

No. 620,522.

Patented Feb. 28, 1899.

W. J. WILLIAMS.  
INDICATING SIGN FOR POST-OFFICE BOXES.

(Application filed Sept. 4, 1897.)

(No Model.)

FIG. 1.

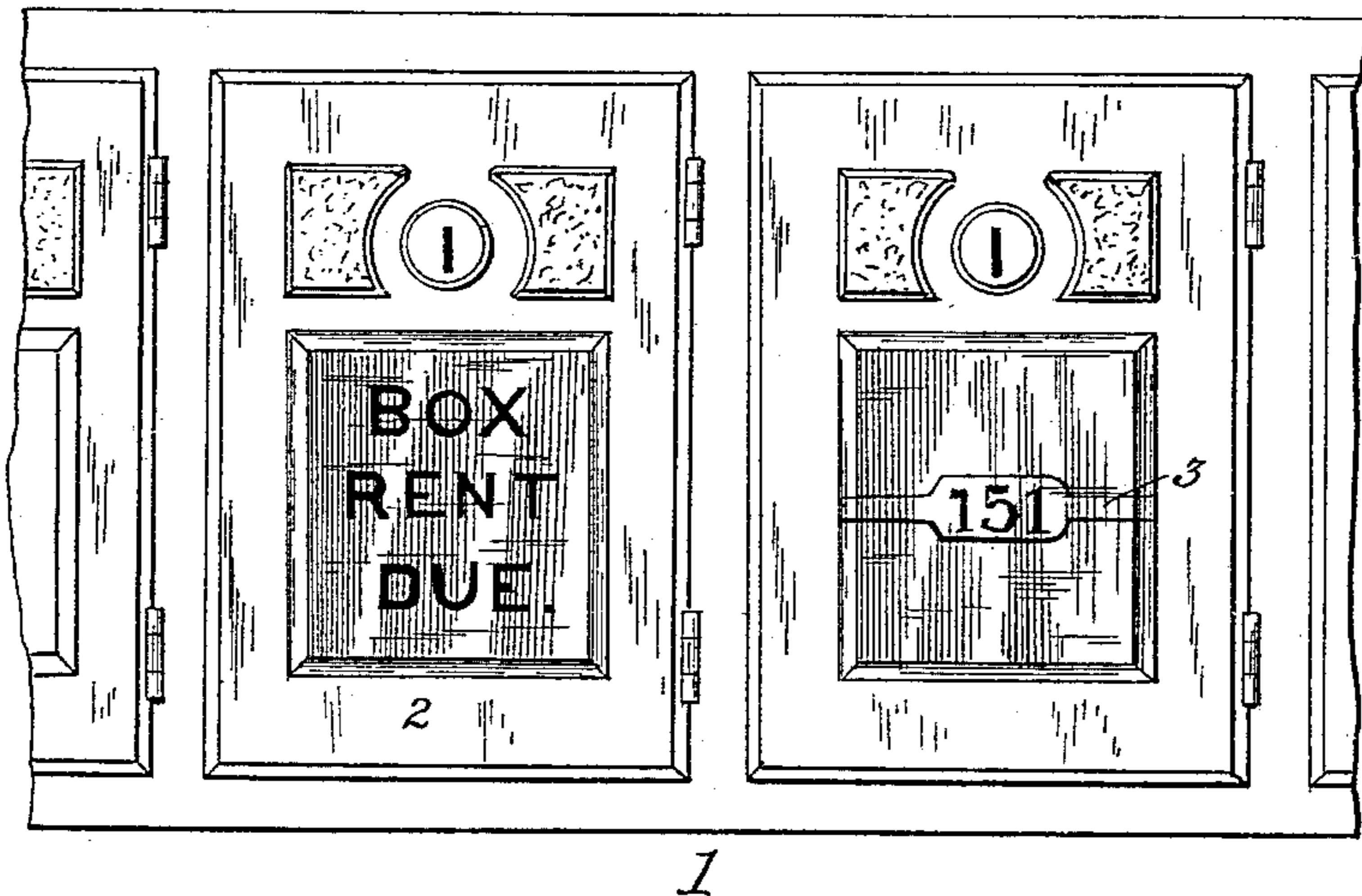


FIG. 2.

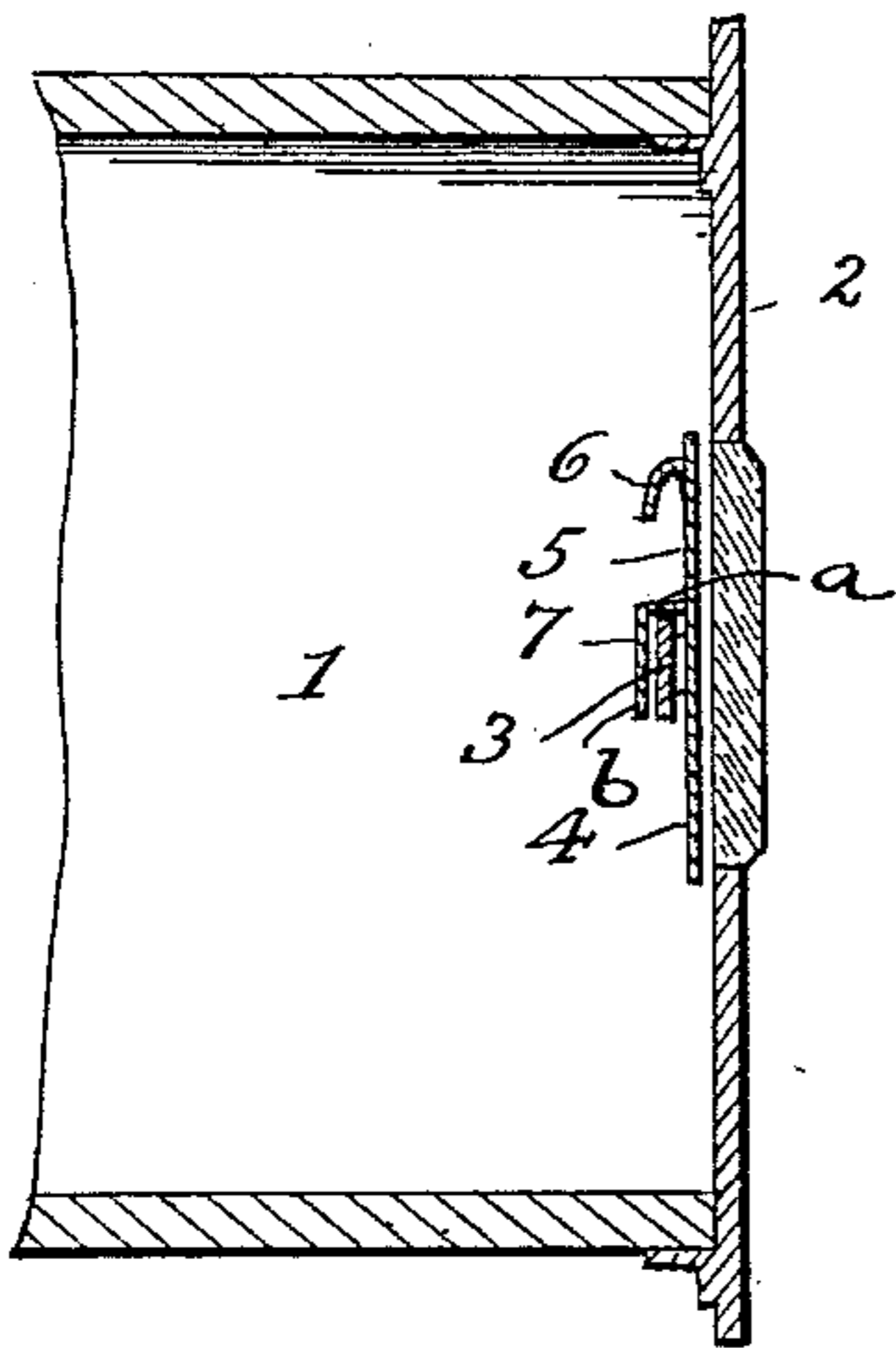


FIG. 3.

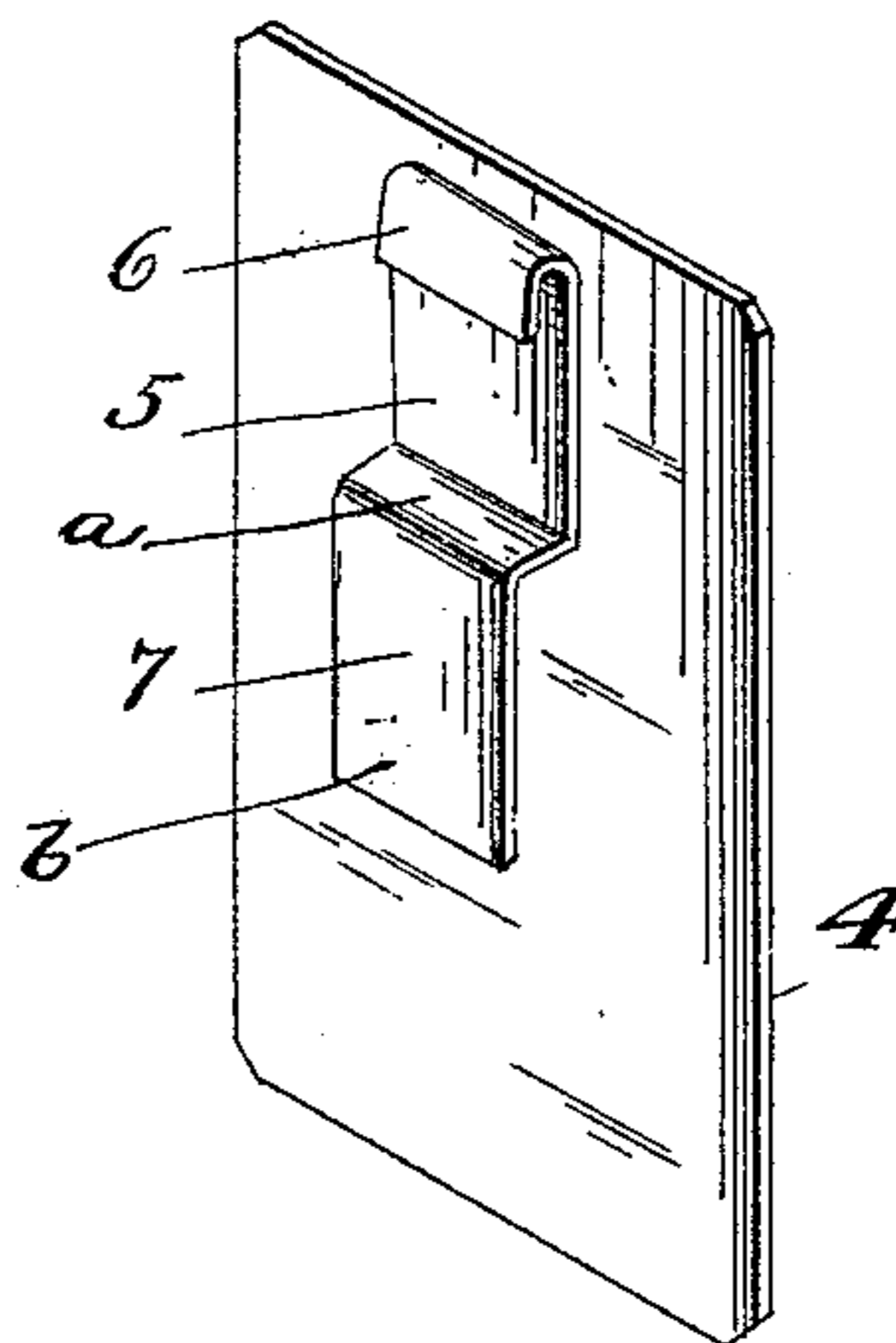


FIG. 4.



WITNESSES

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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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## INDICATING-SIGN FOR POST-OFFICE BOXES.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 620,522, dated February 28, 1899.

Application filed September 4, 1897. Serial No. 650,667. (No model.)

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, WESLEY J. WILLIAMS, a citizen of the United States, residing at Defiance, in the county of Shelby and State of Iowa, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Indicating-Signs for Post-Office Boxes; and I do hereby 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.

This invention relates to certain new and useful improvements in indicating-signs for post-office boxes; and the object is to provide a sign to take the place of the usual notification-card and which is adapted to be readily and conveniently suspended from the cross-bar on the door or outer wall of the box, so that the notice thereon will be visible from the exterior through the glass panel, thereby doing away with the present objectionable practice of placing the card in the box with the mail-matter and producing a notification-sign having a wider range of usefulness.

A further object is to provide a sign having a novel form and arrangement of hooks, whereby it is adapted to be readily and conveniently inserted by a suitable tool through the inner open ends of long and narrow boxes and suspended in position from the cross-bar on the outer wall or door.

To these ends the invention consists in a sign embodying certain novel features of construction and arrangement of parts, as will be hereinafter more fully described, and particularly pointed out in the appended claim, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, forming a part of this specification, and in which—

Figure 1 is a front view of a post-office lock-box with my improved indicating-sign in position. Fig. 2 is a sectional elevation of the same. Fig. 3 is a perspective view of the inner side of the sign. Fig. 4 is a perspective view of the inserting-tool.

Referring now more particularly to the drawings, wherein like letters and figures of reference designate corresponding parts throughout the several views, the numeral 1 represents the interior of a post-office lock-box of usual construction, 2 the door thereof, and 3 a transverse metallic strip secured on

the inner side of said door and bearing the number of the box on its outer face.

In carrying out my invention I employ an approximately rectangular plate 4, preferably metallic, the dimensions of which are governed, of course, by the size of the box in which it is intended to be used. This plate is imperforate or non-apertured to form tongues or other projections, so that the outer face thereof presents a smooth unbroken surface. Upon the inner or rear face of the plate is a central vertical strip 5, having its upper end bent outwardly and downwardly to form a hook 6 and its lower end offset or projected outwardly to form a retaining arm or hook 7, and this strip is secured intermediately between said hooks to the plate by soldering or otherwise. These two hooks are arranged centrally of the plate in vertical alinement and parallel with the plate, and the said hook 6 is located adjacent to the upper edge of the plate, while the hook 7 is located centrally thereof. The hook or arm 7 is of peculiar form to adapt it for the particular purpose for which it is intended, having a right-angled upper shoulder *a* and a pendent web or flange *b* standing out a sufficient distance from the plate to enable the hook to be easily fitted down over the metallic strip 3 on the inner side of the box-door without exerting pressure and so that said shoulder *a* will rest on the strip and support the plate. This construction is of importance in a sign of this character, as on account of the restricted size of a post-office box it would be difficult to manipulate a sign employing a normally-closed spring-tongue which would have to be forced open under pressure to engage the supporting-strip. On the outer face of the plate "Vacant," "Box rent due," or any other notice from the postmaster to the public or to the box-holder may be imprinted or embossed either directly upon the metal or upon a card affixed thereto. As the face of the plate is smooth and unbroken by apertures or projections, the notice may be easily painted thereon and the plate readily embossed, enameled, or otherwise ornamented to produce a neat and attractive sign.

The tool for inserting and suspending the sign consists of a single piece of wire bent at one end of its stem or shank portion 11 to

form a loop-shaped handle 12 and at its opposite end to form a laterally-disposed engaging-hook 13 of novel form, one arm 14 thereof being arranged at an obtuse angle to the shank and the other arm 15 at a right angle thereto, the construction being such that the main portion of the hook lies outside the line of the shank, while the bill portion of the arm 15 terminates and lies substantially within the line of said shank. In operation hook 6 of the sign is suspended from the arm 15 of the tool, which properly centers and steadies it, while at the same time allowing its lower end to tilt without liability of dislocation. The sign is then inserted by means of the tool between the door or front wall of the box until the hook 7 rests upon the cross-bar 3, whereupon the sign will be properly supported in position, so that the notice thereon will be exposed through the glass panel.

From the above description, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, the construction and operation of my invention will be fully understood and embodies advantages due to its peculiar construction alone. By its use a notice to the effect that the box is vacant or any other notice of interest to the public may be placed in a conspicuous position. The present objectionable practice of notifying a box-holder that his box-rent is due by placing a notification-card in the box with the mail-matter, where it is often overlooked or lost, is obviated and an indicating-sign provided which, unlike the card, may be used definitely and cannot be overlooked. These and other material and obvious advantages

are attained by providing a sign having the peculiar construction and arrangement of hooks hereinbefore described, which adapts it to engage the cross-bar of the box and permit of it being inserted thereinto and suspended from the interior without subjecting the postmaster or his assistants to the labor and annoyance of separately opening each box-door from the exterior.

Having thus fully described the invention, what is claimed as new is—

An indicating-sign for post-office boxes adapted to be supported on the cross strip or bar on the interior of the box so that the notice thereon will be visible through the glass panel, and comprising an imperforate plate bearing a suitable notice on its outer face and provided on its inner face with a central vertical retaining-strip, said strip being secured at its center to the plate and having its upper end bent to form a downturned hook adapted to engage a supporting and inserting tool, substantially as described, and its lower end offset or projected outwardly to form a suspending arm or hook having a right-angled shoulder to rest on the cross-bar and support the plate, and a vertical flange or web standing out from the plate so that it may be fitted down on said cross-bar without pressure, as and for the purpose set forth.

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

WESLEY J. WILLIAMS.

Witnesses:

LEROY E. SINCLAIR,  
LYLE M. WILLIAMS.