

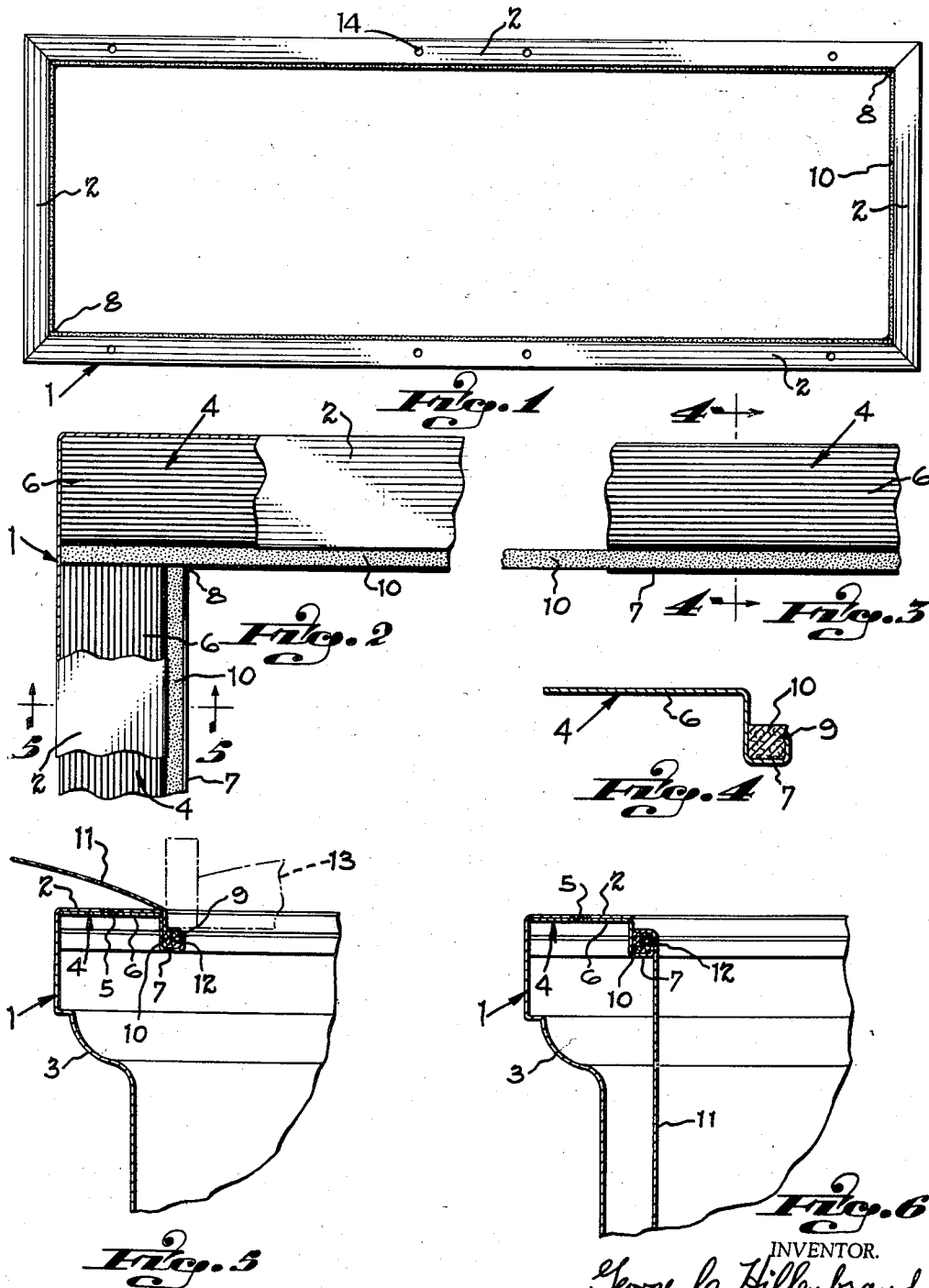
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BURIAL CASKET BODY CONSTRUCTION

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BURIAL CASKET BODY CONSTRUCTION

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This invention relates to the construction of a burial casket and is particularly directed to an innovation which implements the fabrication of burial caskets by assembly line production methods.

It has been customary for many years to fabricate burial caskets from sheet metal, and in general, sheet steel has been the most usual fabricating material. However, in order to fabricate burial caskets to sell at a price which is reasonable, it is necessary to use a relatively light gauge sheet steel. Otherwise expressed, from the point of view of the cost of the starting materials and the cost of fabricating, it is necessary to utilize steel sheets which are relatively inexpensive and hence light, and which may be configured during the fabricating operations without resort to the use of fabricating machinery of the weight and strength which would be necessary if heavy steel sheets or steel plates were utilized for the casket construction.

However, these steel sheets which are otherwise suitable for casket construction introduce the disadvantage of providing a casket body which is relatively flimsy. For instance, a casket body may be six or seven feet long, two and one-half or three feet wide, and eighteen to thirty-six inches high. No plain sheet metal shell of such dimensions can possess any substantial stability unless the sheet material of the shell is very thick or unless heavy internal bracing is used. The latter is impractical in casket construction because the main portion of the casket interior must be available for its intended use. Also, the weight of the body in the casket places strains upon it which further impair the rigidity of the casket construction.

While a strong, rigid casket structure is desirable from all points of view, a highly rigid body structure is particularly necessary for the quantity production of caskets of the type which are known as "sealers," caskets wherein rubber or plastic gasketing is utilized to seal the casket against ingress of atmosphere or moisture. Caskets of this general type are disclosed in U. S. Patent to Purkiss, No. 2,284,921, issued June 2, 1942.

In the past it has been conventional to reinforce a sheet metal casket with a wooden frame located within the casket at the top thereof and immediately beneath the turned flange which conventionally constitutes the top of the body portion of the casket. The construction and insertion of wooden frames requires substantial artisan skill on the part of the workman and constitutes a bottleneck in the production line inasmuch as the frame cannot be properly affixed within the caskets by modern line production methods. Also, the wooden frames leave considerable to be desired from the point of view of imparting appropriate rigidity to the casket body or shell. As an example, the wood frames have warped, distorting the casket body to make the opening and closing and the latching of the lid or lid sections difficult. Additionally, one of the primary reasons for using metal in casket constructions is its permanence,

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and the use of wood, which deteriorates in time, defeats the purpose of the so-called "all-metal" caskets provided in the past.

The wooden frames, however, have been considered necessary for the construction of an otherwise all-metal casket, not only from the point of view of bracing but also for the purpose of attaching the internal fabric lining of the casket to the casket body. Conventionally, the edge of the wooden frame is exposed just below the upper, inwardly turned flange of the casket body and the lining has been attached to the edge of the wooden frame by upholstering techniques, i. e. the fabric casket lining is attached to the wooden frame by driving in tacks horizontally through the fabric lining material and into the frame. Obviously, this operation is not only time-consuming, but requires high artisan skill and considerable discipline on the part of the artisan if sloppy work on the part of the artisan is completely avoided.

The construction of the casket body of the present invention is very simple and involves the addition of but two elements to the casket shell, namely, channel braces and tacking strips inserted in the channels. More specifically, channel members are spot welded beneath the inwardly turned flange of the top of the casket body and are tack welded to each other to provide a rectangular brace which extends all of the way around the margin of the casket.

The channel portion of each brace projects inwardly of the turned flange of the casket top and faces upwardly. The utilization of this channel structure adds materially to the strength and rigidity of the rectangular bracing structure. The interior of the channels are filled with any plastic or compressible material to which the lining fabric may be tacked. As disclosed, the channels are filled with compressed, twisted kraft paper which further rigidifies the channel members in addition to providing a medium to which the lining of the casket may be attached.

The invention will be better understood in relation to the description of the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a plan view of the finished casket body;

Figure 2 is a fragmentary plan view of a top corner of the casket with the top internally turned flange of the casket broken away in part to expose the construction of the channel bracing at the corners;

Figure 3 is a fragmentary top plan view showing a portion only of flange and channel;

Figure 4 is a fragmentary cross-sectional view taken on line 4—4 of Figure 3;

Figure 5 is a sectional view taken on line 5—5 of Figure 2 but with the fabric lining of the casket attached and the automatic attaching mechanism disclosed in broken lines; and

Figure 6 is a sectional view which is the same as the view of Figure 5 except that the fabric lining of the casket is disclosed in its ultimate position after completion of the casket.

Referring to the drawings, the casket body comprises four side walls 1, a bottom (not shown), and an inwardly turned flange 2 at the top of each side wall. The side walls may be ornamentally configured as indicated at 3, which is conventional in casket fabrication. Beneath the marginal flange 2 which extends inwardly from each side wall a channel member 4 is disposed. This channel member is welded to the under surface of the flange 2 as at 5. As disclosed, the channel member is constituted by a planar portion 6 which engages and reinforces the entire flange 2 and a channel proper 7 which projects inwardly of flange 2. These channels are welded together where they meet as at 8. The channel 7 faces upwardly and is preferably crimped slightly inwardly as

at 9 in order to better retain whatever medium is utilized to fill the channel for providing a tacking strip.

As disclosed, the channel is filled with a strip of compressed, twisted kraft paper 10 which may be produced in rolls and inserted in the channels by machine methods prior to the attachment of the channel members within the body of the casket. Rubber, plastic, or other similar materials may be used in place of the kraft paper, but the latter is highly convenient because it remains firmly in the channel after being wedged in place and holds securely the tacks or staples which are utilized for attaching the fabric of the casket lining to the casket body.

As disclosed in Figure 5, the fabric of the casket lining 11 is marginally engaged with the tacking strips, with the main body of the fabric extending to the outside of the casket. Next, tacks or staples 12 are inserted through the margin of the fabric and into the tacking strip by automatic stapling mechanism 13. It is to be noted that the attachment devices are inserted vertically rather than horizontally which greatly accelerates and facilitates the operation. Additionally, the channel 7 preferably is below the plane of the planar portion 6 to provide a step, as shown in Figure 5, against which the stapler 13 may be engaged to guide the operation while the lining is being stapled in place. After completion of the attachment of the fabric of the casket lining, the fabric is draped inwardly as disclosed in Figure 6, whereby a double thickness of the fabric overlies the tacking strips, which covers the tacks or staples which have been used to effect the attachment.

The casket construction of this invention is highly advantageous for numerous reasons. In the first place, the construction provides the first all-metal casket, that is, a casket in which both the shell and the bracing for the shell are constituted by metal members which are quantity produced and assembled by modern production line methods. In the second place, the construction provides for the attachment of the casket lining by quantity production methods rather than by artisan upholstering methods. Further, the channel is utilized to accomplish the dual function of materially bracing the top margins of the casket shell and of permitting expedient attachment of the casket lining. In fact, this construction so standardizes the production of caskets that the apertures 14 for hinging and locking mechanism may be drilled as part of the operation of forming the casket body, as contrasted with the latter drilling of the holes at the time the top is fitted on the casket body, as has been conventional in the past. In other words, in the past the construction of casket bodies has not been sufficiently accurate to permit complete interchangeability of casket bodies and casket tops. Rather, in the past, it has been necessary to fit these parts together by selection of individual mating parts and fitting these parts together to consummate the closure. The present invention provides a casket body which may be produced by mass production methods, and my co-pending application, Serial No. 639,262, filed February 11, 1957, discloses a construction for casket tops which may be utilized in combination with the casket bodies of the present invention.

While the reinforcing frame is shown in relation to a casket shell section constituting the body of a casket it can be used in relation to a casket top. In this reversed relationship, the staple receptive material within the channel portion, therefore, serves as a means to fasten a decorative panel in place in the casket top.

Having described my invention, I claim:

1. In an all-metal casket body construction, said body construction including an inwardly turned flat flange which extends around the open top of said body, a reinforcing frame for the top of said body comprising four frame members, each frame member including a planar section which is coextensive with the underside of the flange at a side of said casket body and which is secured thereto, a channel formed at the inner side of said planar portion inwardly of said flange, said channel opening upwardly and having therein a material receptive to staples for securing casket lining material thereto.

2. In a casket body having a continuous flange turned inwardly at the top thereof, a reinforcing frame for said body comprising framing members each of which consists of a planar portion and a channel portion, each framing member being affixed to the flange with the planar portion thereof being coextensive with the underside of the flange and attached thereto by a series of spot welds for rigidly affixing the framing member to the flange, the channel portion of the framing member being coextensive with the inner edge of the flange and being located below the level of the flange to provide a guiding edge between the channel portion and the inner edge of the flange, said channel opening upwardly and having a strip of dense staple receptive material secured therein by the inner wall of the channel which slopes upwardly in the direction of the outer wall of the channel.

3. In an all metal rectangular casket body construction, said body including an inwardly turned flange extending all of the way around the open top of said body, an integral reinforcing frame adapted to constitute the sole bracing for the casket body, said frame constituted by four frame members, each frame member including a planar portion which is secured to the under side of the flange, and a channel portion on the inner side of said planar portion.

4. In an all metal rectangular casket body construction, said body including an inwardly turned flange extending all of the way around the open top of said body, an integral reinforcing frame adapted to constitute the sole bracing for the casket body, said frame constituted by four frame members, each frame member including a planar portion which is secured to the under side of the flange, and a channel portion on the inner side of said planar portion, said channel portion being upwardly turned and disposed inwardly of said flange.

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