

The Perplexity Puzzles

(including *Perplexity*, *Automobile*, *Panama Canal*, *Jonah*)



Solution of the Panama Canal Puzzle.

The key letters are N M C N and are used in the order named. First fill the lower slot with the four letters A A A A then arrange the four key letters at the left hand end of the long middle slot. The N must stand straight up and down, then follow with M and C and N, which you must turn until it drops down into the lower vertical slot and thus allow the remaining letters to pass up to the upper slot, after which it is but a matter of arranging the letters to spell the name **Panama Canal**. After having spelled the word from left to right, then reverse it to spell the name backwards from right to left. Thus **lanac amanaP ehT**. Otherwise the Puzzle is not solved. To reverse the Puzzle use the key letters as before.

ROSS ETTINGER CO.

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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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