Feb. 26, 1952 J. J. McEWAN 2,587,355

CASKET CONSTRUCTION

Original Filed Jan. 15, 1948 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

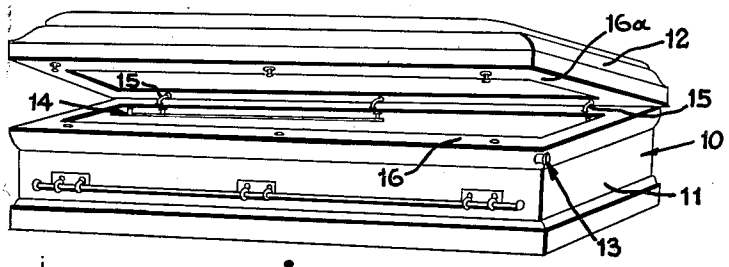


Fig. 1

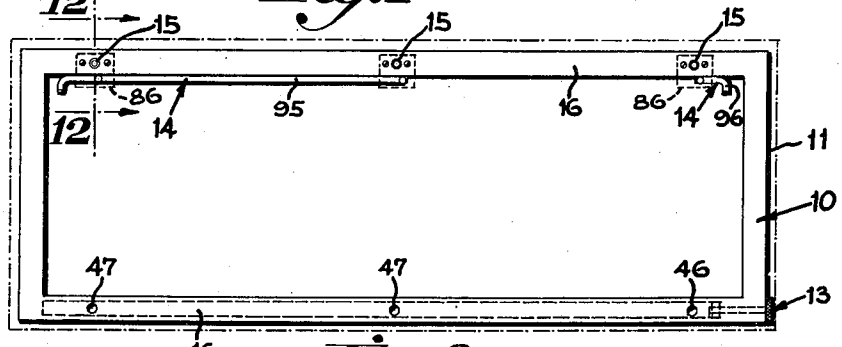


Fig. 2

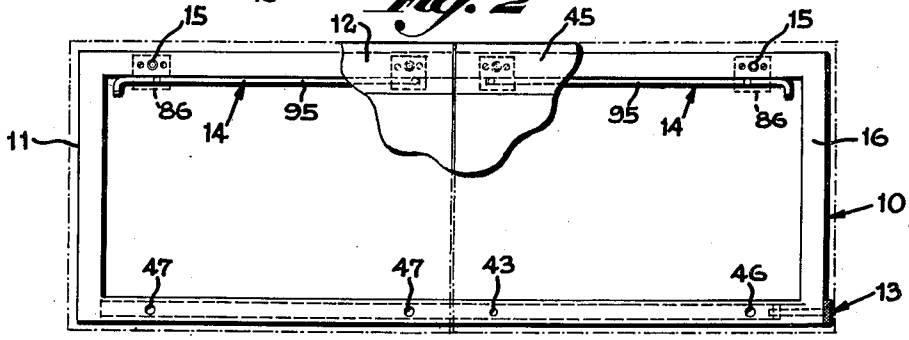


Fig. 3

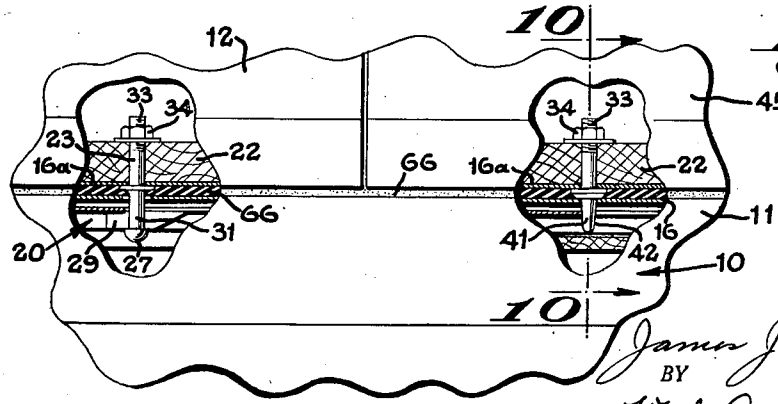


Fig. 4

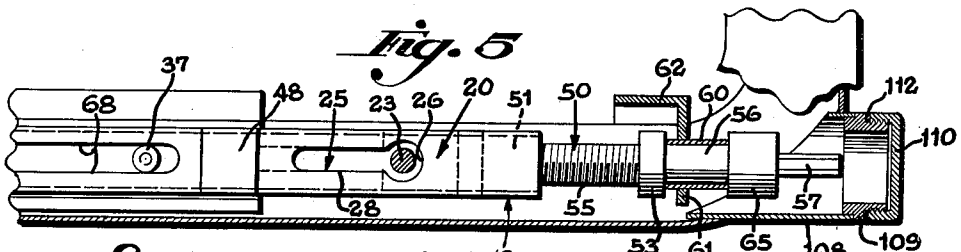
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Fig. 5



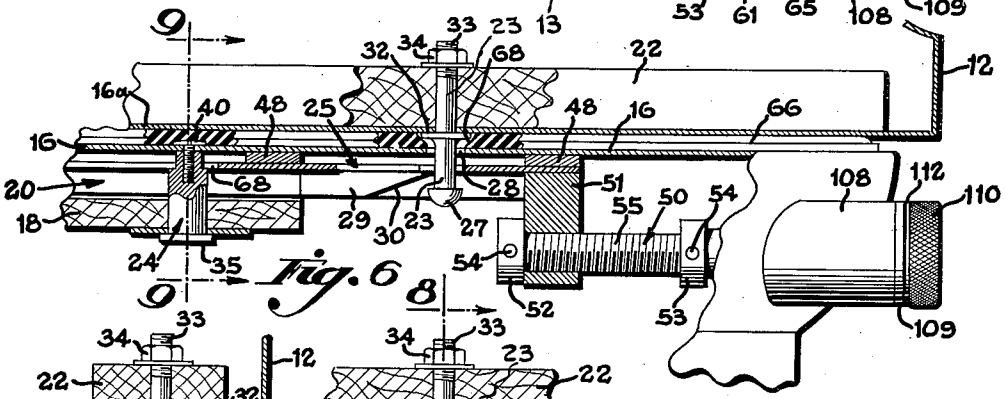


Fig. 6

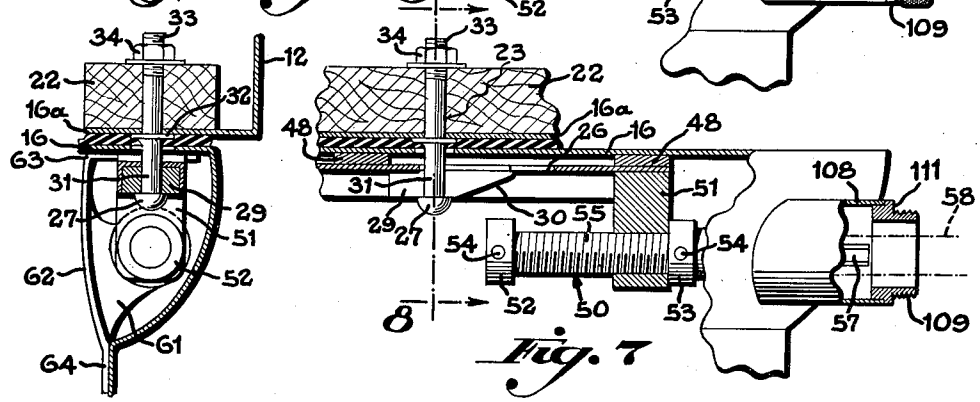
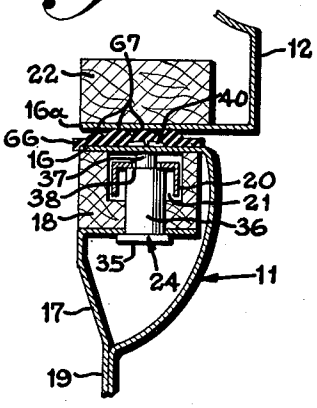
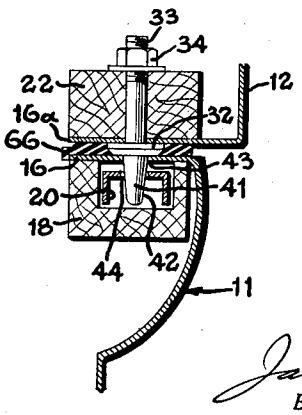


Fig. 7

Fig. 8





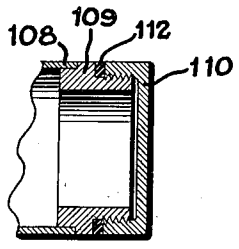


Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 11

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CASKET CONSTRUCTION

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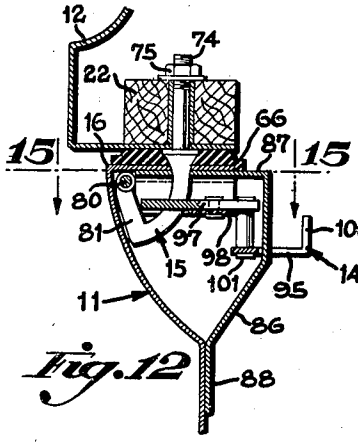


Fig. 12

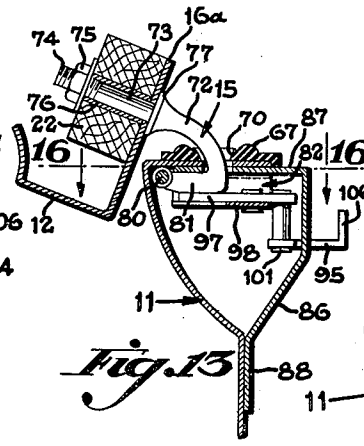


Fig. 13

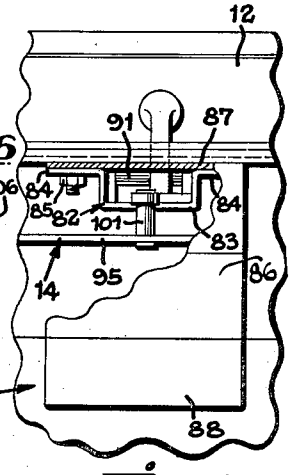


Fig. 14

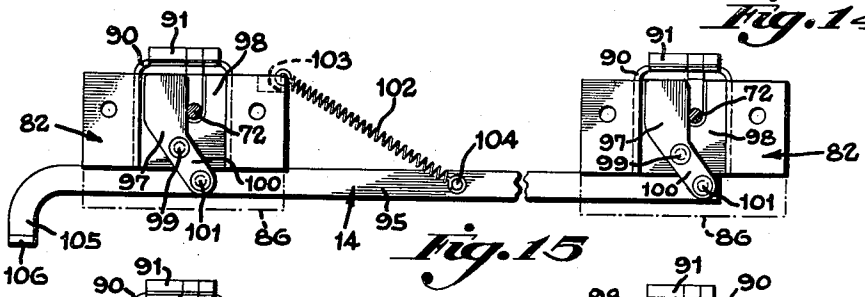


Fig. 15

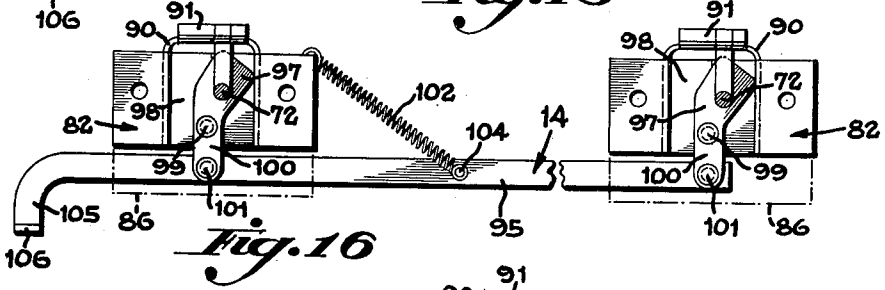


Fig. 16

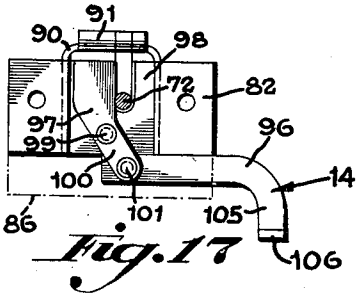


Fig. 17

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Patented Feb. 26, 1952

2,587,355

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,587,355

CASKET CONSTRUCTION

James J. McEwan, Batesville, Ind., assignor to The Batesville Casket Company, Batesville, Ind., a corporation of Indiana

Original application January 15, 1948, Serial No. 2,481, now Patent No. 2,582,841, dated January 15, 1952. Divided and this application August 16, 1949, Serial No. 113,869

2 Claims. (Cl. 27—18)

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This invention relates to burial caskets and has particular reference to improvements in the lid pull-down mechanism and hinge construction for hermetically sealed caskets. This application is a division of my copending application Serial No. 2,481, filed January 15, 1948, now Patent No. 2,582,841, dated January 15, 1952.

The present improvements are designed for application to a structure of the type disclosed in the patent to Robert B. Purkiss, No. 2,323,674 issued July 6, 1943.

In general it has been the object of the present inventor to improve the operating characteristics of the sealing apparatus so as to permit the sealing and locking operation to be performed quickly, smoothly and positively, and in the case of the cut top casket, to align accurately the two lid sections to facilitate sealing the seam between the sections.

A further object has been to improve the design of the pull-down mechanism for the lid and its relationship to the sealing strip to provide a more uniform sealing pressure about the periphery of the casket and thereby improve the effectiveness of the seal.

The improved structure is designed for application either to caskets of the cut top style which embody a sectional lid respectively for the foot and head portions of the casket, or to single lid caskets. In either instance a gasket or sealing strip is applied between the casket and lid or lids, and the pull-down mechanism serves to compress the sealing gasket between the casket and the lid to seal the casket hermetically, prior to burial. In the instance of the cut top casket, the sealing gasket extends also across the seam between the two lid sections with its opposite ends joining the body seal. This gasket section also is compressed by the pull-down mechanism to establish a seal between the lid sections.

In order to reduce production costs and to provide caskets of a uniform quality, the casket body and lid are fabricated preferably from sheet metal stampings. The respective casket and lid shells may be assembled completely as units, with the lid hingedly mounted on the casket and the pull-down and locking mechanism installed in the casket shell in working order. Upholstery or lining units for the lid and casket shells may then be installed to complete the assembly. In order to facilitate the application of the upholstery or liners, the present structure incorporates suitable nailing strips or rails, preferably of wood, to which the liner units may be attached. These rails provide reinforcing elements upon which

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to anchor the pull-down bolts which form a part of the locking apparatus. The improved structure therefore, expedites the fabrication of the casket units and coincidentally, the rails stiffen the structure, prevent warping or springing due to pull-down pressure and thus provide a more rugged and efficient sealing arrangement.

In the instance of the cut top casket, the present structure incorporates as an improvement, an alignment or dowel pin carried by the foot section of the sectional lid, arranged to project through an opening in the upper edge of the casket when the lid is closed. This locks the foot section securely to the casket and prevents shifting due to horizontal pressure exerted by the locking apparatus when the casket is sealed. When the head section is closed it overlies and engages against a vertical shoulder formed in the foot section, therefore, the single dowel pin of the foot section prevents lateral displacement of both lid sections when the latch mechanism is actuated.

After the lid or lids are closed, the pull-down and locking apparatus is actuated by a suitable instrumentality, such as a crank, as in the above mentioned Purkiss patent. This tool is inserted from the exterior of the casket and engages the end of an actuating screw, which upon being rotated, shifts a longitudinal locking bar in the appropriate direction to pull down the lid and apply the sealing pressure. It will be apparent that an opening must be provided for insertion of the tool and that the opening thus provided tends to affect adversely the seal provided between the lid and the casket. To prevent leakage through this opening into the interior of the casket it has been the practice to provide a packing gland to seal off the exposed end of the screw shaft but this structure has not been entirely satisfactory. Therefore this packing has been eliminated in the improved arrangement by the provision of a closure cap which is arranged to make a positive sealing engagement with the crank opening of the casket. This cap is applied after the casket is sealed and permanently seals the crank opening.

Another prevailing practice has been to provide collapsible exposed lid braces at one or both ends of the casket to hold the lid open during the funeral services. This apparatus is somewhat objectionable because of its appearance and because of difficulty in manipulation. In the present structure the braces have been eliminated by the provision of latch means cooperating with the lid hinges which serve automatically to latch

the lid in open position. The latching apparatus is concealed within the confines of the casket shell and operates automatically to latch and stabilize the lid in open position when the lid is fully raised. The automatic operation of the latch apparatus permits the lid or lids to be raised and latched by one person conveniently.

Other objects and advantages not specifically set forth will be more fully apparent from the following specification with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a single lid casket embodying the present improvements.

Figure 2 is a diagrammatic top plan view of a casket of the single lid type, the lid being removed to illustrate in general, the arrangement of the lid holding apparatus and pull-down mechanism.

Figure 3 is a similar diagrammatic view illustrating a cut top or sectional lid casket.

Figure 4 is a fragmentary front view of a casket of the cut top variety with the sectional lids closed showing a pull-down bolt in locked position and showing the dowel pin as used in this type of casket.

Figure 5 is a fragmentary plan view of the forward edge of a casket, partially in section, illustrating the locking bar and its actuating means mounted therein.

Figure 6 is a fragmentary front view partially in section projected from Figure 5, showing the locking bar in conjunction with a portion of the casket lid structure, the locking bar in unlocked position and with a locking bolt in position for engagement by the bar.

Figure 7 is a view similar to Figure 6 showing the locking bar in its locked position drawing the locking bolt and casket lid in pressure engagement with the sealing strip.

Figure 8 is a sectional view taken on line 8—8, Figure 7 showing the locking bar in locked position and showing the bearing means for the screw shaft which actuates the locking bar.

Figure 9 is a sectional view taken on line 9—9, Figure 6 showing one of the spacer studs which support the locking bar.

Figure 10 is a sectional view taken on line 10—10, Figure 4 showing the dowel pin as used in the cut top caskets.

Figure 11 is an enlarged fragmentary sectional view detailing the cap and casing used to seal the crank opening for the locking bar after the lid is closed and sealed.

Figure 12 is a fragmentary sectional view taken along line 12—12 of Figure 2, showing the hinge and a portion of the lid in closed position and the latch mechanism associated therewith.

Figure 13 is a sectional view similar to Figure 12 showing the hinge and lid in open position with the latch mechanism engaged to latch the lid in open position.

Figure 14 is a fragmentary view showing the hinge structure as viewed from inside the casket with the lid in open position as projected from Figure 13.

Figure 15 is a top plan view of the hinge latching mechanism in unlatched position, taken along line 15—15 of Figure 12.

Figure 16 is a view similar to Figure 15 taken along line 16—16 of Figure 13 showing the apparatus in latching position.

Figure 17 is a view of the hinge locking mechanism used for a single hinge in the unlatched position.

Referring to Figure 1 of the drawings, a casket unit incorporating the present improvements is indicated generally at 10. The unit embodies a casket body 11 and a lid 12 which is hingedly mounted upon the casket body along the rearward edge thereof. The forward edge of the lid and casket incorporates a pull-down and locking apparatus indicated generally at 13 by means of which the lid is drawn into sealing engagement with a gasket to hermetically seal the unit. Apparatus indicated generally at 14 is installed in conjunction with the lid hinges 15 to latch the lid in open position automatically.

As shown in Figures 2 and 3 the lid sealing and holding mechanism is capable of installation either in a single lid casket or in a cut top or dual lid casket. In both instances the pull-down mechanism for the lids is identical. In the case of the cut-type lid illustrated in Figure 3, the lid holding mechanism follows generally the same design as that of the single lid with the exception that two pairs of independent latch and hinge members are provided for the foot and head sections respectively to permit the foot section to be lowered independently of the head section. In the case of the single lid structure as shown in Figure 2, the casket unit may be provided with three hinge and latching elements, two of which may be connected together for unitary operation while the third is operated independently. The purpose of this arrangement is to permit the lid to be conveniently raised and latched open by one person but to require that two persons be present, one at each end, to release the latches so as to avoid the possibility of accidents in lowering the lid.

Lid pull-down and sealing mechanism

Referring specifically to the pull-down apparatus it will be noted that the upper edge of the casket body is flanged as at 16 to present a flat bearing surface corresponding to the flanged edge 16a of lid 12. A sealing strip, hereinafter described, is disposed between these flanges to establish a seal between the lid and body. As shown in Figures 1 and 9, flange 16 extends completely around the periphery of the casket and in conjunction with a series of flanged support brackets 17, located to the interior of a casket shell, serves to mount interiorly of the shell, a co-extensive filler or nailing strip 18 formed preferably of wood. The support brackets 17 may be spot welded to the inside of the casket for which purpose each is provided with a vertical flange 19 in contact with and secured to the inside of the casket wall (Figure 9). Disposed within the filler strip 18 along the forward edge of the casket is a longitudinal channel or locking bar 20, the upper face of the nailing strip being channeled or routed out as at 21 to receive the bar 20. Thus, the channel rail 20 is housed between flange 16 and within the nailing strip 18. The nailing strip is omitted from the rearward edge of the casket body to provide space for the lid supporting apparatus 14 and hinges 15 (Figure 12), hereinafter described.

A corresponding nailing strip frame 22 is disposed within the marginal edge of lid 12 on the inner side of flange 16a. The forward rail or nailing strip of the lid provides an anchorage for the pull-down bolts 23 which cooperate with the locking bar 20 as hereinafter described (Figure 4) and the rearward longitudinal nailing strip of the lid provides an anchorage for the swinging members of the hinges 15, hereinafter described. It is to be noted that the

respective body and lid nailing strips constitute complementary reinforcing members to permit the members to be pulled forcibly together for sealing, without appreciable springing of either part, and the sealing function of the structure thereby is improved.

Specifically described with reference to Figures 5 to 10 inclusive, the locking bar **20** is channel shaped in cross-section and includes a series of longitudinal slots, one respectively for each of the pull-down or draw bolts **23** and one respectively for each of the spacer studs **24** which clamp the nailing strip **18** securely between the flange **16** and bracket **17** (Figure 9). The bar **20**, of course, is free to be translated longitudinally relative to the spacers and pull-down bolts. The slots **25** for the pull-down bolts are keyhole shaped as shown in Figures 5 and 6 so as to provide enlarged openings **26** through which may pass the heads **27** of the pull-down bolts when the locking bar is in unlocked position to permit the lid to be opened or closed. Therefore when the lid is closed, the ends of the pull-down bolts will pass through the openings **28** of flange **16** and openings **26**, to extend downwardly through the locking bar as shown in Figures 6, 7 and 8.

Along the opposite edges of the longitudinal slot portions **28**, are disposed pairs of pull-down skids **29**, secured to bar **20** and adapted to engage the heads **27** of the pull-down bolts when the lock bar **20** is translated to pull-down position, as shown in Figure 7. For this purpose, the leading edges of the skids are inclined as at **30** to provide a wedging action against the heads of the pull-down bolts. It will be noted in Figure 8 that each pair of skids **29** is spaced apart to clear the shank **31** of the pull-down bolts and to engage the upper edge of the head **27**. The shanks **31** of the pull-down bolts pass upwardly through the lid nailing strip **18** and are provided with an integral flange **32** seated against the lid flange **16***a*. The upper end of the shank extends through the nailing strip and is screwthreaded as at **33** to receive a nut and washer **34** to clamp securely the pull-down bolt to the nailing strip. By virtue of the flange **32** the bolts serve additionally to secure the nailing strip to the lid flange.

The spacers **24**, (Figures 6 and 9) previously mentioned, are in the form of studs each having a flat head **35** engaging the upper flange of bracket **17** and a shank **36** extending upwardly through the nailing strip **18**. The upper end of shank **36** is counter-turned as at **37** to provide a shoulder **38** for the locking bar **20**. The counter-turned portion **37** extends through the slot formed in the locking bar for this purpose, (Figure 5), and the upper end bears against the undersurface of the casket body flange **16**. The upper end of the spacer is drilled and tapped to receive a screw **40**, the head of which bears against the upper surface of flange **16** to secure the spacer in place. The spacers thus serve to clamp the nailing strip securely in position and the shoulders **38** provide a slide bearing for the locking bar **20**.

As shown in Figure 10 the dowel pins **41** are mounted substantially in the same manner as the previously described pull-down bolts **23**. The lower portion of the pin includes an integral flange **32** and the upper end of the bolt passes through the lid nailing strip **22** and is secured thereto by means of a nut and washer **34**, as previously described. Instead of the headed lower end shown with reference to the pull-down bolts, the lower end of the dowel pin is tapered as at **42** so as to pass through an opening **43** provided in the flange **16** for this purpose. The locking bar **20** is provided with a longitudinal slot **44** to accommodate the lower end of the dowel pin.

By virtue of the taper **42**, the dowel pin establishes a close fit with the hole **43** in flange **16** so that the lid section is securely locked against longitudinal motion relative to the casket body. It is to be noted at this point with reference to Figure 3, that the taper pin is applied to the foot section **45** of a cut type or sectional lid casket. In this arrangement a set of three pull-down bolts is employed, one for the foot section, as indicated diagrammatically at **46** in Figure 3, and two for the head section, as indicated at **47—47**. It will further be noted that the hole **43** for dowel pin **41** is located slightly to the right of the joint between the head and foot sections, and upon the other side of the joint is located one of the holes **47** for the pull-down bolt.

In closing the casket lids prior to burial, the foot section **45** first is lowered, then the head section is lowered. The foot section is provided with a shoulder and the head section is provided with an overhanging ledge, as illustrated in the aforesaid Purkiss patent. A transverse seal is located between the shoulder and ledge and upon operation of the pull-down mechanism, the head section is drawn down tightly to compress and establish a seal across the transverse seam. By virtue of the overhanging ledge bearing against the shoulder of the foot section, the head section pulls down the foot section at the seam. It will be apparent that the dowel pin thus serves to stabilize both lid sections against the longitudinal force imposed upon the pull-down bolts due to the longitudinal movement of the pull-down or locking bar during the sealing operation. The dowel pin also may be applied for the same purpose to the one-piece lid style of casket. In either instance, the translation of the latching bar may tend to shift the lid thereby transmitting stress to the hinges, and the dowel pin serves to isolate the hinges from this force.

Between the underside of flange **16** and the locking bar **20** is disposed a series of spacer blocks **48** (Figure 6). These blocks preferably are secured to the bar by welding or the like and serve to reduce the sliding friction of the bar and to maintain the bar against the upward pressure exerted by the skids during the locking motion of the bar. The bar thus is engaged and sustained between the shoulders **38** of the spacer studs and the spacer blocks **48** so as to be accurately located for actuation in the horizontal plane for engagement with the heads of the pull-down bolts.

Bar **20** is actuated, for locking and unlocking, by means of a screw shaft which is rotated by a detachable crank. The crank is fitted into an opening provided at one end of the casket and accessible through a receptacle having a detachable closure head which may be sealed off after the casket is closed and sealed as hereinafter disclosed. Described in detail with reference to Figures 5 to 7 the actuating screw shaft **50** has its inner end in screwthreaded engagement with a connecting block **51** which is welded or otherwise secured to the end of the bar **20**. A pair of stop collars **52** and **53** is provided at opposite ends of

the screw shaft and secured in position by means of taper pins 54. The travel range of block 51 thus is limited to the distance between the stop collars. In unlocked position the connecting block resides against the left hand collar 52 as shown in Figure 6 and in the locked position against the right hand collar 53 as shown in Figure 7.

For purposes of identification the actuating shaft 50 may be divided into three sections, the threaded section 55 engaging connecting block 51, an unthreaded journal portion 56, and an extended portion 57 preferably hexagonal or square in cross section to provide engagement with a crank or other operating instrumentality as indicated at 58 in broken lines (Figure 7). The unthreaded portion 56 of the shaft is rotatably journalled in a bearing bushing 60 secured by welding or other means to the flange 61 of a bearing bracket 62 (Figures 5 and 8). Bearing bracket 62 preferably is formed of sheet metal and embodies a horizontal flange 63 at its upper end, spot welded or otherwise secured to the flange 16 of the casket body and includes a depending vertical flange having its lower end 64 secured to the interior wall of the casket body as by spot welding. It is to be noted in Figure 5 that the right hand stop collar 53 abuts against one end of bushing 60 and a stop collar 65, which may be an integral part of the shaft or which may be in the form of a collar pinned to the actuating shaft, engages the opposite end of the bushing. This structure provides a rugged bearing support for the actuating shaft and maintains the longitudinal position of the shaft against the longitudinal thrust developed when the shaft is rotated to draw down or release the lid.

The sealing strip extending around the body between the lid and body flanges 16 and 16*a* may follow the structure disclosed in the aforementioned Purkiss patent with the transverse lid seal, in the case of the cut top casket, having its ends arranged to make a sealing engagement with the body strip when the lids are closed and sealed. As shown in Figure 9 the body sealing strip 66 preferably includes a series of corrugations or ribs 67 to permit a greater flow of material under compression. Holes are provided in the gasket to accommodate the pull-down bolts 23, the taper pins 41 and the hinge arms. Referring to Figure 6 it will be noted that a clearance hole 68, shaped to accommodate the flange 32, is provided and a similar clearance hole is provided for the flange of the taper pin as illustrated in Figure 10. Likewise as shown in Figure 13 a clearance hole 70 is provided around the swinging arm of the hinge. In this case a marginal ridge may be formed around the circumference of the hole to be compressed when the lid is closed, causing the sealing material to flow in and embrace and seal the arm of the hinge thereby rendering more effective the casket seal.

Lid holding mechanism

Referring to Figures 2 and 3 and 12 to 17 inclusive, the casket is equipped with automatic latching means to hold one or both of the lids in elevated position during the services. This apparatus operates in conjunction with the hinges 15 to establish automatically a locking engagement with the hinge when the lid is raised to the position shown in Figure 13. Described in detail, the hinge 15 comprises a curved arm 72 having a shank 73 extending through the framing member or nailing strip 22. The inner end of shank 73 is screwthreaded as at 74 to receive a nut and washer 75. A sleeve or spacer 76, coextensive with and surrounding the shank 73, extends through the nailing strip to permit the nut 75 to establish a clamping engagement of the flared flange 77 against the flange 16*a* of the lid shell. The arm 72 which extends from the shank 73 is arcuate in shape, being developed in an arc, the center of which coincides with the center of hinge pin 80. Since the arm is curved to fit the radius of its swing, the arm may swing relative to the hole 70 without interference. It will be noted in Figure 15 that arm 72 is circular in cross section so as to facilitate the sealing function of the gasket hole relative to the hinge arm.

The curved arm portion 72 terminates in a straight arm section 81, the opposite end of which pivotally joins the hinge pin 80 (Figure 13). Pin 80 is located beneath flange 16 of the body shell and forms a part of a bracket generally indicated at 82 (Figure 14). Bracket 82 comprises a U-shaped body portion 83 having integral flanges 84—84 at opposite ends which are secured by means of screws and nuts 85 extending through the flange 16. A reinforcing bracket 86, somewhat similar to the brackets 17 for the body nailing strip 18, is utilized to stiffen the body shell at the hinges. This bracket includes a horizontal flange 87 disposed between the mounting flanges 84 of the U-shaped hinge brackets 82 and flange 16. Therefore the flange 87 is securely clamped by the screws and nuts 85 between the hinge bracket 82 and flange 16. The bracket 86 includes a downwardly depending reinforcing flange 88 welded or otherwise secured to the body shell as shown in Figures 12 and 13.

As shown in Figures 15 and 16 the hinge brackets further include a connecting section 90 integral with the rear edges of the vertical legs of the U-shaped body portion and the upper portion of this metal section is curled as at 91 to receive the hinge pin 80. It is to be noted that hinge brackets 82 are stamped from sheet metal and the sections 90 and 91 may be a continuation of the rearward edge of the U-shaped body portion 83. This provides a rigid unit not only providing a support or mounting for the swinging arm 72 of the hinges but also forms a cooperating part of the automatic lid latching mechanism generally indicated at 14, hereinafter described.

The lid latching apparatus 14 is actuated by actuating bars 95 and 96 as illustrated diagrammatically in Figures 2 and 3. In the instance of the one piece lid structure illustrated in Figure 2, the casket lid is carried upon three hinges and in the case of the cut top casket, each lid section is carried by a pair of hinges. The latching apparatus is identical for each hinge except that in the one piece lid, two of the three hinges are latched by common bar 95, while the remaining hinge is locked by a separate bar 96. In the case of the cut top casket shown in Figure 3, the hinges are arranged in pairs, each pair being actuated in common by a respective actuating bar 95 of the one piece type similar to the one shown in Figure 2. Although it is quite feasible to actuate all of the hinge latch devices from a common actuating bar, it has been found desirable in order to prevent accidents to require that more than one person be present when the lid is lowered. Thus, in the single lid type of casket the lid may conveniently be raised by one person

and automatically latched in open position but when it is desired to unlatch and lower the lid it is impossible for one person to actuate both latch bars, since the bars are located at opposite ends of the casket. The design of the latching apparatus makes it necessary to raise the lid slightly to relieve the latching mechanism of the weight of the lid. Consequently after release, the lid is supported and lowered by two persons and the possibility of having the lid slip from the grasp is avoided. It has been found also that there is some danger of tipping the casket when it is mounted upon the wheeled carriages commonly employed in transporting the casket due to the weight of the lid and the fact that such carriages are rather unstable. Therefore the double latch requiring the services of two persons, one at each end, serves as a precautionary measure.

Described in detail (Figures 12 to 17), the latching mechanism for the lid constitutes a sector 97 lying upon the upper surface of the cross web 98 vertical of the U-shaped bracket 82. As shown in Figure 15 the sector is pivoted as at 99 to the web 98 and includes an extended arm 100 having its end pivoted as at 101 to the actuating bar 95. As shown in Figure 13 the sector 97 is arranged to lie between the web 98 and the arm section 81 of the hinge. In the position shown in Figure 13 it will be apparent that the sector 97 serves as a stop to prevent the hinge from returning to its normal closed position thus locking the lid in its raised position. A spring 102 is disposed in tension between the bar 95 and the bracket 82. For this purpose the bracket is provided with a lug 103 and the actuating bar is provided with a pin 104 for anchoring the opposite end of the spring. It will be apparent in Figure 15 that with the lid in its closed position, as shown, spring 102 tends to shift the actuating bar to the left causing the latching sector 97 to be urged in the right hand direction against the curved hinge arms 72. When the lid is elevated the arm will swing from its position shown in Figure 12 to the position shown in Figure 13 and the actuating bar 95 and sector 97 will snap to the latching position beneath the straight hinge section 81 as shown in Figure 16, thus automatically latching the lid in its elevated position.

As shown in Figure 15 the left hand end of actuating bar 95 includes a right angular extension 105 having an upturned end 106 providing a hand hold for actuating the bar. The end 105 extends slightly beyond the interior confines of the casket and the casket lining (not shown) may be provided with a slot for this purpose.

The double hinge latch mechanism shown in Figures 15 and 16 is applicable either to the single or to the sectional lid type of casket for controlling the pair of hinges toward the head or left end of the casket as viewed in Figures 2 and 3. In either installation the structure is identical except that the bar 95 is altered to adapt the mechanism to the particular casket style. In the instance of the single hinge latch illustrated with reference to the one-piece lid casket in Figure 2, the structure is identical to that previously described except that the bar 96 merely actuates a single latching sector and for this purpose is quite short.

Final sealing operation

As shown in Figures 5 and 11 the casket body is provided with an opening into which is fitted and sealed a sleeve 108 by brazing or welding so as to establish a seal with the casket body shell. A threaded ferrule or bushing 109 is brazed or otherwise secured in a sealed manner to the outer end of the sleeve 108 to receive a closure cap 110 in screw-threaded engagement therewith. Bushing 109 is provided with a shoulder 111 against which is seated a gasket 112 formed of rubber or similar pliable material. When the closure cap 110 is tightened upon the bushing, gasket 112 is compressed between the end of the closure cap and the shoulder 111 to establish an hermetic seal between the cap and the bushing. The interior of the casket therefore is effectually sealed off from the atmosphere when the cap is tightened in place. As shown in Figure 7 the cap is removed to insert the crank for actuation of the latching mechanism and after finally rotating the crank to its sealing position the cap is applied and tightened (Figure 11), thus completing the sealing operation.

Prior to burial, for instance at the close of the funeral services, the lid or lids are closed and the crank or key 58 is inserted into the receptacle 108 and engaged upon the actuating stem 57. The crank is turned a number of times so as to shift the locking bar 20 to its pull-down position shown in Figure 7, at which time the stop collar 53 will be encountered to prevent further rotation of the crank. The lid is then clamped and sealed as illustrated in Figure 7. Prior to burial the cap 110 is replaced on its threaded bushing and tightened to establish a seal with the gasket 112, thereby hermetically sealing the interior of the gasket against the entry of air.

By the use of the wood nailing strips 18 and 22 it will be apparent that the casket body and lid shells may be completely fabricated in working order, prior to installing the linings. By this procedure the assembly job may be done most efficiently since the men need not exercise special care to avoid soiling the linings during assembly and adjustment. When everything is in working order the linings may be tacked to the nailing strips to complete the casket for shipment. The nailing strips thereby serve not only to reinforce the structure but also to reduce the time and cost of assembly by simplifying both the mechanical assembly of the working parts and the installation of the liner units.

The improved casket unit is of minimum weight and of attractive appearance. The absence of the usual lid braces enhances its appearance and the mechanism for establishing the seal is, of course, completely concealed. The improved sealing mechanism by virtue of concealment and rapid actuation, permits the casket to be closed and sealed without much more work than usually is involved in closing and locking the ordinary unsealed casket and thus permits this operation to be performed quickly by the funeral director or assistant at the church or funeral home in the presence of the relatives and friends of the deceased without attracting undue attention.

Having described my invention, I claim:

1. A casket structure comprising: a body shell, a lid shell, complementary marginal flanges on said respective shells, hinges connecting said lid shell to said body shell, said hinges including a bracket secured to said body flange, a hinge arm having its lower end pivotally connected to said bracket and having its opposite end anchored in said lid shell, said bracket having a slot to permit said hinge arm to pass therethrough, a latch arm disposed in a plane parallel to said bracket and pivotally connected to said

bracket, said latch arm adapted to swing laterally to a position between said hinge arm and said slot to lock said arm in an elevated position thereby latching said lid shell in raised position, and manually operated release means for disengaging said latch arm to lower said lid shell.

2. A casket structure comprising; a body shell, a lid shell, complementary marginal flanges on said respective shells, hinges connecting said lid shell to said body shell, said hinges including a U-shaped bracket secured to said body flange, a hinge arm having its lower end pivotally connected to said U-shaped bracket and having its opposite end anchored in said lid shell, the web of said U-shaped bracket having a slot to permit said hinge arm to pass therethrough, a latch arm disposed on the upper surface of said bracket web in a plane between said web and the upper end of said hinge arm and pivotally connected to said web, said latch arm adapted to swing laterally to a position between said hinge arm and said slot to lock said hinge arm in an elevated position thereby latching said lid shell in raised position, a manually operated release bar pivotally connected to said latch arm to actuate said latch arm, and a spring adapted to urge said latch arm in locking position to cause the same to snap to a locking position automatically when said lid is raised.

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