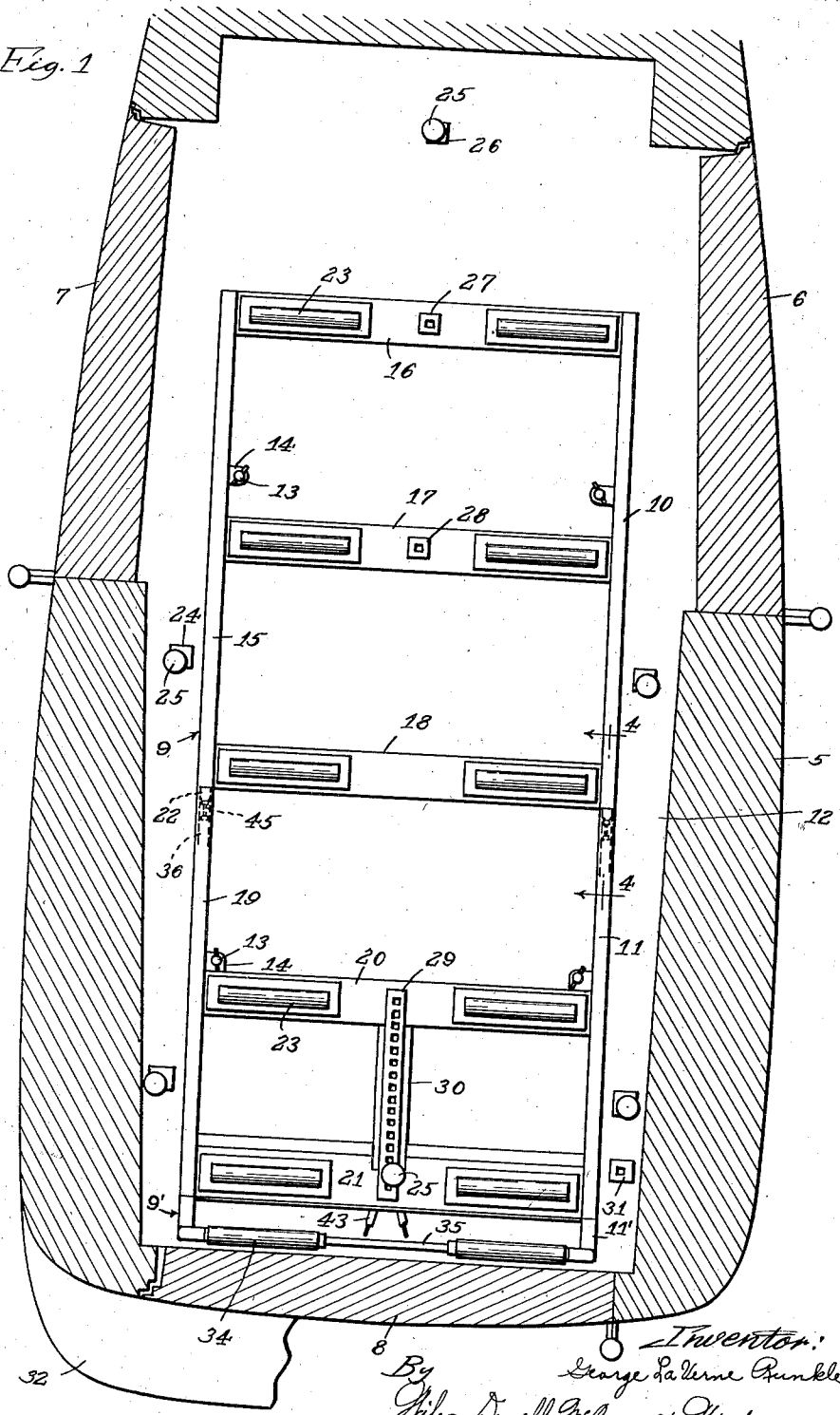
Feb. 21, 1939. G. LA V. RUNKLE 2,148,245

CASKET RACK FOR HEARSES

Filed March 15, 1937 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1



Inventor:
George LaVerne Runkle

By Wilson, Dowell, McCanna & Hintercorn
Attys.

Feb. 21, 1939.

G. LA V. RUNKLE

2,148,245

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Fig. 2

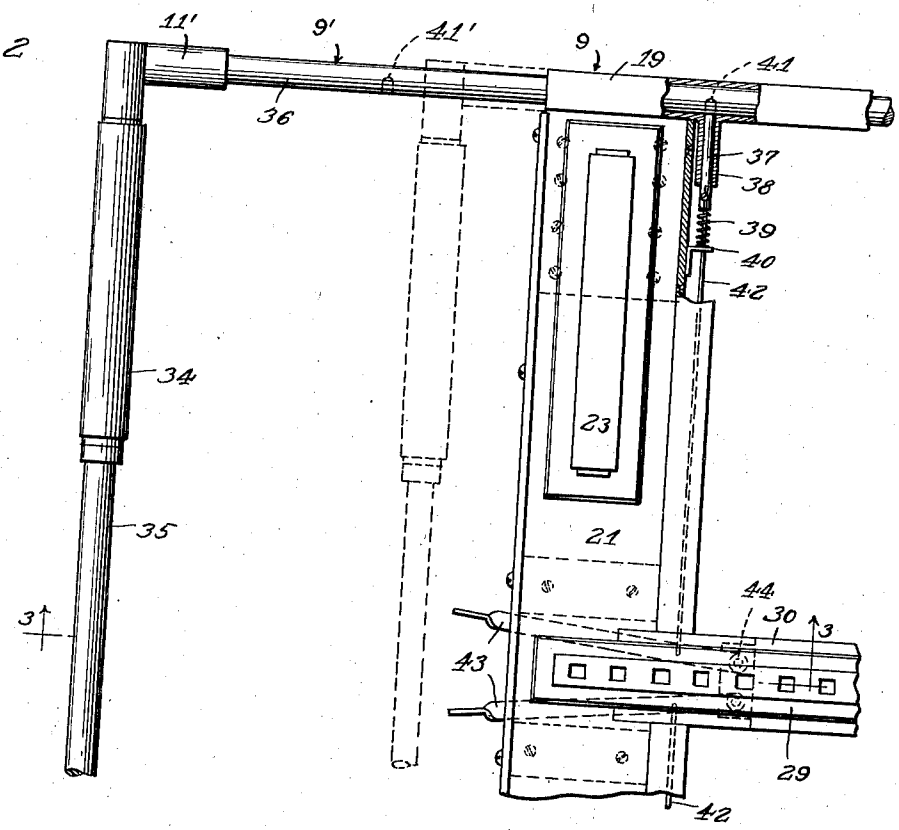
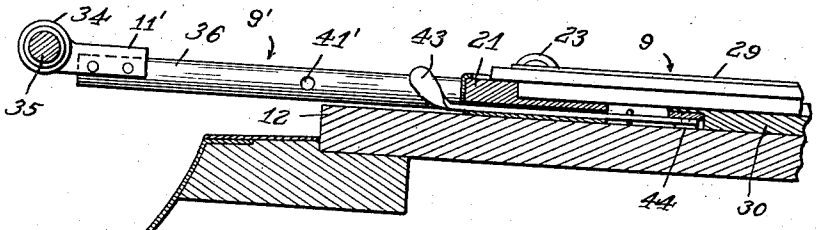


Fig. 3



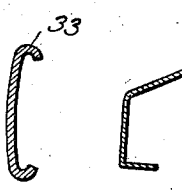


Fig. 4

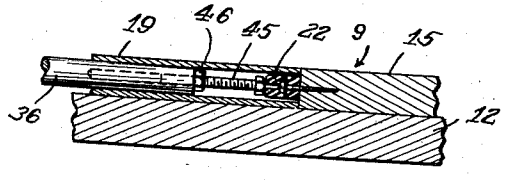
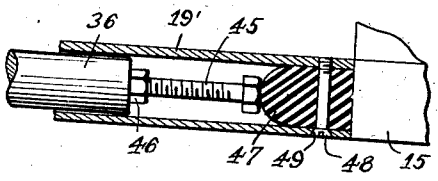


Fig. 5



Inventor:
By George LaVerne Runkle
Wilson, Dowell, McCune & Winterrowd
Attys

Patented Feb. 21, 1939

2,148,245

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,148,245

CASKET RACK FOR HEARSES

George La Verne Runkle, Freeport, Ill., assignor to Henney Motor Company, Freeport, Ill., a corporation of Delaware

Application March 15, 1937, Serial No. 130,931

13 Claims. (Cl. 214—84)

This invention relates to a casket rack for hearses.

Some undertakers, particularly in small towns, cannot afford to have a separate service car, and must use their hearses for that purpose. It is the principal object of my invention to provide a removable casket rack for the floor of the hearse made of light skeleton construction and preferably in two sections so as to permit easy handling in the removal and reinstallation thereof, said rack being designed for fastening to the floor of the hearse in such a manner that when it is removed the floor is entirely cleared of all obstructions and ready for any kind of use.

Another object is to provide an extensible casket rack having a novel extension section extensible from the main section to reach over the beaver-tail extension of the hearse body, such as is provided on the latest designs of hearses. The extension section being built into the rack this way, is quickly and easily removable therewith, and the door opening is clear of any obstructions when the rack is removed.

A further object consists in the provision of an extension rack section comprising a frame having a sliding telescoping fit in the side members of the tubular frame of the main section, the frame for the extension section being arranged to be locked releasably in its retracted position. A feature in this connection is the provision of rubber bumpers arranged to be compressed by abutment with the extension section when the latter is moved to retracted position, whereby to place the parts under tension and avoid the likelihood of rattling when the hearse is in motion.

The invention is described in detail in the following description wherein reference is made to the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a horizontal section through the body of a hearse showing the extensible casket rack of my invention in plan;

Fig. 2 is a fragmentary plan view on a larger scale of the rear left corner of the rack showing the extension section in full lines in the extended position and in dotted lines in retracted position;

Fig. 3 is a longitudinal section on the line 3—3 of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is a sectional detail on the line 4—4 of Fig. 1, on the same scale as Figs. 2 and 3, and

Fig. 5 is a section similar to Fig. 4, showing another construction.

The same reference numerals are applied to corresponding parts throughout the views.

The reference numeral 5 designates the body of a hearse having opposed side doors 6 and 7 affording access to the front end of the casket space, and a rear door 8 which when opened permits the loading or unloading of the casket endwise. The extensible casket rack of my invention is indicated generally by the reference numeral 9 and its main section is made up of two rectangular frames or sub-sections 10 and 11 placed end to end on the floor 12 of the hearse and arranged to be suitably secured in place by wing-headed screws 13 passed through lugs 14 on the two frames and threaded in holes provided therefor in the floor, as by nuts set in the floor flush with the surface. Two screws, one on each side of each frame, are sufficient to hold the same. The two rack frames are of skeleton form, the frame 10 having wooden side rails 15 joined by wooden cross-pieces 16–18, and the frame 11 having metal tubular side rails 19 joined by wooden cross-rails 20 and 21. The object is to make the frames light enough so that they can be handled and carried easily. Dowels 22 fastened to the ends of the rails 15 fit in the ends of the rails 19 for alignment of the two frames. The cross-pieces 16–18, 20, and 21 have rollers 23 mounted thereon in pairs, and these are all preferably of rubber so that the casket will roll thereon smoothly and silently and without danger of slipping sideways. Socket plates 24 set in the floor 12, two on each side of the rack 9, have the top surfaces thereof flush with the floor surface and are arranged to receive bier pins 25 to serve mainly as guides for the casket in loading and unloading. These pins will not ordinarily come in contact with the sides of the casket because the rubber rollers 23 will not permit side slippage. Another socket plate 26 is provided in the floor 12 in forwardly spaced relation to the front end of the rack 9 to receive another bier pin 25 to limit forward movement of the casket in loading. In the case of smaller caskets, the front pin 25 may be inserted in either of the socket plates 27 and 28 provided on the cross-pieces 16 and 17. An elongated socket plate 29 is mounted on the cross-members 20 and 21 and a connecting member 30 extending longitudinally at the middle of the frame 11. This plate has a number of sockets provided therein in longitudinally spaced relation to receive a bier pin placed behind the casket in whichever hole is closest to the casket when the casket has been moved all the way in. This last pin must of course be removed before the casket can be unloaded, and an additional socket plate 31 is provided therefor on the floor alongside the rack at the rear end thereof, as

shown. It should be clear from the description thus far that I have provided a casket rack which can be easily removed and replaced and, being sectional and of light skeleton construction, can be handled entirely by one man easily. Furthermore, the rack when removed leaves the floor **12** entirely clear, assuming that the bier pins **25** are also removed. Thus the hearse can be quickly converted into a service car, yet changed back into a hearse without it being at all apparent to the uninitiated that the same is of convertible design.

The hearse illustrated is of the type having a beaver-tail extension **32** on the rear end thereof terminating in front of the rear bumper **33** (Fig. 3). In accordance with my invention the rack **9** is of extensible form, having an extension section **9'** arranged to be moved to a position reaching over the beaver tail extension **32** to compensate therefor. The frame **11'** of this extension has rollers **34** rotatably mounted on the cross-bar **35** thereof. The latter is carried on a pair of side rails **36** slidably mounted on the rear frame **11** of the main section with a telescoping fit in the side rails **19**. Latch pins **37** reciprocable in transverse guides **38** on the inner side of the side rails **19** are normally moved outwardly under the action of compression springs **39** inserted between abutments **40** on the cross-piece **21** and the ends of the latch pins, as shown in Fig. 2, whereby to enter said pins in holes **41** provided therefor in the side rails **36** and accordingly lock the side rails **36** against endwise movement in the side rails. Flexible wires **42** passed through the abutments **40** and springs **39** and secured at their outer ends in the latch pins **37** are connected at their opposite ends to the intermediate portions of levers **43**, projecting from the back of the cross-piece **21** and pivoted at their foward ends as at **44** in the middle member **30** previously referred to. Thus the latch pins may be released by simply pressing the ends of the levers **43** together between the thumb and index finger of one hand, whereupon the extension section can be slid in one direction or the other relative to the main section. When this extension section is pulled out to reach over the beaver-tail extension **32** of the hearse, as in Figs. 2 and 3, the pins **37**, upon coming into register with the holes **41**, will enter these holes under pressure of the springs **39** and lock the extension section against movement in either direction. These latch pins have to be released, as previously described, before the extension section can be returned to the retracted position shown in Fig. 1 and in dotted lines in Fig. 2. Once the latch pins have been released, the extension section can be slid inwardly until screws **45**, adjustably mounted on the inner ends of the side rails **36**, come into abutment with the dowels **22**, as in Fig. 4, at which time the holes **41'** in the side rails **36** will register with the latch pins **37** and the extension section will be accordingly locked by entry of the pins in the holes under spring pressure. The screws **45** are so adjusted that a slight compression of the dowels **22** must occur before the holes **41'** are in register with the pins **37**. Hence, when the pins **37** enter the holes **41'**, the parts are kept under tension as a result of the expansive force of the dowels **22**, and there is therefore no danger of any play between the parts which might give rise to rattling when the hearse is in motion. Furthermore, the dowels **22** silence the operation by acting as bumpers. Lock nuts **46** on the screws **45** serve, when tightened against the ends of the side rails **36**, to hold the screws in adjusted position.

The rubber bumper **47**, shown in Fig. 5, is mounted directly in the front end of the tubular side rail **19'** of the rear main section of the rack **9**, instead of being provided in the form of a dowel on the side rail of the front main rack section. These bumpers can be fastened in place in the front ends of the two side rails **19'** in any suitable manner as by means of a flat head screw **48** inserted in a countersunk portion **49** in the wall of the rail near the front end thereof. With this construction, the operation is the same so far as silencing the impact of the extension section and eliminating rattling thereof when locked in its forward position is concerned. I have found that the advantage in having the rear main rack section a self-contained unit like this overbalances what advantage there was in having the front and rear main rack sections doweled together in the manner previously described.

With either construction, it is apparent that my novel, extensible rack has many important practical advantages, its principal one being that the whole assembly is so light and compact and easy to install or remove. Also, when it is removed, the entire floor, as well as the door sill, are cleared of obstructions and practically the same as the floor of a service car, and useful in the same way.

It is believed the foregoing description conveys a good understanding of the objects and advantages of my invention. The appended claims have been drawn with a view to covering all legitimate modifications and adaptations.

I claim:

1. In a hearse, a removable casket rack for the floor of the hearse comprising separable rectangular, skeleton frame sections, each comprising longitudinal side rails and connecting cross-pieces, means for detachably securing each of said frame sections to the hearse floor with the ends of the side rails of said sections in abutting relation, and casket supporting anti-friction rollers mounted on said cross-pieces so as to be removable from the hearse with the rack.

2. In a hearse, a removable casket rack for the floor of the hearse comprising two separable rectangular skeleton frame sections which when placed end to end approximate the length of a large sized casket, the sections being approximately of the same length and both of light weight construction, said sections having longitudinal side members joined by cross-members, casket supporting anti-friction rollers on said cross-members, and an extension rack section comprising side members slidably supported on the side members of the rear one of said first sections and a cross-member supported on the side members for movement outwardly from the end of the rack, the cross-member providing an outboard casket support in the same plane with said rollers on said rack.

3. A sectional casket rack for hearses comprising two sections each having side rails, and cross-members carrying casket supporting rollers, the side rails on at least one of said sections being hollow to provide guides therein, cushioning bumpers in the guides, a third set of side rails slidable in said guides into abutment with said bumpers, and a roller carrying support carried on said last named side rails.

4. A sectional casket rack for hearses comprising two sections each having side rails, and cross-members carrying casket supporting rollers, the

side rails on at least one of said sections being hollow to provide guides therein, dowels on the ends of the side rails of the other section arranged to be entered in the ends of the other side rails to detachably connect said sections in aligned relation, the ends of said dowels being constructed to serve as cushioning bumpers, a third set of side rails slidable in said guides into abutment with the ends of said dowels, and a roller carrying support carried on said last named side rails.

5. A sectional casket rack for hearses comprising two separable sections each having side rails, and cross-members carrying casket supporting rollers, the side rails on at least one of said sections being hollow to provide guides therein, cushioning bumpers in said guides, a third set of side rails slidable in said guides into abutment with said bumpers, a roller carrying support carried on said last named side rails, and means for releasably securing said third named side rails in adjusted position in said guides, comprising a spring-pressed latch pin on one of said hollow side rails in transverse relation thereto, and a latch pin hole provided in the rail slidable in said hollow rail, arranged to register with the pin only when the related bumper is compressed to a predetermined degree, for the purpose described.

6. A device as set forth in claim 5, including an adjustable screw on the end of the inner rail arranged to compress the bumper more or less in the locked retracted position of the extensible side rails, according to the screw's adjustment.

7. A device as set forth in claim 5, including an adjustable screw on the end of the inner rail arranged to compress the bumper more or less in the locked retracted position of the extensible side rails, according to the screw's adjustment, and a lock nut on said screw for securing it in adjusted condition.

8. A casket rack for hearses comprising side rails, and casket supporting rollers on said rack, the side rails having guides thereon, an extensible rack section comprising side rails slidable in said guides, said section carrying one or more casket supporting rollers in substantially the same horiozntal plane with the aforesaid rollers, compressible bumpers in said guides arranged to be compressed by the ends of the side rails of said extensible section, and means for releasably locking said section in retracted position relative to said rack, with the bumpers compressed a predetermined extent.

9. A casket rack for hearses comprising side rails, and casket supporting rollers on said rack, the side rails having guides thereon, an extensible rack section comprising side rails slidable in said guides, said section carrying one or more casket supporting rollers in substantially the same horizontal plane with the aforesaid rollers, compressible bumpers in said guides arranged to be compressed by the ends of the side rails of said extensible section, and means for releasably securing said side rails in adjusted position in said guides, comprising a spring-pressed latch pin in transverse relation to one of said guides, and a latch pin hole provided in the rail slidable in said guide, arranged to register with the pin only when the bumpers are compressed to a predetermined degree, for the purpose described.

10. A device as set forth in claim 9, including adjustable screws on the ends of the side rails of said extensible section arranged to compress said bumpers more or less in the locked retracted position of said extensible support, according to the adjustment of said screws.

11. A device as set forth in claim 9, including adjustable screws on the ends of the side rails of said extensible section arranged to compress said bumpers more or less in the locked retracted position of said extensible support, according to the adjustment of said screws, and lock nuts on said screws holding the same in adjusted condition.

12. In a hearse comprising a floor, a removable casket rack for the floor of the hearse comprising two separable rack sections each in the form of a rectangular frame made of light weight skeleton construction to facilitate carrying the same when removed, each frame section having cross-members, and casket supporting anti-friction rollers mounted on said cross-members so as to be removable from the hearse with the rack sections, means for detachably connecting adjoining ends of said sections to form a casket rack of approximately the length of a large sized casket, and means for detachably securing each of said rack sections to the floor of the hearse.

13. In a hearse, a removable casket rack for the floor of the hearse comprising two separable front and rear skeleton frame sections, each comprising laterally spaced, parallel longitudinal side rails and cross-members on each section rigidly connecting the side rails thereof together, said sections being adapted to support casket supporting rollers, means on the ends of said side rails for detachably interconnecting said sections in longitudinal operative alignment with one another, and a single means in connection with each of said side rails for detachably securing the frame sections to the floor of a hearse.

GEORGE LA VERNE RUNKLE.