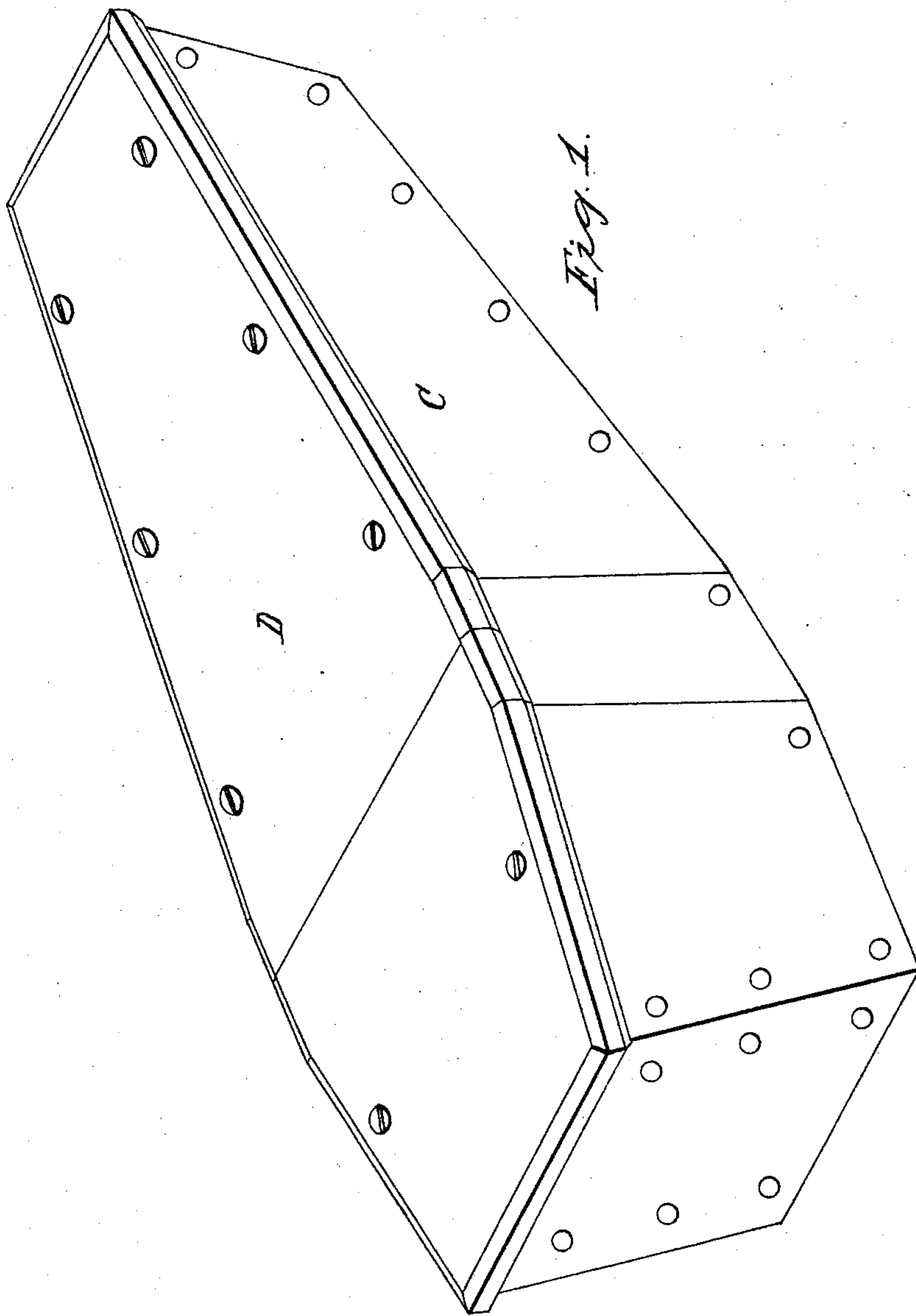


*J. Burns,  
Coffin.*

*Nº 56,364.*

*Patented July 17, 1866.*



*Witnesses:*

*Francis A. Brinell  
Edw. Howland*

*Inventor:*

*John Burns*

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOHN BURNS, OF PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, ASSIGNOR TO HIMSELF  
AND JOSEPH W. BAKER, OF SAME PLACE.

## IMPROVEMENT IN COFFINS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **56,364**, dated July 17, 1866.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, JOHN BURNS, of the city and county of Providence, and State of Rhode Island, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Coffins; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawing, making part of this specification, in which—

Figure 1 represents a perspective view of my improved coffin.

My improvement has reference almost exclusively to the wooden coffin of the description generally used for burying the dead, as distinguished from stone or metallic coffins or "burial cases," as they are sometimes termed.

The decomposition which is going on beneath the coffin-lid and the weight of the earth above it have the effect to crush in the lid and mingle the earth with the remains of the deceased long before the sides and bottom of the coffin have become seriously impaired by decay, so that when it is desired to remove the remains, as not unfrequently happens, it is found very difficult to do so without removing a large quantity of the earth that has caved in from above. When, also, the coffin has completely decayed nothing is left to mark the location of the remains, which is many times desirable and important.

The object of my invention is to remove these and other objections to the wooden coffin as at present constructed; and it consists in making the lid of the coffin of some comparatively imperishable material—as, for instance, marble, slate, or other suitable stone, or of cast-iron.

In the drawing, C is the body of the coffin, which is generally of mahogany, rosewood, or

black walnut, and D is the lid of white marble, highly polished and made in the usual way of making coffin-lids, with a piece across the upper part of the coffin, that may be removed separately to look at the face of the deceased. This lid should be about three-fourths of an inch in thickness, and may be screwed to the wooden body in the usual way.

The name, age, and other inscription may be cut in the face of the marble lid instead of the metal plate generally used for that purpose, and such inscription is unaffected by the corrosion which destroys the metal plate, so that when cut in the marble it is less liable to be obliterated. The principal advantage, however, is that after the coffin of wood has completely decayed the marble lid still remains as an imperishable tablet, covering the ashes of the deceased and unmistakably marking their last resting-place. The marble lid, besides this, produces a highly ornamental effect, and is but a trifle more weighty and no more expensive than the ordinary wooden lid.

Having thus described my invention, I would state that I am aware that coffins have heretofore been made entirely of marble and other suitable stone, and also of cast-iron and other metals and materials of greater or less imperishability; but this is not what I claim.

I claim—

Combining with a wooden coffin of the usual construction a lid of marble or other equivalent material, substantially as described, for the purpose specified.

JOHN BURNS.

Witnesses:

ISAAC A. BROWNELL,  
E. L. HOWLAND.