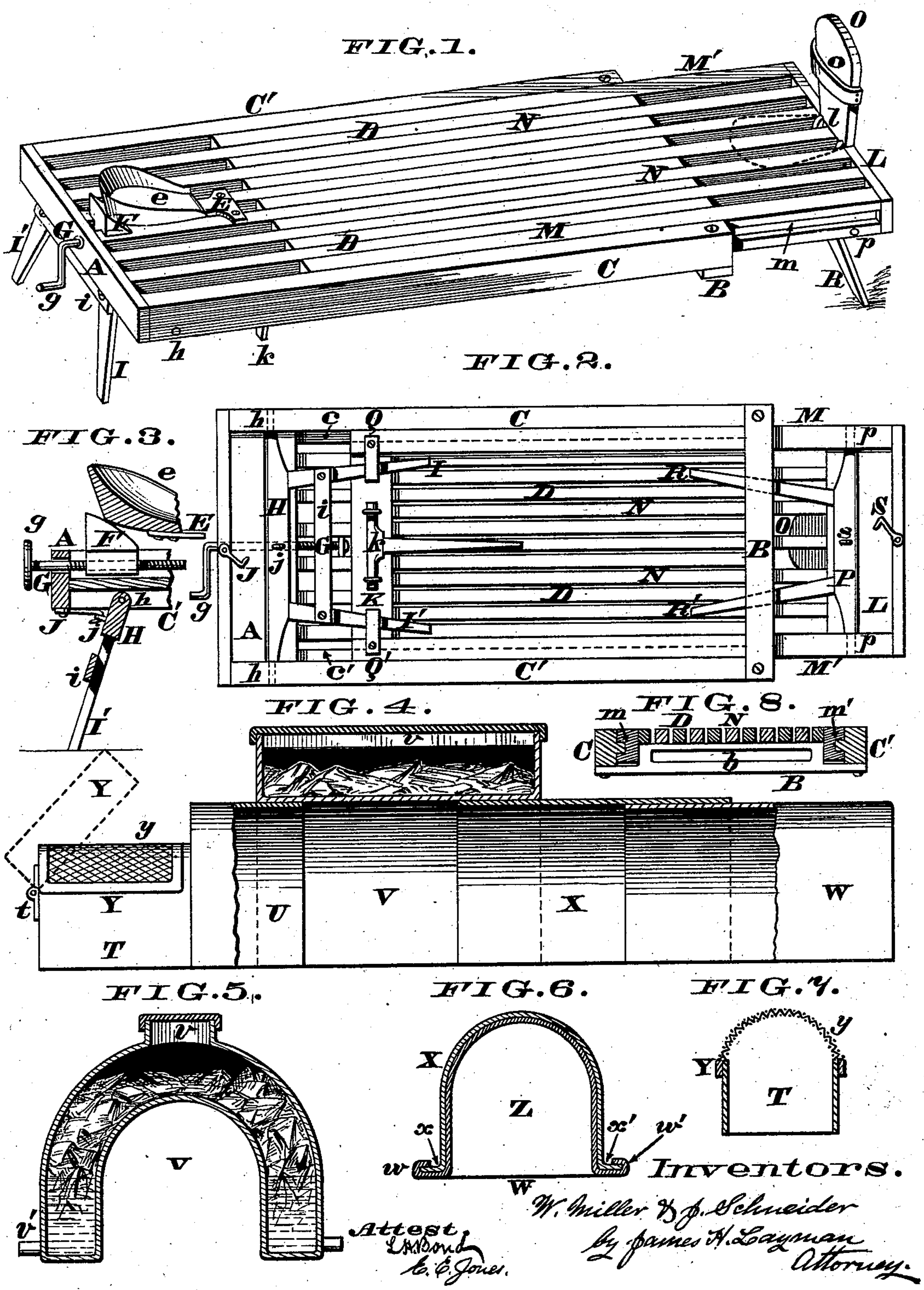
W. MILLER & J. SCHNEIDER.

Corpse-Preserver.

No. 204,237. Patented May 28, 1878.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WILLIAM MILLER AND JOHN SCHNEIDER, OF CONNERSVILLE, INDIANA.

IMPROVEMENT IN CORPSE-PRESERVERS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **204,237**, dated May 28, 1878; application filed January 10, 1878.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, WILLIAM MILLER and JOHN SCHNEIDER, both of Connersville, Fayette county, Indiana, have invented a new and useful Extensible Corpse-Preserver, of which the following is a specification:

Our invention comprises a corpse-preserver which is capable of being extended longitudinally, so as to be serviceable for bodies of any length; and said preserver consists, essentially, of two principal members—to wit, the cooling-board, upon which the body is placed, and a case or jacket for enveloping the corpse. This cooling-board is composed of two slatted frames, united to each other with tongues and grooves, or otherwise constructed to permit longitudinal adjustment or extension, and supported upon trestles or legs, which latter are capable of being folded up against said frames to economize space in transportation. One of these slatted frames has attached to it, with a yielding plate or strap, a suitable support or rest for the head of the corpse, which rest bears upon an inclined plane or wedge, that can be adjusted longitudinally of the frame by means of a screw. By this arrangement said rest can be elevated or depressed, so as to adapt it to the special requirements of any corpse placed upon the cooling-board.

The other slatted frame has hinged to it a foot-board provided with an elastic band, that is to be engaged with the feet of the corpse, and thereby retain them in a proper position until the body is placed in the coffin. When not in use this foot-board can be turned down against the frame to which it is hinged.

The enveloping case or jacket consists of a number of sections, preferably of sheet metal, which sections are capable of being telescoped one within another, so as to cause said case to be of the same length as the adjustable cooling-board, to which it is applied. These adjustable members of the case are about semi-tubular in transverse section, and the one that incloses the head of the corpse is provided with a lid that is covered either with wire-gauze or with finely-perforated sheet metal, in order that any vapors generated within the case may readily escape therefrom.

That section of the case adapted to inclose the trunk of the corpse is constructed with double walls, so as to constitute the refrigerator of the apparatus, said section being provided at top with a suitable opening, through which ice is inserted.

Having thus indicated the leading features of our invention, we will now proceed to give a detailed description of the same, referring to the annexed drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a perspective view, showing our adjustable cooling-board in position for the reception of a corpse. Fig. 2 is a plan of the under side of said board, the legs being folded up and the frames nearly closed together. Fig. 3 is an enlarged vertical section through the vertically-adjustable head-rest. Fig. 4 is a partially-sectionized elevation of the telescopic case or jacket. Fig. 5 is a vertical section through the ice-receptacle of said case. Fig. 6 is a vertical section through the foot and intermediate portions of the case. Fig. 7 is a vertical section through the head portion of said case, and Fig. 8 is a transverse section through the cooling-board.

A and B represent two beams united to each other by side rails C C′, whose inner surfaces are provided with tongues *c c′*, as seen in Figs. 2 and 8.

D represents a series of parallel and equidistant slats extending from beam A to the one B, which latter is slotted longitudinally at *b*, as shown in Fig. 8.

Secured to the two central ones of slats D is an elastic plate or strap, E, to whose free end is attached a head-rest, *e*, of any approved shape and construction. This head-rest *e* is supported upon an inclined plane or wedge, F, which latter is capable of a longitudinal movement between the aforesaid central slats by means of a screw, G, that engages with said wedge. The outer end of this screw carries a crank or hand wheel, *g*, while its inner end is journaled in a bar secured to the two central slats. (See Fig. 2.)

Journaled in the rails C C′, at *h*, is a batten, H, to which two legs, I I′, are secured, said legs being united with a stretcher, *i*. Batten H has a staple, *j*, which, when engaged with hook J, serves to maintain the legs in a proper position for supporting the cooling-board, as represented in Fig. 3.

The above-described members constitute

what may be called the head-section of the cooling-board, the foot-section of the same being constructed as follows:

K and L represent two beams united by side rails M M′, whose outer surfaces are grooved longitudinally at *m m′* to receive the tongues *c c′* of rails C C′.

N represents a series of parallel and equidistant slats, extending from beam K to the one L, and disposed between the slats D, previously described. Hinged to beam L at *l* is a foot-board, O, having an elastic band, *o*, secured to it; but, if preferred, a strap and buckle may be substituted for said band.

The other beam K has hinged to it a leg, *k*, that supports the middle portion of the cooling-board.

Journaled in the rails M M′ at *p* is a batten, P, provided with legs R R′.

S and *s* represent, respectively, a hook and staple for maintaining legs R R′ in their open or supporting position. Projecting horizontally and inwardly from the rails M M′ are short pins or stops Q Q, whose office will presently appear.

The telescopic case or jacket is composed of a head-section, T U, a trunk-section, V, a foot-section, W, and one or more intermediate sections, X, all of said sections being preferably about semi-tubular in shape, and open at bottom.

Head-section T has hinged to it at *t* a lid, Y, covered with wire-gauze, *y*, and said section is secured to an extension-tube, U, of somewhat greater diameter than the tube T. The outer end of section T is closed while its inner end is open, so as to communicate with the extension U, which latter is adapted to slide snugly within the trunk-section V. Said trunk-section is constructed with outer and inner walls, as seen in Fig. 5, thereby forming an annular chamber for the reception of ice, which refrigerant is inserted through a capped neck, *v*, on the upper side of said chamber.

v′ are pipes for drawing off any water that may accumulate within the ice-chamber V, and said pipes may be provided with suitable cocks or plugs for regulating the flow.

Adapted to slide snugly within this section V is an intermediate section, X, having horizontal flanges *x x′*, around which latter are engaged the recurved flanges *w w′* of the foot-section W, whose outer end is closed at Z, as seen in Fig. 6.

Our corpse-preserver is employed in the following manner: In its normal or closed condition the frames A B C C′ K L M M′ are drawn closely together until beam K comes in contact with beam A, which act causes the legs I I′ to engage under the pins Q Q′, while the other legs R R′ traverse the slot or mortise *b* of beam B. This contraction of the cooling-board draws leg *k* in under the stretcher *i*, and all of the legs are now maintained snugly against the under side of slats D and N. Foot-board O is turned down upon slats N, as indicated by dotted lines in Fig. 1, and the cooling-board is now in a very compact condition, and can be readily carried about by hand. When it is to be used the two frames A B C C′, K L M M′ are drawn out or extended the proper distance, thereby disengaging legs I I′ *k* R R′ from their respective retaining devices Q Q′ *i b*, and leaving said legs free to be brought to an erect position, in which position the legs I I′ and R R′ are secured with the hooks and staples J *j* and S *s*. Foot-board O is now brought to an erect position, and suitable coverings are then spread over the extended cooling-board, after which act the corpse is placed upon the coverings, and the feet engaged under band *o*. Screw G is then turned either to the right or left, so as to cause such a vertical adjustment of rest *e* as will bring the head of the corpse to the proper position. The head-section T U, foot-section W, and intermediate section X are then properly adjusted and applied to the cooling-board, after which the trunk-section V is placed over the members U and X, so as to unite them, and thus afford a practically continuous jacket or case that entirely envelops the corpse, and effectually protects the same from flies, rats, and other vermin. The chamber or section V is now filled with ice, as seen in Fig. 5, and the body is then preserved as long as may be desired.

While the body is thus enveloped, the face of the corpse is plainly visible through the wire-gauze or perforated covering *y* of lid Y, which gauze prevents flies entering the case, and at the same time it allows vapor to escape therefrom. If it should be desired to obtain access to the face of the corpse, the lid Y *y* is turned on its hinged bearing *t*, as indicated by dotted lines in Fig. 4.

A modification of our invention may be formed by dispensing with the hinged legs I I′ and R R′, in which case the extensible cooling-board can be supported upon trestles or chairs, or any other convenient expedients.

When designed for use in cold climates the ice-chamber V may be omitted from the telescopic jacket or case.

We claim as of our invention—

1. A longitudinally-extensible jacket or case for enveloping a corpse, said jacket being composed of the open-bottom sheet-metal sections T, U, V, W, and X, which sections are about semi-tubular in transverse section, and are capable of telescoping one within another, as herein described, and for the purpose set forth.

2. In combination with a longitudinally-extensible cooling-board, the within-described open-bottomed sheet-metal jacket or case, whose several sections are capable of being telescoped one within another, so as to adjust said jacket to the length of the cooling-board, as herein described and set forth.

3. A longitudinally-extensible cooling-board, consisting of the two slatted frames A B C *c*

C′ *c′*, K L M *m* M′ *m′*, pivoted legs H *h* I I′, P *p* R R′, and retaining devices *b* Q Q′, substantially as herein described and set forth.

4. In combination with a cooling-board, the yielding bearing E, head-rest *e*, wedge-nut F, and screw G, said screw being provided with a handle, *g*, external to the frame of said cooling-board, in order that the rest *e* may be adjusted vertically without removing the enveloping case or jacket, as herein described and set forth.

5. The lid Y, hinged to the head-section of a corpse-preserver at *t*, and provided with a wire-gauze covering, *y*, substantially as herein described.

In testimony of which invention we hereunto set our hands.

WILLIAM MILLER.
JOHN SCHNEIDER.

Witnesses:
JAMES H. LAYMAN,
GEO. H. KOLKER.