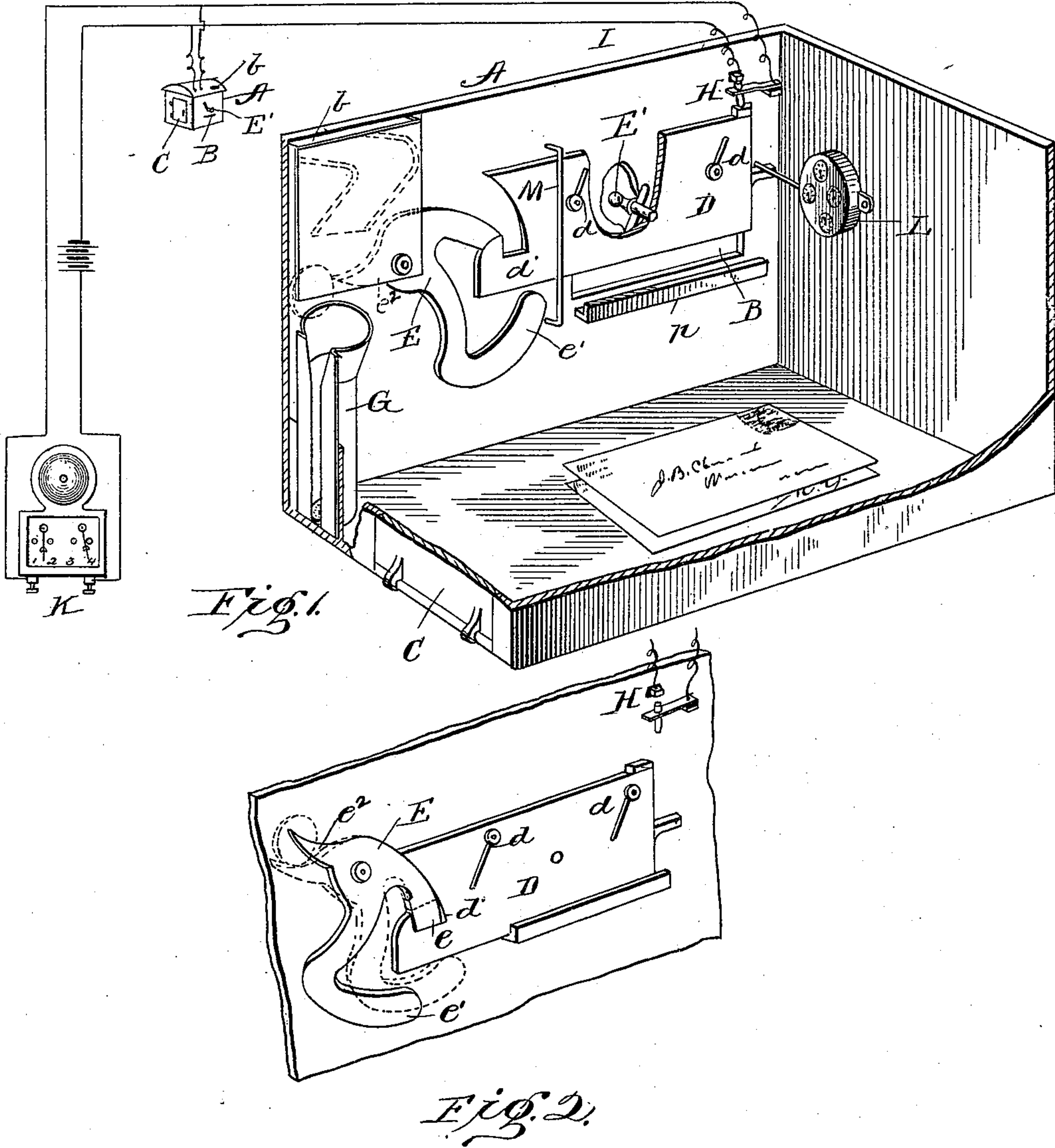


(No Model.)

C. F. MUNSON.  
MAIL COLLECTION SYSTEM.

No. 551,087.

Patented Dec. 10, 1895.



Witnesses:  
J. M. Fowler Jr.  
Aly Stewart.

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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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## MAIL-COLLECTION SYSTEM.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 551,087, dated December 10, 1895.

Application filed August 30, 1895. Serial No. 561,050. (No model.)

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, CHARLES F. MUNSON, of the city of Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, have invented certain new and useful  
5 Improvements in Mail-Collection Systems; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the same, reference being had to the accompanying  
10 drawings, forming a part of this specification, and to the letters of reference marked thereon.

This invention has for its object to provide a special-collection system for use in the postal service, if desired, in connection with what is now known as the "special-delivery" system, and whereby mail-matter deposited in  
15 any one of a series of boxes located throughout a district, together with a coin or other insignia of predetermined value, will cause a predetermined signal to be sent to a central station, giving notice of the fact and enabling a special-collection messenger to proceed at once  
20 to the particular box, secure the mail-matter, and either deliver or forward it to its destination at once.

The system contemplates the employment of automatic signaling apparatus at each collection-box in electrical connection with an annunciator at a central office, together with mechanism at each box for automatically indicating the number of packages of mail-matter deposited and for indicating the particular coin or insignia deposited with each package should there be more than one at a time, together with certain novel details of construction, combinations, and arrangements of  
30 parts, whereby accuracy and safety are secured, all as will be hereinafter described, and pointed out particularly in the appended claims.

Referring to the accompanying drawings, Figure 1 is a sectional perspective view of a box with a diagrammatic illustration of the signal system. Fig. 2 is a detail of the automatic locking mechanism.

Like letters of reference in both figures indicate the same parts.

In populous portions of the country, or cities where a collection system for mail-matter is effective, it is customary to constitute arbitrary districts apportioned to different col-

lectors who report to sub-stations, from which latter the mail-matter is transferred to a central station, whence it is forwarded to its destination, and in carrying this invention into practice a number of special-collection  
55 boxes are located at convenient points in each district, with signaling-circuits extending to each sub-station, where special collectors are held in readiness to answer the signals and forward the mail-matter with the utmost dispatch.

Referring to Fig. 1, the letters A A indicate mail-boxes of any approved pattern adapted to be located at convenient points in a district equipped with this system. In each  
65 box an opening B is formed for the entry of mail-matter and a door C for removing the same. A movable closure, preferably consisting of a sliding plate D, is provided for the opening B and adapted to be held closed by a  
70 locking mechanism released by the entry of a coin or other insignia inserted through an opening b in the top of the box.

In the preferred construction the sliding closure or plate D is guided by slots and pins  
75 or bolts d to move upward diagonally, and at one end it is formed with a catch projection, such as d', with which the hook end e of the pivoted locking-bolt E co-operates, as shown in full lines, Fig. 2, to hold the closure over  
80 the opening.

The locking-bolt is provided with a counterbalance weight or arm e' for holding it normally in locked position and for limiting its movement independently of the closure, as  
85 will now appear.

Extending out on one side of the locking-bolt is a coin-arm e<sup>2</sup>, upon which the weight of the coin rests and turns the bolt to the position indicated in dotted lines in said Fig. 2,  
90 with the weight or limiting arm e' against the under edge of the sliding closure. When in this position, the closure is unlocked and free to be moved upward by the depositor who grasps the handle or knob E' projecting  
95 through the front of the box, and as the closure is moved up its hook end rides under the hook end of the locking-bolt, and the latter turns until the coin drops off into its receptacle G.



The locking-bolt, it will be understood, is delicately poised, so as to be overbalanced and unlock the closure when a coin is dropped through the coin-opening so as to rest upon the coin-arm, and the coin is retained on this arm until the closure is raised and the arm inclined at such an angle as to allow the coin to escape.

Any ordinary means may be provided for preventing the entry of bogus coin or for preventing the operation of the device by the insertion of a wire or sticks, &c. The coins when they pass from the coin-arm drop into a cylindrical or other shaped receptacle G, which retains them in the order in which they were deposited. Thus should the box contain several letters they will be one on top of the other in the same order as the coins, and should a bogus coin have been dropped in the letter corresponding to it may be thrown out or sent by ordinary post.

For the purpose of indicating at the central office the particular box in which a letter or other mail-matter has been deposited with special collection prepared, contacts H are actuated by the movement of the closure to send a signal over the circuit I to the annunciator K, located at the central office. Several boxes may be located in the same circuit, if desired, and as a check upon any irregularities of the collector an additional check is preferably provided in the shape of an indicator L of ordinary construction mounted within the box and adapted to indicate the number of times the closure has been opened and consequently the number of packages of mail-matter which should have come from that box.

The sliding closure shown, besides being held in place by the screws or bolts before referred to, is further secured by a yoke M, and when closed the bottom edge is held in a seat *n* extending along the bottom of the entrance-opening. Thus no mail or other matter can by any possibility enter without the closure is first opened.

The mechanism employed for carrying the invention into effect is simple in the extreme, and while I have been specific in describing the same I do not wish to be limited to the specific details of construction, for it is obvious that other forms of coin-released locking mechanism and signaling mechanism may

be employed without departing from the substantial invention.

What I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. In a system, such as herein described, the combination with the series of mail receptacles each having an opening, a movable closure therefor, and a circuit controller operated when the closure is opened, of an annunciator at a central office a signal circuit connecting the annunciator and several boxes and a coin controlled lock controlling the operation of the circuit controller at each box; substantially as described.

2. In a system such as herein described, the combination with the mail receptacle and a closure for the entrance opening thereof, of the circuit controller moved by said closure, the coin or insignia controlled lock for the closure and a central station with an electric signal circuit extending therefrom to the circuit controller; substantially as described.

3. In a system such as described, the combination with the mail receptacle the closure for the entrance opening thereof and the handle for manually moving said closure, of the coin or insignia controlled lock for the closure, the circuit controller and the central office and signal circuit extending therefrom to the circuit controller at the box; substantially as described.

4. In a system such as described the combination with the mail receptacle the closure for the entrance opening thereof and the coin or insignia controlled lock for the closure, of the counter and the circuit controller both operated by the closure, a central office and a signal circuit extending therefrom to the circuit controller; substantially as described.

5. In a mail receptacle for special collection systems, the combination with the receptacle having the entrance opening, the sliding closure for said opening, the circuit controller operated thereby and the annunciator in circuit with the controller, of the pivoted coin actuated locking bolt for said closure, the coin arm on said bolt and the coin opening over said arm; substantially as described.

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