

**Dec. 15, 1959**

**E. W. McCOMBS**

**2,916,797**

## CASKET AND VAULT

Filed June 21, 1957

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

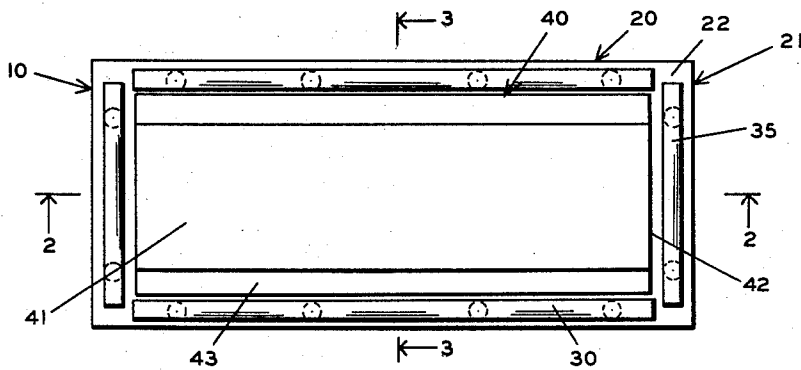
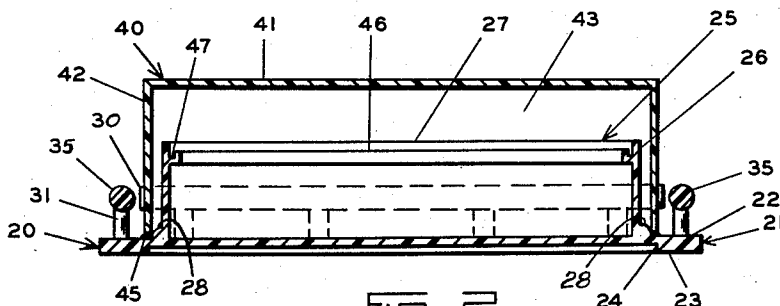


Fig. 1



五. 2

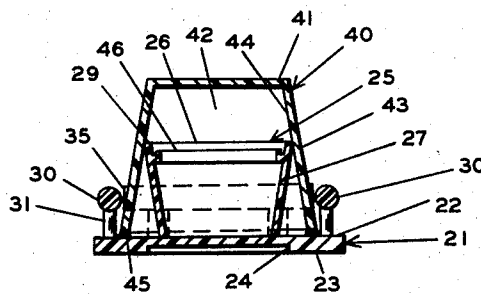


Fig. 3

INVENTOR.  
EUGENE W. M<sup>c</sup>COMBS

**BY**

Jerome R. Cox  
ATTORNEY

Dec. 15, 1959

E. W. M<sup>c</sup>COMBS  
CASKET AND VAULT

2,916,797

Filed June 21, 1957

2 Sheets-Sheet 2

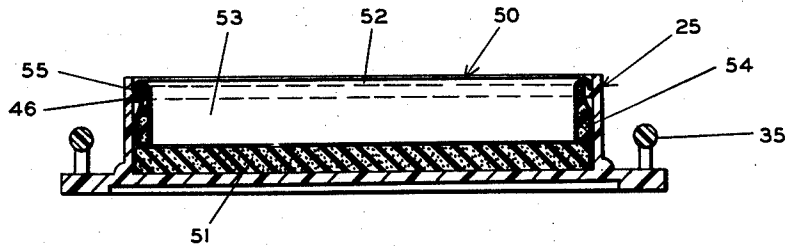


FIG. 4

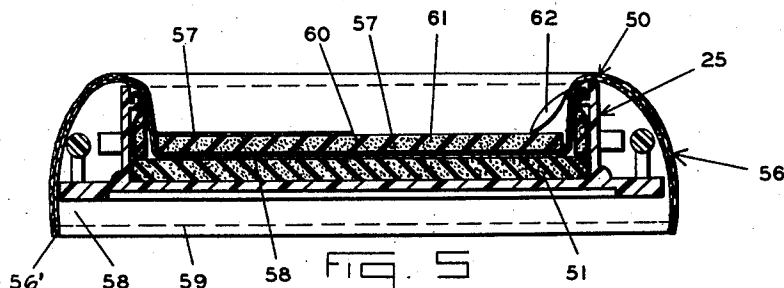


FIG. 5

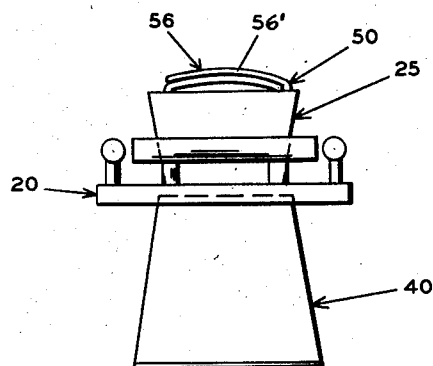


FIG. 6

INVENTOR.  
EUGENE W. M<sup>c</sup>COMBS

BY

*Jerome R. Cox*  
ATTORNEY

1

2,916,797

## CASKET AND VAULT

Eugene W. McCombs, Upper Arlington, Ohio

Application June 21, 1957, Serial No. 667,227

2 Claims. (Cl. 27—35)

The invention herein disclosed and illustrated relate to protective burial containers and more particularly, though not exclusively, to unitary burial container devices which serve both as a universally attractive burial casket and also as a permanently impregnable burial vault.

According to established and presently customary procedure for interment of deceased human beings in the United States, the body of the recently deceased is displayed in state in an attractively formed and richly trimmed casket constructed principally of steel or wood in such manner that the casket is sufficiently rigid to serve to support the mass of the body and is nevertheless sufficiently light in weight to be manually carried to the grave by persons of ordinary physical capabilities. Due to the gross weight limitations arising out of the custom of manual transportation of the casket and body to the grave, it has been found impractical in the past to construct burial caskets which are sufficiently light in weight and which also have a configuration calculated to withstand the pressure of the fill earth in the grave without becoming distorted, and to withstand for reasonable periods of time the corrosive action of ground water which is frequently encountered after burial.

As a result of these limitations which are imposed by custom upon the casket structure it is both necessary and desirable under the present procedure to provide a separate burial vault constructed of relatively heavy gauge metallic materials which is often provided with ceramic coatings, or alternatively to provide a protective burial vault of concrete construction for encasing and protecting the relatively insubstantial casket from collapsing under the weight of fill earth and/or for protecting the casket from contact with corrosive ground waters. Such burial vaults as are presently in use are so excessively massive as to require special mechanical handling equipment for their proper installation in a grave.

Thus the employment of separate caskets and massive vaults as they are presently used serves (1) to unduly complicate the process of interment, (2) to require the uneconomical expenditure of time and labor in the handling and installation of burial vaults, and (3) to require an unnecessarily large grave and therefore to prevent the economical use of space in burial plots.

It is also now customary to provide, in the interior of burial caskets, extensive interior trim fashioned from rich and colorful fabrics and braids which are, according to present practice, permanently installed within the casket during the course of construction and are individualistically designed to appeal to the esthetic tastes of the various individuals who ultimately select the casket for use. Since caskets are often selected primarily on the basis of trim alone and since individual preferences in the matter of color and drapery vary widely, the practice of permanently installing interior casket trim makes it presently necessary for a large number of caskets to be kept available for display purposes to afford the selecting

2

individual an opportunity to make a satisfactory choice of a casket for use.

### Objects

5 One of the objects of the present invention is to provide an effective combination casket and vault of unitary structure which is sufficiently light in weight to be susceptible of manual transportation to the place of interment.

10 A further object of my invention is to provide a light weight combination casket and vault unit which is sufficiently rigid to withstand without distortion the forces exerted by the mass of earth which is normally required to fill a grave.

15 A further object of my invention is to provide a combination casket and vault unit which is not subject to corrosive disintegration when exposed in contact with ground water over extended periods of time.

20 A further object of my invention is to provide a combination burial casket and vault unit sufficiently compact in structure to accommodate an extraordinarily large body and yet to be in turn accommodated in a grave of standard length and width dimensions.

25 A further object of my invention is to provide a burial casket which can be used effectively without a separate protective vault.

A further object of my invention is to provide an effective burial vault which is adaptable for concurrent use as a burial casket.

30 A still further object of my invention is to provide a burial casket having interchangeable trim accessories.

Further objects and features of my invention will be apparent from the following specification and claims when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings.

### Drawings

In the drawings which disclose one embodiment of my invention:

Fig. 1 is a top plan view of the device;

40 Fig. 2 is a section taken substantially on the line 2—2 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a section taken substantially on the line 3—3 of Fig. 1;

45 Fig. 4 is a section similar to Fig. 2 showing the casket portion only with side trim pads in place;

Fig. 5 is a section similar to Fig. 4 showing the mattress, pillow and cloth cover in position for displaying a body in state; and

50 Fig. 6 is an end view of the device showing the vault portion in use as a catafalque supporting the casket portion in position for displaying a body in state and showing the cloth cover folded in place over the body.

### Detailed description

55 Referring to the drawings for a detailed description of my invention it may be seen that I have shown generally in Fig. 1 a burial container 10 comprising a casket portion 20, a vault portion 40 and removable trim accessories 50 (Fig. 5) each of which is described hereinafter in detail.

60 Casket portion 20 is formed into a single integrally molded unit from suitable thermoplastic materials which are permanently colorable in a wide range of colors and are impervious to ground water and/or naturally occurring corrosive chemical solvents. Casket 20 is further formed with the general configuration shown in Figs. 2 and 3 having a base portion 21, an enclosure portion 25 and handle portions 30 and 35, each of said portions being further described hereafter.

70 Base portion 21 is formed with the generally rectangular configuration shown in Fig. 1 and has overall perimetrical dimensions not greater than the corresponding

outside dimensions of a standard burial vault. Base 21 is further formed with an upwardly disposed face 22 and a downwardly disposed face 23, each of said faces having a substantially plane configuration as seen in Figs. 2 and 3.

Enclosure portion 25 is formed integrally with base portion 21 and has oppositely disposed end walls 26 formed to the generally trapezoidal configuration shown in Fig. 3. Said end walls 26 project upwardly from and are disposed perpendicular to face 22 of base portion 21. Enclosure portion 25 is further formed with oppositely disposed sloping longitudinal walls 27 having the generally rectangular form shown in Fig. 2 and formed integrally with end walls 26 and base portion 21.

A plurality of oppositely disposed longitudinal handles 30 are formed with any suitable configuration and are rigidly secured to base 21 by suitable means such as handle posts 31 which are formed integrally with handles 30 and with base 21. End handles 35 are formed and secured to base 21 by means similar to that means just described which is employed to secure longitudinal handles 30. Handles 30 and 35 and posts 31 may, if desired, be formed of materials other than plastic materials and may be rigidly secured to base 21 by any suitable fastening means. Handles 30 are disposed upon face 22 parallel with and adjacent the opposite longitudinal edges of base 21 and handles 35 are similarly disposed along opposite end edges of said base 21.

Base portion 21 is further formed with oppositely disposed guide moldings 28 which are formed integrally with the lower portion of each end wall 26 and with the adjacent portion of face 22 of base 21. Each of said guide moldings 28 projects outwardly and slopes downwardly from one end wall 26 and is disposed along the line of intersection of said wall 26 and face 22.

Vault portion 40 is formed in a manner similar to that previously described for forming casket portion 20 into a single integrally molded unit formed with the general configuration shown in Figs. 2 and 3 and has a top 41 of substantially rectangular configuration. Top 41 is formed integrally with oppositely disposed vault ends 42 and with oppositely sloping vault sides 43. Vault ends 42 are formed to the general trapezoidal configuration shown in Fig. 3 with appropriate perimetrical dimensions for permitting the upper longitudinal edges of walls 27 of enclosure 25 to be in contact engagement with the inner surface 44 of vault sides 43 when vault portion 40 is in sealed engagement (described later herein) with face 22 of base portion 21. Vault sides 43 are formed with the generally rectangular configuration shown in Fig. 2 and are each integral with opposite ends 42 and with top 41. A suitable sealing material 45 may be fixedly secured along the entire perimeter of the downwardly disposed edges of vault 40 for sealing burial container 10 against the entrance of ground water into the container after container 10 is assembled in the closed configuration shown in Figs. 1, 2 and 3.

A relatively shallow concavity 24 is also provided in face 23 of base portion 21. Concavity 24 has abruptly defined perimetrical edges and has a shape and dimensions appropriate to conform to the shape and size of top 41 of vault 40 to facilitate the central super-positioning of casket portion 20 upon vault portion 40 when the vault portion is used as a catafalque for supporting the casket.

Channel portions 46 having channels 47 are formed integrally with walls 26 and 27 of enclosure portion 25 as shown in Fig. 2; or if preferred, an appropriate channel molding may alternatively be formed separately and attached by suitable means to the inner faces of walls 26 and 27 adjacent to and parallel with the upper edges of said walls 26 and 27. The channel portions 46 co-operate with adjacent faces of walls 26 and 27 to form a downwardly disposed channel 47 intermediate the

channel portions 46 and the adjacent faces of walls 26 and 27.

Trim accessories 50 are shown generally in Figs. 4 and 5 and comprise padding material 51, a plurality of liner pads 52, cloth cover 56, mattress 61 and pillow 62 each of which is described hereafter in detail.

Padding material 51 (Fig. 4) may be any suitable material such as for instance, that material which is presently used in the art for supporting a body in the desired elevated position in a casket. Liner pads 52 are formed with the general configuration shown, have an outer cover 53 of suitable fabric sewn over a pad 54 formed of appropriate padding material, and have an upwardly extending hem portion 55.

Cloth cover 56 (Fig. 5) comprises an upper layer 57 of appropriate fabric material with any suitable size and configuration; and a lower layer 58 of fabric similar in size and configuration to layer 57. Said layers 57 and 58 are bound together along their perimetrical edges by a suitable hem 59. Upper layer 57 is provided with a centrally disposed opening 60 which has a slot-like configuration and is bound about its periphery by a suitable hem. Opening 60 is of suitable size for slidably containing mattress 61 and a body at rest upon said mattress.

Mattress 61 and pillow 62 are of any suitable structure and configuration such as for instance a comparable mattress and pillow of well known configuration now used in the art.

#### Operation

When in use the burial container of my invention serves first as a display means for display of a body in state, and second as a protective container means for containing and protecting the body after burial.

During the period when my device is used for display purposes vault cover portion 40 (Fig. 6) serves as a catafalque or casket supporting means and casket portion 20 is positioned at rest upon the top 41 of vault 40 with the upwardly disposed face of top 41 contained within concavity 24 of casket 20. The body of the deceased is positioned upon mattress 61 and pillow 62 (Fig. 5) in the usual manner with layer 58 of cover 56 positioned under mattress 61, with that portion of layer 57 which lies adjacent one side of opening 60 positioned over the lower portion of the body, and with the portion of layer 57 adjacent the opposite side of opening 60 positioned under mattress 61. Perimetrical portions 56' of cover 56 is permitted to extend downwardly from the upper edges of enclosure 25 and to hang in folds about all sides of casket 20 and the upper part of vault 40. Cover 56 thus serves as a decorative screen for concealing the outer surfaces of casket portion 20 during that period when the body is in state.

When it is desired to close the casket and proceed with burial, perimetrical portion 56' of cover 56 (Fig. 6) is appropriately folded for covering and concealing the body and for being contained entirely within enclosure 25 of casket portion 20. After the cloth cover 56 is folded in the manner just described, casket portion 20 is removed from its position upon vault 40 and is repositioned at rest upon an appropriate wheeled conveyance such as those now in common use in the art. Vault portion 40 is then placed in the position shown in Fig. 3 with sealing means 45 in contact engagement with plane face 22 of casket base 21. When vault 40 has been positioned upon casket 20 in the manner just described, the upper edges 29 of walls 27 and shoulder moldings 28 adjacent walls 26 frictionally engage the inner surfaces of vault walls 43 and 42 respectively for positioning vault 40 centrally upon surface 22 of casket 20.

Suitable mechanical fastening means of well known configuration (not shown) may be provided, if desired, either on casket portion 20 or on vault portion 40, or both, for securing portions 20 and 40 in permanently

5

locked mutual engagement. In the absence of mechanical fastening means, one of many well known adhesive means (not shown) is employed for securing sealing means 45 in permanently sealed engagement with surface 22 and thereby preventing ground water from entering the interior of vault 40.

It is to be understood that the above described embodiments of my invention are for the purpose of illustration only and various changes may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of my invention.

I claim:

1. A burial container comprising a casket portion and a vault cover portion; said casket portion comprising a base slab; a pair of end walls extending substantially vertically therefrom and spaced from the ends of said slab; and a pair of side walls extending slopingly upward, flaring outwardly and spaced from the sides of said slab so that said end walls and said side walls form an enclosure; and said vault cover portion comprising a top; a pair of end walls extending downward from said top, contacting said slab at their lower ends, and fitting closely outside of the end walls of said casket portion; and a pair of downwardly extending outwardly flaring side walls which contact the tops of the side walls of the casket portion and at their bottom edges contact said slab outside of the side walls of the casket portion.

2. A burial container comprising a casket means having a base portion with a plurality of oppositely directed plane faces and a concavity formed in one of said plane

6

faces; an enclosure portion formed integrally with said base portion and having a plurality of walls extending upwardly from another of said plane faces, each of said walls being formed adjacent to its upper end with an inwardly extending ledge in the upper face of which there is formed a horizontally extending channel; handle means formed integrally with said base portion and disposed substantially perpendicular thereto; trim means comprising a plurality of liner pads having upwardly disposed hems for at times being frictionally engaged within said channels, a mattress, a pillow, and a cover formed of a plurality of layers of flexible material sewn together adjacent the perimetrical edges of said cover and formed with a slot-like opening centrally disposed within the upwardly disposed layer of said material; vault cover means having a top portion with a substantially plane configuration and having a plurality of depending sides, each of said sides being formed integrally with said top and with other sides adjacent thereto, said cover means also having sealing material secured to the downwardly directed edges of said sides.

#### References Cited in the file of this patent

##### UNITED STATES PATENTS

|    |           |                |               |
|----|-----------|----------------|---------------|
| 25 | 984,494   | Russell        | Feb. 14, 1911 |
|    | 1,778,175 | Thune          | Oct. 14, 1930 |
|    | 2,059,941 | Friedel et al. | Nov. 3, 1936  |
|    | 2,181,504 | Bowler         | Nov. 28, 1939 |
|    | 2,775,021 | Bourgraf       | Dec. 25, 1956 |