

No. 806,756.

PATENTED DEC. 5, 1905.

J. M. STAFFORD.  
APPARATUS FOR PRESERVING THE DEAD.  
APPLICATION FILED MAY 4, 1905.

Fig. 1.

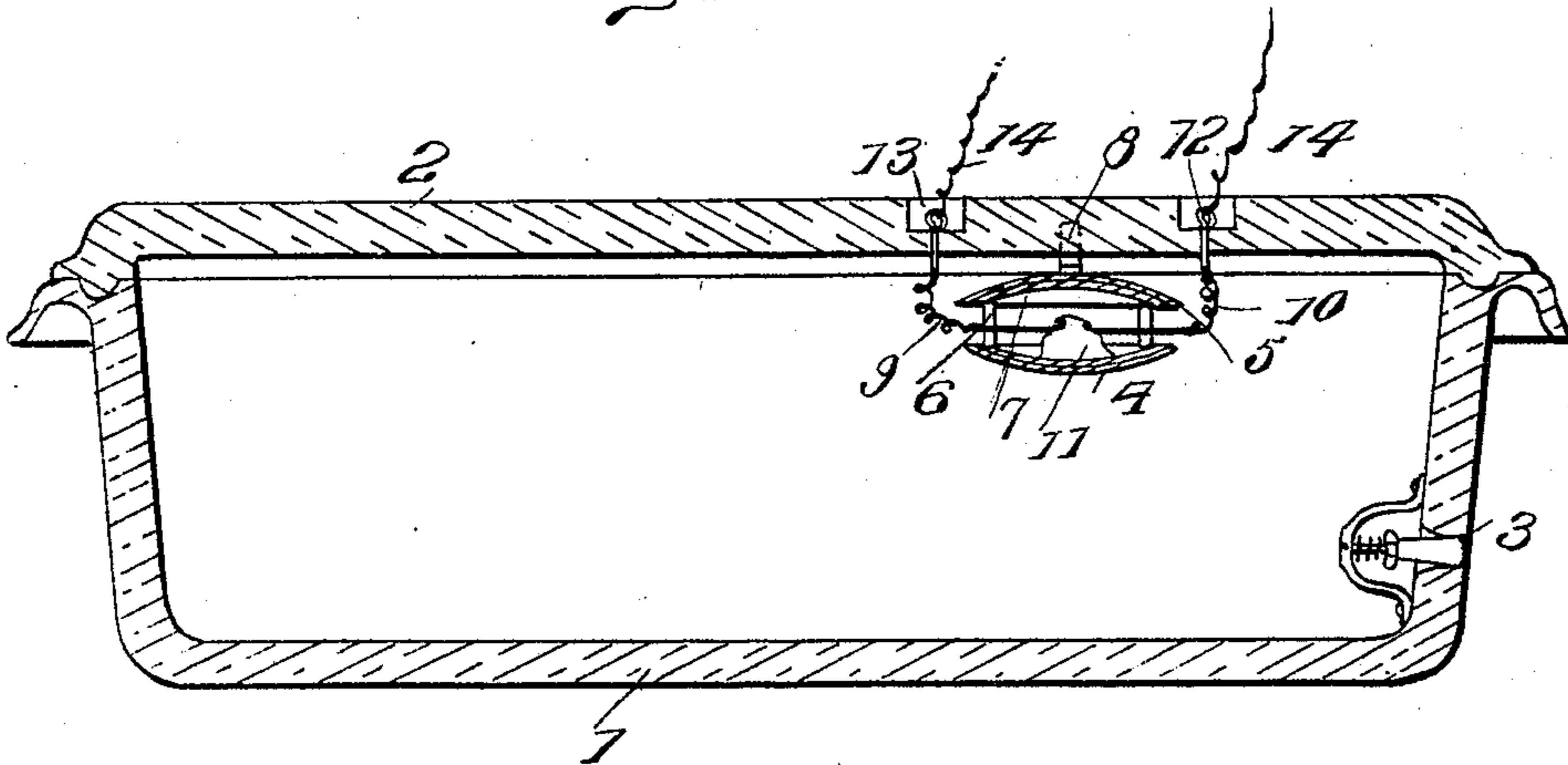


Fig. 2.

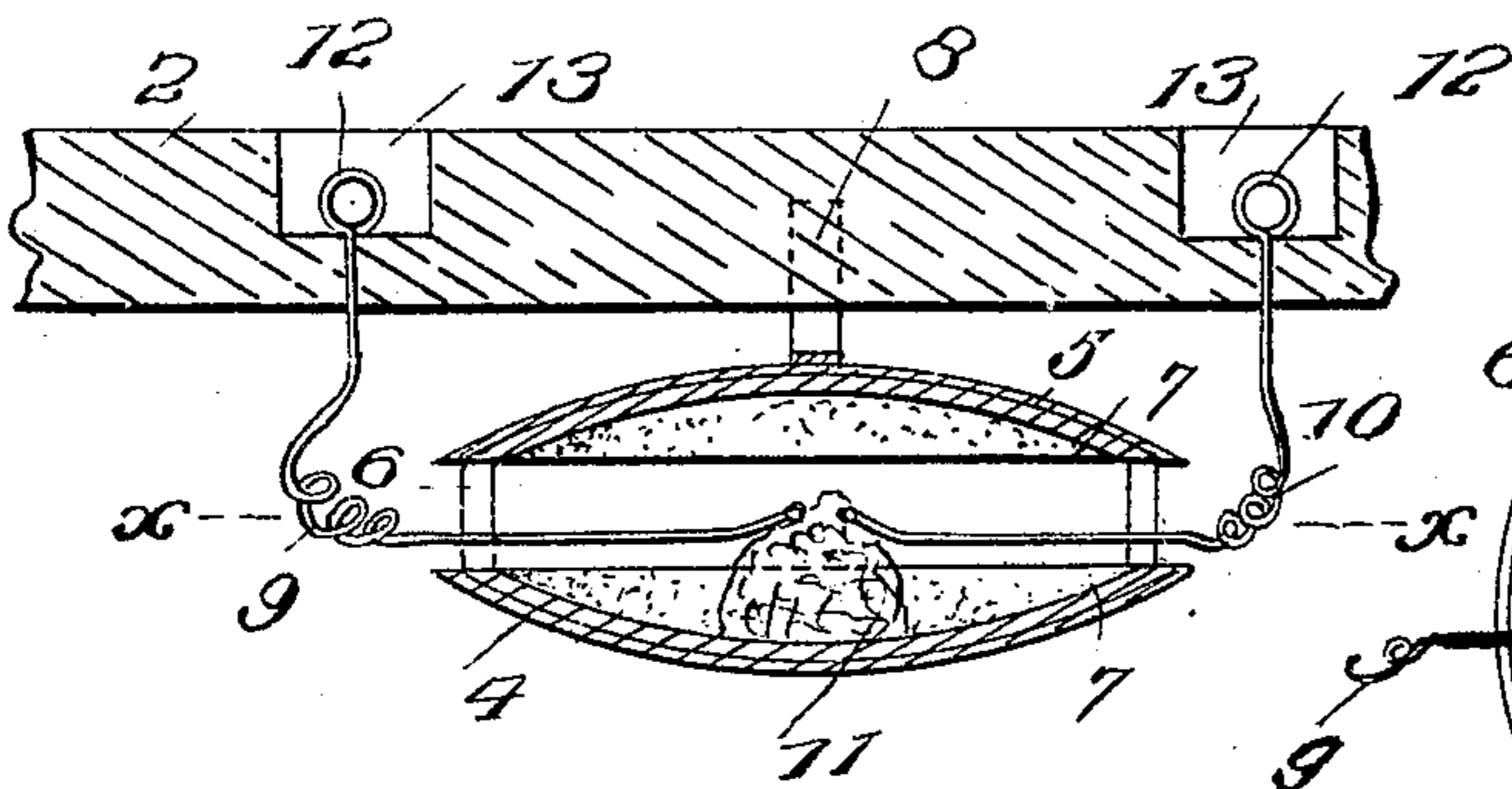
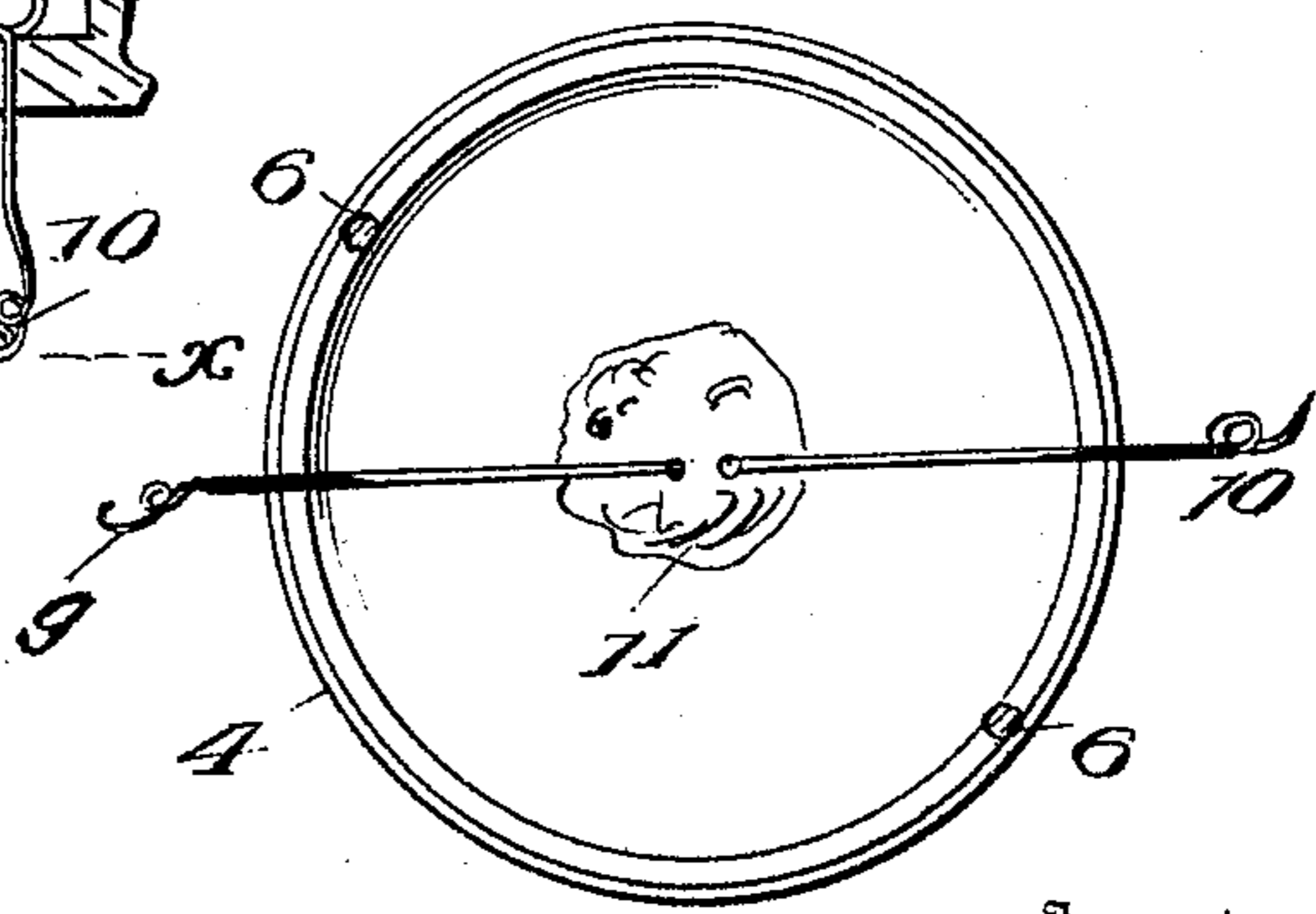


Fig. 3.



Inventor

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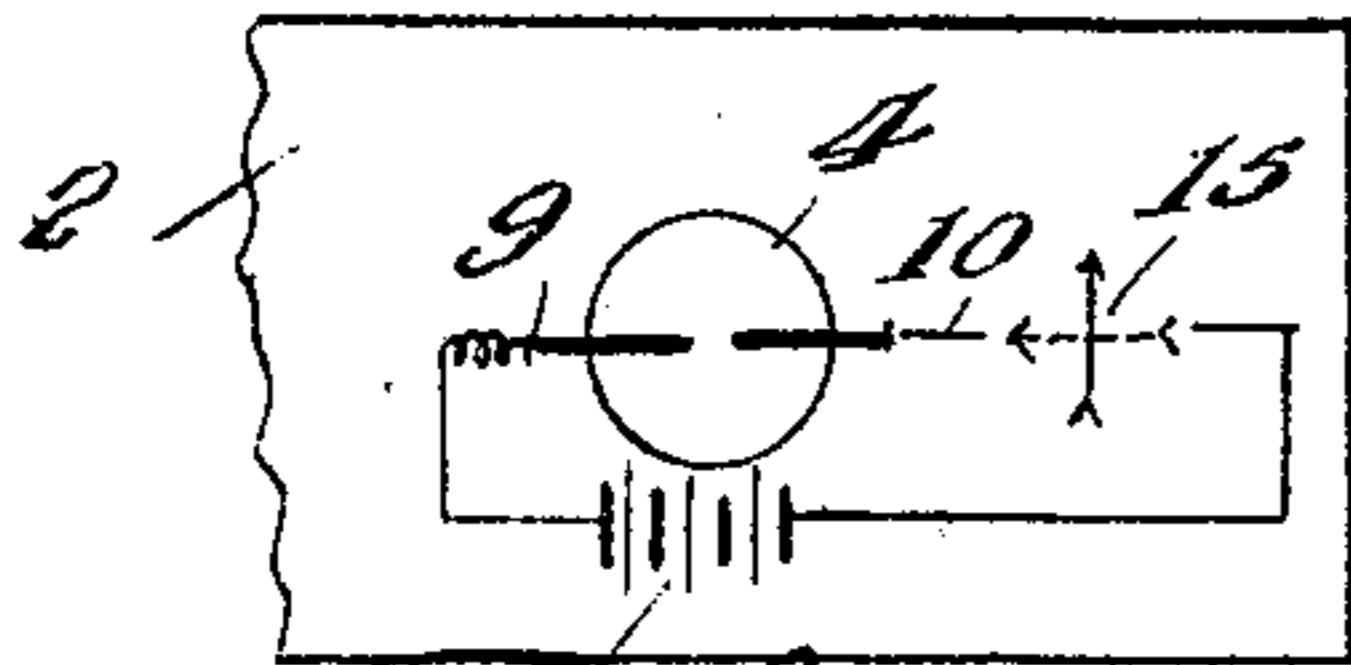


Fig. 4.

Witnesses 16

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By

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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JAMES M. STAFFORD, OF PETERSBURG, INDIANA.

## APPARATUS FOR PRESERVING THE DEAD.

No. 806,756.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented Dec. 5, 1905.

Application filed May 4, 1905. Serial No. 258,828.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, JAMES M. STAFFORD, a citizen of the United States, residing at Petersburg, in the county of Pike and State of Indiana, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Apparatus for Preserving the Dead, of which the following is a specification.

This invention appertains to means for preventing the dissolution of the dead by wholly removing the remains from the destructive influence of oxygen.

The invention provides for neutralization of the oxygen contained within the casket or like receptacle after being hermetically sealed by combustion of phosphorus or like highly-combustible agent or substance having a strong affinity for oxygen.

The invention consists of an attachment comprising means for supporting the combustible agent and a device for igniting said agent after the receptacle containing the deceased has been closed, sealed, and a partial vacuum created by exhaustion of the air therefrom.

For a full description of the invention and the merits thereof and also to acquire a knowledge of the details of construction of the means for effecting the result reference is to be had to the following description and accompanying drawings.

While the invention may be adapted to different forms and conditions by changes in the structure and minor details without departing from the spirit or essential features thereof, still the preferred embodiment thereof is shown in the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a longitudinal section of a casket or burial-receptacle provided with an attachment embodying the salient features of the invention. Fig. 2 is a sectional view of the attachment and a portion of the cover of the casket on a larger scale. Fig. 3 is a horizontal section on the line *xx* of Fig. 2. Fig. 4 is a diagrammatic view showing different means for closing the electric circuit.

Corresponding and like parts are referred to in the following description and indicated in all the views of the drawings by the same reference characters.

The coffin, casket, or like receptacle 1 may be of any material adapted to maintain a vacuum after the same has been created. The invention is designed most especially for use in connection with burial-receptacles con-

structed of glass, vitreous material, or the like not affected by dampness or the elements. The cover 2 is adapted to be cemented to the body of the receptacle, a tongue-and-groove joint being provided to insure a firm bonding or union. A valve 3 controls an opening formed in a side of the receptacle at a convenient point and is adapted to seat by an inward movement, thereby preventing its opening under a pressure from without.

The attachment may be applied to any convenient part of the receptacle and by preference is attached to the cover 2, so as not to interfere in the least with the trimmings of the casket or with the remains or draperies. The attachment comprises a pan 4 and a deflector 5, the latter being arranged over the pan and connected thereto by posts 6. The pan 4 and deflector 5 are preferably formed of sheet metal and may be highly finished or embellished, so as to present an ornamental and pleasing appearance. The inner or opposing sides of the elements 4 and 5 are covered by asbestos 7 or like refractory material, so as to protect the parts 4 and 5 and prevent dangerous heating thereof. The contrivance may be attached to the cover in any manner, and for this purpose a stem projects from the deflector 5 and is adapted to be let into the cover 2.

The means for igniting the phosphorus or other highly-combustible agent or material contemplates employment of electricity, and, as shown, said means comprise wires 9 and 10, each having an end portion let into the cover 2 and the opposite end portion loose and adapted to be arranged with reference to the combustible agent 11 so as to effect ignition thereof at the proper time. The wires 9 and 10 may be molded into the cover 2 or cemented in the openings bored therein or in any manner so as to provide a firm and tight connection. The outer ends of the wires 9 and 10 are formed into eyes 12, which are located in recesses 13, formed in the upper side of the cover, so as not to be in the way or liable to mishap. If desired, said wires 9 and 10 or their projecting ends 12 may be utilized as fastening means for securing the name-plate, tablet, or ornamentation of the cover 2.

After the remains of the deceased have been placed in the receptacle 1 and the cover 2 placed in position and cemented thereon an air-pump or other means creating a vacuum is fitted to the valve-controlled opening for

exhausting the air from within the receptacle, so as to create a vacuum and reduce the oxygen to the smallest amount possible. Preliminary to placing the cover 2 in position and hermetically sealing the casket or receptacle a piece of phosphorus 11 or a quantity of other highly-combustible substance or material is placed upon the pan 4 and the wires 9 and 10 adjusted with reference thereto so as to leave minute space near their ends for the passage of a spark upon completion of the circuit. After the receptacle has been hermetically sealed and a partial vacuum created therein the wires 9 and 10 are connected by wires 14 to a source of electric supply, and on passage of the current the agent 11 is ignited, and the resultant combustion consumes or neutralizes every trace of oxygen that may be contained within the receptacle. After this operation the wires 14 are disconnected from the wires 9 and 10 and the casket or receptacle may be disposed of in any determinate way. Every trace of oxygen being eliminated and the receptacle being impervious and hermetically sealed, it follows that the remains, being removed from the consuming influence of the oxygen, are preserved. The location of the attachment upon the inner side of the cover 2 admits of every particle of oxygen contained within the receptacle finding ready access to the agent during the process of combustion.

As shown in Fig. 4, a circuit-closer 15 is illustrated, consisting of a magnetic needle poised so as to turn freely when subjected to magnetic influence. The wires 9 and 10 are included in an electric circuit comprising the circuit-closer 15 and a battery or generator 16. The magnetic needle 15 normally occupies a position so as to interrupt the circuit and when moved to the dotted-line position causes the circuit-spark to pass between the terminals of the wire, whereby the phosphorus or other highly-combustible substance is ignited. The battery 16 may be of any type that will produce a spark upon closing and interrupting the circuit. It is preferred to have the attachment connected to the lid or cover of the casket in any manner. The parts are so arranged that under normal conditions the electric circuit is open. After the cover has been placed in position and the casket hermetically sealed a magnet of proper strength is utilized to effect movement of the needle 15, so that the circuit may be closed and the phosphorus ignited upon the passage of the spark.

Having thus described the invention, what

is claimed as new, and desired to be secured by Letters Patent, is—

1. In combination with a burial casket or receptacle, an attachment arranged within the same for containing a highly-combustible agent such as phosphorus, and means for igniting said combustible agent after the receptacle has been closed and hermetically sealed.

2. In combination with a burial casket or receptacle adapted to be closed or hermetically sealed, means arranged within said receptacle and adapted to receive a highly-combustible agent, and an electric igniter for said agent, the same consisting of wires having one end firmly attached to a part of the receptacle and having the opposite end portion of each loose to admit of proper adjustment of the loose ends of the wires with reference to the combustible agent and the supporting means therefor.

3. The combination of a burial casket or receptacle adapted to be closed and hermetically sealed, an attachment arranged within the same and adapted to receive a highly-combustible agent such as phosphorus, said attachment comprising a combustible agent and a deflector arranged thereover, and means for igniting said combustible agent after the receptacle has been closed and sealed.

4. In combination with a burial casket or receptacle adapted to be closed and hermetically sealed, an attachment arranged within the same comprising a pan and a deflector, means connecting the pan and deflector and other means for attaching the appliance to a part of the receptacle, and an igniter adapted to be operated from within the receptacle for igniting the highly-combustible agent placed in said pan.

5. In combination with a burial casket or receptacle adapted to be closed or hermetically sealed, means arranged within the same adapted to receive a highly-combustible agent and means for igniting said agent, the same consisting of electric wires having an end portion attached to a part of the receptacle and having the opposite end portion loose, the outer or projecting ends of said electric wires being fitted into recesses formed in the outer side of the receptacle.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature in presence of two witnesses.

JAMES M. STAFFORD. [L. s.]

Witnesses:

J. A. THOMAS,  
ALVA STAFFORD.