

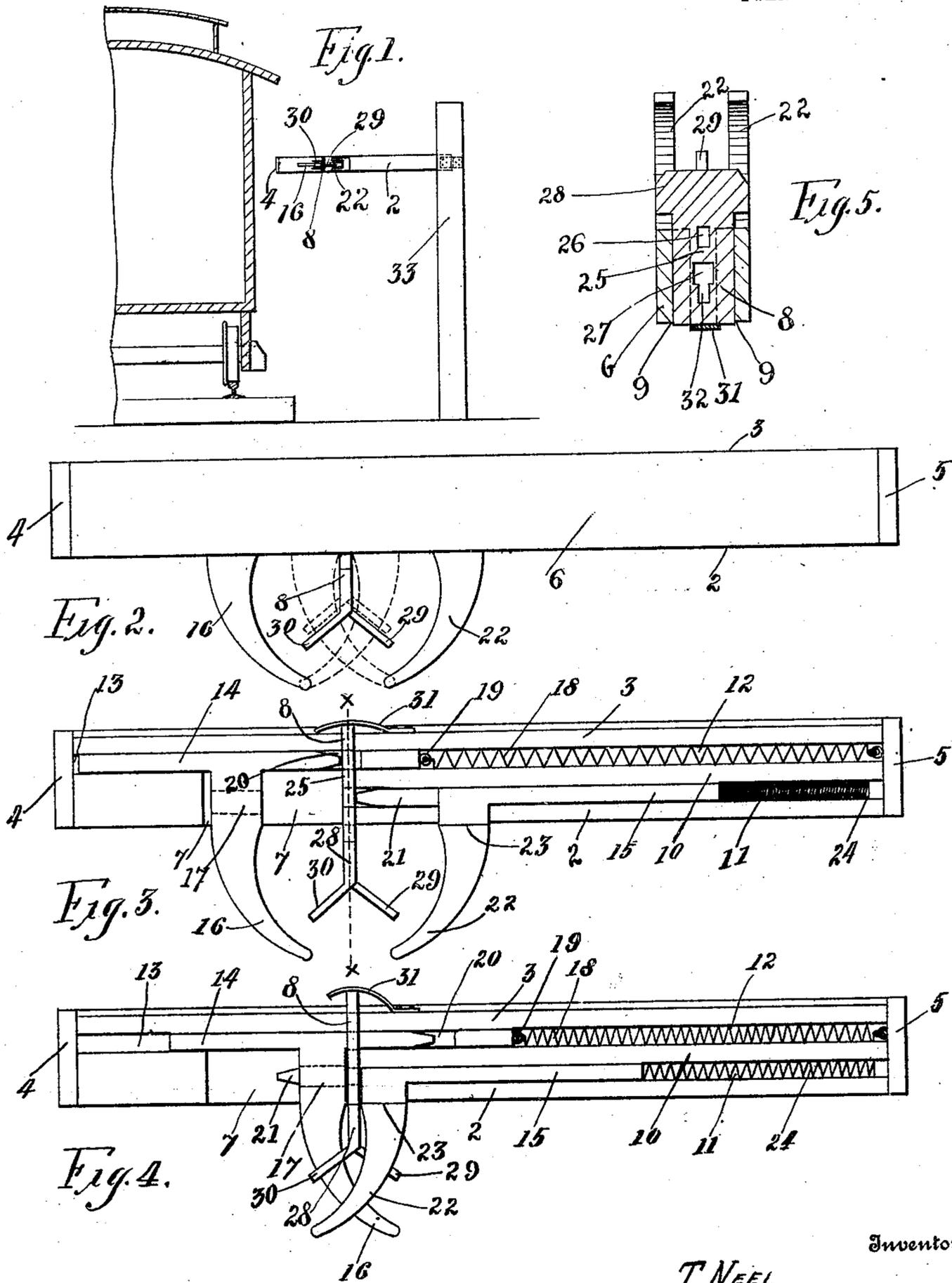
T. NEEL, W. E. WILLIAMS & F. W. OWESNEY.
MAIL CATCHING DEVICE.

APPLICATION FILED SEPT. 2, 1908.

Patented Apr. 6, 1909.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

917,108.



Witnesses

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Inventors

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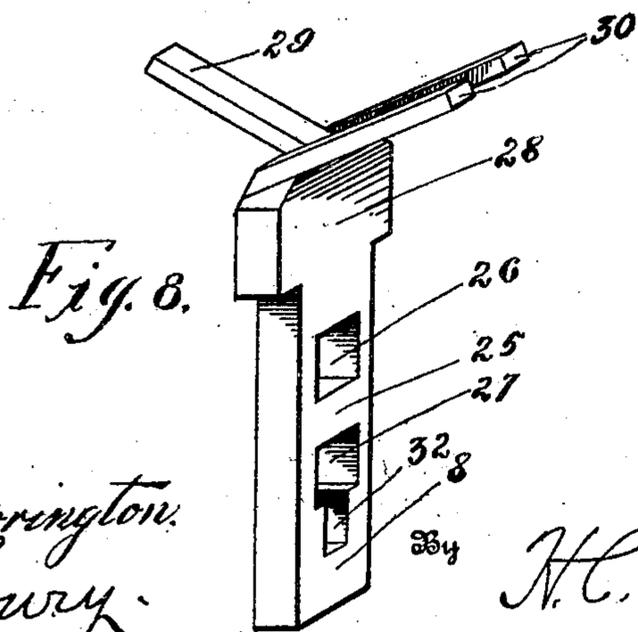
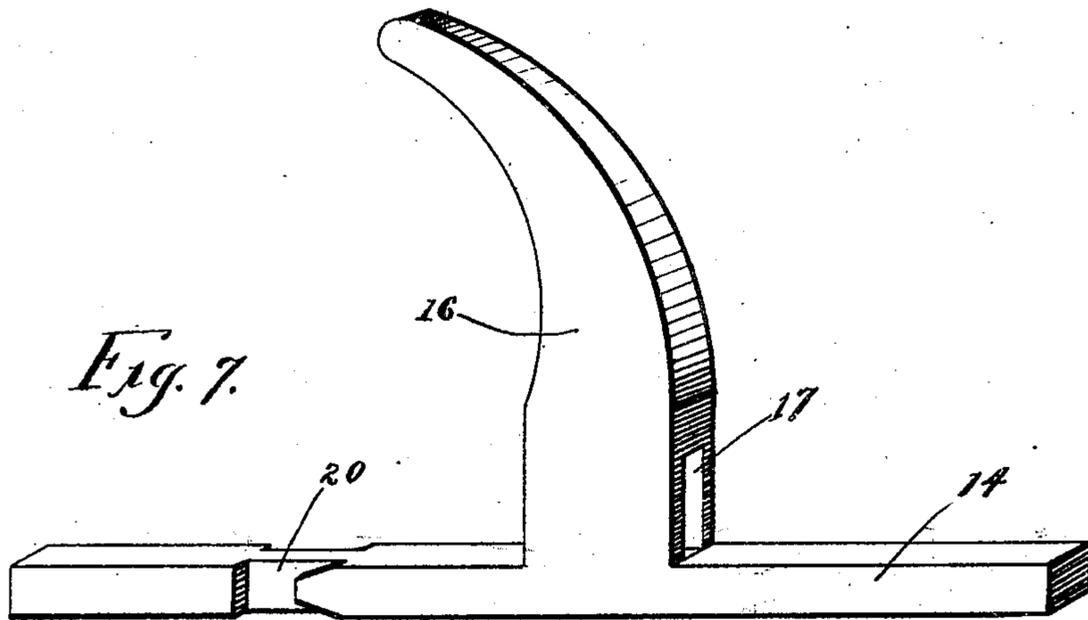
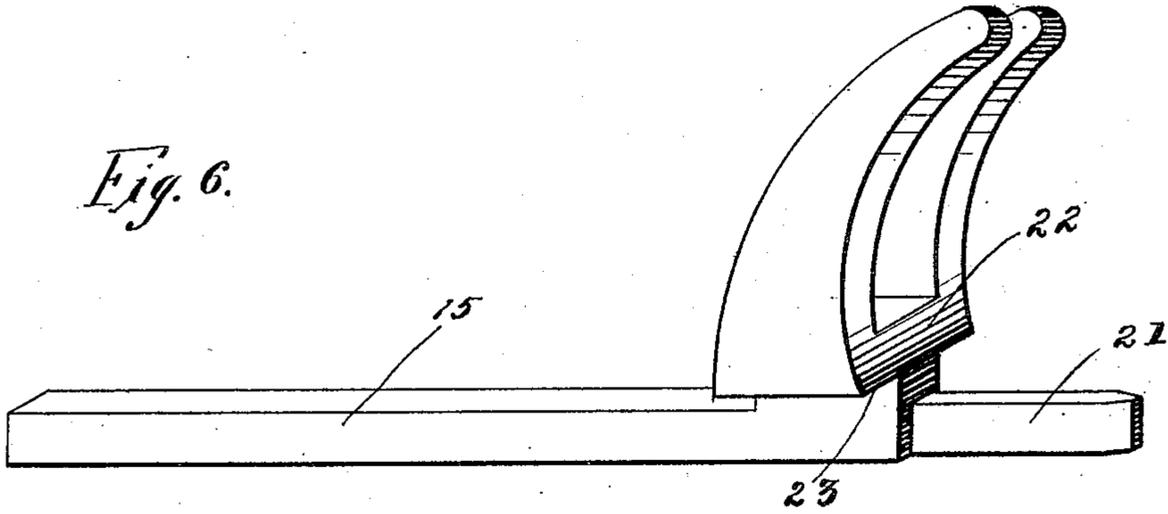
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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

THOMAS NEEL, WILLIAM E. WILLIAMS, AND FREDERICK W. OWESNEY, OF IRONDALE, OHIO.

MAIL-CATCHING DEVICE.

No. 917,108.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented April 6, 1909.

Application filed September 2, 1908. Serial No. 451,419.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, THOMAS NEEL, WILLIAM E. WILLIAMS, and FREDERICK W. OWESNEY, citizens of the United States of America, residing at Irondale, in the county of Jefferson and State of Ohio, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Mail-Catching Devices, of which the following is a specification, reference being had therein to the accompanying drawing.

This invention relates to mail catching devices, and the object of our invention is to provide novel means for catching, gripping and firmly holding a mail bag, that is delivered to a mail car in motion, or to a railway station.

Another object of our invention is to provide a mail catcher that will be positive in its action, free from injury by ordinary use, and highly efficient for the purposes for which the same is intended.

Our invention aims to eliminate the danger to which mail clerks, station masters, and persons in a mail car or at a railway station have been subjected to, by mail bags being thrown from fast moving trains and by bags being suddenly thrown through the doorway of a mail car. In this connection, our mail catcher also protects a mail bag from being injured by dispensing with the rough handling of the same.

We attain the above objects by a device that will be presently described in detail and then specifically claimed.

Referring to the drawings, Figure 1 is a front elevation of our device located at one side of a railway for receiving mail, Fig. 2 is an enlarged plan of our device in an open position, Fig. 3 is a similar view with the top plate thereof removed, Fig. 4 is a similar view illustrating the mail catching device closed, Fig. 5 is a cross sectional view taken on the line $x-x$ of Fig. 3. Fig. 6 is a perspective view of one of the gripping arms, Fig. 7 is a similar view of another of the gripping arms, and Fig. 8 is a perspective view of the latch of the mail catching device.

To put our invention into practice, we provide an oblong casing, comprising a base plate, side plates 2 and 3, end plates 4 and 5 and a top plate 6, all of these plates being assembled to provide a strong and rigid structure, although, we would have it understood in connection with this casing that some of the plates thereof can be made inte-

gral, for instance all of said plates, with the exception of the top plate 6, which can be suitably secured to the casing. The side plate 2 adjacent to the end plate 4 is cut away, as at 7, to provide a longitudinal slot. The side plate 3 is provided with a transverse slot 8, and the confronting faces of the plates 1 and 6 are provided with transverse grooves 9 alining with said transverse slot, the object of which will presently appear. In the casing is arranged a longitudinal partition 10, extending from the end plate 5 to a point alining with the slot 8 and the grooves 9. This partition provides two guide-ways 11 and 12, the guide-way 12 being continued between the side plates 2 and 3 at the outer end of the casing closed by the plate 4. This continuation of the guide-way 12, which we have designated 13 is formed by making the outer end of the side plate 2 a greater breadth than the remainder of the plate.

In the guide-ways 11 and 12 are arranged two slide bars 14 and 15 respectively. The slide bar 14 is provided with a laterally extending curved gripping arm 16 extending through the front side or slot 7 of the casing. The base of this arm is provided with a longitudinal opening 17, the purpose of which will presently appear.

Arranged in the guide-way 12 is a retractile coil spring 18 having one end thereof secured to the end plate 5, and the opposite end thereof secured to the end of the slide bar 14, as at 19. The slide bar 14, contiguous to the spring fastened end thereof is provided with a contracted portion 20.

The slide bar 15 is provided with a contracted outer end 21 and adjacent to the contracted end is provided with a curved forked gripping arm 22, the shoulders 23 of said arm bearing against the side plate 2 and the front edge of the top plate 6, when said arm is moved. This arm is adapted to cooperate with the arm 16 in gripping a mail bag, and when said arms are closed, as best shown in Fig. 4, the curved arm 16, extends through the forked arm 22.

Arranged within the guide-way 11 is a compression spring 24 having one end thereof held by the end plate 5, while the opposite end thereof bears directly against the end of a bar 15.

Slidably mounted in the grooves 9 and the slot 8 is a latch 25, having a square opening

26 formed therein for the contracted end 21 of the bar 15, and a T shaped opening 27 for the bar 14. This latch is of a greater length than the casing and has one end thereof extending forward between the arms 16 and 22 and enlarged as at 28 for two upwardly extending prongs 29 and 30, the latter being bifurcated to provide clearance for the arm 16, while the former extends through a forked arm 22, when said arms are closed. The rear end of the latch 25 is engaged by a leaf spring 31 secured to the side plate 3.

With the arms 16 and 22 in an open position as shown in Fig. 3, the coil springs 18 and 24 are under tension. The bar 14, which extends through the opening 27 of the latch 25 is held in the narrow portion 32 of said opening by the contracted portion 20 of said bar. The contracted end 21 of the bar 15 is held against the latch between the openings 26 and 27 and the spring 31 remains under tension. Immediately upon a mail bag striking the prongs 29 and 30, or said prongs striking a bag, the latch 25 is forced inwardly placing the spring 31 under greater tension. As the latch moves inwardly, the contracted portion 20 of the bar 14 is released by the narrow portion 32 of the opening 27, and said bar is free to move in said opening. The spring 18 which is under tension will immediately draw the bar 14 toward the plate 5, causing the arm 16 to assume the position illustrated in Fig. 4. Simultaneously with the release of the bar 14, the bar 15 is released. The spring 24 forces the contracted end 21 of the bar 15 through the opening 26 into the opening 17 of the arm 16, causing the arm 22 to embrace the prong 29 and the arm 16. The mail bag will be firmly held between the arm 16 and 22, and to release said mail bag, the arms 16 and 22 are manually opened. As soon as the arms reach an open position, the spring 31 which has been placed under tension forces the latch 25 outwardly, whereby the bar 14 will be held by the contracted portion 20 engaging in the latch and the contracted end 21 of the bar 15 engaging the side of the latch.

The case in its entirety can be hinged or movably connected to a post 33 or the doorway of a car, and in either position, the casing is adapted to swing to one side after a mail bag has been caught.

While in the drawings forming a part of this application there is illustrated the preferred embodiments of our invention, we would have it understood that various changes can be made as to the shape, proportion and size of the structural details without departing from the scope of the invention.

Having now described our invention what we claim as new, is;—

1. A mail catcher embodying a hinged casing, said casing having a slot formed therein, a spring pressed latch arranged transversely of said casing and having one end protruding therefrom, springs carried by the protruding end of said latch, said latch having openings formed therein, a spring pressed bar slidably mounted in said casing and extending through one of the openings of said latch, said bar having a contracted portion adapted to be engaged by said latch for temporarily holding said bar, a curved arm carried by said bar and protruding from said casing, a spring pressed bar slidably mounted in said casing and adapted to enter the other of said openings of said latch, and a curved forked arm carried by said bar and protruding from said casing and adapted to cooperate with the first mentioned curved arm for holding a mail bag when said arms are released by said latch.

2. A mail catching device comprising a hinged casing having a slot formed therein, a spring pressed latch located transversely of said casing, a spring held bar slidably mounted in said casing and adapted to be temporarily held by said latch, a curved arm carried by said bar and extending through the slot of said casing, a spring pressed bar slidably mounted in said casing and adapted to be temporarily held by said latch, a curved forked arm carried by said bar and extending through the slot of said casing to cooperate with the first mentioned arm for holding a mail bag when released by said latch.

3. A mail catching device comprising a casing having a slot formed therein, curved arms arranged in said casing and extending through said slot, spring actuated bars slidably mounted in said casing and connecting with the inner ends of said arms, and a spring pressed latch arranged transversely of said casing for temporarily holding said arms in an open position, said latch protruding from said casing to be struck by a mail bag to release said temporarily held arms.

4. A mail catching device comprising a casing, spring actuated curved gripping arms arranged in said casing and protruding therefrom, and a spring pressed latch arranged transversely of said arms for temporarily holding said arms in an open position.

In testimony whereof we affix our signatures in the presence of two witnesses.

THOMAS NEEL.

WILLIAM E. WILLIAMS.

FREDERICK W. OWESNEY.

Witnesses:

O. E. KENNEDY,

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