





# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

STEPHEN J. CARLETON, OF ARCADIA, FLORIDA.

## LETTER-BOX.

No. 842,445.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented Jan. 29, 1907.

Application filed August 27, 1906. Serial No. 332,214.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, STEPHEN J. CARLETON, a citizen of the United States, residing at Arcadia, in the county of De Soto and State of Florida, have invented new and useful Improvements in Letter-Boxes, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to letter-boxes, more particularly letter-boxes of the collection and delivery type; and it has for one of its objects to provide a letter-box having improved means for notifying a carrier when a letter that is to be collected is contained in the box.

Another object of the invention is the provision of a letter-box equipped with improved electromechanical means for apprising the owner of the box when a letter is delivered to the box by a carrier.

With the foregoing in mind the invention will be fully understood from the following description and claim when the same are read in connection with the accompanying drawings, forming part of this specification, in which—

Figure 1 is a perspective view of my novel box as the same appears subsequent to the deposit in the box of a letter to be collected. Fig. 2 is a view illustrating the box in vertical section and also illustrating diagrammatically the electric circuit and the bell and source of electric energy in the circuit. Fig. 3 is a detail vertical section taken in the plane of the line 3 3 in Fig. 2 and showing the box-cover closed and the electric circuit interrupted. Fig. 4 is a view taken at the same point as Fig. 3, but showing the box-cover open and the electric circuit complete.

Similar letters of reference designate corresponding parts in all of the views of the drawings.

My novel letter-box is preferably made of metal, and its body A is provided with a compartment *a* for the reception of letters delivered by a carrier, a compartment *b*, in which letters to be collected by the carrier are to be placed, and a top wall *c*, preferably declined forward, as shown, and having a slot or opening *d* in communication with the compartment *a* and a slot or opening *e*, the latter communicating with the compartment *b*. In connection with the compartments *a* and *b* suitable doors *f* and *g* are provided, so that the mail may be readily taken from the compartments by the persons authorized so to do.

B is the cover of the box. The said cover is hinged at *h* to the body and is provided with

a slot or opening *k*, arranged to register, as shown in Fig. 2, with the opening *e* in top *c*.

With a view of informing the owner of the box when a letter is deposited by a carrier in the compartment *a*, no matter whether the box is located on the front of a house or at the side of a highway remote from the house, I provide the electromechanical means shown in Fig. 2 and in detail in Figs. 3 and 4. The said electromechanical means comprises a non-conducting support *m*, a circuit-closing device *n*, a battery or other source of electric energy *p*, and an electric bell *q*, said battery and bell being arranged in circuit with the device *n*, as illustrated diagrammatically in Fig. 2. The device *n* is made up of a member *r* in the form of a strip of metal connected at one end to one side of the support *m* and extending above said support and a member *s*, also in the form of a strip of metal, connected at one end to the support *m* and having an upwardly-extending loop *t*, which rests in an opening *u* in the top wall *c* of body A, and also having an arm *v* disposed under the member *r*.

The member *s* is possessed of resiliency, and hence it will be apparent that when the cover B is down the weight of said cover bearing on the apex of the loop *u* will hold the arm *v* of member *s* in its position below and away from the member *r* and in that way maintain an interrupted circuit. When, however, the cover B is raised by a carrier in order to enable him to deliver a letter through the opening *d* and into the compartment *a*, it will be seen that the member *s*, relieved of the weight of cover B, will spring up and contact with the member *r*, so as to complete the electric circuit and ring the bell *q*, and thereby notify the box owner of the delivery of a letter. The bell *q* will ring but a short time, because, as will be readily understood, when the carrier releases the top B, said top by gravitating to its closed position, Figs. 2 and 3, will depress the member *s*, and thereby open the electric circuit and maintain it normally in such state.

It will be gathered from the foregoing that the device *n* is simple in construction and reliable in operation and is not liable to get out of order incident to the use of the box.

Above the opening *k* in cover B is arranged a flap C, which is hinged to the cover at the point *w*. The said flap C must be raised precedent to the deposit of a letter to be collected in the compartment *b*, and I



therefore hinge to the cover B at a point slightly above the hinge connection of flap C a sign M, bearing, by preference, the word "Mail." This sign M is preferably in the  
5 form of a sheet-metal plate, which is carried by a shaft  $x$ , journaled in a stiff manner in bearings on the cover B and terminating at one end in an arm  $y$ , arranged to bring up against the top of the cover, as shown in  
10 Fig. 1.

When the compartment  $b$  is empty, the owner of the box or the carrier swings the sign M down on the flap C, as shown in Fig. 2. It will be noticed, however, that when  
15 the flap C is raised, as is necessary to the deposit of a letter in the compartment  $b$ , the sign M will be raised to the position shown in Fig. 1, also that in virtue of the stiff or tight connection of said sign to cover B the  
20 sign will remain in its raised position after the flap C is released and permitted to drop to its closed position. From this it follows that when a carrier passes the box he will be apprised of the fact that there is a letter in  
25 the compartment  $b$ , which it is his duty to collect. After the carrier takes the letter from compartment  $b$  either he or the owner of the box may return the sign to the idle position. (Shown in Fig. 2.)

30 It will be appreciated from the foregoing that both of the novel features of my improved letter-box contribute materially to the utility of the box and yet add but little to the cost of the same.

35 The construction shown and described constitutes the preferred embodiment of my invention; but I desire it understood that in

practice such changes in the form, construction, and relative arrangement of parts may be made as fairly fall within the scope of my  
40 invention as claimed.

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

In a letter-box, the combination of a body 45 having openings in its top, one of which is for the introduction of letters, a circuit-closing device arranged in a normally open electric circuit with a source of electric energy and an electric signal and comprising a non-  
50 conducting support located in the box-body, a stationary member connected to said support, and a resilient member also connected to the support and having a loop extending upward through the other opening in the top 55 and also having an arm arranged under the stationary member and adapted when the resilient member is free to be moved and held against said stationary member to close the electric circuit, and a vertically-  
60 swinging cover pivoted to the body and normally closing the openings in the top of said body and resting on the loop of the resilient member comprised in the circuit-closing device, whereby the weight of the cover oper-  
65 ates to normally hold the arm of the resilient member away from the stationary member.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand in presence of two subscribing witnesses.

STEPHEN J. CARLETON.

Witnesses:

W. H. SIMMONS,  
A. C. FREEMAN.