METHOD FOR PREPARING BODIES FOR BURIAL

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BY

Agent
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This is a division of patent application Serial No. 97,251 filed March 21, 1961, now Patent No. 3,154,834 for Device for Preparing Bodies for Burial.

This invention relates to the preparation of bodies for burial, and more particularly to a method and device by which to maintain the body in proper position during embalming.

It is generally recognized among morticians that, following death the shoulders of a body tend to relax in the direction of the head, thus obscuring the neck and giving a generally distorted appearance. This condition progresses to greater degrees in tall or heavy persons. Additionally, the feet tend to relax downward, and in the case of tall persons this oftentimes necessitates the use of longer than standard caskets to accommodate the increased length. The problem of restoring normal appearance to the body prior to completion of firming the body by the chemical reactions provided by embalming, thus increases with weight and height of the person as well as with the extent of progress of rigor mortis.

Attempts have been made heretofore to provide devices by which to support the body in proper position during embalming. Such devices broadly comprise strap assemblies which loop over the shoulders and between the legs, the crotch being utilized as the base against which the straps may be tensioned to draw the shoulders downward to proper position. These prior devices have proved unsatisfactory, for in utilizing the crotch as a base the femoral area is obscured, thus rendering difficult the drainage and injection operations in this area. Moreover, the increased pressure applied at the crotch by tensioning of the straps induces increased body excretions, and this coupled with the fluids flowing from the femoral surgery contributes to an excessively unduly condition. Further, application of such devices to the body requires rolling or otherwise moving the latter. Still further, the use of the crotch as a base for adjusting the shoulders contributes nothing toward proper support of the feet.

Accordingly, it is a principal object of the present invention to provide a method and device by which the shoulders, legs and feet may be properly adjusted and maintained during embalming.

Another important object of this invention is the provision of a method and device by which to support a body in proper position during embalming without obscuring the areas utilized for injection and drainage.

Still another important object of the present invention is the provision of a method and device by which a body may be prepared for burial with a minimum of manipulation and maximum tidiness.

Another important object of the present invention is to provide a device which is of simplified construction for economical manufacture and maximum facility of use, and which functions to support simultaneously the shoulders, legs and feet of the body in proper position during embalming.

The foregoing and other objects and advantages of this invention will appear from the following detailed description taken in connection with the accompanying drawing in which:

FIG. 1 is a plan view of a corpse having applied thereto one form of device of the present invention and illustrating the method of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary view in side elevation illustrating the manner of application of the device of FIG. 1 to the foot;

FIG. 3 is a plan view of a corpse having applied thereto a modified form of device embodying features of the present invention;

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary view in side elevation illustrating the manner of application of the device of FIG. 3 to the foot; and

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary plan view illustrating a form of coupling between separate components of the device of FIG. 3.

In its general concept, the present invention involves the application of a contracting force between the shoulders and feet of a body, whereby simultaneously to draw the shoulders downward and to support the feet in position substantially normal to the legs, with the latter held straight and together.

Referring first to FIG. 1, the illustrated embodiment includes a pair of shoulder loops 10, 12 extending from an adjustment buckle 14. The loops preferably are quite large so as to not obscure the axilla which oftentimes is utilized for venous blood drainage and arterial injection of embalming fluids. The loops do not obstruct drainage from the jugular vein and injection into the carotid artery.

A second strap 16 is formed at one end with a foot loop 18, as by doubling the end section and sewing or otherwise connecting the free end to an intermediate portion of the strap. The opposite end of this second strap is adapted for adjustable connection to the buckle 14.

The straps are formed from elongated strips of natural or synthetic woven material, leather, synthetic thermoplastic or other suitable material which is quite resistant to stretching.

The buckle 14 may be of the friction type, such as is used for safety belts, or it may be of the tongue type which cooperates with spaced perforations in the strap, in the manner of a conventional trouser belt.

It is important to the proper operation of the present invention that the foot loop 18 engage the sole of the foot forwardly of the ankle joint, preferably in the area of the metatarsus. By this proper positioning of the foot loop, the compressive force of the tightened strap draws the foot into proper position, substantially normal to the leg.

It will be understood that if the foot loop engages the foot close to the heel, the force of the strap will cause the foot to rotate counterclockwise in FIG. 2 to a distorted position of maximum extension from the leg.

If desired, proper positioning of the foot loop 18 may be insured by the provision of the toe loop 20 which extends from the intermediate portion of the foot loop and is adapted to receive therethrough one or more of the toes of the foot. It will be apparent that the toe loop is proportioned so that when it engages the base of the toes the foot loop is prevented from further movement toward the heel of the foot.

In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 1, the single foot loop 18 encircles both feet, thus retaining the legs and feet together. In addition, by application of the compressive force of the strap near the outer extremity of the feet, the knees are held down and thus buckling of the legs is prevented.

The remaining length of strap 16 extends toward the waist along the medial line of the body. This medial position of the strap 16 does not in any way obscure the femoral area.

It is to be noted that the shoulder loops 10, 12 and foot loop 18 are readily applied to the body without the necessity of rolling the latter. It is necessary merely to elevate the arms slightly to put the shoulder loops in proper position. With the foot loop properly positioned forwardly
of the ankle, the free end of the strap 16 is drawn through the buckle 14 and pulled to the extent necessary to draw the shoulders downward to the desired position. Although substantial force is sometimes necessary, it has been found that the strength of the ankle bone is sufficient to sustain it. Thus, the foot serves well as the base against which the shoulder straps are tensioned, and the feet thus are maintained automatically in proper position.

In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 3, two separate strap assemblies are employed, one having a shoulder loop 22, a foot loop 24 and an intermediate adjustment buckle 26, and the other assembly having shoulder loop 28, foot loop 30 and buckle 32. Each foot loop also may be provided with a toe loop 34, for properly positioning of the foot loop on the forward portion of the foot, in the manner previously described.

In the use of the separate strap assemblies of FIG. 3, the shoulder strap and foot loop of one assembly are applied to opposite members of the body. For example, the shoulder loop 22 of one strap assembly is applied to the right shoulder of the body and the associated foot loop 24 is applied to the left foot of the body. The shoulder loop 28 and foot loop 30 of other strap assembly are applied to the left shoulder and right foot, as will be apparent. By means of this criss-cross arrangement the feet and legs are held together in proper position.

In the embodiment of FIG. 3, it may occur in some instances that the crossed strap assemblies obscure the femoral area to a slight degree. This condition may be eliminated by drawing the straps together intermediate the end loops. In the embodiment illustrated, this is accomplished by drawing the buckles 26, 32 together and interconnecting them by such means as the C-shaped clip 36 (FIG. 5). Other forms of fasteners may be utilized, and they may be applied to the buckles or to the straps at any position most suitable to minimize the obstruction of the femoral area.

After the chemical reactions provided by embalming have been completed, the body remains firm. Accordingly, the device then may be removed and sterilized for subsequent use.

It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various changes may be made in the structural details described hereinbefore without departing from the spirit of this invention and the scope of the appended claims.

Having now described my invention and the manner in which it may be used, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. The method of preparing a body for burial, comprising applying a compressive force between the shoulders and forward portions of the feet in a direction and of sufficient magnitude to draw the shoulders toward the feet to prevent buckling of the knees, and to draw the feet into position substantially normal to the legs, while preventing spreading of the legs and feet, and embalming the body while maintaining said force.

2. The method of preparing a body for burial, comprising applying compressive forces between the right shoulder and forward portion of the left foot and between the left shoulder and the forward portion of the right foot, sufficient to draw the shoulders toward the feet to prevent buckling of the knees, and to draw the feet into position substantially normal to the legs while preventing spreading of the legs and feet, and embalming the body while maintaining said forces.

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