Feb. 4, 1958 L. G. GRUBER 2,821,770

DOUBLE-ACTION CLOSURE LATCH FOR DIVIDED LID CASKETS

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Fig.1.

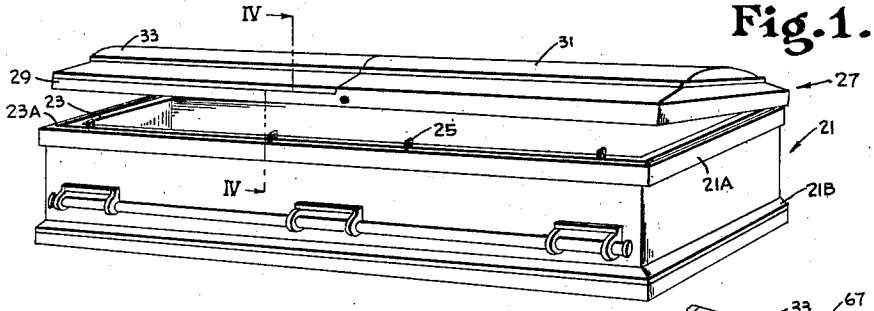


Fig.13.

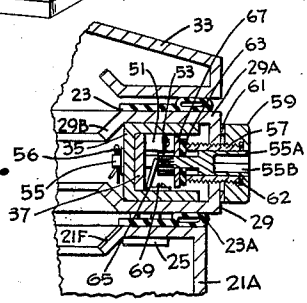


Fig.2.

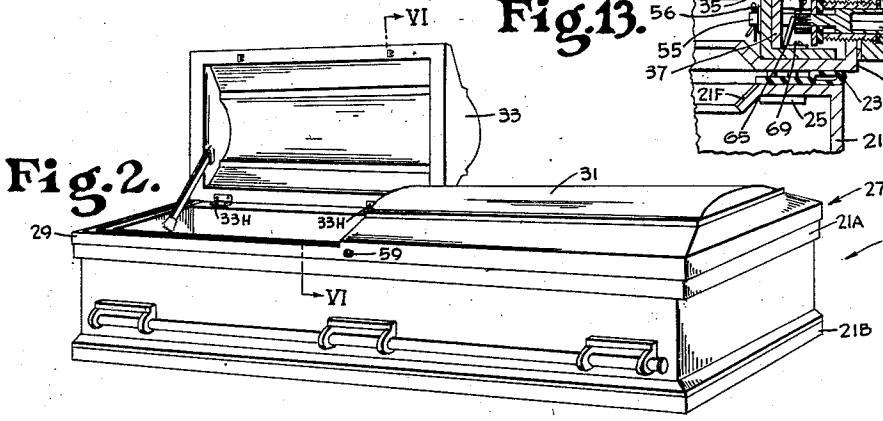
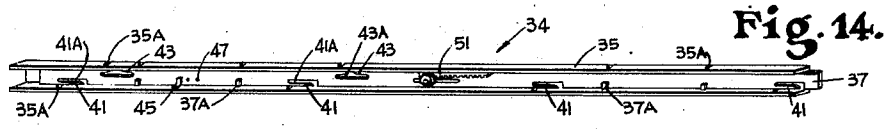


Fig.14.



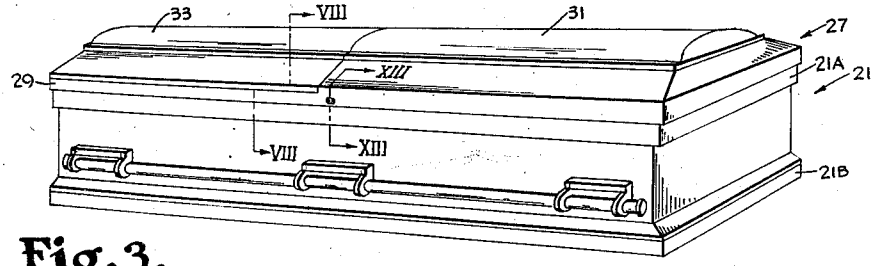


Fig.3.

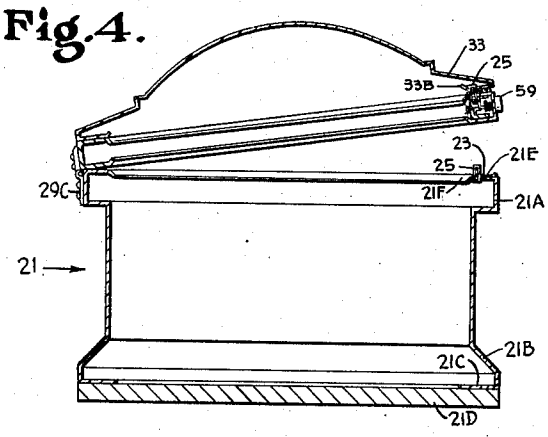
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DOUBLE-ACTION CLOSURE LATCH FOR DIVIDED LID CASKETS

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Fig.4.



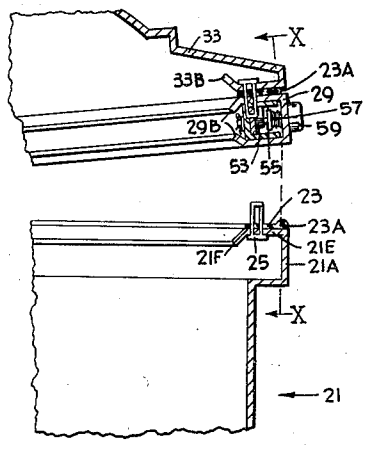
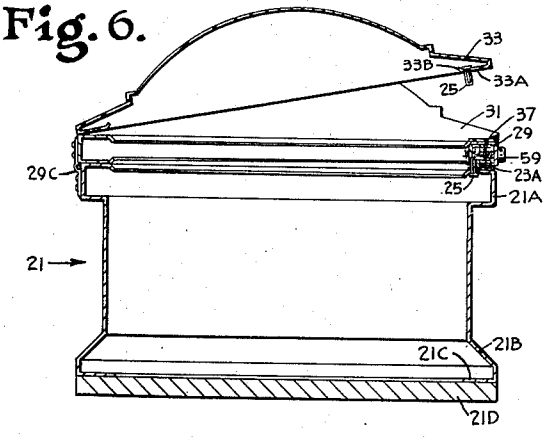


Fig.5.

Fig.6.



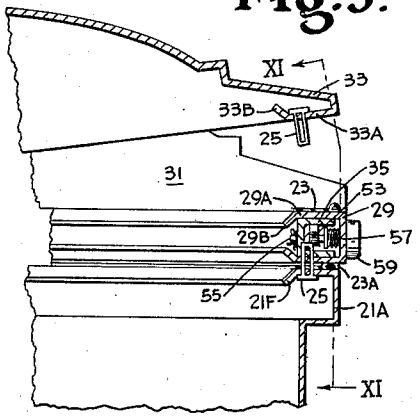
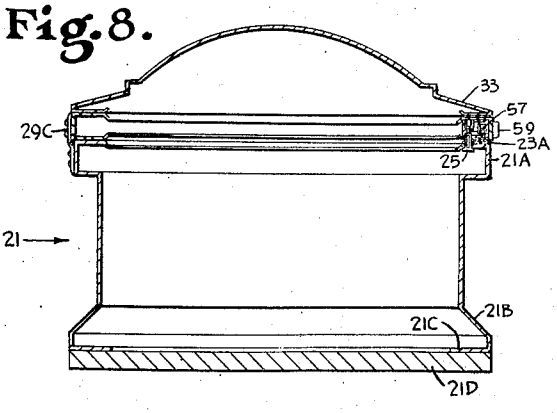


Fig.7.

Fig.8.



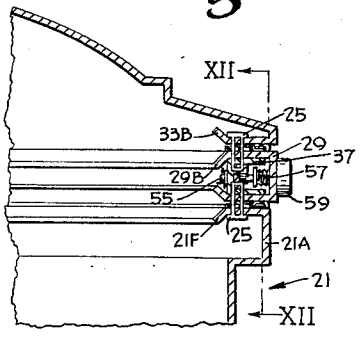


Fig.9.

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DOUBLE-ACTION CLOSURE LATCH FOR DIVIDED LID CASKETS

Filed July 13, 1953 3 Sheets-Sheet 3

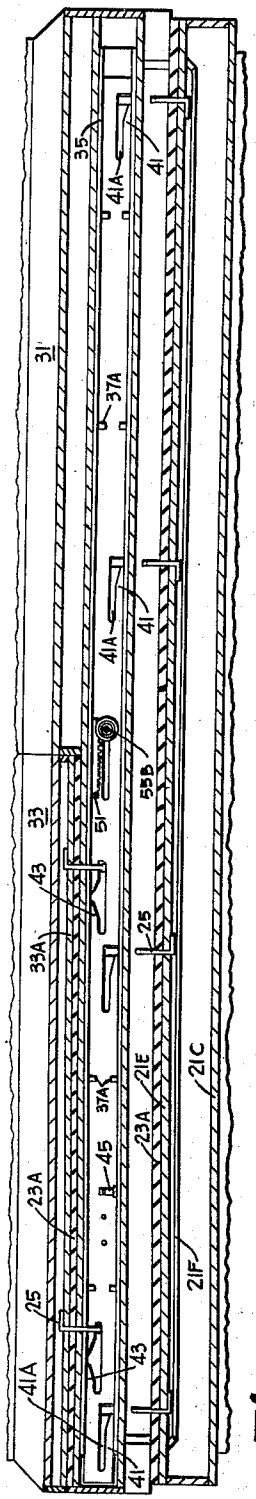


Fig. 10.

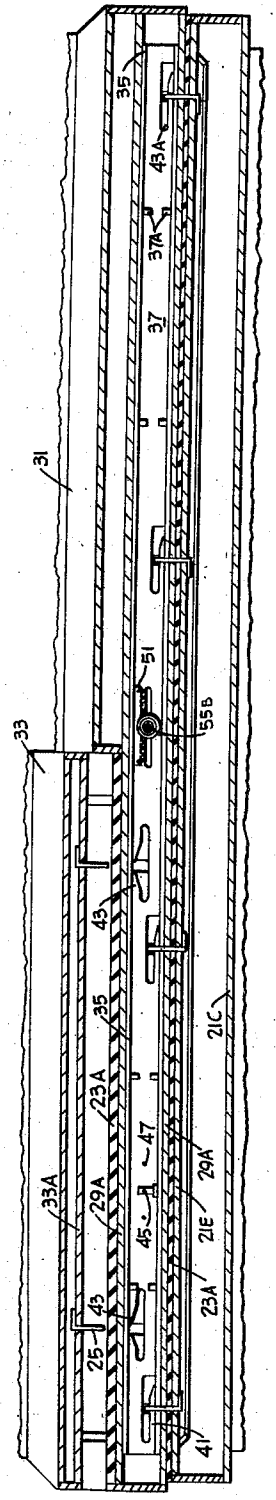


Fig. 11.

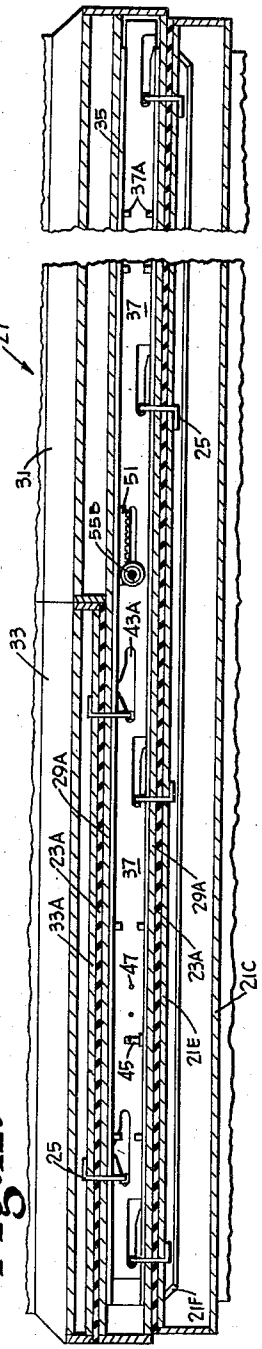


Fig. 12.

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DOUBLE-ACTION CLOSURE LATCH FOR DIVIDED LID CASKETS

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Application July 13, 1953, Serial No. 367,523
17 Claims. (Cl. 27—17)

This invention relates to a double-action closure latch for divided lid caskets. More particularly, the invention relates to a latching device for burial caskets of the type having a full length closure frame hinged thereto along the rear edge thereof and having a head-end half-length closure similarly hinged to the full length closure frame, said latching device comprising a latch bar housed within the front rim portion of said full-length closure frame and being selectively movable to a first position in which the head-end half-length closure is latched to the full-length closure frame for movement thereof as a unitary closure to facilitate insertion of a body, to a second, intermediate position in which the full-length closure frame is latched to the casket and the head-end half-closure is unlatched for raising to permit viewing the upper half of the body, and to a third position in which the closure portions are firmly latched to each other and to the casket.

Specifically, the invention relates to a latching assembly for burial caskets of the type having a full-length closure frame hinged along its rear edge to the casket and having a head-end half-length closure similarly hinged to the full-length closure frame, said latching device comprising a channel-bar guide housed within and fixed to the front rim portion of said full-length closure frame, a latch bar slidably carried therein and being slotted to define longitudinally extending latch tongues for matingly passing through the eyes of hasps fastened to the casket rim and the half-length closure, said latch bar being movable by a single water-tight operating means selectively to three positions in which, respectively, the closure portions are locked together for movement as a unit, the full-length closure frame is latched to the casket and the half-closure is movable, and both closure portions are latched to each other and to the casket, said latching assembly also including a signal for indicating at least the intermediate position.

It is a principal object of the invention to provide means for quickly and securely latching the two closures of a divided lid burial casket so that, selectively, (1) said closures may be locked together for movement as a unitary closure, (2) the foot-end closure may be latched closed with the head-end free for movement, or (3) both parts may be securely latched closed.

It is another object to provide a latching device for a divided lid casket, which latching device selectively latches at a plurality of points along the closure edge and is movable by a single conveniently located operating means.

It is a further object to provide a double-action latching device, for the closures of a divided lid casket, with signaling means for clearly indicating when the latching mechanism is in one or more of its several functional positions.

It is yet another object to provide a latching device of the class described which is of simple, rugged, and highly effective construction and which is formed as a unit easily installable in a wide variety of caskets.

It is an overall object of the invention to generally improve the design and efficiency of closure latches for caskets, and more particularly for divided lid caskets.

The means by which the foregoing and other objects of the present invention are accomplished and the manner of their accomplishment will be readily understood from the following specification upon reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a front perspective view of a burial casket embodying the present invention, the closure members being latched together for movement as a unit.

Fig. 2 is a front perspective view showing the foot-end closure latched down and the head-end closure movable to body-viewing position.

Fig. 3 is a front perspective view of the casket with both closures latched in closed position.

Fig. 4 is an enlarged and elevational view in section taken as on the line IV—IV of Fig. 1.

Fig. 5 is a further enlarged fragmentary detail view of the latch structure of Fig. 4.

Fig. 6 is an enlarged and elevational view in section taken as on the line VI—VI of Fig. 2.

Fig. 7 is a further enlarged fragmentary detail view of the latch structure of Fig. 6.

Fig. 8 is an enlarged end elevational view in section taken as on the line VIII—VIII of Fig. 3.

Fig. 9 is a further enlarged fragmentary detail view of the latch structure of Fig. 8.

Fig. 10 is a front elevational view in section taken as on the line X—X of Fig. 5.

Fig. 11 is a front elevational view in section taken as on the line XI—XI of Fig. 7.

Fig. 12 is a front elevational view in section taken as on the line XII—XII of Fig. 9.

Fig. 13 is an enlarged fragmentary end elevational view in section taken on the line XIII—XIII of Fig. 3.

Fig. 14 is a front perspective view of the latching unit per se with its parts in final or fully latching relative positions.

Referring now to the drawings in which the various parts are indicated by numerals, the numeral **21** generally designates a metallic casket of generally conventional construction. The upper and lower extremities of the side and end walls of the casket may be bent outwardly and then vertically to form upper and lower molding-simulating portions **21A** and **21B**, respectively. The lower molding portion **21B** may be inturned at **21C** to form a flange for welding or other attachment to the casket bottom **21D**. The top molding portion **21A** has a substantially horizontal inwardly directed extension **21E** forming a flat rim or seat for a lower sealing gasket **23** of rubber or similar resilient material. (The gasket **23**, Fig. 13, may be of any conventional construction, but preferably has an outer enlarged bead portion **23A** made more resilient by the hollow or tubular construction shown.) The inner edge of seat **21E** is provided with a narrow downturned edge flange **21F** for appearance and strength. Seat **21E** is apertured at spaced intervals along its length to permit extension upwardly therethrough of latch-engaging hasp devices **25** later to be described.

The cover or closure for the casket **21** is generally designated **27**. Closure **27** consists basically of a unitary frame member **29**, a foot-end half-closure **31** permanently fixed thereto, and a head-end half-closure **33** hingedly attached thereto. Frame **29** is formed of an inwardly opening peripheral channel bar **29A** which may be formed of side and end sections joined as by welding to create the frame bar. The upper exposed face of channel bar **29A** forms a flat seat for an upper sealing gasket **23** preferably identical with lower gasket **23**. The inner edges of the channel bar sections **29A** are bent toward each other at **29B** for appearance and strength. The rear section of channel bar **29A** of frame member **29** is hingedly connected at **29C** to the casket **21**. The relatively movable head-end half-closure **33** is hinged as by suitable hinges **33H** to the upper rear edge of the rear section of frame member **29**.

The head-end half-closure **33** also has inwardly bent flanges **33A** to form gasket-compressing seats. The inner

edges of flanges 33A are further bent to form narrow trim and strengthening flanges 33B, and flange 33A along the forward portion of the closure 33 is apertured to receive hasp devices 25 like those carried by the flange 21E of the casket proper 21.

The latching assembly, generally designated 34, comprises a channel bar 35 of a size and shape to be snugly received within the channel of the front section of closure frame 29. The channel bar 35 is welded or otherwise anchored to its enclosing channel-shaped section of the closure frame 29, with its open side facing forwardly. Slidably held uprightly on edge and against the rear wall of the channel in bar 35 is the latch bar 37, formed conveniently of steel strap material of sufficient thickness for suitable stiffness and strength. Latch bar 37 is held in place loosely lying against the rear wall of the channel in channel bar 35 by any suitable means such as lugs 37A struck upwardly and downwardly from the top and bottom flanges forming the channel bar 35.

Channel bar 35 is provided with notches 35A in its upper and lower rear corners formed by the junction of the horizontal flanges and vertical web of channel 35 to receive the hasp parts of hasp devices 25 which extend through such notches 35A, into the channel of channel bar 35 for latching engagement with the latch tongues on latch bar 37, next to be described.

The latch bar 37 is notched at points along its length corresponding to locations at which hasp devices 25 are to be engaged thereby for registry with such hasps on insertion. The notches in the bottoms of channel bar 35 and latch bar 37 are spaced along substantially the entire length of the latching assembly, while the notches in the top of said parts are spaced within the limits of the length of head closure 33, since the bottom of latch bar 37 co-operates with the casket rim to lock the whole closure down, while the top of latch bar 37 only locks the head-end closure to the closure frame.

The bottom latch tongues 41 are formed by slotting latch bar 37 as at 41A preferably in one direction away from the hasp-entering notches, as shown, being so slotted to the left of the notches as seen in Fig. 14 for example. These tongues 41 are relatively long since they latchingly engage their co-operating hasps in two of the three functional positions of the latch bar 37.

For co-operation with the hasps of the head-end half-closure, pairs of relatively shorter and oppositely extending latch tongues 43 are formed by slotting in opposite directions, as at 43A, from the bottom of the hasp receiving notches in the top of the head-end portion of the latch bar 37 (Figs. 10, 11, 12, 14). It should here be noted that the hasps entering notches in the upper edge of the latch bar 37 are at an intermediate point of the tongue-defining longitudinal slots 43A while those in the lower edge are at the right ends of the tongue-defining slots 41A, for purposes to be explained below. The ends of latch tongues 41 and 43 are tapered to facilitate their entering the eyes in the hasp devices 25 and to provide a camming action so that the sealing gaskets 23 will be effectively compressed for sealing.

To give an audible indication of the position of the latch bar relative to its guide channel bar 35, the latter may have fixed to its bottom (or top) flange a spring post 45 having a ball-like protuberance (not shown) yieldingly pressed against the front face of latch bar 37. Latch bar 37 in turn is preferably provided with three depressions or dimples 47, each corresponding to a functional position of the latch bar, which thus give an audible click and/or a tactile indication of the functional positions thereof. It should be noted that the center position is the one for which the indicator will be most useful since the extreme positions can be detected (although less safely and certainly) by relying upon the stop means, consisting of the opposite ends of frame 29, for limiting the travel of the latch bar.

The single device for operating the latch bar 37 comprises a rack 51 fixed to the latch bar and a co-operating pinion 53 axially fixed to the guide channel bar 35 and thereby to the closure frame 29. Pinion 53 is keyed or otherwise fixed to a shaft 55 against both axial and rotational displacement. Shaft 55 is journaled at its rear end in a bore in the rear wall of the channel bar 35 and passes through a longitudinal slot 37A in latch bar 37. Shaft 55 is held against forward displacement by any suitable means such as cotter pin 56. The forward end of shaft 55 is enlarged at 55A and is provided with an axially disposed non-cylindrical socket 55B for the reception of a complementarily shaped tool shaft (not shown) by which the shaft 55 and thereby the latching mechanism are operated. It is preferred that the pinion be of such size that two full turns are required for the full movement of the rack. Thus one full turn from either extreme position of the latch bar 37 will bring it to the intermediate position.

The enlarged front end 55A of shaft 55 is journaled in a bearing sleeve 57. Bearing sleeve 57 is externally threaded for co-operating with a complementarily threaded opening in the closure frame 29. A centrally apertured cap 59 screws over the externally exposed end of sleeve 57. A pair of washers or gaskets 61 and 62 of rubber or other water-excluding material prevent leakage into frame 29 around the outside of bearing sleeve 57. Leakage between sleeve 57 and shaft 55 is prevented by the gasket or washer 63, which closely embraces shaft 55 and is pressed against the end of sleeve 57 by the spring 65 pressing against the pinion 53 to urge it and shaft 55 outwardly (or to the right, Fig. 13) and thus compressing gasket 63 between washer 67 and the inner end of bearing sleeve 57. Spring 65 is attached by any suitable means, such as screw 69, to the channel bar guide 35.

The gasket 63, it should be noted, not only seals the bearing against leakage of water therethrough into the casket, but also serves as a safety lock or brake to prevent turning of the pinion shaft (caused, for example, by vibration during shipment by rail). The braking action of the gasket, however, is easily relieved merely by an inward pressure on the rotating tool (not shown) into socket 55B during operation of the latching mechanism.

In operation, the casket embodying the present invention will be shipped with the closure sections closed and the latch bar in its extreme position to the right (Figs. 12 and 14) in which position the latch tongues 41 and the left ones of the pairs of tongues 43 will be latchingly received in the apertures of their co-operating hasp devices. The conditions and positions of the several parts are thus illustrated in Figs. 3, 8, 9, 12 and 14.

When the casket is to be used, the operating tool is inserted into socket 55B (optionally the shaft 55 is pressed inwardly against spring 65 to remove the braking effect of gasket 63) and the shaft 55 is rotated two full turns to the left, driving rack 51 and latch bar 37 connected thereto to their extreme left positions of Fig. 10, where the right hand tongues 43 have been moved into latching engagement with the upper hasps and the two half-closures are locked together for movement as a unit and are unlatched from the hasps 25 on the casket rim proper, tongues 41 having been shifted out of the lower hasps and the lower notches 41A moved into alinement with the hasps. (The sealing gaskets 23 may be placed as needed, or may be lightly or strongly cemented in place at the time of manufacture or as desired thereafter.)

With the closure fully open, the casket is arranged and the corpse (not shown) placed therein. The full closure is then lowered and the latch bar is moved to its intermediate (one "click" or one-rotation) position, which locks the closure frame to the casket by engaging tongues 41 into the casket carried hasps, but releases the head-end half-closure for raising or lowering, as desired, for

viewing the upper half of the corpse on its "half couch," the upper notches 43A having been moved into alinement with the hasps so that they are free for movement away from the latch mechanism. The positions of the latching mechanism parts are now those of Fig. 11.

Finally, the casket is closed and sealed by lowering half-closure 33 and moving the latch bar again to its extreme right position by another full rotation of pinion shaft 55, continuing the hasp engagement by lower tongues 41, and reengaging left hand tongues 43 with the upper hasps.

It will be seen that as each of the respective tongues 41, 43 is advanced and engaged with the corresponding hasps, the camming action of the tongue ends is effective to tightly seal the related closure portion again the underlying gasket. The tight seal thus effected seals the junction line between half lid 33 and frame 29, and that between frame 29 and the casket rim in substantially hermetic manner against the entry of air and/or moisture after latching of the closures, thus enabling the closure and sealing of the casket in a simple single operation.

It will be noted that the latching arrangement affords an additional advantage in providing for latching the half lid 33 to frame 29 while the frame is unlatched from the casket rim. This arrangement thus permits the overall closure to be raised for access to the casket interior as for positioning and/or arrangement of a copse therein, but prevents the hinged half lid from undesirably swinging open independently during such positioning, thus eliminating a source of damage previously found undesirable.

It will further be seen that the present structure insures proper relative latching of the closure members as desired, since in order to release frame 29 from the casket, the latching mechanism must be moved to the position shown in Figs. 1, 4, 5, and 10, in which the hinged half lid is latched to frame 29, while in order to free the half lid for opening the latching mechanism must be shifted to the intermediate position of Figs. 2, 6, 7, and 11 in which the frame is latched to the casket.

I claim:

1. In combination, a burial casket having a sealing rim around its upper edge, a closure frame overlying and hinged thereto along the rear edge of said rim, a closure member fixed to and covering approximately the foot half of said closure frame, a second closure member covering the remaining portion of said frame and hingedly connected thereto adjacent its rear edge, an elongated latching member, having latch elements spaced therealong, carried by said frame adjacent its front edge, means holding and guiding said elongated latching member for limited longitudinal movement only relative to said closure frame, co-operating latch devices attached to the front portion of the edge of said casket and the front edge of said second closure member at spaced points therealong for latching engagement by said latch elements of said latching member, said latching member being longitudinally shiftable, means for shifting said latching member, shift of said latching member effecting shift of said latch elements relative to said latch devices to and from one position of said latching member in which said closure members are locked together for hinging movement as a unit relative to said casket, from and to another position of said latching member in which said first closure member and said closure frame are latched to said casket and said second closure member is unlatched and free to move, and to and from a third position of said latching member in which all of said closure members and frame are latched with said casket in casket-closing position.

2. Structure according to claim 1 and additionally comprising resilient sealing gaskets interposed between the abutting edges of said frame and said sealing rim and also between said frame and the abutting edge of said second closure member.

3. Structure according to claim 2 and additionally comprising a signaling device for indicating at least one of the three functional positions of said latching member relative to said frame.

4. Structure according to claim 3, said signaling device comprising a spring finger attached to one of, and depressions in the other of said frame and said latching member.

5. In combination, a divided-lid burial casket having a sealing rim around its upper edge, a closure frame adapted to rest upon said rim and comprising inwardly open channel bars, a closure member fixed to and covering approximately the foot half of said frame and casket, a second closure member adapted to cover the remaining portion of said frame and casket and hingedly connected adjacent its rear edge to said frame, a forwardly facing guide channel bar snugly fitted in and anchored to the front section of said frame, a latch bar guidedly and slidably nested between the top and bottom plates of said guide channel bar, means holding said latch bar loosely against the rear plate of said guide channel bar, spaced alined apertures in the bottom and top of said front section of said frame and said guide channel bar, hasps attached to said casket rim and to the edge of said second closure member so as to enter said apertures when the parts are moved into engaging positions, said latch bar also having notches for said hasps to enter, said notches having longitudinal extensions defining tongue-like latches, and means operable from the outside of said casket for moving said latch bar for selectively latching said frame and closure members together for movement as a unit, latching only said fixed closure member and frame to said casket, or latching all of said closure members and frame to said casket.

6. Structure according to claim 5, and in which said means holding said latch bar against the rear plate of said guide channel bar comprises lugs struck up and down from said top and bottom plates thereof.

7. Structure according to claim 5, said tongue-like latches having tapered ends to serve as cams to facilitate and improve latch engagement of said hasps.

8. Structure according to claim 5, said tongue-like latches for latching said second closure member being pairs of short latches extending toward their respective notches, and said tongue-like latches for latching said frame to said casket rim being of the order of twice the length of the other latches, whereby the hasps on said second closure member are in non-latching position at an intermediate position only of said latch bar.

9. In combination, a burial casket having a sealing rim around its upper edge, a closure frame overlying and hinged thereto along the rear edge of said rim, a closure fixed to and covering approximately the foot half of said closure frame, a second closure covering the remaining portion of said frame and hingedly connected thereto adjacent its rear edge, an elongated latching member, having latch elements spaced therealong, carried by said frame adjacent its front edge, means holding and guiding said elongated latching member for limited longitudinal movement only relative to said closure frame, co-operating latch devices attached to said rim adjacent its front edge and to the front edge of said second closure at spaced points therealong for latching engagement by said latch elements of said latching member, a rack attached to said elongated latching member, a shaft journaled in bearing means attached to said closure frame, said shaft being adapted for engagement by means operable from the exterior of said frame for rotation of said shaft to shift said latching member as desired.

10. Structure according to claim 9 and in which said shaft is provided with an axial non-cylindrical bore to receive a similarly shaped tip of a rotating tool.

11. Structure according to claim 9, said shaft being adapted for one full rotation for moving said latching

member to or from either of its extreme functional positions from or to its intermediate functional position.

12. In a casket, a casket body, a closure frame hinged to the casket body, a partial closure mounted on said frame, a second partial closure hinged to said frame, and cooperating latching means carried by said frame, said body and said second closure, part of said latching means being longitudinally shiftable relative to the remainder of said latching means, said latching means having an intermediate position in which said frame is latched to said body, one end position in which said second closure is latched to said frame and said frame is unlatched from said body and another end position in which said second closure is latched to said frame and said frame is latched to said body, the shiftable part of said latching means being shifted to said one end position in one direction beyond said intermediate position and being shifted to the other end position in the opposite direction beyond said intermediate position.

13. In a casket, a casket body, a closure frame hinged to the casket body, a partial closure fixed to said frame, a second partial closure hinged to said frame, and cooperating latching means carried by said frame, said body and said second closure, said latching means carried by said frame being longitudinally shiftable relative to the remaider of said latching means carried by said second closure and said body, said shiftable latching means having an intermediate position in which said shiftable means engages said body-carried latching means and said frame is latched to said body, one end position in which said shiftable means engages said closure-carried latching means and is disengaged from said body-carried latching means and said second closure is latched to said frame and said frame is unlatched from said body, and another end position in which said shiftable means engages said body-carried and closure-carried latching means and said second closure is latched to said frame and said frame is latched to said body, said shiftable latching means being shifted to said one end position in one direction beyond said intermediate position and being shifted to the other end position in the opposite direction beyond said intermediate position.

14. In a casket, a casket body, a closure frame hinged to said body, a first partial closure mounted on said frame, a second partial closure hinged to said frame, hasp elements carried by said body and said second closure and projecting into said frame, a latch bar slidably mounted in said frame in cooperative relation with said hasp elements, said latch bar including opposed tongues positioned to alternately engage the second closure hasp elements responsive to opposite shift of said latch bar in opposite directions, additional tongues spaced from said opposed tongues and positioned to engage the body-carried hasp elements on latch bar shift in one of said directions, said additional tongues being disengaged from said body-carried hasp elements when said latch bar is in a position substantially at the end of shift in one of said directions, part of said opposed tongues being then engaged with said closure-carried hasp elements, shift of said latch bar in the other of said directions away from said position engaging said additional tongues with said body-carried hasp elements and moving said part of said opposed tongues away from engagement with said closure-carried hasp elements, continuation of latch bar shift in said other direction continuing hasp engagement by said additional tongues and moving the remainder of said opposed tongues into engagement with said closure-carried hasp elements.

15. In a casket, a casket body, a closure frame hinged to said body, a first partial closure mounted on said frame, a second partial closure hinged to said frame, longitudinally spaced hasp elements carried by said body and said second closure and respectively projecting upwardly and downwardly into said frame, a latch bar longitudinally slidably mounted in said frame in cooperative relation with said hasp elements, said latch bar including longitudinally spaced pairs of opposed tongues positioned to alternately engage the second closure hasp elements responsive to opposite shift of said latch bar in opposite directions, additional tongues spaced vertically from said opposed tongues and positioned to engage the body-carried hasp elements on latch bar shift in one of said directions, said additional tongues being disengaged from said body-carried hasp elements when said latch bar is in a position substantially at the end of shift in one of said directions, part of said opposed tongues being then engaged with said closure-carried hasp elements, shift of said latch bar in the other of said directions away from said position engaging said additional tongues with said body-carried hasp elements and moving said part of said opposed tongues away from engagement with said closure-carried hasp elements, continuation of latch bar shift in said other direction continuing hasp engagement by said additional tongues and moving the remainder of said opposed tongues into engagement with said closure-carried hasp elements.

16. In a casket, a casket body, a closure frame hinged to said body, a first partial closure mounted on said frame, a second partial closure hinged to said frame, latch means carried by said body and said second closure and projecting into said frame, a latch bar slidably mounted in said frame in cooperative relation with said latch means, said latch bar including opposed latch portions positioned to alternately engage the second closure latch means responsive to opposite shift of said latch bar in opposite directions, additional latch portions spaced from said opposed latch portions and positioned to engage the body-carried latch means on latch bar shift in one of said directions, said additional latch portions being disengaged from said body-carried latch means when said latch bar is in a position substantially at the end of shift in one of said directions, and part of said opposed latch portions being then engaged with said closure-carried latch means, shift of said latch bar in the other of said directions away from said position engaging said additional latch portions with said body-carried latch means and moving said part of said opposed latch portions away from engagement with said closure-carried latch means, continuation of latch bar shift in said other direction continuing latch means engagement by said additional latch portions and moving the remainder of said opposed latch portions into engagement with said closure-carried latch means.

17. In a burial casket, a casket body, a closure frame hinged to said body, a closure fixed to and covering one end of said frame, a second closure hinged to said frame and covering the other end of said frame, a plurality of hasp elements connected to and projecting upwardly from the opposite edge of said body, a plurality of hasp elements connected to and projecting downwardly from said second closure, said frame lying between said body and said second closure, and a latch bar carried by said frame, said latch bar including upper and lower tongues and being selectively longitudinally shiftable among a first position in which said upper tongues engage said downwardly projecting hasp elements, and said upwardly projecting hasp elements are free, an intermediate position in which said lower tongues engage said upwardly projecting hasp elements and said downwardly projecting hasp elements are free, and another position in which said tongues concurrently engage said upwardly and downwardly projecting hasp elements.

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