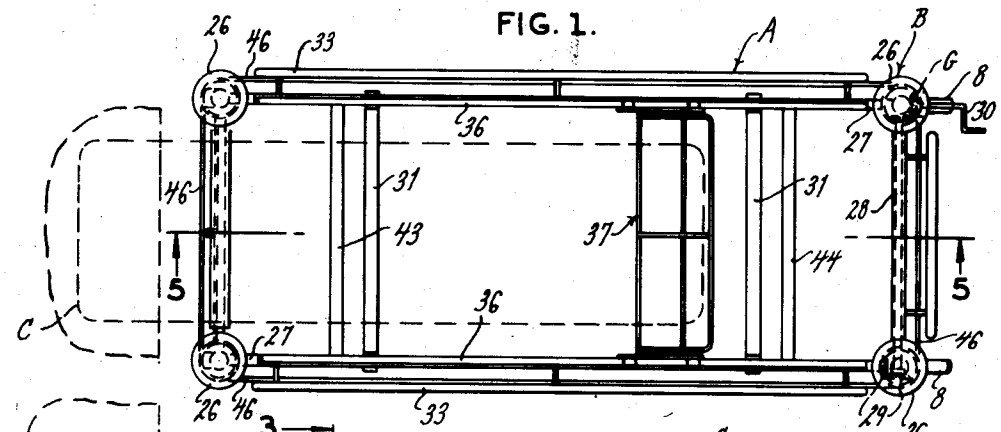
Oct. 20, 1953 M. W. CHRISMAN 2,655,713

BURIAL APPARATUS

Filed June 14, 1950 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

FIG. 1.



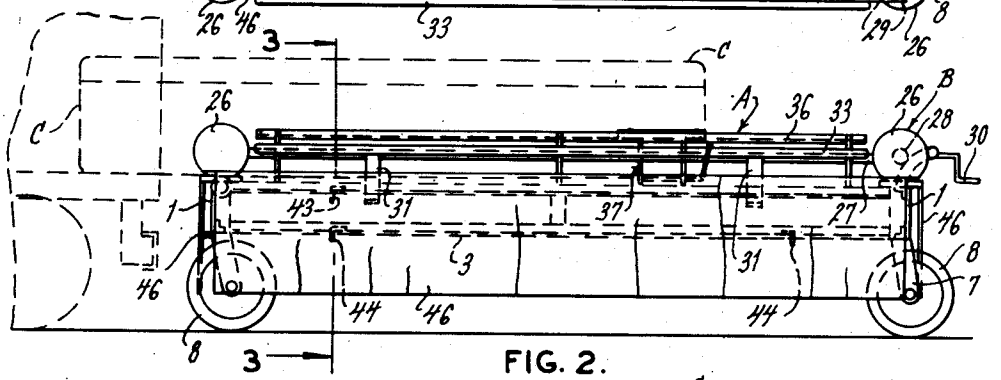


FIG. 2.

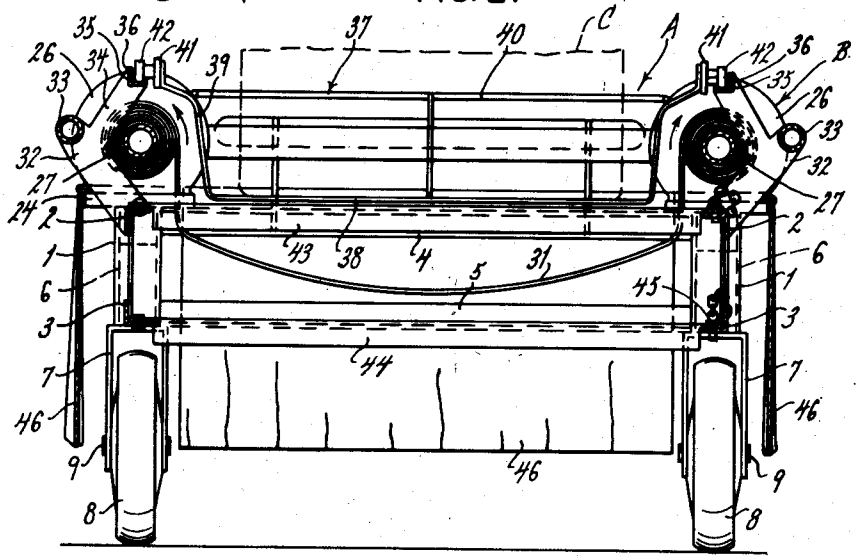


FIG. 3.

INVENTOR.

MERRILL W. CHRISMAN

BY

ATTORNEY

Oct. 20, 1953 M. W. CHRISMAN 2,655,713

BURIAL APPARATUS

Filed June 14, 1950 3 Sheets-Sheet 2

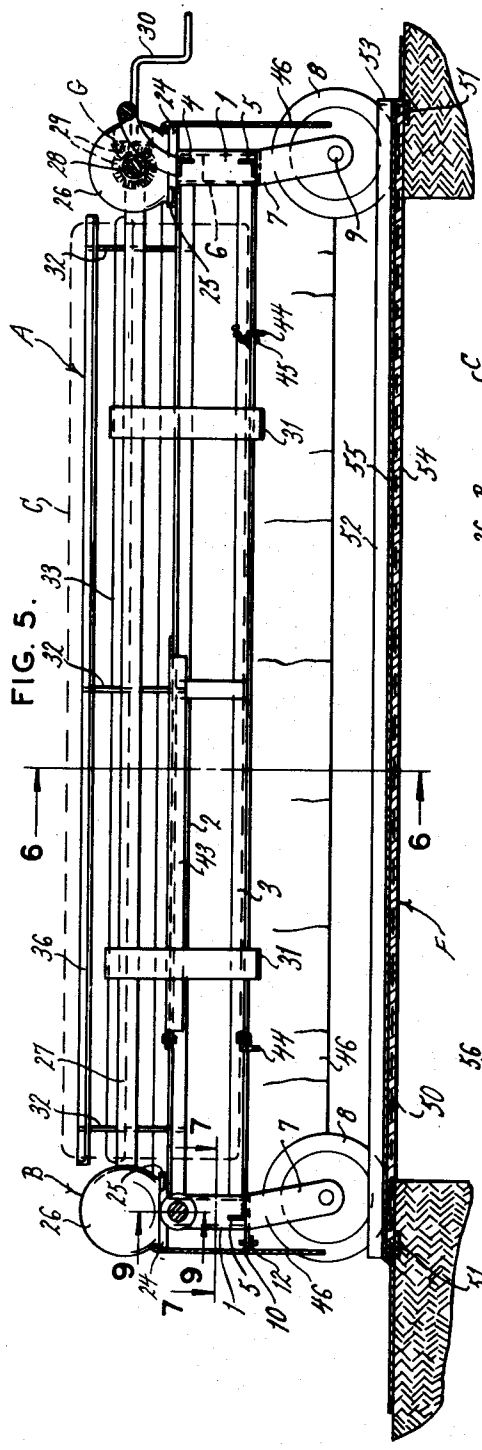


FIG. 5.

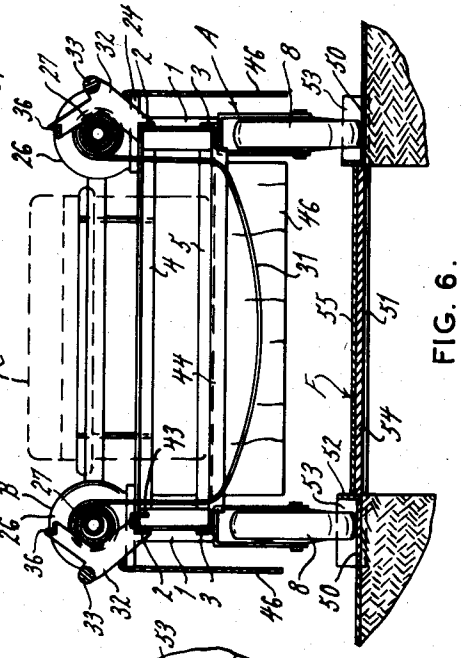


FIG. 6.

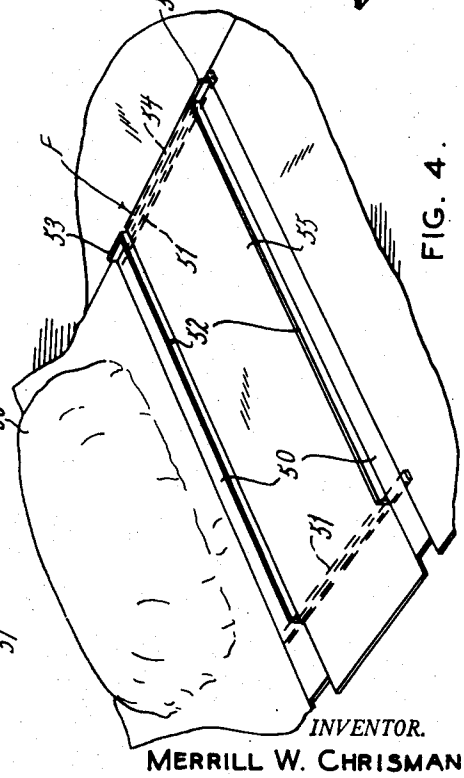


FIG. 4.

INVENTOR.
MERRILL W. CHRISMAN
BY
Alfred W. Peschke
ATTORNEY

Oct. 20, 1953 M. W. CHRISMAN 2,655,713

BURIAL APPARATUS

Filed June 14, 1950 3 Sheets-Sheet 3

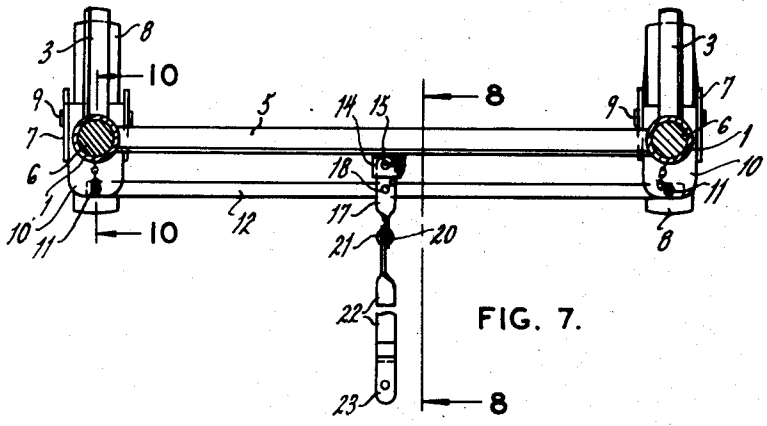


FIG. 7.

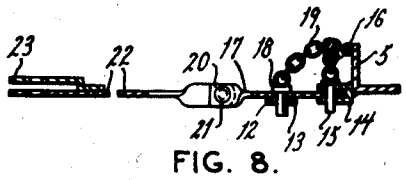


FIG. 8.

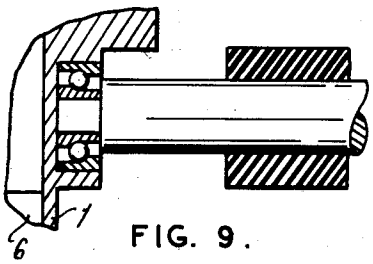


FIG. 9.

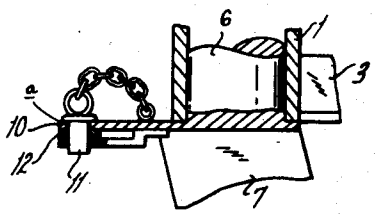


FIG. 10.

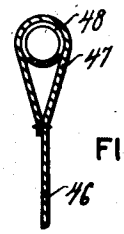


FIG. 12.

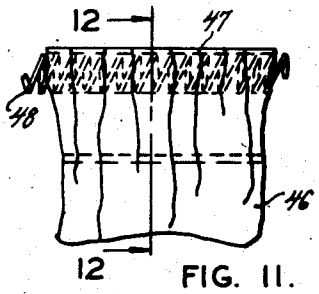


FIG. 11.

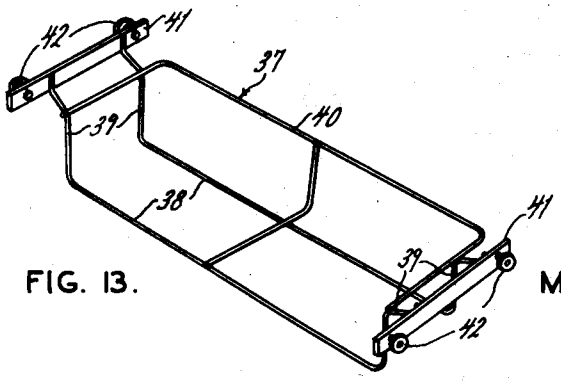


FIG. 13.

INVENTOR.
MERRILL W. CHRISMAN
BY
ATTORNEY

Patented Oct. 20, 1953 2,655,713

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,655,713

BURIAL APPARATUS

Merrill W. Chrisman, Affton, Mo.

Application June 14, 1950, Serial No. 168,076

4 Claims. (Cl. 27—27)

1

This invention relates in general to certain new and useful improvements in burial apparatus.

At the present time, the majority of interments take place in graves which are prepared in the grounds at the cemetery. The circumstances surrounding the funeral and the interment are fraught with sorrow and the most harassing portion of the experience is unnecesarily intensified by the frequently clumsy methods employed in transporting the casket from the hearse to the grave and the physical circumstances surrounding the placement of the casket over the grave. Most funeral services at the grave have eliminated the extremely saddening procedure of lowering the casket into the grave and covering it with earth. However, it heretofore has been considered necessary to carry the casket manually from the hearse to the grave and set it over the casket-lowering equipment which is visible and very obviously carries the thought of the grave most keenly in the minds of the mourners. Furthermore, with the present equipment, it is merely possible to set up more or less fixed machinery around the grave opening to receive the casket from the hands of the pallbearers and support it across the open grave for ultimate lowering thereinto. The mourners, as they approach the cemetery and surround the location of the grave, must of necessity see the yawning opening into which the casket will be ultimately lowered and are made keenly aware of the mechanical equipment which is to be used for this purpose. Most undertakers and cemetery managers now use artificial green grass blankets to cover the mound of earth and the surrounding grave site, but even this is not sufficient to relieve the unnecessarily harsh suggestions which are brought to the minds of the persons present by the open grave and surrounding paraphernalia.

It is the primary object of the present invention, therefore, to provide burial apparatus which will make it possible to avoid the unpleasant and harrowing implications of the open yawning pit and which will permit substantial concealment of all the unpleasant background realities connected with actual grave burial.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide equipment which can be set up around and over the open grave to conceal it almost completely from the mourners and persons attending a funeral, so that the entire memory which the mourners would carry away from the cemetery with them will be as pleasant as may be possible under the circumstances and will be suffused with spiritual dignity.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide equipment which will facilitate the transportation of the casket from the hearse to the grave site and will eliminate the clumsy back-breaking effort which has heretofore been required of the pallbearers in the performance of their duties.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a casket-carrying device which will

2

facilitate the removal of the casket from the hearse and can be readily manipulated to transport the casket over the ground to the site of the grave, positioning it in proper alignment with the concealed grave opening, so that later, when the funeral ceremony has been completed and the mourners have left the grave site, the equipment serving as a concealment for the grave opening may be conveniently and quickly removed and the casket may be lowered into the grave directly from the casket-carrier without additional movements or manipulation.

It is also an object of the present invention to provide a casket-carrier which may be readily hauled over the terrain of the cemetery from one location to another and is so constructed that all of the adjunctive paraphernalia used to conceal the grave and cover the mound of dirt removed from the grave can be readily piled upon the carrier for transportation.

It is an additional object of the present invention to provide a casket-carrier in which the mechanical elements are decoratively concealed to a sufficient degree to render the entire device attractive in appearance without impairment of the efficient operation thereof.

With the above and other objects in view, my invention resides in the novel features of form, construction, arrangement, and combination of parts presently described and pointed out in the claims.

In the accompanying drawings (three sheets)—

Figure 1 is a top plan view of a casket-carrier constructed in accordance with and embodying the present invention;

Figure 2 is a side elevational view of the casket-carrier;

Figure 3 is a transverse sectional view taken along line 3—3 of Figure 2;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of the grave site with the interment equipment in place thereon and the grave opening and earth mound decoratively concealed from direct view;

Figure 5 is a longitudinal sectional view of the casket-carrier taken along line 5—5 of Figure 1;

Figure 6 is a transverse sectional view of the casket-carrier taken along line 6—6 of Figure 5;

Figure 7 is a fragmentary sectional view taken along line 7—7 of Figure 5;

Figure 8 is a fragmentary sectional view taken along line 8—8 of Figure 7;

Figure 9 is a fragmentary sectional view taken along line 9—9 of Figure 5;

Figure 10 is a fragmentary sectional view taken along line 10—10 of Figure 7;

Figure 11 is a fragmentary view of the upper margin of the drape used for decorative concealment of the under portions of the casket-carrier illustrating in more specific detail the manner in which the drape is supported on the casket-carrier;

Figure 12 is a fragmentary sectional view taken along line 12—12 of Figure 11; and

Figure 13 is a perspective view of the remov-

able casket dolly forming a part of the present invention.

Referring now in more detail and by reference characters to the drawings, which illustrate a preferred embodiment of the present invention, A designates a casket-carrier comprising four relatively short vertically disposed tubular corner posts 1 rigidly welded along their side faces to the ends of upper and lower side rails 2, 3, and upper and lower transverse end rails 4, 5, being thereby connected in a formation of a strong rigid rectangular frame which is entirely open in its central or interior area. Swivelly mounted in each corner post by means of a pintle stud 6 and extending downwardly therefrom is a U-shaped wheel mount 7 conventionally provided at its lower end with a rubber-tired ball bearing mounted wheel 8 conventionally supported upon a horizontal axle 9. The front two wheel mounts 7 are integrally provided with forwardly projecting U-shaped horizontal tongues 10, each of which is provided with an aperture *a* for loosely receiving a pin 11 removably mounted therein and extending through the end of a tie-bar 12, which is centrally provided with an aperture 13 disposed in forwardly spaced alignment with a horizontal forwardly opening U-shaped bracket 14 welded upon the central portion of the end rail 5. Pivotally mounted in, and extending forwardly from, the bracket 14 by means of a removable pin 15, flexibly secured to the end rail 5 by means of a short length of chain 16, is a forwardly extending removable draw-bar 17, which is also pivotally secured to the tie-bar 12 by means of a removable pin 18 flexibly secured to the end rail 5 by means of a short length of chain 19. At its forward end, the draw-bar 17 is twisted through 90° to form a flat vertical tongue 20, and rockably mounted thereon by means of a loose rivet 21 is an auxiliary draw-bar 22 provided at its forward end with a conventional clevis 23 adapted for releasable securement in any conventional manner to the hitching lug of a tractor or other powered vehicle (not shown).

It will be noted, by reference to Figures 7 and 8, that the auxiliary draw-bar 22 is free to move up and down through a limited vertical arc to various angles of inclination between the casket-carrier A and the vehicle by which it is being pulled, so as to accommodate for unevenness in the terrain normally encountered in the cemetery. In addition, the tire-bar 12 will be shifted to the right or left as the pulling vehicle turns to the right or the left, thereby causing the front wheels to track properly.

Welded to, and extending horizontally across, the upper end of each of the corner posts 1 is a circular bearing plate 24 having an upstanding annular flange 25. The plate 24 and flange 25 are of such size and shape as will accommodate almost all types of existing casket-lowering machines, so that the casket-carrier A may be employed in connection with any such casket-lowering machine which the undertaker or cemetery operator may have conveniently available. Shown for illustrative purposes in conjunction with the presently described casket-carrier A is a conventional casket-lowering machine B consisting of four somewhat spherical corner housings 26 connected longitudinally by lengthwise extending tubular shafts 27. The rear two housings 26 are cross-connected by a tubular shaft 28. The shafts 27 and 28 are conventionally journaled in suitable bearings and interconnected by bevel gears 29. One of the housings 26 is provided with an outwardly projecting crank-handle 30, which is splined or otherwise connected into a gear-reduction unit, conventionally indicated in dotted lines at G, and drivingly connected to one of the shafts 27. Thus, by turning the crank 30, the two shafts 27 are turned in opposite directions, thereby slowly unwinding the canvas tapes 31 and lowering the casket C into the grave. It will, of course, be understood that, by turning the crank 30 in the reverse direction, the tapes can be rolled up on the shafts 27 to lift the casket rather than lower it. This particularly feature is of value in handling the casket during interment, as will presently be more fully discussed.

Welded or otherwise securely mounted upon the side rails 2 and projecting outwardly and angularly upwardly therefrom, on each side of the casket-carrier A, are three lengthwise spaced bracket arms 32. Two of the bracket arms 32 are located adjacent the ends of the rails 2 and the third is located approximately midway between the others, so as to provide a symmetrical and equidistantly spaced relationship between the two bracket arms 32 on each side of the casket-carrier A. Also welded or otherwise rigidly mounted in the upper ends of the bracket arms 32 extending on opposite sides of the casket-carrier A, in upwardly and outwardly spaced parallel relation to the rails, are tubular handle-bars 33. The upward and outward angularity of the bracket arms 32 is such that the tubular handle-bars 33 will be located at approximately the right distance outwardly from the casket-carrier A and above the ground, so that the pallbearers may conveniently grasp it as they stand on the ground next to the casket-carrier A, thereby making it unnecessary for the pallbearers to stoop, reach, stretch, or otherwise inconvenience themselves in grasping the handle-bars 33 and propelling the casket-carrier A along the ground as they move toward the grave.

Formed integrally with each bracket arm 32 and extending angularly inwardly from the upper end thereof is a side arm 34 terminating at its other end in an L-shaped notch 35 into which is securely fitted and welded a lengthwise extending section of channel iron 36. It will be noted, by reference to Figure 3, that the sections of channel iron 36 on opposite sides of the casket-carrier A are disposed in upwardly spaced relation to the side rails 2 and open inwardly toward each other to provide a slide-way.

Provided for disposition within and between the rails 36 is a narrow basket-like structure 37 formed of interlaced and welded rod stock and comprising a bottom element 38, side wall-forming elements 39, and a back wall-forming element 40. The side wall-forming elements 39 are extended angularly outwardly and are cross-connected by horizontal sections of bar stock 41. Mounted in the sections of bar stock 41 and projecting outwardly therefrom are pairs of ball bearing rollers 42 which ride in the slide rails 36.

It will be noted that the basket 37 is, in effect, open on its forward end and is relatively narrow, so that it may be slid or rolled forwardly in the slide rails 36 up to and within the forward end of the casket-carrier A. In this position, the casket-carrier A may be rolled up to the door of the hearse and the casket C pulled outwardly from the hearse, so that the forward end projects through the door and comes to rest within

the basket 37. The basket 37 and casket C can then be rolled rearwardly, so that the casket C will slide out through the casket-carrier A. During this operation, the rolling basket 37 supports the end of the casket C and, in fact, carries most of the weight thereof, the remaining weight of the casket C being supported by a roller or any other conventional mechanism, which is always present in the floor of all modern hearses. If the hearse does not have such casket-supporting device, the casket will nevertheless slide freely over the sill of the hearse door and can be lifted by a single attendant from the hearse through the last few inches of movement until the casket C is entirely disposed within the confines of the casket-carrier A.

Swingably mounted on one of the side rails 2 adjacent the forward end of the casket-carrier A is a cross-bar 43, which may be swung outwardly when desired and caused to extend transversely across the casket-carrier A and rest at its opposite end upon the other rail 2. When the casket-carrier A is being prepared, this bar 43 is swung outwardly into transversely extended position, so that, as the attendant lowers the hind end of the casket from the hearse door into the casket-carrier, it will come to rest upon the bar 43 without dropping any very great distance.

Before the casket C is received into the casket-carrier A, the tapes 31 should be lowered, so that they hang in a U-shaped loop below the level of the bar 43 and the bottom wall-forming element 38 of the basket 37. Thus, it will be seen that, as the casket C is initially brought to rest within the confines of the casket-carrier A, it will be supported at one end by the basket 37 and at the other end by the cross-bar 43, with its bottom substantially in the level of the plane of the side rails 2. The handle 30 is thereupon turned in the proper direction to wind the tape 31 upon the shafts 27 until the tapes tighten beneath the casket C, whereupon by continual movement of the handle 30 the casket C is elevated slightly and is supported by the tapes 31, being thus lifted from the bar 43 and basket 37. The basket 37 is then removed and placed in the hearse or any other convenient location and the bar 43 is swung backwardly into lengthwise overlying alignment upon the side rail 2.

Swingably mounted upon one of the lower side rails 3 at appropriately spaced distances along the length thereof are two cross-bars 44, substantially similar to the previously described cross-bar 43. The cross-bar 44 are sufficiently long to swing outwardly and extend transversely across the casket-carrier A and rest at their opposite or free ends upon the other side rail 3. Preferably, though not necessarily, the free ends of the cross-bars 44 are apertured for receiving locking pins 45, it being desirable to provide such locking pins 45 to insure against accidentally jarring the bars loose and dropping the casket when the latter is lowered thereonto, as will be presently pointed out.

With the cross-bars 44 swung outwardly into transverse position, the handle 30 is turned, lowering the casket until it is entirely disposed within the casket-carrier A and cannot accidentally shift forwardly or to one side and drop off. The casket C is thus brought to rest upon the cross-bars 44 by which it is supported.

With the casket C thus mounted, the pallbearers grasp the handle-bars 33 and move the casket C toward the side of the grave. It has

been found that the casket-carrier A is very easily propelled across the grass or other terrain of the type usually found in cemeteries without imposing undue strain upon the pallbearers or forcing them to stumble along clumsily, as is usually the case. Instead, the pall-bearers walk slowly forwardly in fully upright position, propelling the casket toward the grave with ease and dignity.

Provided for decorative purposes, and to screen the undercarriage portion of the casket-carrier A from view, are four curtains 46 formed preferably of velvet or other suitable decorative material and provided at their upper ends with tubular hems 47 for receiving a large coil spring 48 which is mounted at its ends upon and is stretched between each pair of corner posts 1. The two curtains 46, adapted to extend across the transverse ends, are relatively short to fit the space they are intended to cover and, correspondingly, the curtains 46, which are to extend on the sides across the casket-carrier A, are correspondingly longer to fit the space which they are designed to cover.

Provided for co-operation with the casket-carrier A is a track-frame F comprising a pair of spaced parallel track members 50 cross-connected by transverse rails 51. The track members 50 are provided along their inner longitudinal margins with upstanding guide rails 52 and transversely across one end with stop members 53. Also provided for co-operation with the frame F is a floor-board or grave-sham 54 sized for neat fitting disposition within the area framed by the track members 50 and adapted to rest on the cross rails 51. The frame F is of such size and proportion as to rest upon the ground just around the rectangular grave opening, substantially as shown in Figures 4, 5, and 6, and when installed around the grave with the sham 54 in place will form a decorative attractive appearance over the grave opening. To further add to the appearance of the device, the sham 54 may be covered with a rectangular section of artificial grass carpet 55 and, similarly, the mound of earth thrown up out of the grave when it was dug is covered with a larger blanket or section of artificial grass carpet 56.

The casket C can be transported from the hearse to the grave in the manner above described and, as the pallbearers approach the grave, the forwardmost of them can very easily direct the front wheels of the casket-carrier A onto the track and the other pallbearers can similarly glide the rear end around until it is aligned with the track, so that the entire casket-carrier A, with the casket C supported therein, can be readily moved onto the track in its entirety, so that the casket will rest in place over the concealed grave opening. The funeral services and last obsequies may be carried out according to whatever ritual may be required and the mourners can then depart with fond and sacred memories, leaving the casket supported in the casket-carrier A at the grave site. After everyone has departed, the cemetery officials and workmen can very easily remove the blankets of artificial grass and the cover-board or sham 55, thus leaving the grave open beneath the casket. Thereupon, the handle 30 can be turned to roll up the canvas band 31 and elevate the casket to lift it above the bars 44 and support its weight in fully extended position. The bars 44 may then be released and swung back into original position in alignment with the side rail 3, so that nothing intervenes

between the casket and the grave. The handle 30 is then turned in the reverse direction to unwind the band 31 and thereby lower the casket into the grave. If the religious requirements of the funeral service for the particular individual being buried make it necessary, the casket can be lowered in the grave as a part of the funeral service. This can be accomplished very simply and in a fully dignified manner by removing the grass blanket 55 and cover-board 54. Since the casket-carrier A is in place over the grave and the curtains 46 extend around the four sides thereof, the grave opening will be substantially concealed in any case.

It should be understood that changes and modifications in the form, construction, arrangement, and combination of the several parts of the casket-carrying device may be made and substituted for those herein shown and described without departing from the nature and principle of my invention as defined in the appended claims.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. A burial device for transporting a casket from the hearse to the grave-site and then lowering the casket into the grave comprising a rectangular frame having four corner posts rigidly connected transversely by end rails and longitudinally by pairs of vertically spaced parallel upper and lower side rails in the provision of a normally unobstructed area within the frame through which the casket may be lowered into the grave, casket-lowering means mounted upon the upper end of said corner posts, said casket lowering means including juxtaposed parallel tape-rollers positioned above the upper side rails, casket-supporting tapes operatively rolled up on and extending between said tape-rollers, said tapes being adapted to assume a horizontal position between the tape-rollers when rolled up tightly thereon, and means swingably mounted on one of the upper side rails and adapted to swing across said unobstructed area and rest upon the other upper side rail in downwardly spaced relation to the horizontal position assumed by the casket-supporting tapes whereby the casket can rest upon said means while it is being transferred from the hearse to the burial device and be lifted therefrom by the tapes when desired.

2. A burial device for transporting a casket from the hearse to the grave-site and then lowering the casket into the grave comprising a rectangular frame having four corner posts rigidly connected transversely by end rails and longitudinally by pairs of vertically spaced parallel upper and lower side rails in the provision of a normally unobstructed area within the frame through which the casket may be lowered into the grave, a wheel swivelly mounted in each corner post, casket lowering means mounted upon the upper ends of said corner posts, said casket lowering means including juxtaposed parallel tape-rollers positioned above the upper side rails, casket-supporting tapes operatively rolled up on and extending between said tape-rollers, said tapes being adapted to assume a horizontal position between the tape-rollers when rolled up tightly thereon, and a pair of bars swingably mounted on one of the lower side rails and adapted to swing across said unobstructed area and rest upon the other lower side rail in downwardly spaced relation to the horizontal position assumed by the casket-supporting tapes whereby the casket can rest upon said bars while it is being transferred from the hearse to the grave-site and be lifted therefrom by the tapes when desired.

3. A burial device for transporting and lowering a casket comprising a rectangular frame having four corner posts rigidly connected transversely by end rails and longitudinally by pairs of vertically spaced parallel upper and lower side rails in the provision of a normally unobstructed area within the frame through which the casket may be lowered into the grave, slide-forming rails mounted in upwardly spaced parallel relation to the upper side rails, a carrier shiftably mounted on and extending between the slide-forming rails and having bottom members for receiving an end of the casket, said bottom members being positioned substantially in the plane of the upper side rails, juxtaposed parallel tape-rollers operatively mounted between the upper side rails and the slide-forming rails, casket-supporting tapes operatively rolled up on and extending between said tape-rollers, said tapes being adapted to assume a horizontal position between the tape-rollers when rolled up tightly thereon, and means swingably mounted on one of the lower side rails and adapted to swing across said unobstructed area and rest upon the other lower side rail in downwardly spaced relation to the horizontal position assumed by the casket-supporting tapes whereby the casket can rest upon said swingably mounted means while it is being transported in the burial device and be lifted therefrom when desired.

4. A burial device for transporting and lowering a casket comprising a rectangular frame having four corner posts rigidly connected transversely by end rails and longitudinally by pairs of vertically spaced parallel upper and lower side rails in the provision of a normally unobstructed area within the frame through which the casket may be lowered into the grave, casket-lowering means mounted upon the upper ends of said corner posts, said casket lowering means including juxtaposed parallel tape-rollers positioned above the upper side rails, casket-supporting tapes operatively rolled up on and extending between said tape-rollers, said tapes being adapted to assume a horizontal position between the tape-rollers when rolled up tightly thereon, a bar swingably mounted at one end on one of the upper side rails, said bar being adapted to swing across said unobstructed area and rest upon the other upper side rail in downwardly spaced relation to the horizontal position assumed by the casket-supporting tapes, and a pair of bars each being swingably mounted at one end upon one of the lower side rails and being adapted to swing across said unobstructed area and rest upon the other lower side rail in downwardly spaced relation to the first-named bar.

MERRILL W. CHRISMAN.

References Cited in the file of this patent

UNITED STATES PATENTS

Number	Name	Date
121,688	Thompson et al.	Dec. 5, 1871
445,875	Brickell	Feb. 3, 1891
605,360	Thorne	June 7, 1898
1,101,217	Stamm	June 23, 1914
2,039,464	Troup	May 5, 1936
2,053,368	Hott	Sept. 8, 1936
2,201,057	Smetana	May 14, 1940
2,262,937	Holmes	Nov. 18, 1941
2,470,971	Blackburn	May 24, 1949
2,542,433	Rockman	Feb. 20, 1951