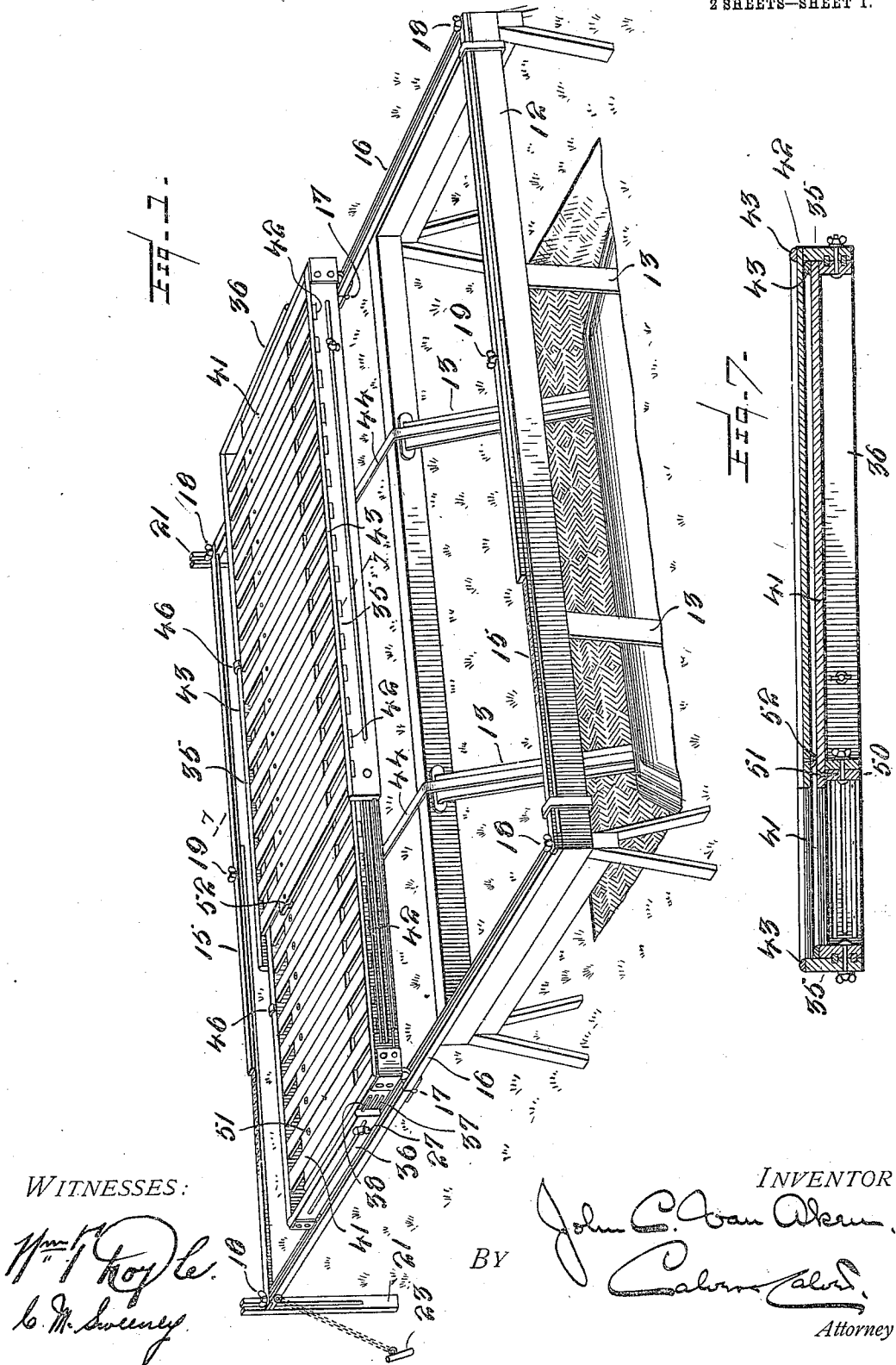


J. C. VAN AKEN.
 FLOWER HOLDING AND GRAVE COVERING DEVICE.
 APPLICATION FILED JULY 28, 1909.

961,994.

Patented June 21, 1910.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.



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Fig. 2.

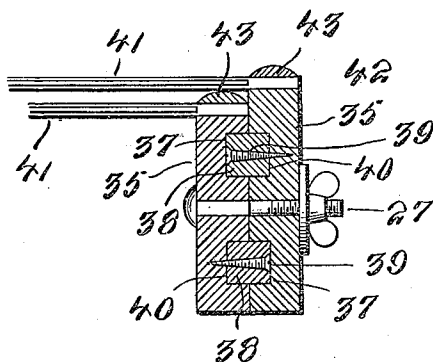


Fig. 3.

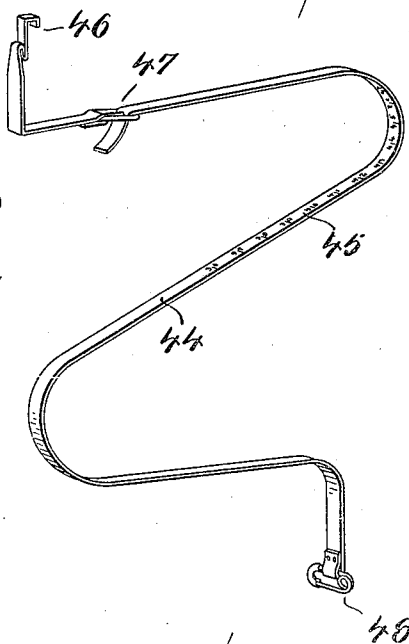


Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOHN C. VAN AKEN, OF RIDGWAY, PENNSYLVANIA.

FLOWER-HOLDING AND GRAVE-COVERING DEVICE.

961,994.

Specification of Letters Patent. Patented June 21, 1910.

Application filed July 28, 1909. Serial No. 510,130.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOHN C. VAN AKEN, a citizen of the United States, residing at Ridgway, in the county of Elk and State of Pennsylvania, have invented or discovered certain new and useful Improvements in Flower-Holding and Grave-Covering Devices, of which the following is a specification, reference being had therein to the accompanying drawings.

This invention relates to devices of the character of that shown and described in Letters Patent of the United States granted to me April 27, 1909, No. 919,655. The apparatus disclosed in said patent is designed for the purpose of holding and displaying the floral tributes at the side of a grave prior to the lowering of the casket, and thereafter, when said casket is lowered, for automatically moving said floral tributes into a position over the grave for covering the same. Said apparatus comprises, in general, a frame providing tracks adapted to be erected at the grave with said tracks extending from a position at one side of said grave to a position substantially over the same, an adjustable flower-bearing carriage arranged to run on said tracks, and means for operatively connecting the casket and carriage whereby as the former is lowered the latter is automatically moved to a position to cover the grave.

The objects of the present invention are to improve the apparatus shown and described in my said prior patent, and the nature of said improvements will best be understood from the following detailed description of one form or embodiment of the invention illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

In said drawings:—Figure 1 is a perspective view of the apparatus as a whole. Fig. 2 is a transverse sectional view of one of the adjustable side or end rails of the carriage. Fig. 3 is a perspective view of one of the straps for connecting the carriage and casket. Fig. 4 is a transverse sectional view of a portion of the carriage showing the inter-engagement of the relatively adjustable slats. Figs. 5 and 6 are views similar to Fig. 4 showing modified constructions. Fig.

7 is a transverse section of the carriage taken substantially on the line 7—7, Fig. 1.

As shown in the drawings, the casket lowering device 12 with its lowering straps 13, and the supporting frame comprising the slotted and relatively adjustable end pieces 15, the side pieces or tracks 16, the adjustable supports 21, the connecting bolts 18, 19 and 22, the hinges 17 for the side pieces, and the steadying pegs 23, all are or may be substantially as shown and described in my prior patent above referred to.

Arranged to move along the tracks 16 is a flower-holding and grave-covering carriage, which, as in my prior construction, is both longitudinally and laterally adjustable. It is one of the objects of the present invention to improve the construction and operation of this carriage. To this end said carriage comprises a suitable contractible and extensible frame-work consisting of side rails each comprising two slotted side pieces 35, and end rails each comprising two slotted end pieces 36, which are relatively adjustable to vary the length and width of the frame, and which may be secured in any desired position of adjustment by means of thumb nut or other bolts 27. In order to render the carriage rigid and prevent sagging thereof under its load, the side pieces 35 and end pieces 36 are provided with means whereby the members of each pair at the sides or ends of the frame will be mutually guided and supported continuously throughout their overlapping lengths.

To the above end, in the construction shown, the following means are provided. As the construction will preferably be the same at both the sides and ends of the frame, the construction of the side rails alone will be described, reference being had to Figs. 1 and 2. Each of the side pieces 35 is provided throughout its length with a longitudinal groove 37, the grooves in the two pieces of each pair being preferably arranged respectively on opposite sides of the slots in said pieces. Each of said pieces is also provided, substantially throughout its length, with a rib 38, the rib on each piece being arranged to enter the complementary groove 37 in the adjacent piece. These ribs

38 are preferably formed by strips of wood, metal, or other suitable material secured to the pieces 35 by any suitable means, as counter-sunk screws 39, and are preferably, 5 for their more efficient operation, received in suitable grooves 40 formed in said pieces.

The top or flower-supporting part or platform of the carriage, in my improved construction, comprises a series of mutually 10 guided slats 41, there being a set of these slats projecting inwardly from each of the side pieces 35, and the slats of each set being guided between the slats of the set carried by the opposite side piece. As in the 15 case of the side and end pieces of the frame, the slats 41 are mutually supported throughout their overlapping lengths, and to these ends the edges of the slats are provided with interengaging tongues and grooves. In 20 Figs. 4, 5 and 6 I have shown various forms and arrangements of these tongues and grooves, but it will be obvious that other forms and arrangements may be adopted without departing from the spirit and scope 25 of my invention. The slats 41 are preferably received in countersunk recesses 42, formed in the upper edges of the side pieces 35, and are secured in place by suitable strips or moldings 43.

30 In order further to strengthen the carriage and to provide a support for the slats 41 intermediate the side rails, I preferably provide, in addition to said side rails, what may be termed a center rail composed of 35 longitudinally sliding pieces 50 which may be of substantially the same construction as the side pieces 35, although in these center pieces the grooves 37 and ribs 38 employed in connection with the side pieces may be 40 and preferably are omitted. The pieces 50 forming the center rail are secured at their ends to, and are carried by the end pieces 36. The center pieces 50 form a support for the slats 41, and to this end the inner ends of 45 the set of slats 41 carried by one of the pieces 35 of one of the side rails are secured to one of said pieces 50 by screws or other fastenings 51. The inner ends of the center slats 41 carried by the other piece 35 of the corresponding side rail are also indirectly supported from said center rail by means of a 50 strip or molding 52 to which said ends are secured, as clearly shown in Fig. 7.

The apparatus described in my prior patent above referred to, comprises connecting 55 cords between the flower supporting carriage and the casket lowering straps 13, whereby as the casket is lowered the carriage is brought to a position over the grave. It 60 is, however, important, for obvious reasons, that the carriage be brought into its final position simultaneously with the arrival of

the casket at the bottom of the grave. Since the distance between the levels of the carriage and the bottom of the grave varies in 65 different cases, it is necessary that the means for connecting the casket and carriage be of a variable length. To this end I have, in the present instance, employed straps 44 of adjustable length for connecting the carriage 70 and lowering straps 13. The preferred construction of one of these straps is illustrated in Fig. 3, the same comprising a body portion provided with a graduated scale 45, a hook 46 for engagement with the side rail at 75 the rear of the carriage, a clasp, buckle, or similar device 47 adapted to secure said hook 46 in any desired position along the scale 45, and means, herein shown as a pin 48, for securing the end of the strap 44 to the casket 80 lowering strap 13.

With the construction above described the necessary adjustments are very simple. The distance from the bottom of the grave to the plane of the upper surface of the carriage 85 measured, the buckle 47 set at a corresponding point on the scale 45, the fastening 48 attached to the strap 13 at a point adjacent the bottom of the casket, and the hook 46 engaged with the rear side rail of the carriage. 90 When now the casket, and consequently the fastening 48, reaches the bottom of the grave, the carriage will have been brought to proper position.

The form of the invention herein shown 95 has been chosen for illustrative purposes merely, and it is to be understood that many other embodiments of the invention may be adopted without departing from the spirit and scope thereof. 100

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

1. In an apparatus of the character described, the combination with a flower-holding and grave-covering carriage, of a strap 105 of adjustable length for connecting said carriage with the casket lowering strap.

2. In an apparatus of the character described, the combination with a flower-holding and grave-covering carriage, of a strap 110 of adjustable length for connecting said carriage with the casket lowering strap, said adjustable strap comprising a body portion having a graduated scale, and a fastening device movable along said scale and adapted 115 to be secured in any desired position.

3. In an apparatus of the character described, the combination with a flower-holding and grave-covering carriage, of a strap 120 of adjustable length for connecting said carriage with the casket lowering strap, said adjustable strap comprising a body portion having a graduated scale, and a fastening device movable along said scale and adapted

to be secured in any desired position, and devices carried by said fastening device and the end of said body portion respectively for engaging said carriage and said casket lowering strap.

5 4. In an apparatus of the character described, a flower-holding and grave-covering carriage comprising adjustable side and end rails, a series of slats projecting inwardly

from each of said side rails, and an adjustable center rail constructed and arranged to support said slats intermediate said side rails.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature, in presence of two witnesses.

JOHN C. VAN AKEN.

Witnesses:

A. M. EUT,

GERTRUDE GERG.