

Basic Detail Report



Title Corpse Preserver

Date 1876-1879

Primary Maker Disbrow & Van Cleve

Medium Black walnut, sheet iron, horsehair, glass, brass

Description Corpse preserver consisting of a two-piece black walnut case insulated with horsehair. The body was laid in the lower half of the case; the top half was then attached, and its galvanized iron tray was filled with ice, resulting in the cooling of the body to preserve it during the mourning period. Two pipes extending through the back end of the case allow for the draining of melted water. The top deck has two hinged access panels for the loading of ice; the forward panel further has a hinged oval portal to allow viewing of the face of the deceased through the glass. Each side and end has a pair of black painted iron handles, and each end has an iron latch for connecting the two sections of the case. A ratchet system allowed the body to be raised or lowered for viewing. The ratchet handle (b.) is separated from the corpse preserver.