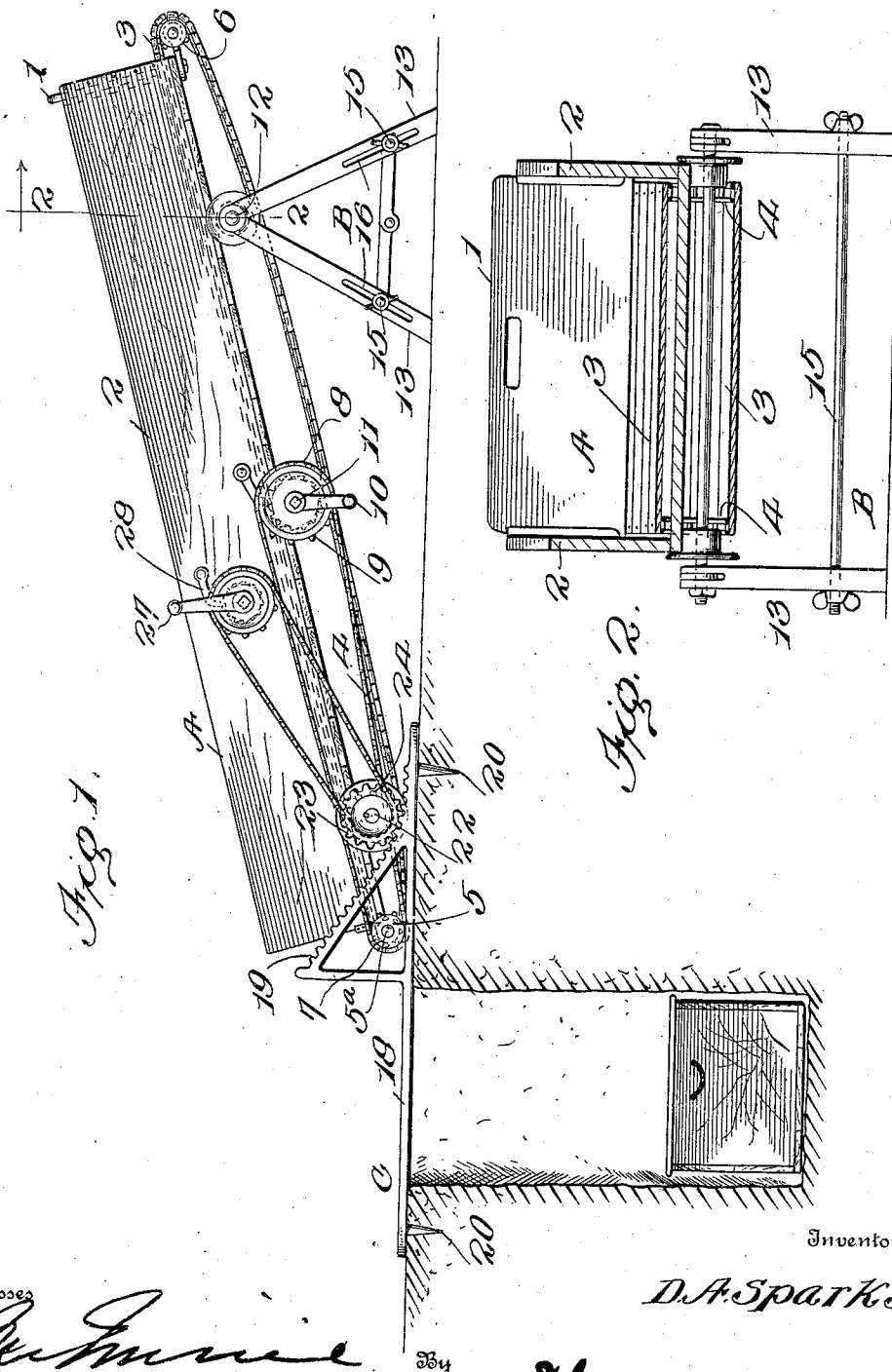


D. A. SPARKS.
GRAVE FILLING APPARATUS.
APPLICATION FILED JAN. 15, 1909.

937,882.

Patented Oct. 26, 1909.
2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.



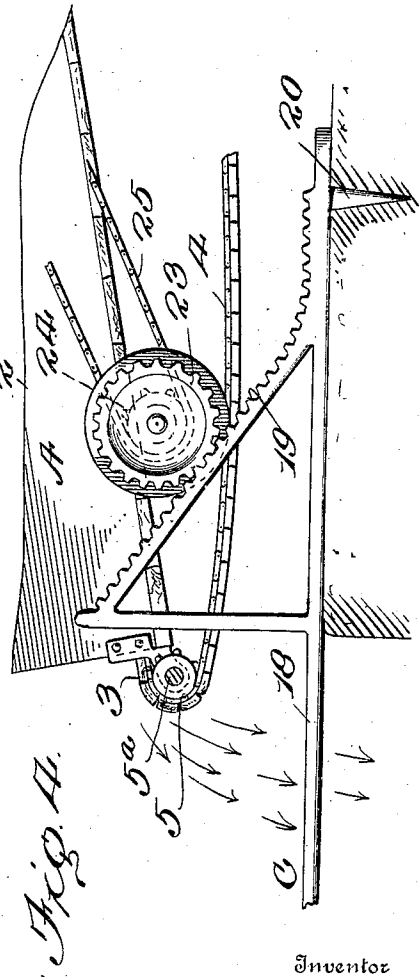
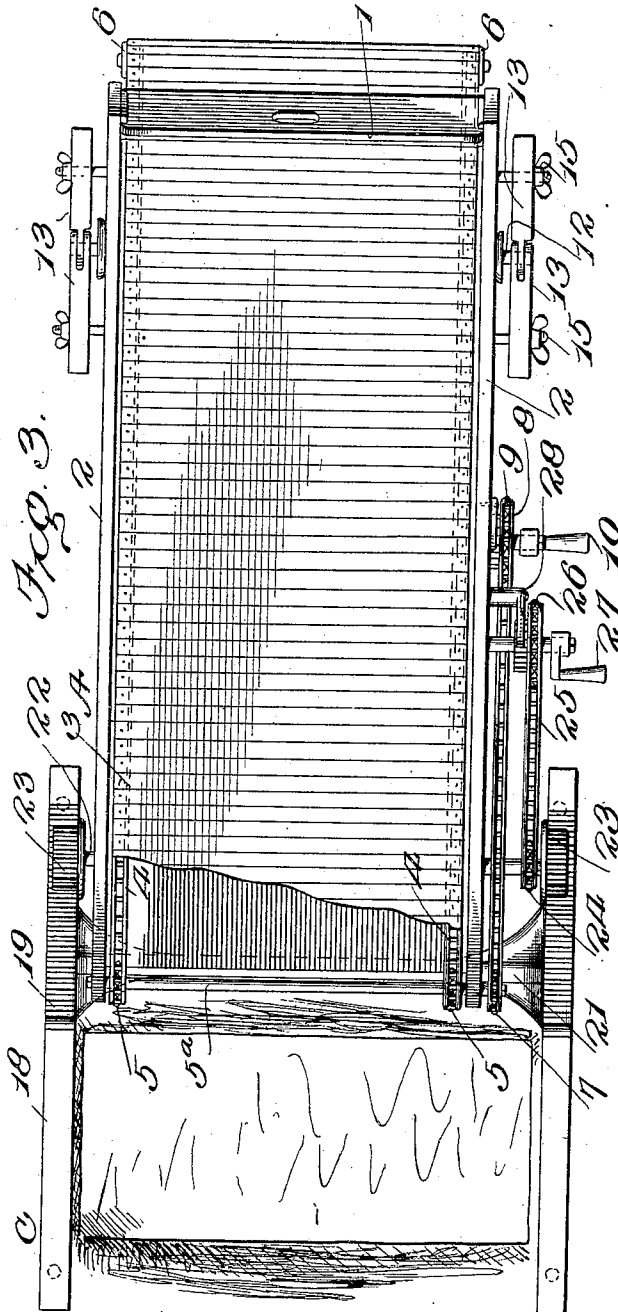
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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

DOUGLAS A. SPARKS, OF MONKTON, MARYLAND.

GRAVE-FILLING APPARATUS.

937,882.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented Oct. 26, 1909.

Application filed January 15, 1909. Serial No. 472,481.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, DOUGLAS A. SPARKS, citizen of the United States, residing at Monkton, in the county of Baltimore and State of Maryland, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Grave-Filling Apparatus, of which the following is a specification.

One of the difficulties encountered in the conduct of funerals, has been at the place of interment, in connection with the filling of the newly-made grave. As is well known, it has been the custom for relatives or those otherwise closely associated with the deceased, to remain at the grave until the same has been filled. This has often led to serious consequences, particularly in inclement weather and where the mourners have been in delicate health, and has also prolonged the distressing scenes that are so often enacted in the cemetery, while in many instances it has been the indirect cause of intrusion upon the scene by thoughtless and curious persons who have thus marred the decency and good order of the ceremony. In short, it is acknowledged that the grave-filling operation should be performed as expeditiously and quietly as possible, and with the least degree of ostentation, and it is to attain this end that my invention is primarily designed.

With this object in view, my invention consists of an improved grave-filling apparatus which may be quickly adjusted at the side of a grave, to fill the same, the operation being performed as quietly as is possible, and obviating the long wait and its consequences above mentioned, while, as a subsidiary advantage, it may be mentioned that the earth with which the grave is to be filled, is retained within the box or receptacle, and is not permitted to lie upon the ground contiguous to the grave, where, as is well known, it has spoiled the appearance of the surrounding turf, and in some instances permanently injured the same. And the invention also consists in certain constructions, arrangements and combinations of the parts that I shall hereinafter fully describe and claim.

For a full understanding of the invention and the merits thereof, and to acquire a knowledge of the details of construction, reference is to be had to the following description and accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a side elevation of my improved grave-filling apparatus; Fig. 2 is a transverse sectional view thereof on the line 2—2 of Fig. 1; Fig. 3 is a top plan view of the apparatus; and, Fig. 4 is an enlarged side elevation of the front end thereof.

Corresponding and like parts are referred to in the following description and indicated in all the views of the drawings by the same reference characters.

My improved grave-filling apparatus comprises a box or receptacle A preferably embodying a rear end 1, sides 2, an open front end, and a bottom 3 which constitutes a conveyor and which is in the form of a slatted apron, preferably endless. The slats of the bottom apron 3 are connected at their ends to endless sprocket chains 4 which pass around front and rear sprocket wheels 5 and 6 journaled on transversely extending shafts mounted at the front and rear ends of the box A. To impart movement to the chains 4 and consequently to the apron 3, the front shaft 5^a carries another sprocket wheel 7 around which a driving chain 8 passes. Said chain also passes around a driving sprocket 9 provided with a crank handle 10 or the like and mounted upon a stub shaft 11 secured to one of the sides 2.

In order to support the box A in proper position, I have provided a rear end support B which, in the present embodiment of the invention, comprises a transversely extending rod 12, to the ends of which two pairs of pivoted legs 13 are connected, the said legs being held in operative spread-out relation by means of rule joint braces 14 or similar devices, and the leg of one pair being secured to the corresponding leg of the opposite pair by means of a transverse brace 15. Preferably each of the legs is provided with an extensible section 16 having a slot and set screw connection therewith, so that one or more of the legs may be extended in order to hold the rod 12 in proper horizontal position when the rear end support B is mounted on sloping or uneven ground. The rod 12 carries rollers 17 that are preferably flanged, and it is upon these rollers that the rear end of the box A is directly supported.

C designates a front end support which comprises a preferably wooden frame of any desired shape or design, properly braced, the same frame embodying side bars 18 that are provided with racks 19, each rack preferably consisting of a horizontal portion

and an inclined portion, as clearly illustrated in Fig. 4. The side bars 18 are also preferably provided with spikes 20 designed to enter the ground when the support C is placed along one side of a grave, and hold the support properly in place. Preferably, the support is of such a width that its cross bar 21 may lie close to one side edge of the grave, while its side bars 18 may extend along the two end walls of the grave.

A transversely extending shaft 22 is journaled to the lower side edges of the side boards 2 of the box A, near the front ends thereof, and pinions 23 are mounted on said shaft, the pinions being designed to engage with and ride upon the racks 19. To turn the pinions 23, the shaft 22 is provided at one end with a sprocket wheel 24 over which a chain 25 passes, the said chain also passing over another sprocket 26 provided with a crank handle or the like 27, so that by turning the sprocket 26, the pinions 23 may be rotated to the front end of the box and caused to ride upwardly and forwardly upon the racks. A ratchet and pawl device 28 is provided for the sprocket 26 so as to prevent the reverse movement of the pinions 23 and to maintain the box in operative position after its front end has been caused to ride upwardly and forwardly on the racks. It is obvious that the rolling supports for the rear end of the box readily permit this forward movement of the latter.

The elevation of the front end of the box is primarily designed for the purpose of providing space whereby the mound may be easily shaped, but it also serves the purpose of raising the driving sprocket 9 to a position where it can be more easily manipulated by the operator standing alongside of the box A. Preferably, as illustrated in the drawings, both driving sprockets 9 and 26 are mounted on the same side of the box, so that they may be manipulated by the same operator or attendant, the parts being so arranged that there will be no interference between the two actuating mechanisms.

Having thus described the invention, what I claim is:

1. A grave-filling apparatus comprising a receptacle for loose earth, a support upon

which the rear end of the receptacle is adapted to rest, and a support for the front end of such receptacle and upon which the receptacle is arranged to ride upwardly and forwardly.

2. A grave-filling apparatus comprising a receptacle for loose earth, a support for the rear end of said receptacle, a front end support for the receptacle, the front end support embodying inclined racks, pinions carried by the receptacle and meshing with said racks, and means for turning said pinions whereby to raise the front end of the receptacle and move it forwardly.

3. A grave-filling apparatus comprising a receptacle for loose earth, a front end support for the receptacle embodying two inclined racks, a shaft journaled in the receptacle, pinions carried by said shaft and meshing with said racks, a sprocket wheel carried by said shaft, a sprocket chain passing around said sprocket wheel, and an actuating sprocket carried by the support and over which the said sprocket chain also passes.

4. A grave-filling apparatus comprising a receptacle for loose earth, a front end support for the receptacle embodying inclined racks, pinions carried by the receptacle and arranged to roll on said racks, means for turning said pinions in one direction, and a pawl and ratchet device arranged to prevent the movement of the pinions in the opposite direction.

5. A grave filling apparatus comprising a receptacle for loose earth, a support for the rear end of the receptacle, a front end support for the receptacle embodying inclines upon which the receptacle is designed to ride upwardly and forwardly, automatic means for preventing the rearward and downward movement on the front end support, and for holding said receptacle in operative position on such front end support.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature in presence of two witnesses.

DOUGLAS A. SPARKS. [L. s.]

Witnesses:

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FREDERICK S. STITT.