Nov. 18, 1947. G. E. MANSFIELD 2,431,183

BURIAL VAULT

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Fig. 1.

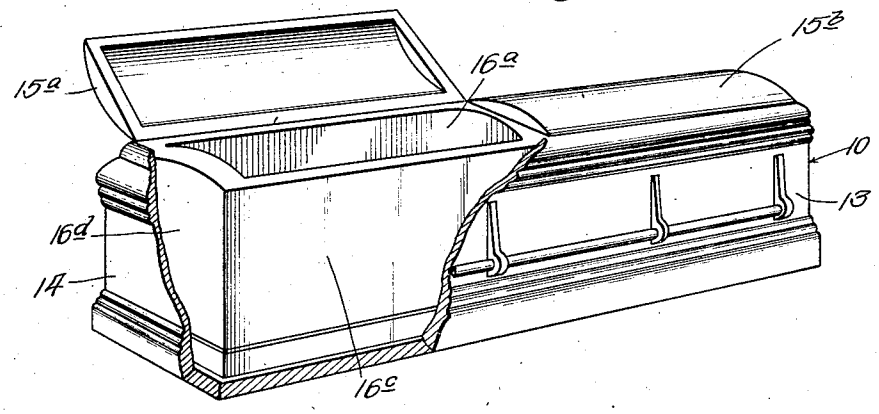
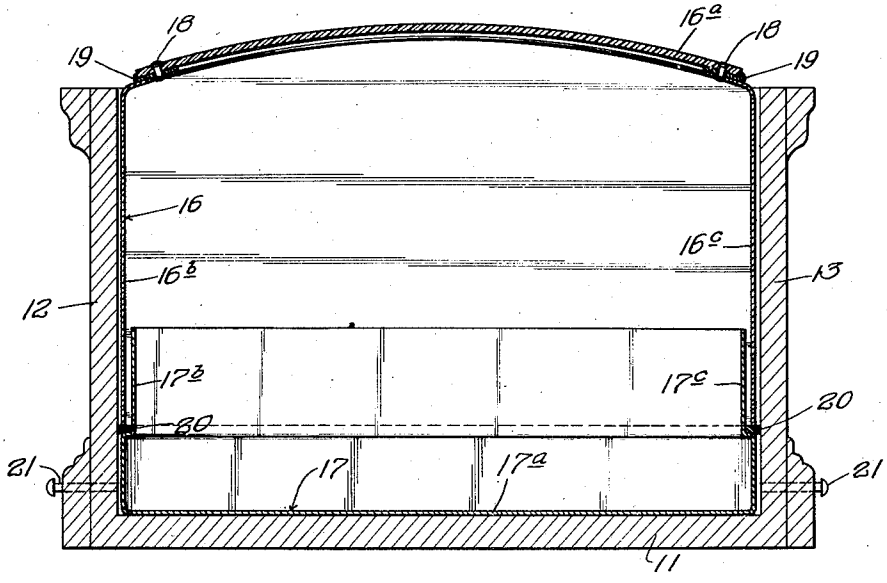


Fig. 2.



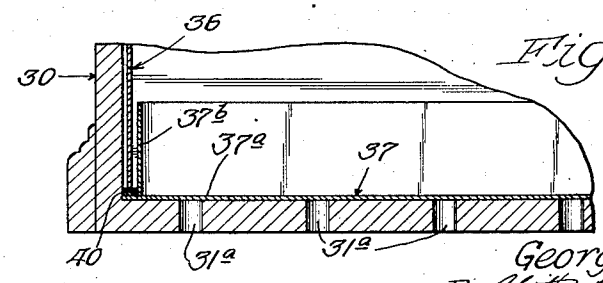


Fig. 3.

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BURIAL VAULT

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3 Claims. (Cl. 27—3)

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This invention relates to a burial vault, and more particularly to an improved burial combination comprising an outer casket and an inner moisture-proof vault.

One feature of this invention is that its provides an improved burial device; another feature of this invention is the provision of a moisture-proof vault within the shell of a moisture-permeable casket, as a wooden casket; yet another fature of this invention is that the vault is constructed with upper and lower sections which are joined with a moisture-proof seal; still another feature is that advantage is taken of the "diving bell" principle positively to insure against water rising in the casket even if the seal fails; a further feature of this invention is that the vertical walls of the top and bottom sections of the vault intermesh for a substantial distance to get full advantage of the protective characteristics of the upper or bell section; yet a further feature of this invention is that it provides all of the protection of a vault while retaining the quickness and ease of interment heretofore possible only where a casket alone was used; and still a further feature of this invention is that the vault performs the function of a metal shipping device where bodies must be shipped. Other features and advantages of this invention will be apparent from the following specification and the drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a view in perspective, partly broken away, of one embodiment of my invention; Figure 2 is a transverse sectional view of the device shown in Figure 1; and Figure 3 is a fragmentary transverse sectional view of another embodiment of my invention.

Where proper and lasting protection against moisture are desired for a body, present practice is to either use a bronze casket with a sealed lid, so expensive as to be only rarely within the means of the bereaved family, or to enclose the casket in a vault at the time of interment. Such vaults are generally of metal, although sometimes of concrete, and require considerable time and extra work in the process of interment, undesirable where the family and friends have already sat through a long service.

I have devised and am here disclosing and claiming what may be termed an inner vault arrangement, a moisture-proof vault so constructed as to go within a conventional casket of moisture-permeable material, as wood. This vault provides all of the protection possible with the heaviest kinds of conventional present vaults, yet enables the burial service to proceed with all the

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ease and simplicity associated with the use of a casket alone.

In the particular embodiment of my invention illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, a conventional hardwood casket, here identified as 10, is shown as the outer shell. In accordance with conventional practice, this has a bottom 11, side walls 12 and 13, ends, the visible end being identified as 14, and a two-part cover or top portion, these parts being here identified as 15a and 15b. It will be understood that this casket may be of walnut or other appropriate wood, or of metal, may be finished in any desired manner, as with a highly polished or cloth covered finish, and may be provided with appropriate trim, hardware such as carrying handles, etc.

Within this outer shell is a vault comprising upper and lower sections 16 and 17. These vault sections must be of moisture-proof material which does not deteriorate under the effects of age and moisture. In the particular form illustrated the metal parts may be of copper or similar non-corrosive metal which may be readily made in relatively thin sheets; and the transparent insert 16a comprising a part of the top portion of the upper section may be of a transparent, moisture-proof, long lasting plastic.

The upper vault section 16 comprises a top portion including the transparent part 16a and depending or downwardly extending sheet metal sides and ends, as the sides 16b and 16c and the end 16d. All of the metal parts are formed into an integral moisture-tight unit, preferably being stamped from a single sheet of copper or similar metal. The transparent part 16a may be held in place on the surrounding metal flanges in any appropriate manner as by rivets 18, a moisture-proof permanent seal between the transparent part and the metal part being made by the use of a sealing compound 19 such as asphalt or some derivative thereof. The result is that the whole top section forms a "bell," being absolutely moisture- and airtight and preventing the rise of water therein by the same principle which keeps water from rising in an empty glass or tumbler inverted in a pan of water, this being generally termed the "diving bell" principle.

The lower section of the vault 17 is here shown as having a bottom 17a and upwardly extending side and end portions, as the side portions 17b and 17c, these also preferably being formed out of a single sheet of metal, or at least being formed so as to be moisture- and airtight. The upwardly extending side and end walls of this lower section are formed in, as may be best seen in Figure 2,

to provide a shoulder extending completely around the lower section and adapted to provide a support for a gasket 20 of rubber or similar material. The walls of the lower section extend up substantially above the shoulder and gasket, as illustrated in the drawings, at least three and preferably about five inches above such shoulder. The bottom edge of the depending walls of the upper section rest on the gasket 20, being intermeshed or interleaved through a part of their length, as shown, with the upwardly extending walls of the lower section 17. Even when age causes the rubber gasket 20 to lose its seal, therefore, the diving bell action of the upper section in preventing water rising more than an inch or two in it keeps the interior of the casket completely dry, since any moisture getting past the seal 20 never rises to a point high enough to run over the upper edge of the walls of the lower section. In order properly to center the lower section in the casket shell and provide for proper meshing of the upper section therewith centering screws or studs 21 may be used.

In a burial wherein use is made of my invention, the lower section 17 would be placed in the casket chosen and then a mattress or appropriate platform of some kind placed within the casket on the bottom of the lower vault section. The body would then be laid out in desired manner and the interior of the casket appropriately trimmed. If desired, the upper section of the vault may be placed in the position shown immediately, before the casket is placed on display, the upper portion of the body being visible through the transparent part 19*a* with the casket cover portion 15*a* open as shown in Figure 1; or the upper vault section may be kept out of the casket until just before interment. In any event, the upper vault section would be in the position illustrated in the drawings and the casket top closed when interment took place. It will also be understood that the casket would be in this condition if the body must be shipped, so that an air-tight container is provided satisfying all laws in this regard.

Another embodiment of my invention is fragmentarily illustrated in Figure 3. In this embodiment a casket 30 again surrounds the inner vault comprising an upper section 36 and a lower section 37, the casket bottom in this case being shown as provided with drainage holes 31*a* which drain off any moisture which might get into the top of the casket between its walls and the inner vault. In this particular embodiment of my invention I contemplate the upper vault or bell section as being integrally formed from a single piece of appropriate metal, as copper, and extending clear down to the bottom of the inner section 37. That is, in this form of my invention the bottom edges of the walls of the upper vault section 36 rest on a gasket 40 which in turn rests on the metal bottom sheet 37*a* of the lower vault section. This sheet metal bottom has upwardly extending vertical walls, as the wall 37*b*, welded or otherwise attached thereto with a moisture- and air-proof seam. As before, the upwardly extending walls of the lower section and the downwardly extending walls of the upper section intermesh for a substantial distance, as from three to five inches.

While I have shown and described certain embodiments of my invention, it is to be understood that it is capable of many modifications. Changes, therefore, in the construction and arrangement may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as disclosed in the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A burial assembly of the character described, including: an outer shell comprising a main body portion and a cover portion and presenting the appearance of a casket; a lower vault section within said casket body portion and having vertical walls extending substantially upwardly therein substantially parallel to the inner surfaces of the walls of said body portion; a bell-shaped upper vault section of thin, moisture-proof sheet material, the depending walls of said bell-shaped section extending down close to said inner surfaces and between them and said upwardly extending walls with sufficient overlap to prevent entrance of water, said lower vault section having a shoulder therearound on which said depending walls are supported; and sealing means for rendering the joint between said upper section and said lower section at least temporarily moisture-proof and air-tight.

2. A burial assembly of the character described, including: an outer shell comprising a main body portion and a cover portion and presenting the appearance of a casket; a lower vault section within said casket body portion and having vertical walls extending substantially upwardly therein substantially parallel to the inner surfaces of the walls of said body portion; a bell-shaped upper vault section of thin, moisture-proof sheet material, the dome portion of this section being only slightly arched, the depending walls of said bell-shaped section extending down close to said inner surfaces and between them and said upwardly extending walls with sufficient overlap to prevent entrance of water, said lower vault section having a shoulder therearound on which said depending walls are supported; and sealing means for rendering the joint between said upper section and said lower section at least temporarily moisture-proof and air-tight.

3. A burial assembly of the character described, including: an outer shell comprising a main body portion and a cover portion and presenting the appearance of a casket; a lower vault section within said casket body portion and having vertical walls extending substantially upwardly therein substantially parallel to the inner surfaces of the walls of said body portion; means for maintaining said lower vault section centered in said casket body portion; a bell-shaped upper vault section of thin, moisture-proof sheet material, the depending walls of said bell-shaped section extending down close to said inner surfaces and between them and said upwardly extending walls with sufficient overlap to prevent entrance of water, said lower vault section having a shoulder therearound on which said depending walls are supported; and sealing means for rendering the joint between said upper section and said lower section at least temporarily moisture-proof and air-tight.

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