

[54] **CASKET CAPSULE**

[72] Inventor: **Wilfred Lewis McHugh**, 2501 Carleton Street, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

[22] Filed: **Mar. 11, 1970**

[21] Appl. No.: **18,645**

[30] **Foreign Application Priority Data**

Mar. 12, 1969 Canada.....045,442

[52] U.S. Cl.....27/2

[51] Int. Cl.....A61g 17/00

[58] Field of Search.....27/2, 27, 35

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

1,048,361	12/1912	Sievert.....	27/27
748,692	1/1904	Booth.....	27/2
2,007,119	7/1935	Harris.....	27/35
3,133,334	5/1964	Johnsen.....	27/27

Primary Examiner—Richard A. Gaudet

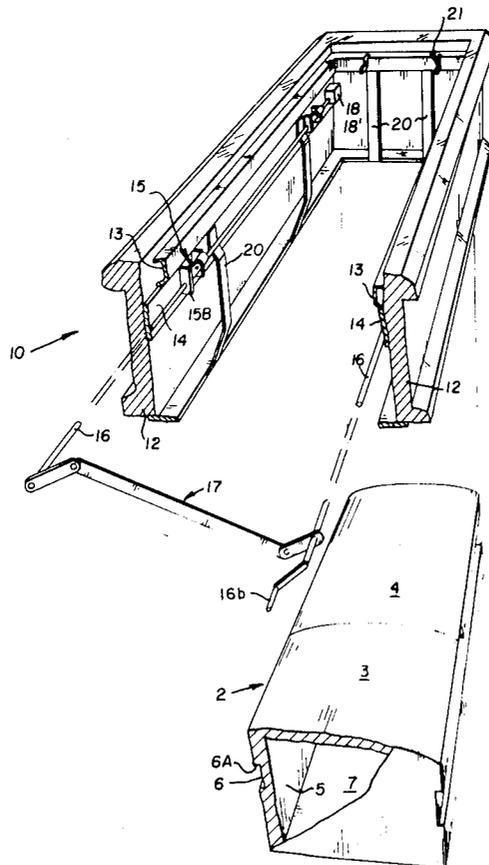
Assistant Examiner—G. F. Dunne

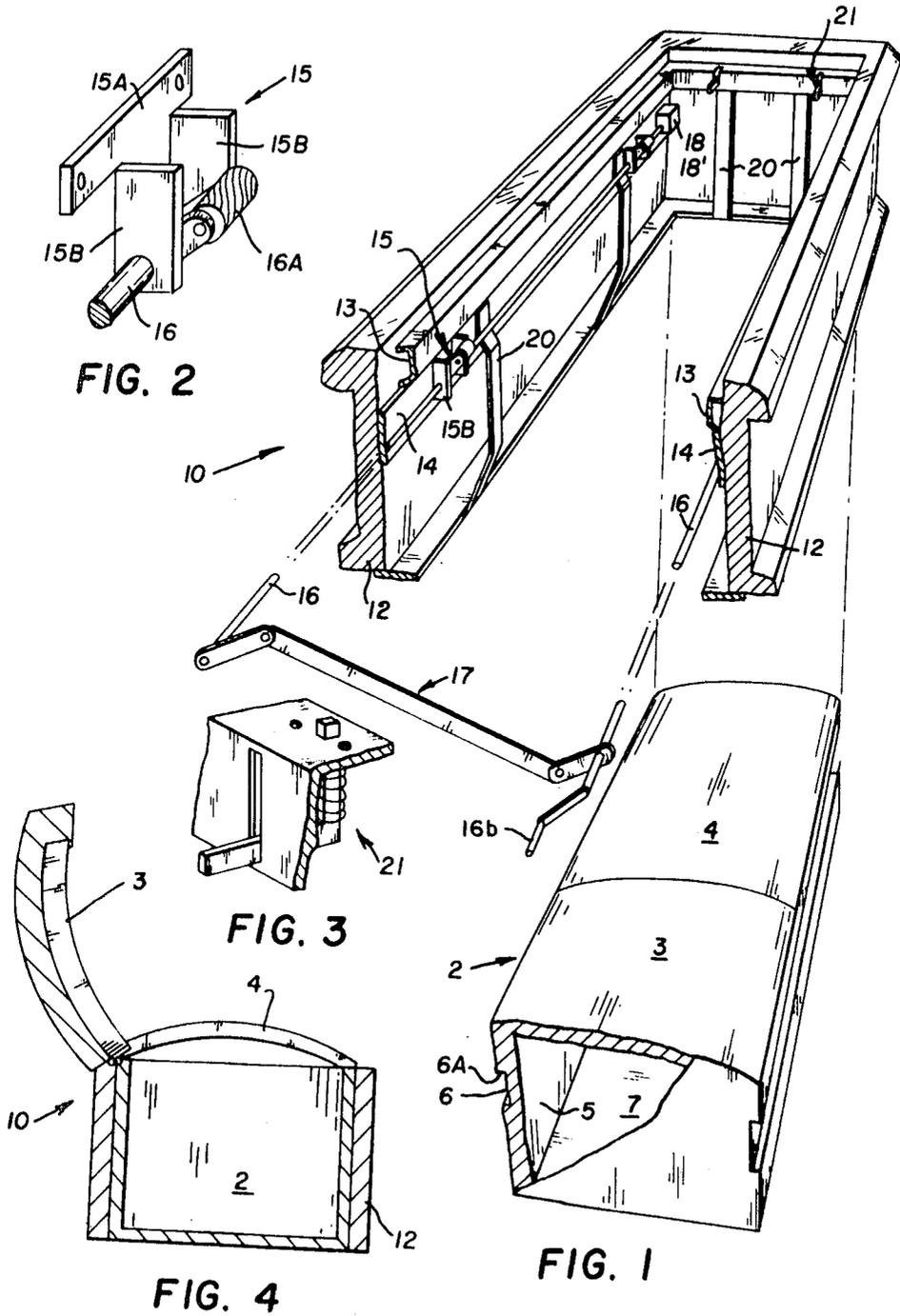
Attorney—Cushman, Darby & Cushman

[57] **ABSTRACT**

Apparatus is described for use with burial coffins having a re-useable outer casket and an inner casket capsule. Mounting means are attached to the interior of the outer casket, and support means are carried by the mounting means and are adapted to engage a shoulder provided on the exterior of the casket capsule. In this way, the casket capsule is both supported and held in substantially fixed relation to the outer casket. Actuating means are provided on the outer casket for activating the support means enabling the casket capsule to be received and releaseably retained within the outer casket. Preferably, guide means are provided on the interior of the outer casket for properly orienting the casket capsule enabling it to be closely received within the outer casket. A tensioner device is also provided to generate a biasing force to disable any unintentional movement of the casket capsule relative to the outer casket.

7 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures





INVENTOR
WILFRED LEWIS McHUGH
BY
Cushman, Mackay & Cushman
ATTORNEYS

CASKET CAPSULE

This invention relates to burial coffins generally, and in particular, to burial coffins having a removable outer casket and an inner casket capsule which is received and releasably held within the outer casket.

Coffin containers used in the burial or cremation of human remains have changed very little since early times. It is for instance, well known that coffins and coffin containers have been used which are made of marble, plaster or the like, as well as modern types of woods, steel, cloth or plastic. These materials are frequently quite costly with the eventual high cost being absorbed by the estate of a deceased person or a government or other agency.

Relatively few attempts have been made towards standardizing coffin containers while still offering a selection or choice to the purchaser. One such attempt is described in Canadian Pat. No. 731,343 in which there is described a combined coffin and casket structure for pre-internment and burial purposes. The burial coffin and casket combination of this patent features an outer casket that can be reused and an inner coffin which is adapted for permanent installation in a burial vault. It is to be noted, however, that this patent is concerned particularly with permanent installation of the inner coffin in a burial vault. The combined burial coffin and reusable outer casket of this patent is completely inappropriate for burial in a cemetery plot.

It is an object of the present invention, therefore, to provide an improved burial coffin and reusable outer casket combination which, for example, is particularly well suited for use in burial services in which the burial coffin or casket capsule is lowered into a grave in the earth.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an improved inner casket capsule and outer casket combination which are securely held together and which may be separated when necessary, for instance, when the casket capsule is to be lowered into the grave.

These and other objects and features will be obtained in accordance with the present invention which provides an apparatus for use with burial coffins having a removable outer casket and an inner casket capsule adapted to be received within the latter, the apparatus comprising mounting means attachable to the outer casket interiorly of the same, support means carried by the mounting means and being adapted to engage a shoulder provided on the exterior of the casket capsule for both supporting and holding said capsule in substantially fixed relation to the outer casket, and actuating means supported on the outer casket and being operable for activating said support means to enable the casket capsule to be received and releasably retained within the outer casket.

In a more preferred form of the present invention, there is provided apparatus for use with burial coffins having a removable outer casket and an inner casket capsule adapted to be received within the latter, such apparatus comprising mounting means that are attachable to the outer casket interiorly of the same, support means movably mounted on the mounting means and being positionable to an inoperative position and to an operative position wherein the support means engage a shoulder provided on the exterior of the casket capsule, for both supporting and holding said capsule in substantially fixed relation to the outer casket, actuating means supported on the outer casket and being operably connected to said support means for effecting selective movement of the latter to said inoperative and operative positions, and guide means provided interiorly of the outer casket for effecting orientation of said casket capsule relative to the outer casket thereby enabling the casket capsule to be closely received and releasably retained within the outer casket.

These embodiments of the present invention will now be described in detail, with reference being made in particular to that form of the invention which is illustrated in the accompanying illustrative drawings, wherein

FIG. 1 is an exploded perspective view, being partly in section and showing one form of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary perspective view showing one particular form of the supporting and holding means which retain and lock the casket capsule inside of the outer casket;

FIG. 3 is also a fragmentary perspective view showing one type of tension means which serve to bias the casket capsule firmly in position to prevent any movement of the same relative to the outer casket; and

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary perspective view showing, for clarity, only the lids or covers of both the casket capsule and outer casket as they would normally be in an open position, as during a funeral service.

With reference to the drawings, the numeral 2, denotes a casket capsule which is received within an outer casket 10. The casket capsule 2 is normally made of wood or other relatively inexpensive material, and it comprises a two-part top shown at 3 and 4. The part 4 is normally a fixed cover attached to the side walls 5, whereas the part 3 is normally a movable lid, hinged along one side in order to enable it to be fully opened, for example, during a funeral service.

In FIG. 4, the casket capsule lid is shown open, e.g., during a funeral service and removably received into a recess in the raised lid of the outer casket 10. Upstanding end walls and a bottom 7 are also provided to define the closed casket capsule 2 or coffin container. As seen in FIG. 1, the side walls 5 are formed preferably with channels 6 that extend longitudinally along the entire length of the casket capsule 2. These channels 6 are provided with an upper shoulder 6a which is engaged by a supporting and retaining assembly 15 which will be described below. In another embodiment, the channels 6 and shoulder 6a are formed in the shorter end walls of the casket capsule 2. In yet another form, the shoulder 6a may be provided by means of a rib or bead fastened to, or integrally formed as part of the side or end wall 6 of the casket capsule 2. The shoulder 6a may even be formed by means of a separate element or assembly secured to the side or end walls 6. Many alternative arrangements are therefore possible, all of which will permit the casket capsule 2 to be received and releasably retained within the outer casket 10. It is, however, important to provide a shoulder structure that has considerable strength, sufficient at least to support the weight of the casket capsule 2 and the body of the deceased person with some margin of safety.

The outer casket 10 is made of steel, wood, plastic, marble or other material or combinations thereof; and it is normally ornate and decorative. Since the outer casket 10 is intended for reuse, it may be made from expensive materials, and of the highest quality workmanship.

The outer casket 10 as shown herein comprises long side walls 12, short end walls 12' and has an open bottom. Normally, the top of the outer casket 10 will be closed by a single hinged cover (not shown), however, in some modified forms, two smaller hinged lids may be used. The side end walls 12 and 12' are provided at their bottom edges with supporting flanges which extends inwardly of the bottom opening. Similarly, the walls 12 and 12' are provided near the top edges with bumper flanges 13 which are generally U-shaped in cross-section. Beneath the bumper flanges on the side walls 12, there is provided a support plate 14 securely fastened to such walls. A plurality of supporting and retaining means each in the form of a support assembly 15 is rigidly secured to the support plate 14.

This support assembly 15 comprises a mounting bracket 15a having a pair of flanges 15b which project outwardly therefrom at substantially right angles. These flanges 15b are apertured to rotatably receive a pair of crank rods 16 on which at least one knurled support roller 16a is rotatably mounted. These support rollers 16a engage the shoulder 6a on the casket capsule 2 to support and retain or lock the same within the outer casket 10.

On at least one end of the crank rod 16, there is provided pitman arms 117 which are actuatable to effect rotation of the crank rods and of the support rollers 16a carried thereon. A spring 18 is also provided at or near one end of each of the

crank rods 16, within a spring housing 18'. These springs 18 function to continuously bias the crank rods 16 and particularly the support roller 16a to their operative position in which the rollers engage the shoulder 6a on the casket capsule 2. One of the crank rods 16 extends exteriorly of the outer casket 10 and is adapted to co-act with a removable crank handle 16b which can be manipulated by hand.

In order that the casket capsule 2 is closely and securely received within the outer casket 10, the latter is provided with guide bars 19. These guide bars 19 will usually be made of strips of steel, aluminum or other similar material. The guide bars 19 are disposed generally vertically and are fastened to the side and end walls 12 and 12' of the outer casket 10. It will be realized that the distance between corresponding guide bars 19 on opposite sides of the outer casket 10 will be slightly greater than the same dimension across the casket capsule 2. In this way, the casket capsule 2 will easily slide up through the open bottom of the outer casket 10 and be guided into position by the guide bars 19, until the top edges of the casket capsule 2 come into contact with the bumper flanges 13. Because of the inclination of the support rollers 16a relative to the side walls 5 of the casket capsule 2, as the outer casket 10 is being lowered over the casket capsule, such support rollers will automatically be pushed aside to their inoperative position. As soon as the channel 6 reaches a predetermined height and the upper shoulders 6a clear the support rollers 16a, the biasing spring 18 will cause such support rollers to move back into the channel 6 to return the same to their operative position, securely holding or locking the casket capsule 2 in position securely within the outer casket 10. In order to release the casket capsule 2, for instance, during burial of the coffin container in a grave in the earth, it is necessary only to turn the removable crank handle 16b which in turn causes the crank rods 16 to be rotated thereby withdrawing the supporting rollers 16a from the their operative position to their inoperative position, hence enabling the casket capsule 2 to be lowered down through the open bottom of the outer casket 10 onto conventional equipment used normally for lowering the coffin container into the grave.

It will be recognized that numerous modifications and configurations of the apparatus described above will be possible. In order that the casket capsule 2 is disabled from excessive movement relative to the outer casket 10, a plurality of tensioner devices 21 will usually be provided in the side and/or end walls 12 and 12' of the outer casket 10. One such tensioner device 21 is shown in FIG. 3, and involves the use of a compression spring and a reciprically movable angle arm which will engage the top or top edge of the cover of the casket capsule 2. It will also be recognized, of course, that although FIG. 1 illustrates the crank rods 16 and the support assemblies 15 as being on the long side walls 12, they may equally well be provided on the short end wall 12' of the outer casket 10. Moreover, for obvious aesthetic reasons the end of the crank rod 16 which is adapted to receive the removable crank handle 16b will normally be flush with or slightly recessed relative to the outer surface of the outer casket 10. The support rollers 16a have been described herein as having a knurled surface. It would be equally suitable to provide some other kind of friction-generating surface on the support rollers 16a, so long as there is positive control maintained during movement of the support rollers 16a from their operative to their inoperative position. It will, of course, be apparent that it would be extremely undesirable to have the casket capsule 2 simply drop without any control from within the outer casket 10. In the embodiment described above, the pitman arms 17 enable the person operating the removable crank handle 16b to maintain positive supporting pressure of the support rollers 16a against the shoulder 6a and outer surface of the walls of the casket capsule 2 while the latter is being lowered. It will further be apparent that some suitable equivalent structure could be used instead of the support rollers 16a, for example, a sprocket or gear wheel which might engage a rack structure provided on the exterior of the wall of the casket capsule 2.

It will readily be seen that the present invention provides a combined casket capsule and outer casket which are held together in nested relation by means of a plurality of support assemblies which function both to firmly support and releasably retain the casket capsule within the outer casket. Many specific variations of the inventive concept described herein are possible. It is therefore comprehended that such variations are intended to be encompassed within the scope of the appended claims.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. Burial apparatus comprising:

a reusable outer casket having closed side and end walls, a top with a closable opening therein, and a permanently open bottom;

an inner casket capsule to be closely received within said outer casket and serving to carry a deceased person's remains, the casket capsule including a bottom, side and end walls, and a top that is adapted to be selectively opened for viewing said remains, at least an oppositely disposed pair of said capsule walls including stop means in the form of a shoulder provided exteriorly thereof;

support means secured to the walls of the outer casket interiorly thereof, and being so located as to cooperate with said shoulders to positively support the casket capsule in substantially fixed relation closely nested within the reusable outer casket, each said support means including a supporting bracket fixed to the wall of the outer casket, and friction wheel means rotatably supported by said bracket, the friction wheel means being continuously biased, in use, into engagement with said oppositely disposed walls of the casket capsule; and

actuating means supported on the outer casket to operatively engage and coax with the support means, whereby manipulation of the actuating means causes said friction wheel means to be disengaged from said shoulder sufficient to facilitate restrainedly lowering the casket capsule through said permanently open bottom.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said friction wheel means includes a friction-generating surface, the wheel means being movably supported on the supporting bracket for travel to a locked, and an operative condition, said surface being operable to frictionally engage the exterior of walls of the casket capsule and thereby accommodate said restrained lowering of the casket capsule.

3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the actuating means includes a crank assembly, and an actuating handle connectable to the crank assembly from the exterior of said outer casket and being manually operable.

4. Burial apparatus comprising;

a reusable outer casket having closed side and end walls, a top with a closable opening therein, and a permanently open bottom;

an inner casket capsule to be closely received within said outer casket and serving to carry a deceased person's remains, the casket capsule including a bottom, side and end walls, and a top that is adapted to be selectively opened for viewing said remains, at least an oppositely disposed pair of said capsule walls including stop means in the form of a shoulder provided exteriorly thereof;

support means secured to the walls of the outer casket interiorly thereof, and being so located as to cooperate with said shoulders to positively support the casket capsule in substantially fixed relation closely nested within the reusable outer casket, each said support means including a supporting bracket fixed to the wall of the outer casket, and a spring biased friction-generating wheel means rotatably mounted by said bracket, said wheel means being continuously biased in use, to bear against the wall of said inner casket capsule and said shoulder thereon;

actuating means mounted on the outer casket to be operable for coaxing with said support means to selectively control retention and release of the inner casket capsule,

5

6

the actuating means being manipulatable for causing the friction-generating wheel means to become disengaged from said shoulder sufficient to facilitate restrainedly lowering the casket capsule through said permanently open bottom; and

guide means provided interiorly of the outer casket for effecting proper orientation of said casket capsule in said nested relation relative to the outer casket the guide means being operable for inhibiting any excessive lateral movement of the casket capsule relative to its enclosing outer casket.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the rotatably mounted wheel means cooperate with a complementary surface on the exterior of the inner casket capsule thereby providing positive

control of the restrained movement of said capsule relative to the outer casket.

6. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein stop means and a tensioning device are provided on one of the outer casket or inner casket capsule, said tensioning device being operable to generate a biasing force which inhibits any unintentional movement of the casket capsule relative to the outer casket.

7. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein a bumper flange is provided on the walls of one of the outer casket or inner casket capsule adjacent an edge thereof to limit the amount of movement possible of the casket capsule upwardly through the open bottom of the outer casket.

* * * * *

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

60

65

70

75