

W. J. KETCHUM.

Mail-Bag Catcher.

No. 48,954.

Patented July 25, 1865.

Fig. 1.

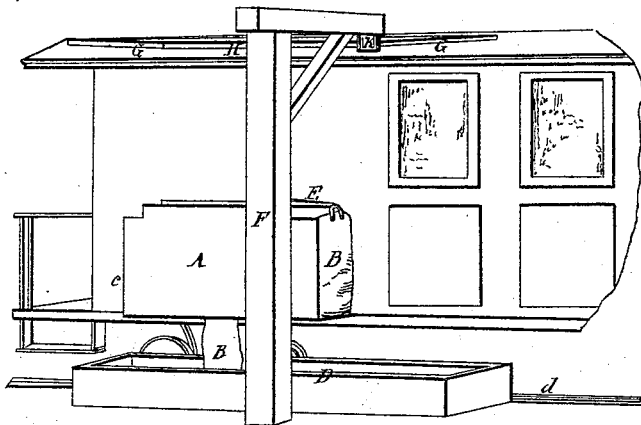


Fig. 2.

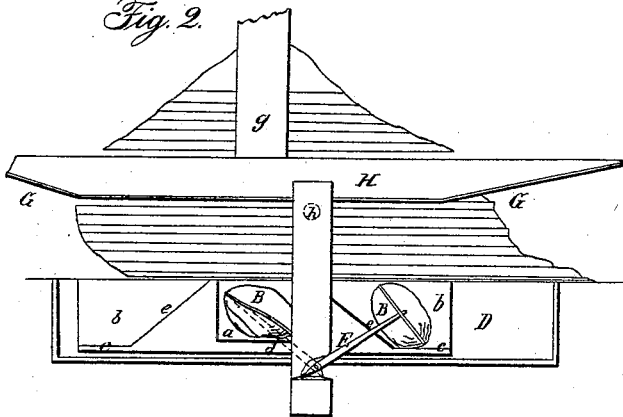
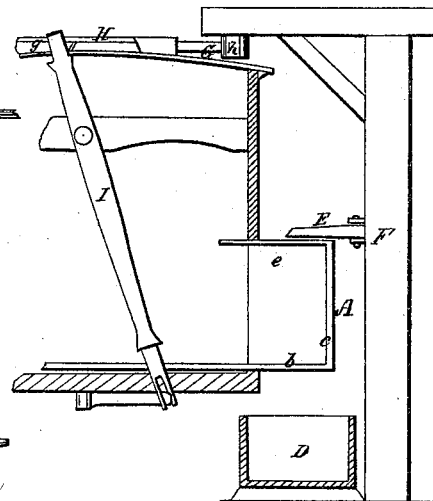


Fig. 3.



Witnesses:

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WILLIAM JAY KETCHAM, OF WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

IMPROVED MODE OF RECEIVING AND DELIVERING MAILS AND PACKAGES ON RAILROAD-CARS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **48,954**, dated July 25, 1865.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, WILLIAM JAY KETCHAM, of the city and county of Washington, in the District of Columbia, have invented a certain new and useful automatic mail and express messenger to be attached to cars for receiving and delivering mails and express-packages at the stations on the line of railroad without stopping or diminishing the speed of the cars; and the following is a clear, full, and exact description of the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, making a part of this specification, in which—

Figure 1 represents a perspective side view of a broken-off section of a car with the drawer open to receive and deliver a mail-bag or package at the station. Fig. 2 shows a plan or top view of the same at the time of changing the mails. Fig. 3 shows a broken-off sectional end view of a car with the drawer to receive and deliver the mails, the station, and the apparatus for operating the same.

The object of my invention is to deliver, and at the same time receive, a mail-bag or package at the station without requiring the agency or attention of any one at the time the change takes place.

My invention consists in placing in a car a movable drawer, in which the mail-bags or packages are placed, on the inside of the car, to be shoved out and dropped into a box to receive them at the station, the movable drawer being so constructed as to form a recess to take in a mail-bag or package at the same time, it being operated automatically as the car passes the station independent of any person connected therewith.

To enable others skilled in the art to make and use my mail and express messenger, I will describe it more in detail, referring to the drawings, and to the letters marked thereon.

In any convenient place in the sides of the car openings of any desired width and length may be made, into which is fitted a movable drawer, A, which has a box, *a*, in the center, into which the mail-bag B is placed to be delivered. On each side of the box *a* there is an extended platform, *b b*, so constructed that the ends *c c* of the drawer A form guards to take off the mail or package and secure it within the car, as the drawer A is closed up flush with the side of the car, the central box, *a*, being

made flaring, the largest at the bottom, which is open, so that when the drawer is thrust out the mail-bag will drop out freely into the box D, placed alongside of the track *d* at the station. At the same time the mail B is delivered in the box D. The mail-bag B', having been placed upon the arm E, which is secured to the post F at a suitable height, or on a platform or table for the purpose, is taken off by the ledge *e*, secured on the drawer-platform *b*, and is instantly deposited within the car.

The apparatus G H I, by which the movable drawer A is made to perform the double function of receiving and delivering—or, in other words, changing the mails or packages—may be placed on the top of the car, so that the inclined surface G of the bar or timber H will come in contact with the friction-roller *n*, placed in a proper position at the station, or the friction-rollers *n* may be attached to the slide *g* on the car, which connects by the lever I with the movable drawer A, the inclined timber being secured in position to operate at the stations. In this case the inclined timbers may be of any required length, so that an easy automatic motion is given and no shock to the car is felt, although the changing of the mail-bags may be effected with the cars going at a high rate of speed. Various mechanical devices may be used and applied to different places, both on the cars and at the stations, to perform the automatic movement required.

It will readily be seen that by my invention, as above described, mail and other packages can be taken with certainty and received into the car, and at the same time another can be delivered at the station with safety, while the train is in motion and the cars moving at high rate of speed.

The operation of mail-carrying by my automatic mail and express messenger will be as follows: The mail post-office car being provided with the apparatus, and all of the mail-stations on the line prepared with the fixtures for operating it, the postmasters at the stations will place their mail-bag on the arm E, or a table prepared for the purpose, in time for the train. The postmaster or agent in the car will also put the mail to be left at the first station in the box *a* of the movable drawer A. No more attention to them is required until the mails are changed, of which due notice

will be given by the hasty admission of the mail-bag into the car. When this takes place the mail for the next station, being prepared, will be put into the box, which will be delivered and another received as the train passes the next station, and so on *ad infinitum*. All that will be required to insure the perfect transmission of the mails and the certainty of delivery at both the stations and in the car is to have the mail-bags for their respective stations put in their places in due time. This being done, no further time or attention need be devoted. The mail agents and clerks can attend to their other duties.

Having thus fully described my invention and its operation, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

Receiving and delivering upon lines of railroad-communication mails and packages by means of devices connected to the railway-car, and operated at the several points of delivery, in the manner herein described.

WILLIAM JAY KETCHAM.

Witnesses:

J. B. WOODRUFF,
JOS. PECK.