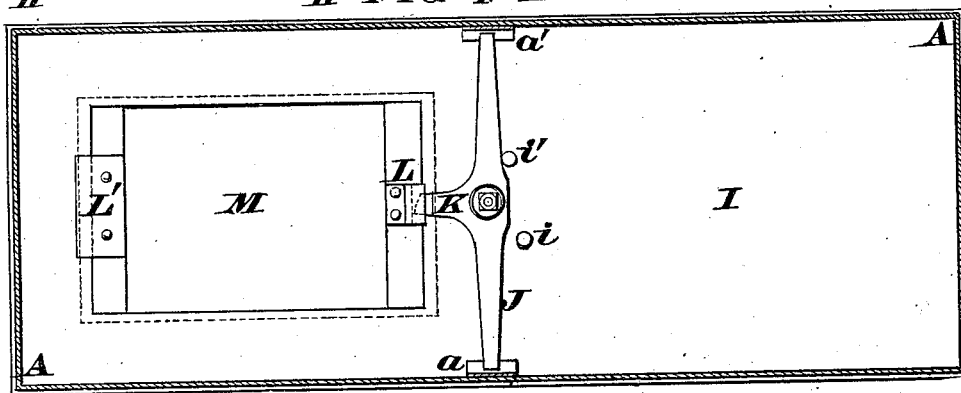
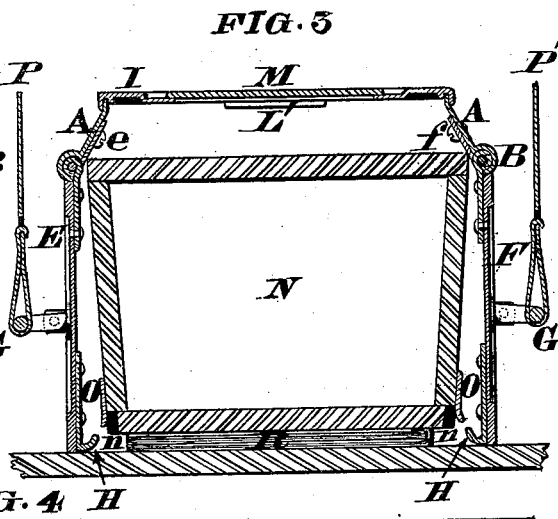
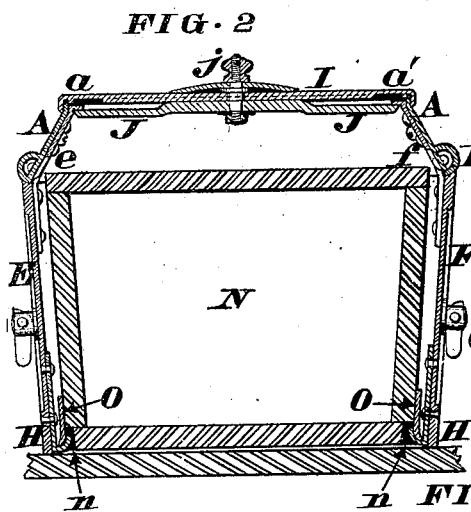
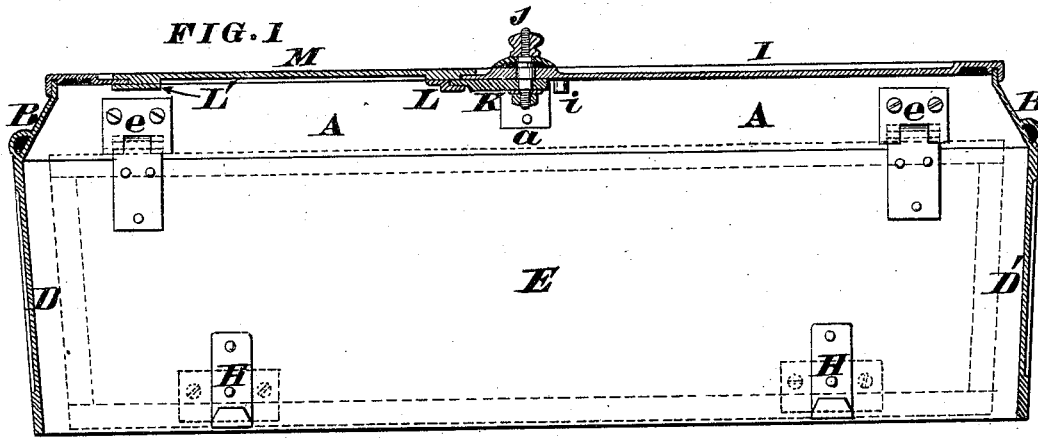


F. B. JAMES.

COFFIN.

No. 188,296.

Patented March 13, 1877.



Attest.  
Frank G. Roth  
D. P. Kennedy

Francis B. James  
by James H. Layman  
his Attorney.

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

FRANCIS B. JAMES, OF CINCINNATI, OHIO.

## IMPROVEMENT IN COFFINS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 188,296, dated March 13, 1877; application filed January 24, 1877.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, FRANCIS B. JAMES, of Cincinnati, Hamilton county, Ohio, have invented a new and useful Catafalque or False Coffin, of which the following is a specification:

This invention relates to that class of burial appliances which comprise an outer and highly-finished sham case or casket for enveloping an inner coffin made of common or inferior stuff, which inner receptacle contains the corpse; and the first part of my invention comprises a novel combination of hinged and outwardly-opening sides, handles, hooks, and sockets, that insures the automatic disengagement of the inner receptacle or coffin proper from the inclosing casket or case the moment said inner coffin reaches the bottom of the grave, as hereinafter more fully described.

The second part of my invention consists in a combination of lugs, turn-bar, and tongue, which turn-bar and tongue serve the twofold purpose of securing the lid to the coffin proper, and also of locking the cap of said lid in position, as more fully explained hereafter.

In the annexed drawings, Figure 1 is a longitudinal section through my catafalque, the position of the concealed coffin being indicated by dotted lines. Fig. 2 is a transverse section of the catafalque, but showing the inner coffin in its normal or engaged position. Fig. 3 is a similar section, representing the inner coffin as deposited in the grave and disengaged from the outer case. Fig. 4 is a horizontal section through the outer case, showing the devices that secure the lid in position.

The principal member of my outer case or casket is a stout rectangular frame, A, which is preferably made of metal, and is surrounded with a bead or molding, B, that stiffens said frame, and adds to the finished appearance of the same. Depending rigidly from this frame are two end pieces, D D', which may be inclined, as shown; or they may be perfectly vertical. Hinged to this frame A B at *e* and *f* are two side pieces, E F, to whose exteriors the handles G are secured, while the inner sides of said pieces have attached to them upturned hooks or catches, or other retaining devices, H, which retaining devices are located near the open bottom of the inclosing

case or casket. I is the removable lid, grooved on its under side to fit snugly upon the upturned flange of main frame A B, which latter is provided with two lugs, *a a'*, that have the opposite ends of a turn-bar, J, engaged beneath them. This bar is rotated with an external knob or handle, *j*, that may be so constructed as to contain flowers or emblems, &c. Projecting from the under side of lid I are stops *i i'*, that limit the motion of bar J in either direction. Projecting laterally from said bar is a tongue, K, adapted to enter a grooved plate, L, on the under side of the detachable cap M of the casket-lid. By this arrangement the turn-bar serves the twofold purpose of locking the cap to the lid and of securing the latter to the casket-frame. The opposite end of cap M is provided with a grooved plate, L', that engages with lid I, in the manner shown in Fig. 1. N represents the inner receptacle or coffin proper, which interior member is composed of any cheap and common stuff, such as pine or poplar, &c., and the lower angles of said coffin are provided with sockets *n*, protected with guard-plates O. P P' represent ropes or straps, wherewith the catafalque is lowered into the grave.

The method of using my catafalque is as follows: The corpse is first placed in the coffin proper, N, and the latter is then enveloped within the outer case or casket A D D' E F I, the hooks H being engaged in the sockets *n* O, as seen in Fig. 2. Now, by referring to this illustration, it will be noticed that the bottom of coffin N is elevated a slight distance above the bottom of the casket, and, owing to the peculiar shape of hooks H and guard-plates O, the weight of said coffin and its contents draws the hinged sides E F together, and maintains them securely in such a closed position as long as may be necessary. While the two coffins are thus coupled together, the cap M can be removed, so as to allow the friends seeing the corpse, it being understood that the inner box N is provided with a glass-covered opening, located directly under cap M. It is also understood that the interior of frame A may be lined with any suitable trimming, to prevent the upper portion of coffin N being exposed when the cap M is thus removed.

As soon as the procession arrives at the cem-

etry, two or more pieces of wood or stones, R, are placed across the bottom of the grave, and the coupled coffins are then lowered with straps P P', in the usual manner. The moment the inner coffin N comes in contact with the supports R the weight of the outer casket causes the hooks H to instantly disengage themselves from sockets n O, and a slight pull on the straps P P' swings the lower or free edges of sides E F away from the coffin, as seen in Fig. 3. The casket is now elevated and returned to the hearse, while the coffin N remains in the grave.

As the external casket is gotten up in a highly-finished and very ornamental manner, while the actual coffin is composed of cheap, common stuff, it is apparent that my catafalque enables people of moderate means indulging in an apparently first-class funeral without being subjected to the heavy expense incidental to such occasions.

If objections should be made to the exposition of the cheap coffin in the grave, this difficulty can be obviated by simply leaving the casket and its contents in a vault, and after the procession quits the cemetery the undertaker can then remove the outer case and take it away with him, the coffin N being privately disposed of at some future occasion when none but the immediate relatives of the deceased are present.

As the leading feature of my invention con-

sists of an outer case that automatically disengages itself from the coffin proper the instant the latter reaches the bottom of the grave, I reserve the right of modifying the details of construction, provided this leading feature of the invention is preserved.

I claim as my invention—

1. An external or false casket or case which envelops the coffin proper, and is automatically disengaged therefrom as soon as said coffin comes in contact with suitable supports placed in the grave, substantially as herein described, and for the purpose set forth.

2. The combination of outer casket or case A D D', hinged and outwardly-opening sides E e F f, handles G, and retaining devices H, which latter engage with sockets n O of the inner coffin N, substantially as herein described and set forth.

3. The combination of frame A, lugs a a', lid I, turn-bar J j, tongue K, and cap L L' M, whereby said turn-bar is rendered capable of locking the lid to the frame, and also securing the cap to the lid, substantially as herein described and set forth.

In testimony of which invention I hereunto set my hand.

FRANCIS B. JAMES.

Witnesses:

JAMES H. LAYMAN,  
FRANK J. ROTH.