

No. 685,913.

Patented Nov. 5, 1901.

P. W. FROMHOLD.

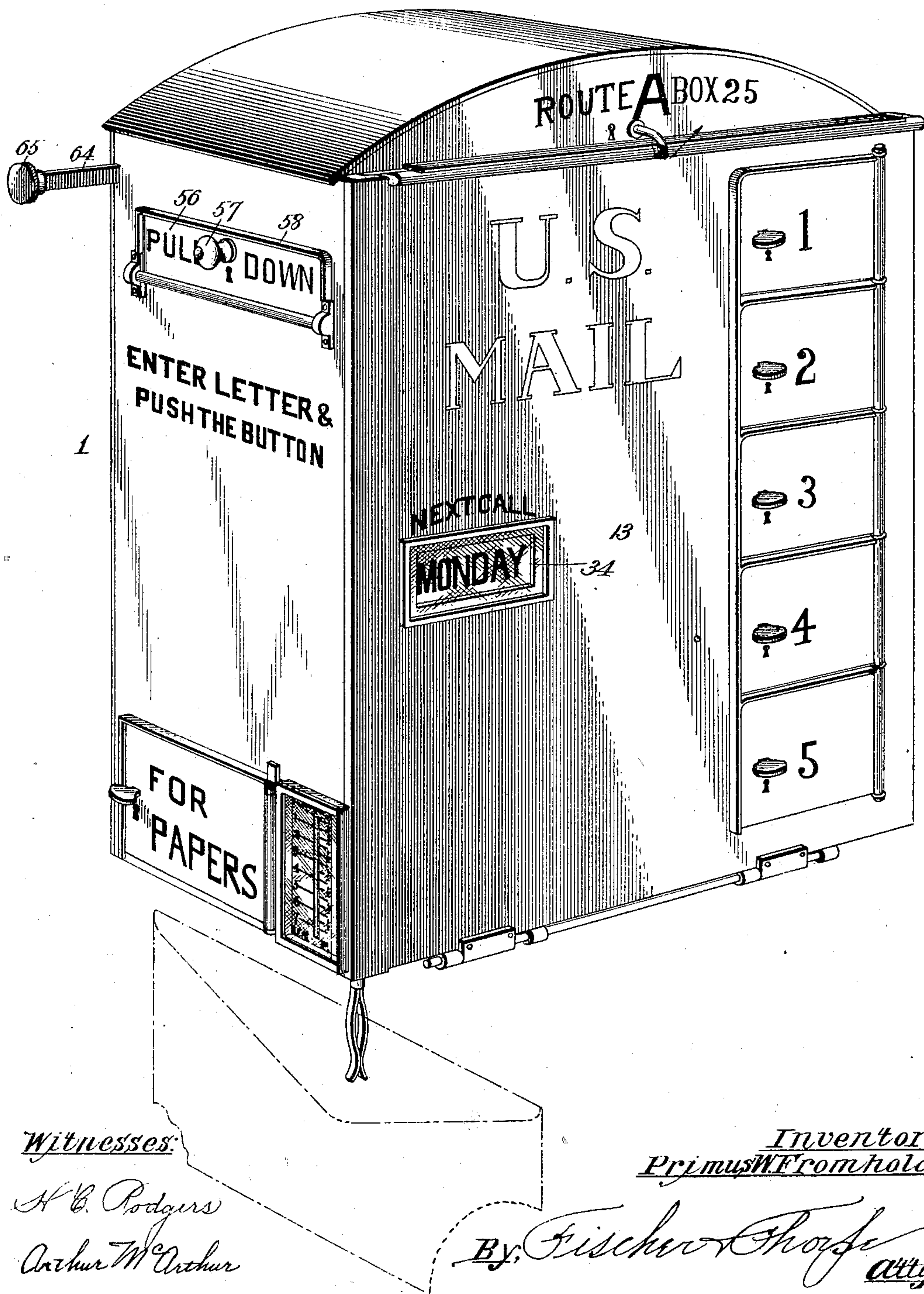
POSTMARKING MECHANISM FOR MAIL BOXES.

(Application filed Feb. 16, 1901.)

(No Model.)

4 Sheets—Sheet 1.

Fig. 1.



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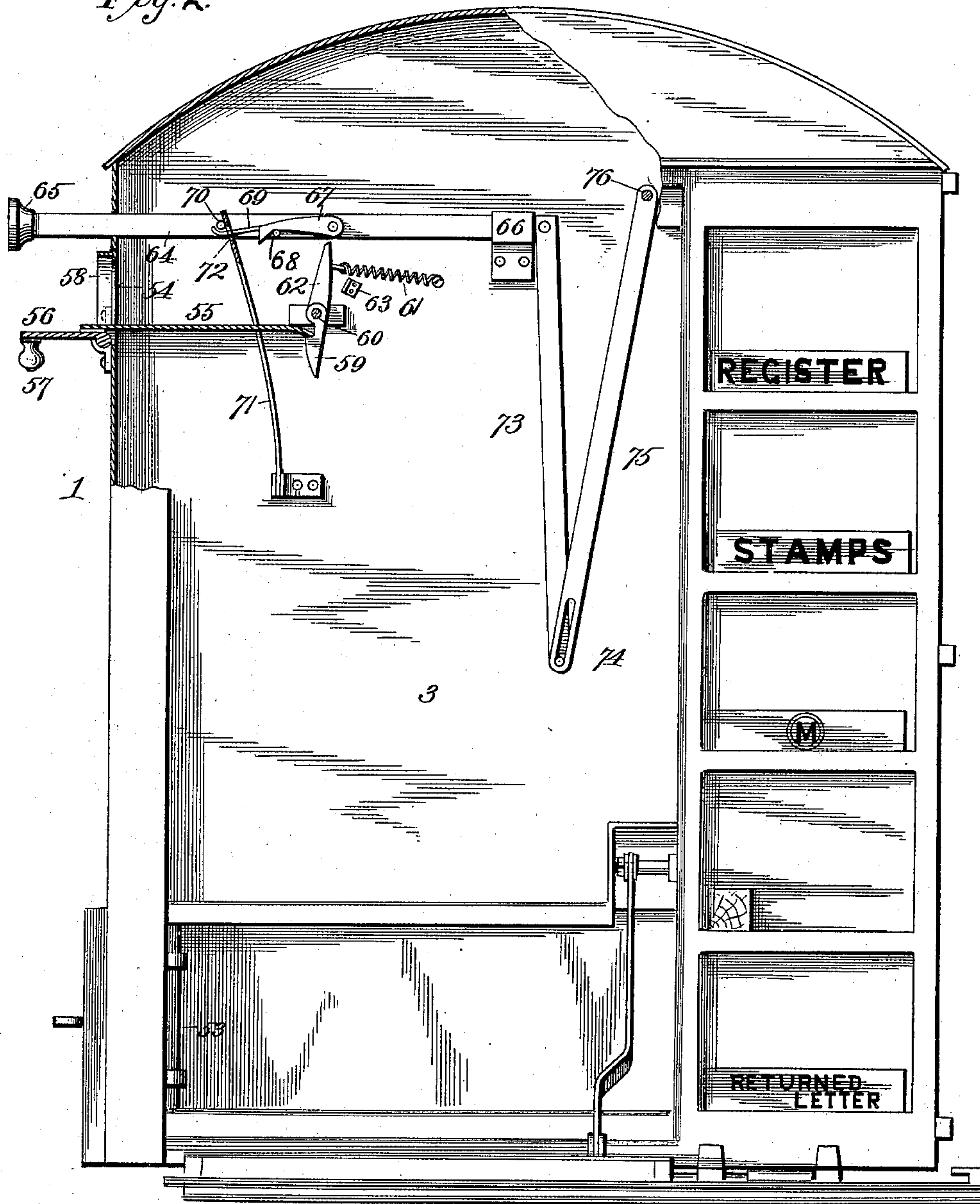
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Fig. 2.



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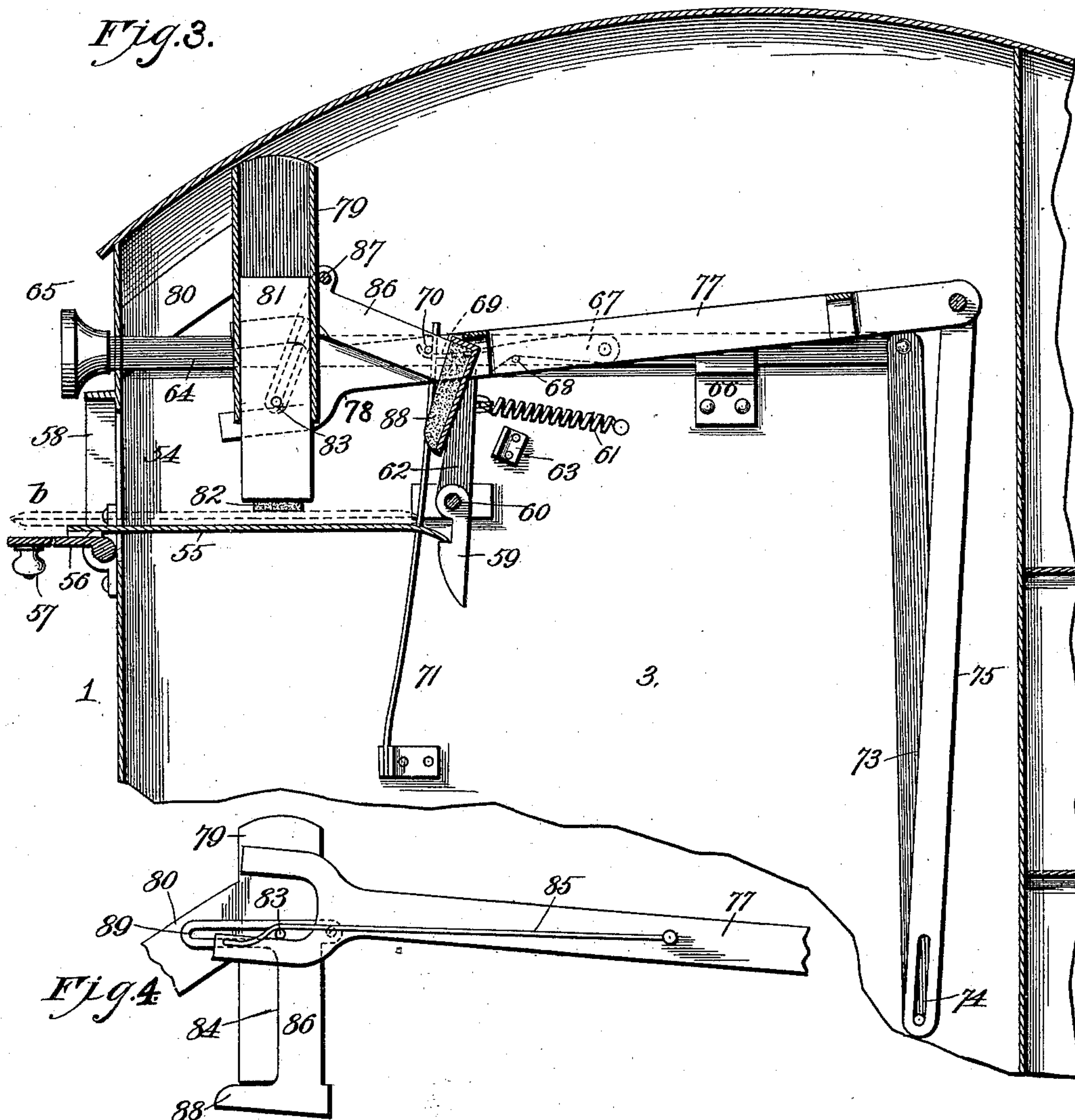
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4 Sheets—Sheet 3.



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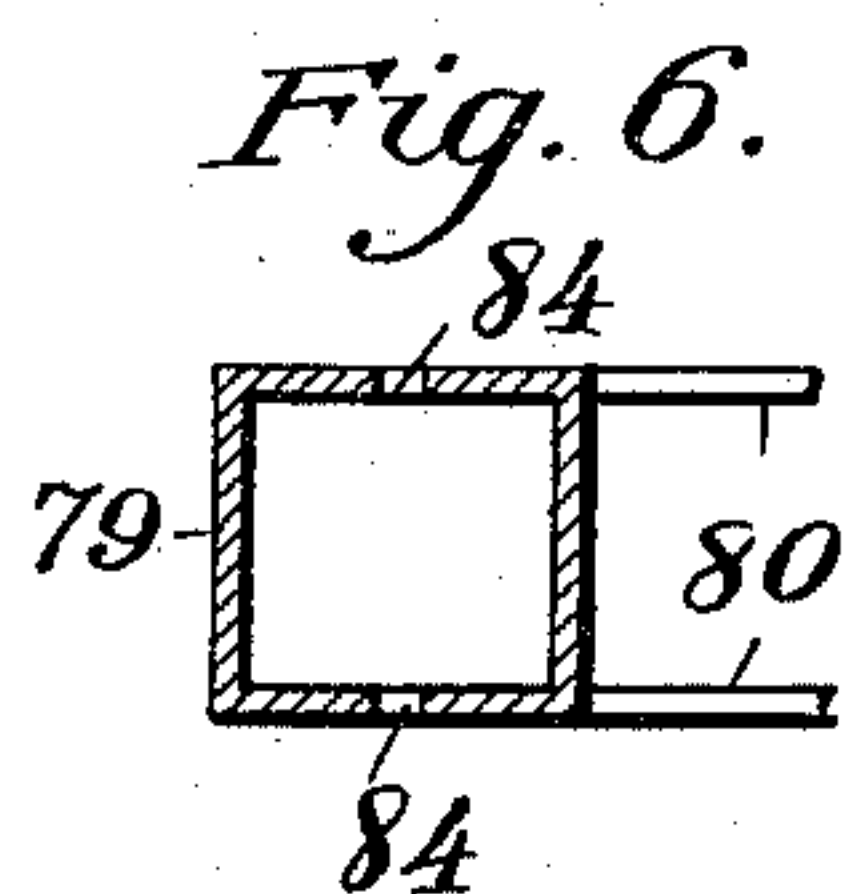
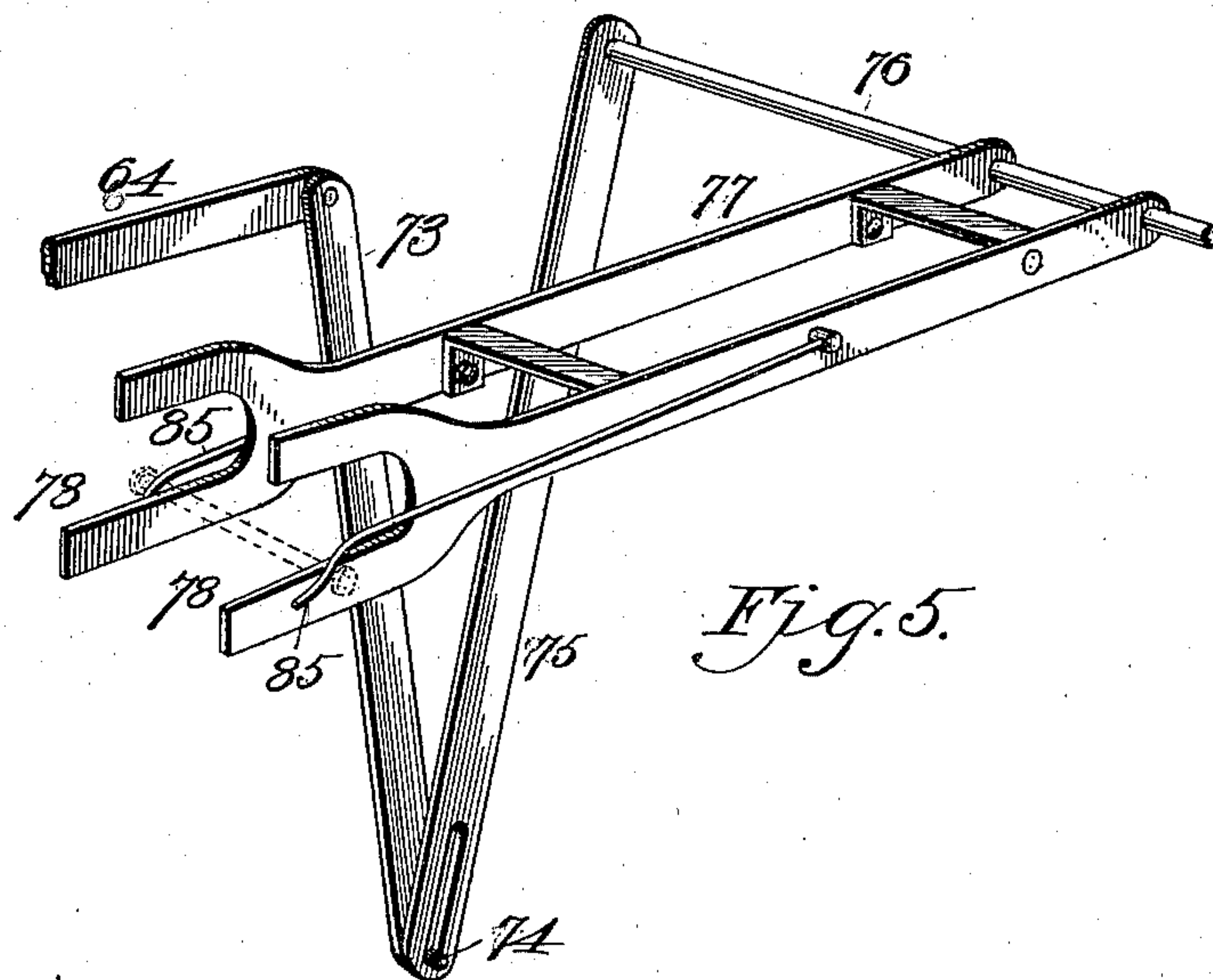
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4 Sheets—Sheet 4.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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POSTMARKING MECHANISM FOR MAIL-BOXES.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 685,913, dated November 5, 1901.

Application filed February 16, 1901. Serial No. 47,560. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, PRIMUS W. FROMHOLD, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Kansas City, Jackson county, Missouri, have
5 invented a new and useful Postmarking Mechanism for Mail-Boxes, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to mail-boxes of that class for use in rural districts and adapted to
10 perform the dual function of a delivery-box of incoming mail for certain individuals and the depository for outgoing mail for the general public, and more especially to postmarking mechanism for such mail-boxes.

15 The object of the invention is to produce positive and efficient means whereby each piece of mail-matter deposited in the box by the transmitter shall receive an impression which will insure its return to the sender if
20 not delivered to whom addressed.

A further object is to provide means of the character specified which possess the desirable features of simplicity, strength, durability, and cheapness of construction.

25 Figure 1 is a perspective view of a rural-delivery mail-box embodying my invention. Fig. 2 is a front view, partly broken away, of the box as opened by the postman. Fig. 3 is a vertical section on an enlarged scale, indicating how the letters are postmarked before they are dropped into the box. Fig. 4 is
30 a side view of the postmarking mechanism. Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a portion of the postmarking mechanism. Fig. 6 is a horizontal section of the tube wherein the stamp-plunger reciprocates.

Referring now to the drawings in detail, where like reference-numerals designate corresponding parts, 1 designates a mail-box of
40 suitable form and material and provided with a compartment 3 to receive mail-matter and with a door 13, adapted to be opened only by the postman in order that he may extract the mail-matter deposited in the box. In the upper part of the wall of the box forming one
45 side of the outgoing-mail compartment 3 and containing the words "Enter letter and push the button" is an opening 54, at the lower margin of which is pivoted a door 55, the
50 greater part of which lies within the box, while the smaller part 56, of size to close the

opening 54, remains outside the box and is provided with a handle 57, by which it may be conveniently thrown to a horizontal position, so as to uncover the opening 54, said
55 opening being inclosed at its upper and side margins by a flange 58 to prevent snow and water entering compartment 3. When the door is thrown to the horizontal position, as described, its inner end slides upward past
60 the cam-nose catches 59, depending rigidly from the cross-shaft 60, journaled in the box, said catches returning instantly and holding the door in a horizontal position under the retractive action of the spiral spring 61, se-
65 cured at one end to a fixed point on the box and at its opposite end to a crank-arm 62 of shaft 60, and rearward of said arm to limit movement in one direction is a stop-plate 63.

64 designates a push-bar extending into
70 compartment 3 of the box and provided with a push-button 65 at its outer end, said push-bar having a bearing where it enters the box and upon the bracket 66, secured within the box. At its inner side it is provided with a
75 pivoted pawl 67, limited as to downward movement by a pin 68 on the bar and provided with a spring extension 69, bearing beneath the pin 70 of the bar. The push-bar is normally held outward, as shown in Figs. 1 and
80 2, by a spring 71, secured within compartment 3 and pressing outwardly against pin 70, being provided with a slot 72, which serves as a guide for the pawl by holding the spring 69 reliably under pin 70. When said outgoing-
85 mail-compartment door is closed, spring 61 depresses crank-arm 62, so that its upper end lies below the path of movement of pawl 67, which therefore may be reciprocated without affecting the position of the catches held
90 reliably by spring 61 in the path of said door, so that when the latter is swung open the catches are forced back, as explained, and then return and support the door in its horizontal position, arm 62 being also held in the
95 path of the pawl. By pushing the push-bar inward the beveled side of the pawl slides over said arm, the spring 69 yielding sufficiently for this purpose and instantly depressing the pawl again after it has cleared said
100 arm, the pin 70 at the same time forcing the spring 71 back to the position shown in Fig.

3. The push-bar being now released, it is forced outward by said spring, which is powerful enough as the front end of the pawl strikes arm 62 to force the latter forward against the resistance of spring 61 and effect the release of the door, which, having its greater area and weight within the box, instantly swings to its vertical position and closes opening 54. The push-bar at its rear end is provided with a rigidly-depending arm 73, having a pin-and-slot connection at its lower end, as at 74, with a depending crank 75 on the cross-shaft 76, and projecting forwardly from and mounted rigidly on said cross-shaft is a vertically-swinging frame 77, terminating in a pair of parallel yokes 78, embracing opposite sides of a square tube 79, supported within compartment 3 by brackets 80, vertically over the inner portion of the door, when occupying the horizontal position shown.

81 designates a plunger fitting slidingly in tube 79 and provided at its lower end with a rubber or other suitable stamp 82 and with trunnions 83, (one only of which appears,) projecting through vertical slots 84 in the front and rear sides of the tube, said trunnions being normally held in the upper ends of said slots by the lower arms of the yokes, springs 85, secured to frame 77, pressing downward on the trunnions with sufficient force to insure the downward reciprocation of the plunger when the push-bar is pushed in and yet yield upwardly in case the descent of the plunger is arrested by the contact of the stamp with an object in its path before the full downstroke of the frame 77 has been completed. Ordinarily the upper arm of the yoke is functionless and is only brought into action when particularly bulky letters or packages are supported upon the horizontal door and a more positive and reliable pressure is needed than can be applied by the springs. In such cases the downward movement of the plunger and springs 85 terminates before that of frame 77, and the necessary pressure on the stamp is applied by the upper arms of the yoke striking down upon the trunnions 83. By the provision of the yielding pressure upon the plunger the device automatically accommodates itself, as will be readily understood, to anything from a postal card to a very bulky package.

For the purpose of keeping the stamp in condition to postmark an article at any time an angular frame 86 is hinged, as at 87, to tube 79 and has its base portion 88 provided with an ink-pad, which is in contact with the stamp, as shown in Fig. 4, except when the push-bar is pushed inward, this pad-frame being thrown to inoperative or operative position by the vertically-moving trunnions 83, operating in its horizontal slots 89, extending approximately parallel to the pad, the action of said trunnions in said slots being illustrated clearly in Figs. 3 and 4.

The postmark applied by the stamp upon the letter or other mail-matter, which is sup-

ported solidly to receive it at its inner end upon the catches 59, is preferably an identification of the box in which it is located, the mark corresponding, preferably, to the official title of the box—for instance, "Route A, Box 25," as appears upon the face of the box above the hinged face-plate. This postmark, as previously suggested, insures the return of an undelivered letter to the box from which it was originally forwarded, which will avoid great confusion in the distribution of undelivered mail where the sender fails to identify its point of origin thereon. Knowing the place from which it originated, it is very easy to ascertain who forwarded it.

From the above description it will be apparent that while I have illustrated and described the preferred embodiment of the invention—a construction which possesses the elements of simplicity, strength, durability, and cheapness—it is to be understood that it is susceptible of modification as regards the form, proportion, detail construction, and arrangement of the parts without departing from the spirit and scope or sacrificing any of its advantages.

I claim—

1. A mail-box provided with an outgoing-mail compartment, a hinged door therefor, means for holding said door open, and means for postmarking mail-matter upon said door and for closing the latter, substantially as described.

2. A mail-box, provided with an outgoing-mail compartment, a hinged door therefor, means for holding said door open, means for postmarking the mail-matter upon the door, and means for automatically effecting the closure of the door and the deposit of the mail-matter within the box, substantially as described.

3. A mail-box, provided with an outgoing-mail compartment, a hinged door therefor, means for holding said door open, postmarking apparatus above the door, instrumentalities for operating said apparatus and postmarking mail-matter upon the door, and means for automatically restoring said instrumentalities to their original positions and effecting the closure of the door, substantially as described.

4. A mail-box, provided with an outgoing-mail compartment, a hinged door therefor, means for holding said door open, a push-bar, means operated by the push-bar for postmarking an article upon the door, and means for effecting the return of the push-bar, and the postmarking devices to the original positions, and the closure of the door, substantially as described.

5. A mail-box, provided with a hinged door, means for holding the same open, postmarking devices above the door, a push-bar, instrumentalities operated by the push-bar for postmarking mail-matter on said door, a pawl carried by said push-bar, and means for forcing the push-bar outward and restoring

the postmarking devices to their original positions and causing the pawl to effect the closure of the door, substantially as described.

6. A mail-box, provided with a door which automatically closes, devices to hold said door open, postmarking devices above the door, means for causing said devices to postmark mail-matter on the door, and instrumentalities for automatically tripping the devices supporting the door to permit the latter to close, substantially as described.

7. A mail-box, provided with a door which automatically closes, spring-actuated devices to hold said door open, postmarking devices above the door, means for causing said devices to postmark mail-matter upon the door, a spring to restore said means and the postmarking devices to their original positions, and a pawl carried by said means and caused by said spring to automatically trip said spring-actuated devices to permit the door to close, substantially as described.

8. A mail-box, provided with a door which automatically closes, devices to hold said door open, postmarking devices above the door, a push-bar to cause said devices to postmark mail-matter on the door, a spring to return said push-bar and postmarking devices to their original positions, and a pawl carried by the push-bar to trip said spring-actuated door-holding devices to permit the latter to close, substantially as described.

9. A mail-box, provided with a door which automatically closes, a cross-shaft provided with a crank-arm and catches, a spring for holding said catches in the path of the door and in engagement therewith when the door is opened, postmarking devices above the door, a push-bar for operating said postmarking devices, a pawl carried by the push-bar and adapted to slide inoperatively over said crank-arm as the postmarking devices are operated, and a spring to return the push-bar to its original position and cause said pawl to engage said arm and thereby trip said catches and permit the door to close, substantially as described.

10. A mail-box provided with a door, means for holding said door open, a tube above the door, a sliding plunger therein containing a stamp at its lower end to engage mail-matter upon the door, and means for effecting the

descent of the plunger with a yielding pressure, and reëlevating it and effecting the closure of the door, substantially as described. 55

11. A mail-box, provided with a door, means for holding said door open, a tube above the door, a sliding plunger therein containing a stamp at its lower end to engage mail-matter upon the door, a pivoted yoke-frame, a spring carried thereby to effect a variable descent of the plunger accordingly as the thickness of the mail-matter varies, and means for reëlevating the yoke-frame, and thereby said plunger, and for effecting the closure of the door, substantially as described. 65

12. A mail-box, provided with a door, means for holding said door open, a tube above the door, a sliding plunger therein containing a stamp at its lower end to engage mail-matter upon the door, a hinged ink-pad normally pressing against said stamp, and having a pin-and-slot connection with the plunger, means for simultaneously effecting the descent of the plunger and the withdrawal of the ink-pad therefrom, and means for reëlevating the plunger, reseating the ink-pad beneath the same, and effecting the closure of the door, substantially as described. 75

13. A mail-box, provided with a door which automatically closes, devices to hold the same open, a push-bar provided with a depending arm, a rock-shaft having a crank-arm having a pin-and-slot connection with said arm, a yoke-frame rigidly mounted on said shaft and provided with springs, a slotted tube, a plunger therein provided with trunnions projecting through said slots and with a stamp at its lower end, said trunnions resting on said yoke-frame below said springs, an ink-pad frame hinged to the tube and having a pin-and-slot connection with said trunnions and provided with a pad normally pressing against said stamp, and a spring to effect the return of the push-bar and other parts to their original positions after each stamping operation takes place, substantially as described. 85 95

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

PRIMUS W. FROMHOLD.

Witnesses:

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