The Perplexity Puzzles
(including Perplexity, Automobile, Panama Canal, Jonnah)

Patented by R. Shaffer 1900, made early 1900's.
(top left: metal 1.6 by 3.5 inches, "THE PERPLEXING PUZZLE, SPELLS, PERPLEXITY, PATENTED";
lower left: metal 1.75 by 4.2 inches, "AUTOMOBILE, PATENTED";
top right: metal 1.6 by 4 inches, "WHEN YOU ARE DOWN IN THE MOUTH, THINK OF JONAH, PATENTED, HE GOT OUT";
lower right: metal 1.6 by 4 inches with paper sleeve, "SOUVENIR PANAMA EXPOSITION 1915, R.E. ROSS PHILA.PA., PANAMA CANAL, PATD")

Some buttons are smaller with off-center shafts. As described above in the directions on the paper sleeve in which The Panama Canal came (its first button is "The"), generally, when the upper and lower slots are full, buttons cannot be parked on the vertical legs and still allow buttons to pass by horizontally, and when there are three buttons on the left, a button cannot enter the lower vertical leg. However, if things are done just right, a button can be rotated and parked in the lower vertical leg while there are three buttons to the left. Hordern's book describes a solution for Perplexity (using key letters XIRY), a solution for Automobile (using key letters BOOT or TILE), and mentions another version for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904.

Further Reading
Shaffer Patent, from: www.uspto.gov - patent no. 642,374

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