G. W. Scollay,

Coffin.

No. 34,700. Patented Mar. 18, 1862.

Fig: 2

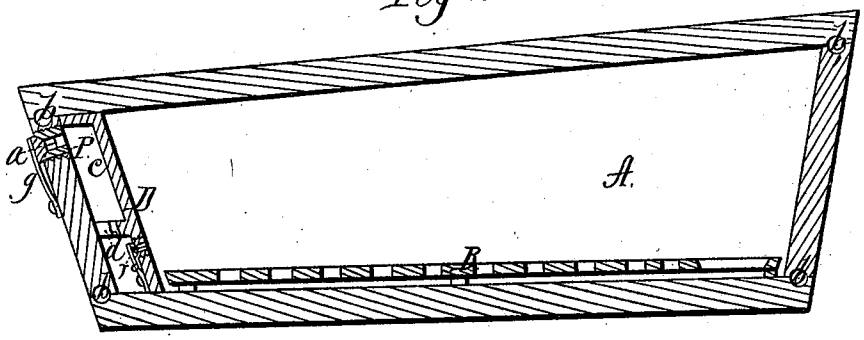
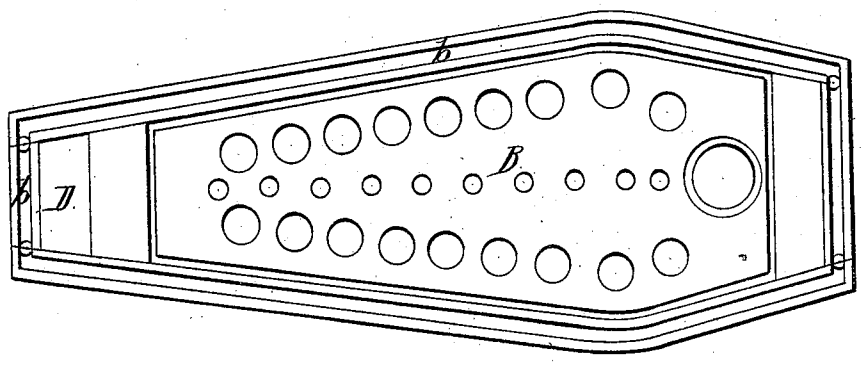


Fig: 1.



Witnesses:
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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

GEORGE W. SCOLLAY, OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

IMPROVEMENT IN BURIAL-CASES.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **34,700**, dated March 18, 1862.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, GEORGE W. SCOLLAY, of the city and county of St. Louis, and State of Missouri, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Coffins or Burial-Cases; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the same, reference being had to the annexed drawings, making part of this specification, in which—

Figure 1 is a top view of my coffin with the lid off; and Fig. 2, a longitudinal section through the center thereof, taken vertically with the lid on.

The object of my invention is to provide a cheap coffin or burial-case in which the human body can be preserved after death for a period of at least forty or fifty days without being more offensive to the senses of sight and smell than when it was first stiffened with death. To effect this object it is necessary—

First, to make the coffin air-tight. This is done by marking the pieces of material in the ordinary manner to the right size and shape and then grooving them, as shown by *b*, wherever they are to be joined together. These grooves are then filled with any suitable cement, after which the pieces are united with screws, in the ordinary manner, the screws being driven through the cement, which as the parts are drawn together will be squeezed up in the hole around the screw so as to exclude the air. After the case has been screwed together it should have a coat of beeswax and rosin put on the inside hot, so as to fill the pores of the wood.

Second. It is necessary to keep the coffin air-tight. This must be done by either absorbing the gas generated in the coffin by a partial decomposition of the corpse or by providing some means for its escape, so that the pressure in the inside will not exceed the pressure of the atmosphere on the outside of the coffin. The gas can be absorbed in the coffin during the first few days after death by the use of proper absorbents; but as decomposition proceeds the absorbents become saturated and will no longer take up the gas, which must now have some means of escape or it will either open the joints of the coffin or burst it. To keep the coffin tight, then, and to preserve the fresh appearance of the corpse as long as possible, I provide the coffin with means of escape for the gas, and also with absorbents to absorb the gas during the very early stages of decomposition. By the use of the absorbents the fresh appearance of the corpse will be preserved until it is saturated, after which the coffin will fill with gas, and before the pressure has become great enough to open the valves provided for its escape will somewhat affect the appearance of the corpse, but not enough to make it much, if any, more repulsive to look upon than when death first ensued. The absorbents I place in a separate chamber made in the coffin to receive them. In this case the chamber is formed by the false bottom B, which fits loosely in the coffin and is perforated so as to allow the gas free access to the absorbents. To allow the gas to escape the valves *a r* are fitted in the foot of the coffin. These valves are made conical and are held in their seats P by means of spring *q s*. They may be made of metal or any suitable material that can be made air-tight.

Third. It is necessary to disinfect the gas of all offensive odor. This is done by making a chamber in one end of the coffin and filling it with some disinfecting absorbents, and causing the gas to pass through it in making its escape from the coffin. This chamber is shown in the drawings by *c*. It is formed by a false end D put in the foot of the coffin. The drawings show the chamber divided by a partition *d*. The deodorizing material is put in the upper chamber and the gas is made to pass through it by means of a series of small perforations *v* made in the partition *d*. The gas issues from the coffin A through the valve *r*, the holes *v*, and the valve *a*. By these means the gas is entirely disinfected, so that the coffin may set anywhere in the house without being in the least offensive to the smell.

It is not absolutely necessary to use two valves or two chambers, as is shown by the drawings. One may answer the purpose; but I deem it best to use two to make certain of excluding the air, for if there were but one valve it might in some way get disarranged so as to admit the atmosphere in the coffin, when the corpse would at once putrify.

The chemicals I propose to use as absorbents and disinfectants are chlorine and fresh-baked charcoal and powdered lint.

It is not material as to what kind of absorbents are used in connection with this coffin. There are a number known to chemists which will serve the purpose. Neither is it mate-

rial as to what kind of valves are used or how they are arranged. Any style of valve that will open by the pressure of the gas against the inside will serve the end sought after.

Having now described the nature of my invention, its object, and the manner of using it, so that any one skilled in the arts to which appertains can apply it, I claim—

1. The continuous grooves *b* in the joints of the coffin, for the purpose of cementing them and making them air-tight in the manner described, for the purpose specified.

2. Combining a valve with a deodorizing-chamber made in the coffin for the purpose of deodorizing the escaping gas, as described.

3. The chamber *c*, in combination with the coffin and with or without the valve *r* and partition *d*, for the purpose of holding the deodorizing material.

GEORGE W. SCOLLAY.

Witnesses:
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