Jan. 1, 1946. W. H. THOMMEN 2,392,298

CASKET CONSTRUCTION

Filed March 24, 1944 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

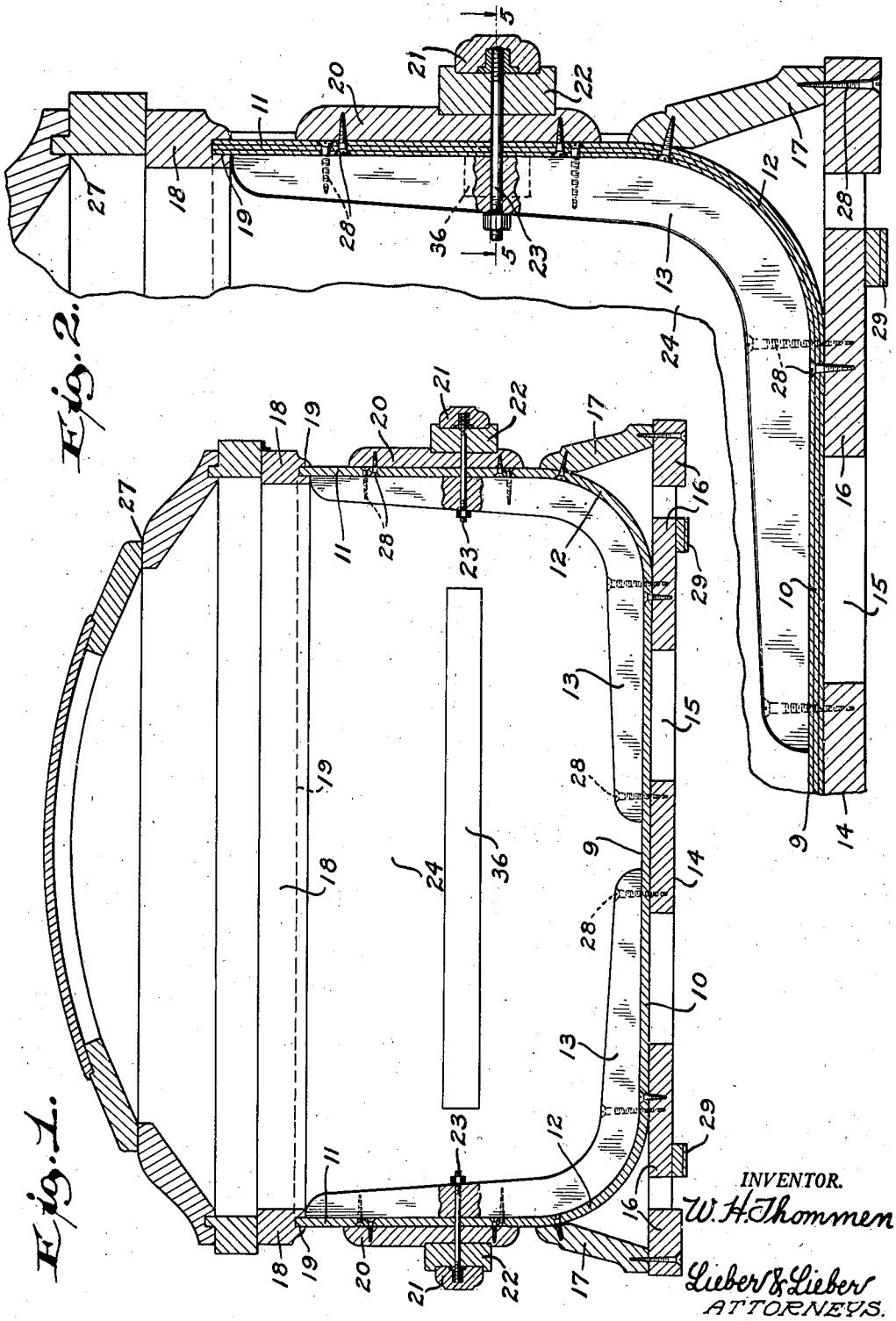


Fig. 2.

Fig. 1.

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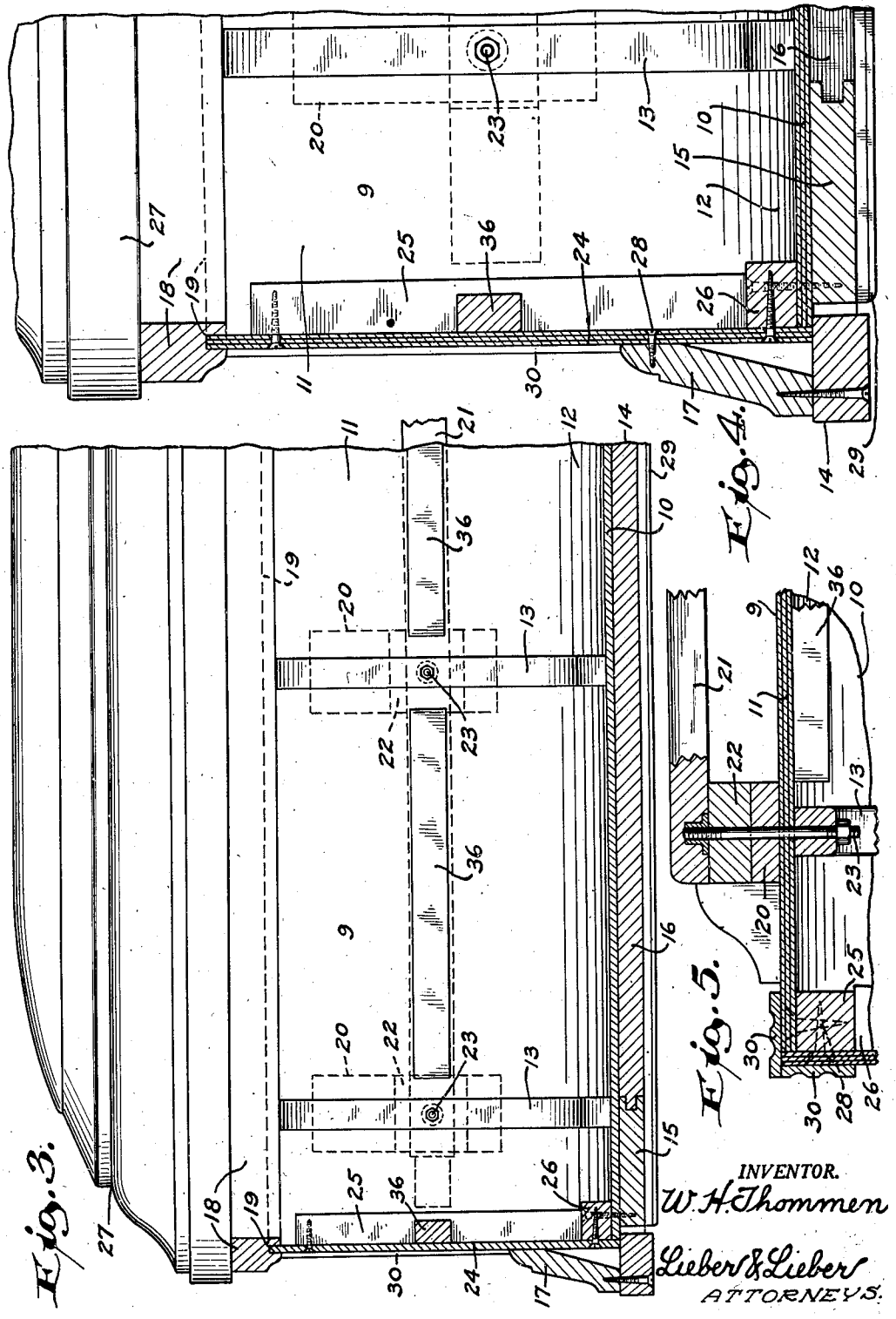


Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

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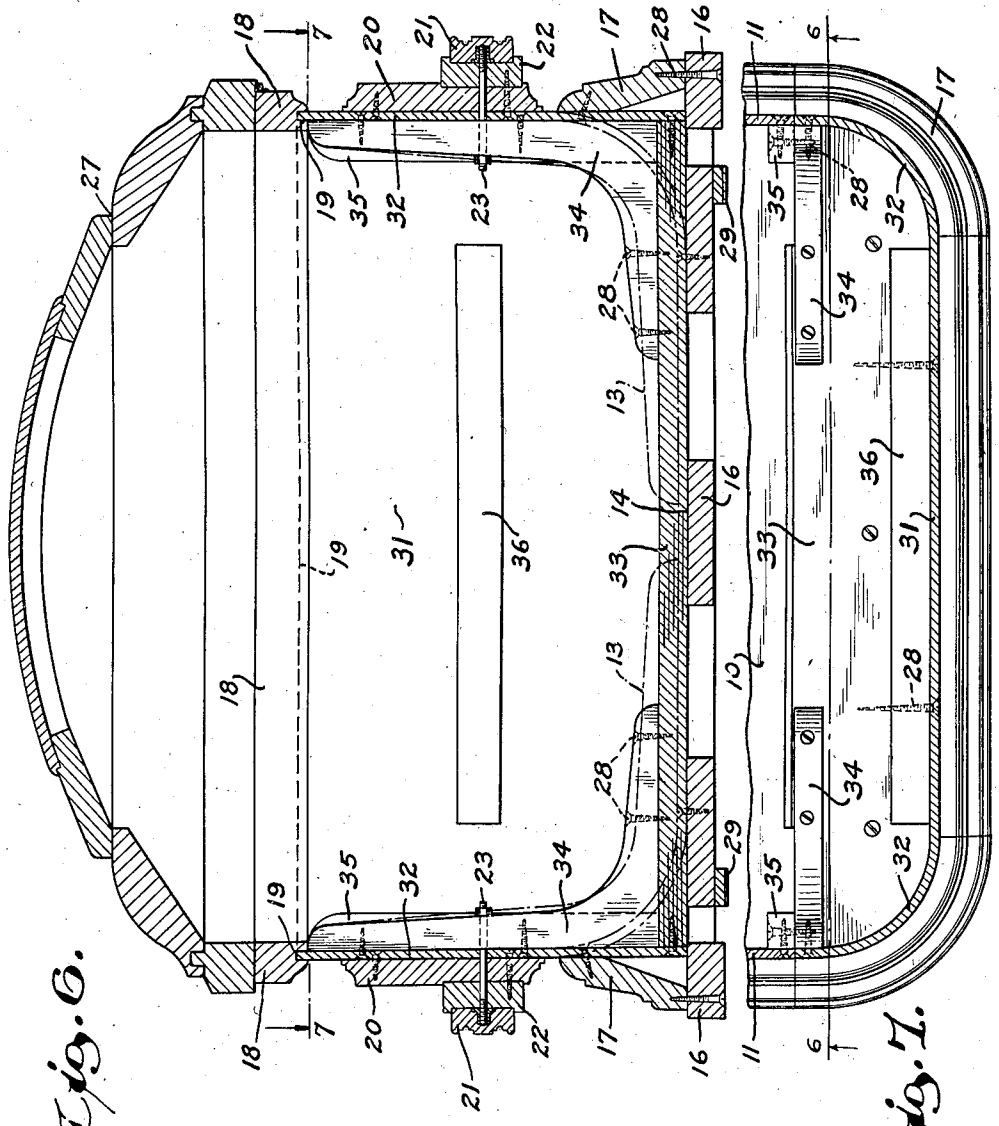


Fig. 6.

Fig. 7.

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Patented Jan. 1, 1946 2,392,298

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,392,298

CASKET CONSTRUCTION

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Application March 24, 1944, Serial No. 527,876

8 Claims. (Cl. 27—2)

This invention relates in general to improvements in the art of manufacturing burial caskets or coffins, and relates more specifically to various improvements in the construction of non-metallic caskets formed primarily of ply-wood or similar sheet material.

The primary object of the present invention is to provide a simple, durable and attractive casket which may be expeditiously formed of ply-wood or the like.

Burial coffins or caskets have heretofore been constructed primarily either of metal or of wood; and while the metal structures are perhaps the most durable, they are also the most expensive and difficult to handle because of their excessive weight. The prior wooden coffins when cheaply built, were relatively frail and insecure; and when properly constructed, these prior wooden caskets were also relatively heavy and costly, thus making all of the previous coffins or caskets relatively objectionable for diverse reasons. Aside from the foregoing objections, metal is also becoming more difficult to procure for use in the manufacture of caskets and the like, whereas certain types of wood such as durable and strong ply-wood is becoming more readily available.

It is therefore another object of my present invention to provide an improved coffin formed primarily of ply-wood, which possesses great strength while being relatively light in weight, and which can also be produced at moderate cost.

Another object of this invention is to provide a highly attractive and sturdy casket assemblage which may be constructed in a unique manner from bendable sheet stock such as ply-wood, so that the bottom and side walls of the structure are formed of a single continuous sheet of the material.

A further object of the present invention is to provide an improved wooden coffin structure, which utilizes a minimum amount of metallic hardware and reenforcing brackets, and wherein the carrying handles and re-enforcing elements may also be formed of wood or the like.

Still another object of my invention is to provide an improved body and end head construction for caskets or the like, whereby the manufacture thereof is simplified while maximum strength is maintained.

These and other objects and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed description.

A clear conception of the features constituting my present improvement, and of the mode of constructing several types of the improved ply-wood caskets, may be had by referring to the drawings accompanying and forming a part of this specification wherein like reference characters designate the same or similar parts in the various views.

Fig. 1 is a transverse vertical section through a typical ply-wood casket embodying the present invention, and having the cover closed;

Fig. 2 is an enlarged fragmentary section similar to that of Fig. 1, but more clearly illustrating the detailed construction of the sides of the casket;

Fig. 3 is a part sectional side elevation of approximately one-half of a casket such as shown in Figs. 1 and 2, with flat end closures or heads applied to the ends thereof, and the section having been taken centrally through the casket;

Fig. 4 is an enlarged fragmentary sectional view of the end head portion of the casket of Fig. 3;

Fig. 5 is a similarly enlarged fragmentary horizontal section through a side and end head of the casket shown in Figs. 1 to 4 inclusive, the section having been taken along the line 5—5 of Fig. 2;

Fig. 6 is a transverse vertical section through another embodiment of the invention comprising a casket having curved end closures or heads applied to the opposite ends thereof, the section having been taken along the line 6—6 of Fig. 7; and

Fig. 7 is a horizontal section through the curved end head assemblage of Fig. 6, taken along the line 7—7.

While the improvement has been shown and described herein as having been applied to only a limited number of typical designs of ply-wood caskets, it is to be understood that caskets embodying the invention may vary considerably in appearance or design, and it is not my desire or intent to unnecessarily limit the scope or utility of the invention by virtue of such specific embodiments.

Referring especially to Figs. 1 to 5 inclusive, the improved ply-wood casket shown therein comprises in general an elongated trough-shaped body 9 formed of a single continuous sheet of material, and having a flat bottom 10 and opposite upright side walls 11 connected to the bottom 10 by curved sections 12; a series of transverse angular ribs 13 disposed within and on opposite sides of the body 9 and being firmly connected to the bottom 10 and side walls 11 thereof; a rigid base 14 formed of firmly united transverse and longitudinal boards 15, 16 respectively, and projecting outwardly beyond the side walls 11 and the ends of the body 9; re-enforcing members or mouldings 17 secured to the outer longitudinal boards 16 of the base 14 and to the side walls 11 and adjacent ribs 13; upper protecting strips 18 having longitudinal grooves 19 coacting with and concealing the upper edges of the side walls 11 of the body 9; outer re-enforcing plates 20 coacting with the side walls 11 of the body 9 adjacent to each rib 13 above the moulding 17 and spanning the adjacent ribs; elongated carrier

handles 21 coacting with the plates 20 on opposite sides of the body 9 through intervening positioning blocks 22 and being rigidly connected to the blocks 22, plates 20, walls 11 and ribs 13 by means of bolts 23; flat end heads 24 closing the opposite ends of the trough-shaped body 9 and being secured thereto with the aid of corner posts 25 and bottom strips 26; and a closure cover 27 coacting with the upper strips 18 of the side walls 11 and end heads 24.

The trough-shaped body 9 including its bottom 10, side walls 11 and curved connecting sections 12, is preferably formed of a single continuous sheet of ply-wood or the like, which may be bent to shape without heating or steaming and provides a rigid and durable structure devoid of joints. The angular stiffening ribs 13 are also preferably formed of heavier and durable ply-wood and snugly fit and are firmly attached to the bottom 10 and adjacent side walls 11 of the body 9 by means of the bolts 23 and screws 28, and gluing in addition if so desired; and these ribs 13 serve to maintain the elongated trough-like body 9 in proper shape. The rigid supporting base 14 may also be constructed of durable ply-wood boards 15, 16 having interfitting tongues and grooves united by gluing or otherwise, and the ribs 13 and body bottom 10 may likewise be rigidly attached to the bottom 14 by means of screws 28 as shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The re-enforcing mouldings 17 which extend entirely around the body 9 and end heads 24, may be of diverse shapes, and are likewise secured to the outer boards 16 of the base 14 and to the lower portions of the body walls 11 above the curved sections 12, with the aid of screws 28 or the like. The upper protecting and re-enforcing strips 18 also extend entirely about the body 9 and end heads 24, and may be firmly secured to the upper concealed edges of the walls 11 and heads 24 by means of glue disposed within the edge confining recesses or grooves 19. An extremely rigid but light body assemblage is thus provided, and the base 14 may also be provided with longitudinal seating strips 29 as shown.

The outer re-enforcing plates 20 which coact with the outer surfaces of the side walls and span the adjacent ribs 13 above the mouldings 17, may also be of varied design in order to enhance the aesthetic appearance, and these plates 20 are provided with handle positioning recesses within which the spacer blocks 22 are firmly seated, see Fig. 2. The blocks 22 in turn, are provided with transverse recesses within which the elongated bar handles 21 are firmly seated, and the handles 21 extend throughout the major length of the casket and are rigidly attached thereto by the bolts 23 which clamp the handles 21, blocks 22, plates 20, walls 11, and ribs 13 together at each of the successive ribs. A sturdy and rigid handle assemblage is thus provided at each side of the coffin, and the plates 20 and blocks 22 positively maintain the elongated carrying handles 21 in proper position and also provide ample space for insertion of the fingers and hands of the carriers. The cover 27 may also be of varied construction and design, in one or more sections which may be hingedly secured to the upper re-enforcing strips 18 in a well known manner, and this cover 27 is preferably formed of light but durable ply-wood in the manner disclosed in my co-pending application Serial No. 445,867, filed June 5, 1942.

The end closures or heads of the casket, may be formed either flat as shown in Figs. 3, 4 and 5, or gracefully curved as illustrated in Figs. 6 and 7, the former construction being preferred in the less expensive coffins, and the latter being especially adapted for use in the higher grade caskets. Referring particularly to Figs. 3 to 5 inclusive, the flat end heads 24 are preferably constructed of flat sheets of relatively thin but durable ply-wood, which span the open ends of the body 9 and have the posts 25 and strips 26 firmly secured to the side and bottom edges thereof by gluing and screws 28. The lower mouldings 17 and upper re-enforcing strips 18 extend entirely across the flat end wall panels and are mitered to the end of the corresponding mouldings 17 and strips 18 of the body 9, and the assembled heads 24 may be slipped into position at the ends of the trough-shaped body and the posts 25 and strips 26 may then be firmly attached to the side walls 11 and bottom 10 of the body 9 with the aid of screws 28 as shown. Finishing mouldings 30 may thereafter be applied to the corners as shown in Fig. 5 to complete the end closures, and these closure head assemblages may obviously be constructed and readily applied at minimum cost to provide a sturdy final coffin.

Referring specifically to Figs. 6 and 7, the more refined curved end head structure shown therein, comprises in general a relatively flat end closure plate 31 formed of durable ply-wood and having curved opposite side portions 32 adapted to aline with the side walls 11 of the body 9; a bottom plate 33 secured within and enclosing the lower end of the head; a pair of oppositely disposed angular side brackets or ribs 34 firmly connecting the free edges of the curved portions 32 with the bottom plate 33; and upright posts 35 to which the ribs 34 are adapted to be secured by screws 28. Each end plate 31 with its curved side portions 32 is formed of a single continuous sheet of ply-wood and the lower mouldings 17 and upper re-enforcing strips 18 extend along these plates and have curved end portions which are alineable with the ends of the corresponding mouldings and strips of the side walls 11; and the bottom plate 33 is disposed slightly higher than the base 14 but snugly engages the adjacent transverse end board 15 thereof as well as the corresponding end edge of the body bottom 10. The bottom plates 33 and the angular bracket ribs 34 may also be formed of thick ply-wood; and the ribs 34 have sharp outer corners as shown in Fig. 6, which seal the ends of the curved sections 12 of the body 9. This curved end head construction while being slightly more complicated than that shown in Figs. 3 to 5 inclusive, presents a neater and more highly finished appearance in the assembled casket, and also provides an effective closure for the ends of the trough-shaped body 9 which can be readily attached thereto.

When assembling the coffins or caskets, the same style of body 9, base 14 and cover 27 may be utilized with either the flat or curved end closure or head, and the interior surfaces of the body and end heads are ordinarily provided with upholstery attaching strips 36 which are glued or otherwise fastened to these surfaces. After the body and base assemblage has been constructed, the end heads may be quickly and conveniently applied to produce an exceedingly light but strong casket, and the cover 27 may thereafter be applied in any suitable manner. The interior of the casket assemblage may then be decorated and upholstered to present a highly finished and attractive appearance, and to cover up internal fastening and re-enforcing elements, and the external

appearance of the caskets may be varied throughout a considerable range by utilizing diverse veneers, panels, mouldings and decorative plates 20 and handles 21. The improved casket structures when thus assembled are not only highly aesthetic in appearance but are also leak-proof and durable in construction, besides being of light weight and therefore easy to handle.

From the foregoing detailed description it will be apparent that my present invention provides an improved coffin or casket which may be constructed primarily of ply-wood to provide an extremely strong, light, and attractive final structure. The formation of the body of the improved casket from a single elongated sheet of ply-wood having opposite side walls integrally associated with an imperforate bottom so as to provide a trough-shaped body, not only facilitates construction of the caskets, but also produces a strong unit devoid of joints at the lower longitudinal corners. This U-shaped body is most effectively re-enforced by the local ply-wood ribs 34, the bottom 14, and the upper strips 18; and the outer plates 20 besides stiffening the side walls 11, also provide effective anchorage points for the handles 21. The blocks 22 positively maintain the handles 21 in proper position, besides providing ample space for the hands of the carriers, and either of the improved end head structures may be applied to the same type of body construction with relative ease. While the improved flat end head structure, is somewhat simpler and less costly than the rounded end head structure, both of these end heads effectively seal the opposite ends of the trough-shaped body and both present a neat and highly finished appearance. The invention has gone into successful use and has proven revolutionary so far as casket design and construction is concerned, and it has been found that with the aid of this invention, caskets can be manufactured more readily and expeditiously of extremely strong and light material, at minimum cost. The caskets may be manufactured in quantity at relatively low cost because of the fact that the body structures of various styles and types of caskets are of like construction, and it is to be noted that the use of excessive metallic hardware has been reduced to a minimum while still maintaining adequate strength in the assemblages.

It should be understood that it is not desired to limit this invention to the exact details of construction, or to the precise mode of assembling the structures, herein shown and described, for various modifications within the scope of the appended claims may occur to persons skilled in the art.

I claim:

1. A casket comprising, a bottom formed of a continuous elongated panel of ply-wood having its opposite sides turned upwardly to provide a trough having a bottom and integral side walls, re-enforcing strips associated with the upper edges of said side walls, a base coacting with said bottom and extending outwardly beyond said side walls, and re-enforcing means connecting the outwardly extending portions of said base with said side walls above said bottom.

2. A casket comprising, a bottom formed of a continuous elongated panel of ply-wood having its opposite sides turned upwardly to provide a trough having a bottom and integral side walls, re-enforcing strips having downwardly open recesses for receiving and concealing the upper edges of said side walls, a base coacting with said bottom and extending outwardly beyond said side walls, and mouldings connecting the outwardly extending portions of said base with said side walls beneath said re-enforcing strips.

3. A casket comprising, a bottom formed of a single elongated panel of ply-wood having its opposite sides turned upwardly to provide a unitary upwardly open trough having a flat bottom and integral side walls, a base coacting with said bottom and extending outwardly beyond said side walls, re-enforcing ribs coacting with the trough bottom and with the inner surface of each of said side walls and being firmly secured to said base, several upright re-enforcing plates secured to the outer surface of each of said side walls and to the adjacent ribs and spanning the adjacent re-enforcing ribs, and other re-enforcing means connecting the outwardly extending portions of said base with said side walls beneath said plates.

4. A casket comprising, a bottom and opposite side walls formed of a single panel of ply-wood and providing an elongated trough, a base coacting with said bottom, end walls coacting with said bottom and side walls to close the opposite trough ends and to maintain the side walls in upstanding position, and means for securing said end walls to said base through said bottom.

5. A casket comprising, a bottom and opposite side walls formed of a single panel of ply-wood and providing an elongated trough, a base coacting with said bottom, end walls coacting with said bottom and side walls and being secured to said base to close the opposite trough ends and to maintain the side walls in upstanding position, and re-enforcing ribs coacting with the bottom and inner surface of each side wall and also being secured to said base.

6. A casket comprising, a bottom and opposite side walls formed of a single panel of ply-wood and providing an elongated trough, a base coacting with said bottom, end walls coacting with said bottom and side walls and being secured to said base through said bottom to close the opposite trough ends and to maintain the side walls in upstanding position, and a re-enforcing strip secured to and concealing the upper edge of each side wall, said end walls also being secured to said strips.

7. A casket comprising, an elongated unitary upwardly open trough formed of a single panel having a bottom connected with integral side walls by gradually curved sections, a base of greater width than said trough coacting with said bottom and projecting outwardly beyond said side walls beneath said curved sections, and re-enforcing members connecting the outer edges of said base with the adjacent side walls above said sections.

8. A casket comprising, an elongated unitary upwardly open trough formed of a single panel having a bottom connected with integral side walls by gradually curved sections, a base of greater width than said trough coacting with said bottom and projecting outwardly beyond said side walls beneath said curved sections, re-enforcing mouldings connecting the outer edges of said base with the adjacent side walls above said sections, and angular ply-wood ribs coacting with the trough bottom and with the adjacent side walls and being secured to said base through said bottom.

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