E. A. Skeele,

Coffin,

No. 39,758, Patented Sep. 1, 1863.

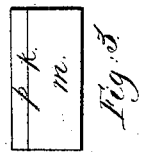


Fig. 3.

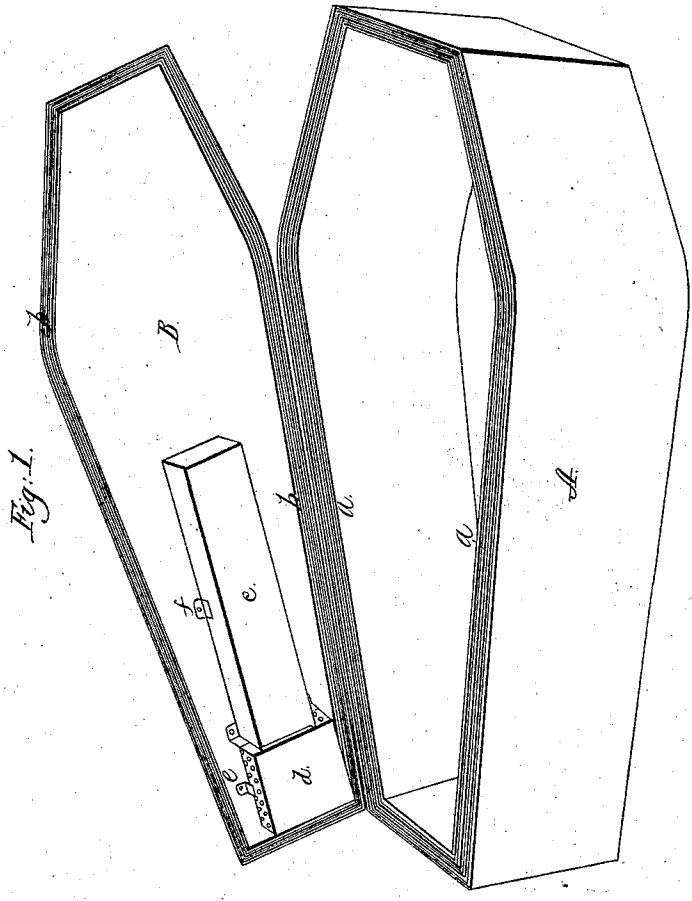


Fig. 1.

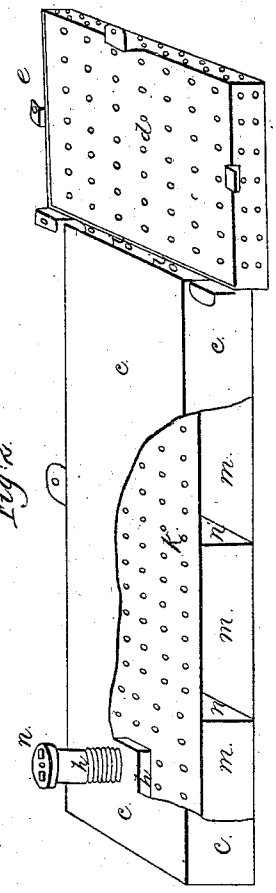


Fig. 2.

Witnesses:

H. E. Clifton

Wm. A. Cunningham

Inventor:

Edwin A. Skeele

AM. PHOTO-LITHO. CO. N.Y. (OSBORNE'S PROCESS.)

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

EDWIN A. SKEELE, OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

IMPROVEMENT IN BURIAL-CASES.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **39,758**, dated September 1, 1863.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, EDWIN A. SKEELE, of the city and county of St. Louis, and State of Missouri, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Disinfecting Burial-Caskets; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full and clear description thereof, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, and to the letters of reference marked thereon and made to form a part of this specification.

The object of this invention is the production of a burial-casket in which the human body may be placed after death and transported any desired distance or kept in any ordinary apartment for an indefinite period of time, or, in fact, until decomposition has entirely ceased, without causing any offensive smell in the room or apartment in which the casket, with its contained corpse, may be deposited, and which at the same time may be constructed of wood or other suitable material so cheaply as to come within the means of all ordinary persons desirous of using the same; and the nature of my invention relates to the construction and arrangement of a reservoir, adapted to contain suitable disinfecting or deodorizing agents, in combination with an escape-passage, by means of which the noxious gases generated by and during the decomposition of the body may be disinfected or deodorized prior to their escape from the casket; second, to the combination, with the aforesaid device, of an auxiliary receptacle, to be employed in certain cases hereinafter named and specified; and, third, to a new method of rendering the joints of the casket air and water tight, as hereinafter described, specified, and represented.

In reference to the accompanying drawings, Figure 1 is a perspective view representing my improved burial-case with all its parts complete and ready for use. Fig. 2 is a perspective view showing the deodorizing devices detached from the casket, a portion of the covering of the reservoir being removed. Fig. 3 is a transverse vertical sectional view of the reservoir and escape-passage.

In order to render my invention effective in the highest possible degree in wooden caskets, it is necessary to render the joints, and also the entire interior surface of the caskets, impervious to air and water. To accomplish this object, I make a series of grooves (shown at *a b*) in the parts of the casket where the joints are to be formed. The said grooves will be filled with suitable cement, and the joints then secured by means of proper screws, thereby closing and holding the cemented joints in the most perfect and thorough manner. The advantage from a series of grooves over one groove is the certainty of effecting perfect joints, whereas should a single groove be employed a slight irregularity in the surface or a fracture in the cement would render the joints imperfect and militate seriously against the perfect operation of my invention. After the said joints have been thus properly formed and secured the entire interior surface of the casket, and also the inner face of the lid, should receive a sufficient coating of suitable material to render the wood air and water proof. There are various compositions known which are suitable and may be employed for this purpose, among which may be mentioned wax and resin, soluble glass and alumina, gum-shellac, &c. The casket, being thus far completed and prepared, will be ready to receive the disinfecting devices, which may be described as follows:

m represents the reservoir for containing the disinfecting agents, the sides, ends, and bottom of which may be in common with the outer case or covering, *c*, its top or cover being formed by the perforated plate *k*, and it may be provided with partitions *n n'*, so that separate compartments may be provided for different kinds of disinfecting or deodorizing agents, if desired. Between the plate *k* and the top of the case *c* is an open escape-passage, *p*, which communicates with the interior of the casket by means of the small openings *i* in the end of case *c*, and with the air outside the casket by means of perforation *n* in the screw *h*. Therefore all the gases generated within and seeking escape from the casket must necessarily pass through the openings *i* into the passage *p*, where they come in contact with the active principles of the disinfecting agents deposited in the reservoir *m*, and which escape through the perforations in plate *k* into said passage. The said gases are thereby deodorized and rendered innocuous prior to their escape from the casket. The perforated screw *h* is adapted to pass through the lid B (which it will be made to fit air and water tight by means of suitable cement) and take into nut

h' of the case *c*, so that it may be made to assist in securing the case *c* to the lid B. Other means of attachment are afforded by the brackets *f*.

d is an auxiliary vessel or receptacle, intended for use, in combination with the reservoir *m* and passage *p*, in certain cases wherein decomposition takes place immediately and rapidly after death, the body to be placed in the casket is large and fleshy, when it may be especially desired to preserve the fresh appearance of the body for a considerable period of time after death and in very warm climates. The sides and top of said receptacle *d* are perforated in such manner as to permit the free escape of the active principle of the disinfectants deposited therein, thereby neutralizing, to a certain extent, the gases within the casket before they enter the passage *p*, and assisting in preserving the fresh appearance of the body. The said receptacle *d* will be secured to the lid B of the casket A by means of suitable brackets, *e*, in such manner as to leave sufficient space between its top and the inner surface of the lid B to allow the contained gases free access to the openings *i* and passage *p*. For all ordinary cases the capacity and efficiency of the reservoir alone are deemed fully sufficient, the auxiliary receptacle being intended for use only in the extraordinary cases before mentioned.

All the disinfecting devices and parts thereof will be formed of suitable anti-corrosive materials, so that their efficiency and durability may not be affected by the action of the gases or fluids within the casket or by that of the disinfecting agents employed.

The casket and disinfecting devices having been been constructed, prepared, and secured as before described, a body may be placed within the casket and the lid secured in the manner described for the other joints of the casket.

I do not wish to confine myself to any particular size for disinfecting devices or their precise location within the casket, as it is obvious the same may be varied without departing from the spirit of my invention; but,

Having described the construction, nature, and application, of my improvement, what I claim as new, of my own invention, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. The within-described arrangement and combination of the reservoir *m k*, escape-passage *p*, and perforated screw *h n*, the same being constructed and arranged relatively substantially as herein described, for the purposes set forth.

2. In combination with the said devices *m k p h n*, the receptacle *d*, constructed and arranged substantially as and for the purpose specified.

In testimony of which invention I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 17th day of April, 1863.

EDWIN A. SKEELE. [L. S.]

Witnesses:
JOHN C. H. CUNNINGHAM,
H. E. CLIFTON.