

No. 675,137.

Patented May 28, 1901.

J. D. O'CONNOR.
REPLY ENVELOPE AND POSTAL CARD.

(Application filed Sept. 1, 1900.)

(No Model.)

Fig. 1.

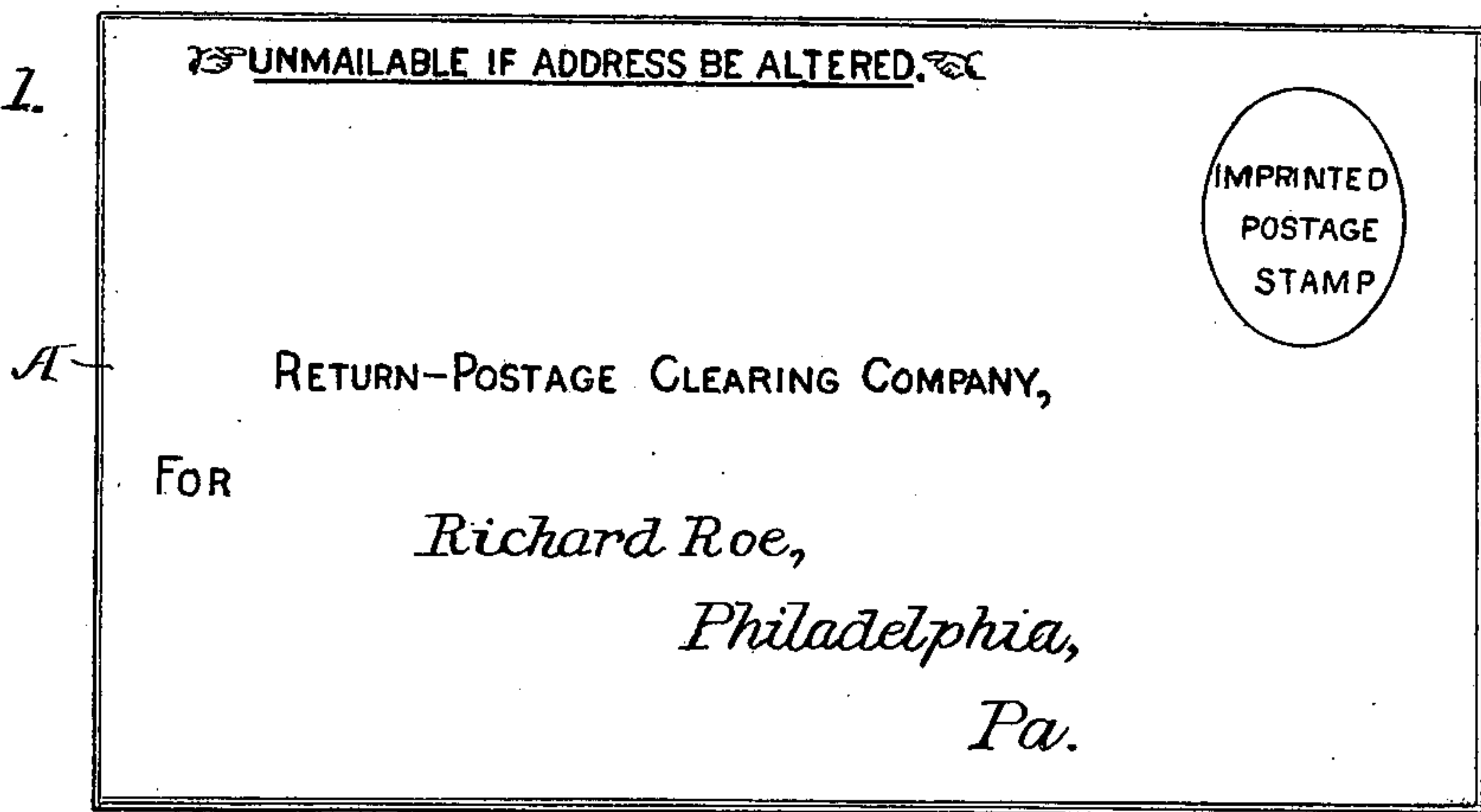


Fig. 2.

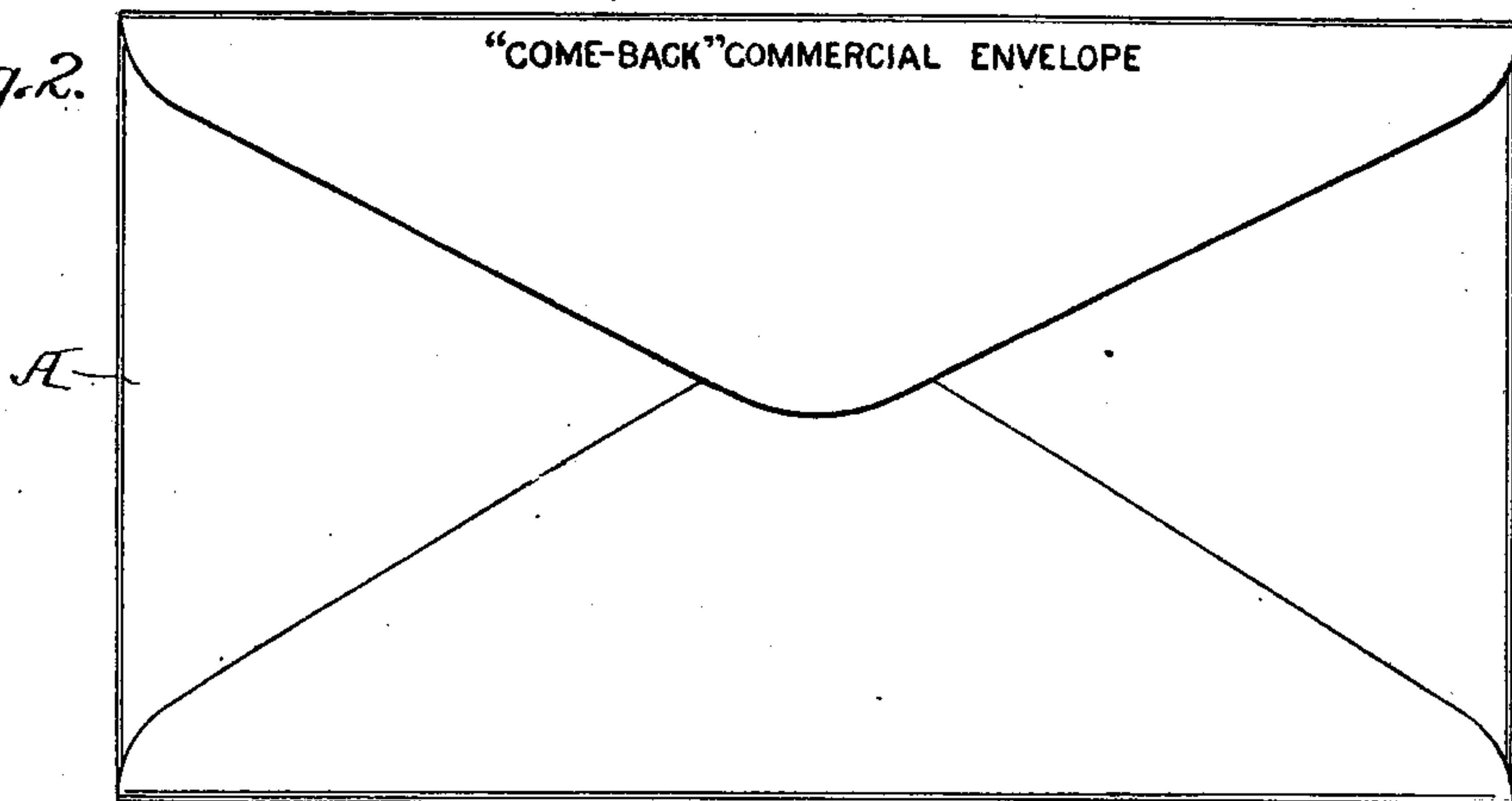
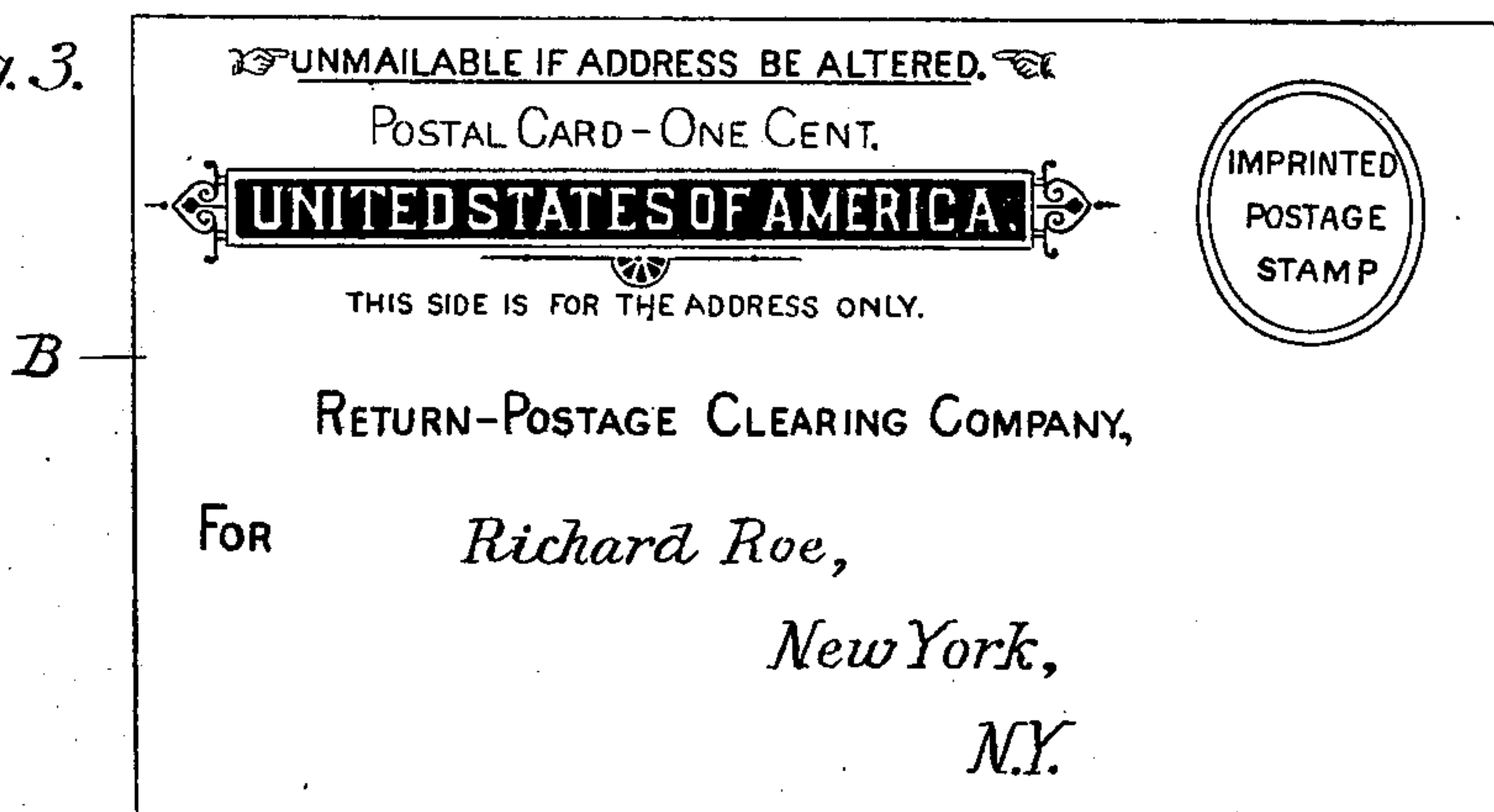


Fig. 3.



Inventor

Witnesses

J. J. Hinkel
C. W. Clement

John D. O'Connor

By

Watson & Watson Attorneys

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOHN D. O'CONNOR, OF WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, ASSIGNOR
TO CHARLES G. PATTERSON, OF NEW YORK, N. Y.

REPLY ENVELOP AND POSTAL CARD.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 675,137, dated May 28, 1901.

Application filed September 1, 1900. Serial No. 28,844. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOHN D. O'CONNOR, a citizen of the United States, residing at Washington, District of Columbia, have invented
5 certain new and useful Improvements in Reply Envelops and Postal Cards, of which the following is a specification.

The objects of the present invention are to reduce the cost to mercantile houses and other
10 organizations and individuals of obtaining replies to advertisements and other communications and to facilitate transaction of business between such business houses, &c., and the Post-Office Department. It is now cus-
15 tomary with many business houses and other parties to send out advertising matter or inquiries accompanied by addressed stamped envelops or postal cards by means of which re-
20 plies to the advertisement or inquiry may be made without cost to the party replying. Very many of these stamped envelops and postal cards are readdressed and diverted to other uses, from which the original purchasers of the
25 cards and envelops derive no benefit, while a large number of such cards and envelops are thrown away or destroyed as waste paper. Experience shows that but a very small percentage of the addressed prepaid missives distributed in this manner returns to the sender, and
30 the loss and waste involved in this business operation are so great as to largely restrict the use of such missives. It is well understood that if means were devised to prevent such loss and waste the use of reply cards and en-
35 velops would be enormously increased, with a consequent increase to the revenues of the Government.

The present invention consists in a new article of manufacture by means of which the
40 purchaser of stamped envelops or postal cards intended for reply purposes is not required to pay the postage on any of such envelops or cards which are unused or redirected and not returned to him, and whereby diversion
45 of said cards and envelops from their intended uses may be prevented. In other words, a merchant or other individual or organization may by the means herein described obtain re-
50 plies or other communications from customers or correspondents and pay the postage thereon without paying any postage on envelops

or cards sent out and diverted to other channels by the receivers, and such diverted cards or envelops become unmailable, except to the addressee. The use of the present invention, 55 as hereinafter described, will effect great economy in and increase and facilitate this class of advertising and correspondence, thereby tending to increase the business and profits of the Post-Office Department and the
60 legitimate business and profits of its patrons.

In carrying out the invention I may use the usual stamped envelops and postal cards issued by the department, or, if deemed best, envelops and cards having a specially-de- 65 signed stamp may be used. The character or design of the stamp is immaterial; but one printed directly upon the paper of the envelop or card should be used.

I shall now describe the invention in con- 70 nection with the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a front view of an envelop embodying the invention. Fig. 2 is a rear view of the same, and Fig. 3 is a front or face view 75 of a postal card to which the invention is applied.

Referring to the drawings, it will be seen that near the upper margin of the envelop A and the postal card B is printed a device or 80 legend constituting a prohibition of transmission through the mails if the address be changed or erased. As shown, this is in the form of a legend, as follows: "Unmailable if address be altered." The purpose of this 85 warning device or direction is to render the envelop or card useless unless it is mailed to the original addressee, whose address is printed in the usual space on the lower half of the front. The card or envelop is to be 90 denied passage through the mails if readdressed or the address altered or mutilated. This feature of the invention may take various forms, the essential thing being that the envelop or card shall bear, in connection with 95 an imprinted address, a device, stamp, symbol, or legend constituting a prohibition to the use of the mails if the address be erased or altered.

Just above and preceding the specific ad- 100 dress of the party by whom the cards or envelops were sent out, called the "secondary

addressee," is the address of an organization or company to whom the card or envelop is to be delivered by the Post-Office Department for the second addressee. As illustrated, this primary address is "Return-Postage Clearing Company, for," such company being herein termed the "primary addressee." One object in having a company or individual through which such correspondence may be transacted is to consolidate the responsibility for payment of the return postage in such manner that a single bond or deposit on account of this class of business may be kept by the Post-Office Department.

The manner in which the new missives herein described are to be employed in the conduct of business will now be briefly explained.

The "Return-Postage Clearing Company" or other party charged by the Post-Office Department with the transaction of this business will purchase from the Post-Office Department in suitable quantities stamped envelopes and postal cards, paying for the cards and envelopes only and not for the stamps or postage. The company will file a bond or make a suitable deposit to secure the Government against loss should payment of the postage on any of said cards or envelopes be refused by the addressee after they have passed through the mail. The primary addressee is the Return-Postage Clearing Company or other party to whom the cards and envelopes are first sold. The address of such party and the words "Unmailable if address be altered" or equivalent words are to be printed by the Government or under Government supervision to preclude the possibility of the cards and envelopes being used for general purposes. The object to be attained is to distinguish this particular class of mail-

matter so that the postal agents will recognize its unmailable character if the address be tampered with. As already stated, a special stamp or symbol may be employed for this purpose. The company or party termed herein the "primary addressee" will distribute the cards and envelopes to customers and print their addresses at the proper place on the face thereof. The cards and envelopes are then sent out through the mail as "inclosures" or otherwise distributed to the parties from whom replies are desired. Such cards or envelopes as are used without altering the addresses are delivered at the post-offices to the primary addressee or its representative upon payment of the postage due thereon, and the Government is thus remunerated for its service, it being intended that the bond or deposit furnished by the primary addressee is simply to indemnify the Government in case of any refusal to pay postage when due, and not intended as an account against which postage shall be charged in ordinary transactions. The primary addressee upon receiving mail is to immediately distribute the same to its customers.

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

As a new article of manufacture, a reply missive having printed thereon the address of a primary addressee, the address of a secondary addressee, and a device or legend indicating that the missive will not be mailable if either address be altered.

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

JOHN D. O'CONNOR.

Witnesses:

SAMUEL H. AGNEW,
JAMES A. WATSON.