A Legacy of Excellence

The History of Des Moines Funeral Service

Mary Halstead
commissioned by
Hamilton’s Funeral Home

Hamilton’s Funeral Home
Des Moines, Iowa  50309
Copyright 1984, 2003 by Hamilton's Funeral Home. All rights reserved. First edition published in 1984; second edition in 2003. No part of this work may be reproduced or copied in any form without written permission of the publisher.
Table Of Contents

Introduction .......................................................... Page 1

A Legacy of Excellence

The Early Years: Cabinetmakers and Livery Proprietors ............................... Page 11

The New Century Begins: Family Names for the Future ................................ Page 18

The Teens: The Move from Storefronts Begins ........................................... Page 29

The Twenties: The Move to Homes Continues ............................................ Page 38

The Thirties: Changes in Established Firms ................................................ Page 51

The Forties: War and New Faces .............................................................. Page 60

The Fifties: Expansion on the South Side ................................................... Page 69

The Sixties: Family-owned or Public Corporation ..................................... Page 75
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Seventies: Third Generation Owners</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Eighties: Family Firms Grow</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nineties: Preparation for the Millennium</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Twenty-First Century: A Fourth Generation</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Day Polk County Funeral Homes</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Line</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk County Funeral Service Family Tree</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

This history of Des Moines Funeral Service is dedicated to Lee Hamilton. His standard of excellence has challenged Hamilton's Funeral Home to become one of the larger family-owned funeral homes not only in the city of Des Moines, but also in the state of Iowa. This standard of excellence is mirrored in the twenty-first century mission statement of the business that carries Lee Hamilton’s name; the mission of Hamilton's Funeral Home is to serve client families and one another, adapting to the desires of each person seeking their help.

Throughout the fifty years that Lee Hamilton served the people of Des Moines as a funeral director, he was recognized as a generous and open-hearted man who genuinely enjoyed people. Whether he was conversing with people at a lodge meeting or other gathering, serving them at the funeral home, or simply walking to and from his business accompanied by his faithful chow dog, people knew Lee Hamilton. And more importantly, they knew that Lee Hamilton would take care of them with dignity, concern, and reverence at the time of a death in the family.

The symbol of helping one another was placed on the lawn of Hamilton’s in 1932 under a 100-year-old oak tree.
Lee Hamilton in 1937

Bill Hutchings, longtime Hamilton's employee.

The Hamilton and Powers Funeral Home and equipment in the late 1920s.
Lee Hamilton's work as a funeral director grew out of his desire to serve people. When he arrived in Des Moines as a young man in 1904, he did not have the funds to establish his own business and therefore sought out a profession where he could fulfill that desire. For the next nine years he worked for several of the city's existing funeral firms, learning the profession from those who had brought funeral service into the new century in the city of Des Moines as well as taking the necessary schooling to become a licensed embalmer.

In 1913 Lee Hamilton entered into a partnership with Ezra J. Selover and Otto Knight and within a few years bought out Knight's interest. The number of families served by the firm grew from 144 in 1913 to 263 in 1927, the year Selover retired and Hamilton became the sole owner of the firm. Hamilton spent his waking hours ready to serve families. He was at the funeral home from early morning until evening seven days a week. He saw the need to provide more services to meet the needs of these families and added a chapel and garages to the funeral home in 1933.

Of course, these were dire times for many of the city's families. Lee Hamilton conducted funeral services fully aware that in some instances he would be absorbing not only the cost of the funeral service itself, but also such things as the cost of the grave space and opening. In practicing this charity, he left the recipients with a sense of personal dignity. Years later members of these same families, now in better economic circumstances, would fondly tell of the time their families “had it tough and Lee Hamilton took care of them.”
Lee Hamilton
1878 – 1956
With the funeral home’s improved facilities, the number of families served increased steadily to over 500 in 1940. That same year Lee Hamilton took on two partners: his son-in-law, Ira Moller, and a valued employee, Ardis Peterson. These new partners carried on the attitudes instilled by the senior member of the firm.

Although the emphasis was on service to individual families, Hamilton’s also carried out many community service projects. During the depression Lee Hamilton helped sponsor an east side soup kitchen. In the years that followed, young boys received uniforms and baseballs; the city’s Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts received Norman Rockwell calendars that detailed scouting information, and softball teams, coached by Ardis Peterson, captured the heart of Des Moines and also a berth in the national competition.

In 1948, Lee Hamilton suffered a stroke; the man to whom long working hours had meant nothing over the years was incapacitated until his death in 1956. He had built a strong business and wisely entrusted it to those who would nurture his ideals of service and create a strong vision for the future.

By the 1950s, the newest generation, now ten years old as owners, saw that many children of the east Des Moines families served over the years were moving to the city’s suburbs. They realized that to provide continued service to these generations, facilities would need to be built at additional locations. Hamilton’s Westover opened in 1960 and Hamilton’s Near Highland Memory Gardens in 1987.

Building new locations was not the only change. The home on Ninth Street which had housed Hamilton’s for more than forty years was slated for demolition in the wake of expansion of the capitol grounds. In 1969 Hamilton’s Funeral Home, now a grandfather among the city’s funeral firms, found itself energized with a new body, a new building that reflected a challenging combination of the architecture of the past and the most modern funeral home amenities — a promise for the future.
Hamilton’s future included a new generation of owners: Bill and John Moller, grandsons of Lee Hamilton and sons of Ira Moller, and Carlton Peterson, son of Ardis Peterson, began to buy out their fathers’ interest in the 1970s. This trio were not strangers to the business; they had all had been part of the Hamilton’s staff since the 1960s. The second generation of owners retired: Ardis Peterson in 1975, Ira Moller in 1978.

**Community Interaction Projects**

That future also meant responding to the needs of a changing population. Of course, there were still those who would live out their entire lives within the city, but more and more people were on the move changing jobs, moving to other cities, and not setting down the familiar roots of times gone by. Lee Hamilton and his contemporaries had been able to personally know groups of people because of the immobility and constancy of the times; this was no longer true. Hamilton’s began to target groups of people, contributing to and benefiting from their existence through a number of community interaction projects, many of which exist today.

Past projects included establishing a Polk County Disaster Plan for Mortuaries that has served as a model for other cities planning for the care of the dead and their survivors in the event of a disaster; providing a teacher/facilitator in school for Project Business; supporting Hospice of Central Iowa; participating in the “I Can Cope” sessions for cancer patients through local hospitals and in the first Amanda the Panda Camp for Iowa youngsters living with cancer; and assisting families during the flood of 1993.
In 1983 and 1984 the firm received the Pursuit of Excellence Bronze Eagle Award from the National Funeral Directors Association. The Pursuit of Excellence Program challenges funeral homes to demonstrate their accomplishments in eight categories of community service and designates five excellent funeral homes in the nation who best meet that challenge. Hamilton’s participation in this program has been another expression of pursuing the standards of excellence set by Lee Hamilton in his service to the residents of Des Moines.

Community interaction projects continue today. In the Living Tribute Program, Hamilton’s gives semiannual donations for plantings to the Des Moines Botanical Center’s Oak Hickory Forest area. These plantings are made in memory of those who have died and used Hamilton’s services. A dedication ceremony for the family and friends of those memorialized is held each spring at the Botanical Center on Arbor Day, a day traditionally set aside for tree planting.

Through another community interaction project — the Book Gift Project — books are given to local public, church, and school libraries during National Library Week and National Children’s Book Week.

(Above) Arbor Day dedication ceremony at the Botanical Center;
(Right) A memorial candle lighting service concludes Coping with Grief symposium.
The Community Impressions Program honors individuals who have contributed to the quality of community life. Articles about these individuals are matted and framed and presented to them along with a letter of recognition and appreciation.

Hamilton's Academy of Grief & Loss

In 1996 a longtime dream came true with the establishment of Hamilton's Academy of Grief & Loss as a separate division of Hamilton's Funeral Home, Inc. The Academy offers the community grief information and resources, grief recovery services and grief-related education.

An integral part of the Academy is the Lee Hamilton Grief Resource Library. This lending library houses an extensive collection of books, periodicals, brochures and videos for all ages pertaining to death, grief and loss. The Academy also composes and keeps current a Community Resource Description List of grief and support resources available in the Des Moines area, as well as across the state. This listing includes support groups, counseling services and other resources available for persons of all ages. Another resource is the Academy's professional referral network that provides access to expertise on banking issues, wills, legal issues, etc.

The Academy's grief recovery services are available for all ages in individual, group or family settings. For children there are two short-term grief programs: Healing Hearts for children in grades one through six and Little Hands for children ages three to six. During Hamilton's Family Services Symposium, speakers address the topic "Coping with Grief," offering practical suggestions to adults who have experienced a death. Representatives from community grief support organizations are also available to offer information about the services that they provide. Throughout the community the Academy is also very involved in giving presentations and seminars about death and grief.

Grief related education services include presentations, seminars, and short courses about death and grief issues, which the academy staff gives to a variety of groups throughout the state of Iowa. The staff also conducts tours of the funeral home and crematory facilities for all types of groups and ages.

Today Hamilton's funeral home is moving into a fourth generation of owners. Sasha Mudlaff, granddaughter of Ardis Peterson and daughter of Carlton Peterson, joined the staff in the 1993 and serves as director of Hamilton's Academy of Grief & Loss. John Moller, Jr., son of John Moller, grandson of Ira Moller, and great grandson of Lee Hamilton, graduated from Worsham Mortuary
School in the fall of 1999. He completed his internship at Hamilton's and now serves as staff services manager. Holly Peterson Miller, granddaughter of Ardis Peterson and daughter of Carlton Peterson, joined the central support staff as an administrator in 2000. Third generation owner Bill Moller retired in December 2001. In 2002 Sasha, John Jr. and Holly became shareholders in the family corporation.

As Hamilton's has grown, the number of employees has also increased. Again, Lee Hamilton's philosophy has prevailed. He carefully chose service-minded, people-oriented employees who would carry forward his ideals of funeral service. Lee Hamilton was a good employer; he treated his employees as equals; their word for the family in economic or emotional need stood as strong as the word of Hamilton himself. Furthermore, he conveyed that confidence to the families served. This standard remains true today; each employee fills the key employee role in dealing with a family, whether he or she is one of the owners or the newest member of the staff.

This history of Des Moines funeral service is also a way of pursuing and preserving the strong personalities and reputations that built Des Moines funeral service. The recording and telling of this history will serve not only as a tribute to those who lived those years but also as a legacy of excellence for the city’s funeral directors and the families that they serve today and in the future.

Mary Halstead
A Legacy of Excellence

The Early Years: Cabinetmakers and Livery Proprietors

Today's Des Moines funeral homes, like those throughout the United States, evolved from the work of the “undertaker” — a word coined by colonial newspapers for the person in the community who undertook the responsibility and care of the dead. Although the history of Iowa and Des Moines starts later than those colonial times, this city’s undertaker was often at the forefront of the profession. For example, Des Moines was the home of one of the country's best known embalming schools, and the state's professional association was one of the first to be established in the country in 1881. The undertakers in this frontier community may have seemed isolated to their eastern counterparts, but Des Moines undertakers were strong pioneers, ready to meet and carry progress: bridges to the future of funeral service.

The Iowa Territory was established in 1838, and five years later Fort Des Moines was built at the juncture of the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers. In 1846 Des Moines was platted and lots were sold; the city had started. The names of Des Moines undertakers during these very early years have gone unrecorded. Building the simple coffin and tenderly caring for the dead was first the role of the isolated family who moved to the new territory. But as a settlement or community began to take shape, Des Moines followed the pattern set in the East. The care of the dead became the responsibility of specific individuals.
The role of undertaker quickly fell to those with related skills: the cabinetmakers, who could build caskets. After a death, someone in the family would bring the cabinetmaker some record of the size of the deceased — perhaps a pole notched to indicate the person's length and width. In turn the craftsman would make a coffin to those dimensions.

By 1850, a year before the city incorporated, the population had grown to 502. In 1857, the year the east and west sides of the river became one city, the population was 3,500 with 500 dwellings and businesses. One of those businesses was Christian Harbach, the first cabinetmaker and undertaker of any record. He started a small furniture and undertaking business in 1856; the Harbach name was destined to be a part of Des Moines funeral service for the next ninety-two years. Like several other early undertakers, Christian and his brother Louis were European immigrants. The brothers came to the United States from Germany in 1854 when Louis was sixteen years old. Christian came

This 1876 display of equipment of the Levi J. Wells Livery Stable at 109 West Fourth included a child's white hearse.

*(Courtesy of Paul Ashby)*
to Des Moines and established his small business on Second between Court and Walnut in 1856. Louis spent some time in Mobile, Alabama, and then in Louisville, Kentucky, where he learned the saddler's trade before coming to Des Moines in 1858. He continued to engage in that trade when he first arrived in Des Moines, and then briefly studied the upholstery craft. In 1860 Louis joined Christian in the furniture and undertaking business.

The Harbach brothers were successful in business. In 1878 Louis bought out his brother's interest. (Christian Harbach died four years later in 1882.) By 1880 Des Moines' population stood at 22,408, and the Harbach business included a four-story brick building for the retail sale of furniture and a separate building with a first floor devoted to undertaking and a wholesale business on the second. By 1890 the city's population had more than doubled and stood at 50,093, and the Harbach business included a furniture factory.

Of course, this growing population needed more than one undertaker. In its near quarter century of operations from 1866 to 1889, Merrill, Keeney, and Company had several addresses near “the point” (the junction of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers). After the company went out of business, William Merrill, one the business’s founders, organized the Merrill Brick Company. Merrill remained with the brick company until 1893 and died in 1902.

During these early years, other furniture-undertaking establishments included William Lotz and Company at 37 Court from 1873 to 1880, McCord and Clements at 621 Walnut from 1882 to 1883, and H.R. Reynolds at 401-403 Sixth Avenue from 1886 to 1890. (These dates and locations and those for many of the other early firms listed in this history are taken from city directories.)

Some undertakers like Peter Patterson, an 1868 immigrant from Sweden, worked for others before starting their own firms. Patterson worked for Harbach’s and then went into business for himself for a brief period of time at 516 East Sycamore (now Grand Avenue) in 1879.

Gustaf Newlen, one of the founders of Scandia Savings and Loan in Des Moines, learned the cabinet making trade in his native Sweden and immigrated to the United States in 1862. Settling first in Chicago, he came to Des Moines in 1866. Although he probably carried out the work of an undertaker from that point on because of his craft, his establishment on East Locust was first listed as an undertaking business in the 1879 city directory. The Newlen name would be part of area funeral service until the early forties.
The Shank Brothers (Henry and Lewis F.) were an example of another type of business associated with undertaking: livery services. In the process of their daily business, these proprietors provided the hacks needed by the grieving families. The Shank brothers opened their undertakering establishment at 201 Sixth Avenue in conjunction with a livery stable in the mid-1880s.

In 1889 the formal entrance to Woodland Cemetery included a canopy that connected the caretaker’s home (at left) and a chapel.

In the spring, the chapel was sometimes used for interment services for those who had died during the months when the ground was frozen hard. (During nineteenth century winters, a receiving vault on the west side of the cemetery provided a temporary place for the deceased between funeral services and actual interment of the body in the spring.) These buildings were removed when 21st Street was widened in 1921. The street became known as Harding Road and later Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway.

(Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa)

The Shank Brothers (Henry and Lewis F.) were an example of another type of business associated with undertaking: livery services. In the process of their daily business, these proprietors provided the hacks needed by the grieving families. The Shank brothers opened their undertakering establishment at 201 Sixth Avenue in conjunction with a livery stable in the mid-1880s. They
remained partners until the early 1900s. The brothers evidently went their separate ways in about 1902 when Lewis moved his business to 424 Locust.

Other undertaking firms during those early years included J. C. Herman at 620 Walnut in the 1880s; O. Harlan “The Eastside Undertaker” at 646 East Grand in 1889; and E. Grinnell at 501-503 East Locust in 1882 and 1883.

Some names would appear one year in the city directory and be gone the next. Names would be linked in partnership one year and those same people might be working separately or with a new associate the next. No hint exists as to what types of agreements, financial or otherwise, were the basis of these partnerships. For example, in 1891 M.E. Patzig and J.C. Clos “Undertakers and Dealers in Picture Frames” were at 414 Sixth. From 1892 to 1896 T.S. Keeney and Patzig were located at 317 Seventh. In 1897, only the Patzig name was listed at the Seventh Street location and advertised “Miss Flora A. Patzig — Lady Embalmer.” Another example is John N. O’Boyle. His name appeared with Frank Bice at 505 Locust in 1894; with Frederick W. Franz, a hairdresser, at the same location in 1895; and with Muehler in 1896.

Des Moines was changing. The Des Moines River was bridged in 1855; the Raccoon, seven years later. The railroad arrived in 1866; the first street car (horse powered) in 1868; city water in 1871; gas street lights in 1876; electric lights and telephones in 1878 (only two years after the invention of the latter); and a paved street (Walnut from First to Fifth) in 1882.

Times were also changing for the city’s undertakers. Until the Civil War, embalming was used only to preserve bodies for medical purposes. Thus, one of the tasks of the enterprising undertaker was to keep the body cool and preserved until the funeral. Instead of embalming equipment, the undertaker would go to the home of the deceased with a cooling tank and ice. Frequently friends and relatives were enlisted to place cooling cloths on the body. Needless to say, funerals were held promptly, particularly in the summer. Modern embalming for funeral purposes was born of necessity on the Civil War battlefields with the desire to return the war dead to their home communities for burial. The teaching of embalming techniques for undertakers began.

The undertaker now had responsibility beyond building or outfitting a casket and providing transportation and mourning mementos. He now needed to learn the techniques for embalming a body. In Iowa, embalming requirements passed in 1895 included the examination of persons who would be licensed to perform embalming.
Although there were many who did not engage in the undertaking business for any length of time, three men whose names would be linked to undertaking and funeral homes for over a quarter of a century came on the scene in the 1890s: Ezra J. Selover, James W. Patrick, and J.E. McDermott.

Ezra J. Selover came to Des Moines from Nevada, Iowa, and worked for the Reynolds Furniture store before setting up his own business at 620 East Grand in 1891.

James W. Patrick was born in Rome, New York, in 1850 and came to Des Moines with his parents when he was about ten years old. The family bought and settled on a farm just north of the present state capitol building. Patrick was in his mid-twenties when he began his livery business at 526 East Grand. Although his 1920 obituary indicates that he worked as an undertaker in conjunction with the livery, he first listed himself as one in 1898.

John E. McDermott set up his undertaking and church goods supply business at 420 Sixth Avenue in 1898. A native of Pennsylvania, he moved with his family...
to Maryville, Missouri, at the age of six and lived in Council Bluffs, Iowa, for four years prior to moving to Des Moines.

Since undertaking had traditionally been a profession handed down from generation to generation, it is not surprising that by the 1890s the second generation of two Des Moines undertaker families was moving into the business: Louis Harbach’s son William and Gustaf Newlen’s son Iver. Their roles in their family-owned businesses were completely different.

William Harbach assisted his father in the family business of which undertaking was only a part. Over the years the Harbachs themselves had become less involved with the day-to-day operation of the undertaking business. In fact, managers were now in charge of undertaking for Harbach’s. In 1893 William Harbach launched another family enterprise and began selling undertakers’ supplies at 417 Walnut.

The Newlen firm was much smaller. After attending East High and Bowen Business College in Des Moines, Iver graduated from the Chicago College of Embalming. He worked for his father beginning in 1892. When Gustaf died in 1901, Iver became owner. That same year the Newlen business moved from East Locust to 619 East Grand. Young Newlen, a Republican, was also interested in politics and was elected county coroner in 1906 and 1909.

Of course, the work of undertakers was not confined to Des Moines; surrounding Polk County communities had undertakers, too. Thomas Anderson, an immigrant from Ireland and one of Bondurant’s earliest citizens, opened an undertaker’s business on the second floor of the town’s first retail building. In Ankeny, Dr. Morgan, who also owned a drugstore, opened an undertaking business in the early 1900s. Another early Ankeny undertaker was Earnest Walter’s furniture and undertaking business. In Polk City, A. Snyder was listed as the community’s undertaker in 1886.

The Carson Furniture and Undertaking firm was one of thirty-four businesses listed in Mitchellville at the turn of the century. Abel Carson started the business in the late 1800s and was joined by his son Bert. The younger Carson endeared himself to town residents with his regular newspaper column, “Turned Loose,” featuring the antics of the residents of the mythical community of Spikerville and comments such as “Lunk Hunkers says some fellers drive like they don’t care how long it would take the undertaker to fix them up.” Carson also had an interest in local politics. Although Mitchellville records are incomplete from 1913 to 1929, Carson was the city’s mayor at the beginning and end of this period. He also served on the community’s school board.
The New Century Begins:
Family Names for the Future

By the early 1900s three men who would found funeral homes which would carry their names into the twenty-first century were engaged in undertaking in Des Moines. Alfred Dahlstrom had opened his own undertaking business; LeRoy Dunn and Lee Hamilton were working in established undertaking businesses. Of the three, only Hamilton's firm would continue to be owned and operated by the founder's descendants at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Alfred Dahlstrom was approaching forty years of age and looking toward the future when he decided to become an undertaker. He realized that cars were becoming popular and that the demand for his livery services would diminish over the next few years. This was not the first career change for Dahlstrom. Born in Dalsland, Sweden, in 1867, he worked on a farm there until coming to the United States in 1887. He first settled in Minnesota but found the weather there “too cold.” A year later he went to Oswalt, Iowa, where he worked in the coal mines. He moved to Des Moines, and in 1897 he went into the livery business at 624 East Grand. Later he and his brother Gus purchased a building for Alfred’s livery business at 609-611 East Grand across the street from Gus’s grocery business. Dahlstrom loved his new homeland and shared that love with other Swedish immigrants as they arrived in Des Moines. He met them at the train and urged them to obtain their American citizenship at the first opportunity.

In Sweden Dahlstrom had one year of schooling; the youth had done so well that his father said no more was needed. Dahlstrom had a different idea. When he came to the United States, he started in first grade with the youngest students and finished eight years of schooling bit-by-bit. The decision to become an undertaker meant more schooling, but Dahlstrom persevered. He graduated from Worsham in Chicago and opened his undertaking business in March 1906 at the livery location. Several years later he closed out the livery and moved to 634 East Grand.

LeRoy C. Dunn was a native of Monmouth, Illinois. After working as a pressman for a newspaper there, he became a traveling salesman for the Maple City Cigar Company. He followed his sales career for several years and also started studying undertaking. In 1903 he took an undertaking position with James W. Patrick for one year. He then left Des Moines and moved to Perry, where he took charge of the undertaking department of the Gamble Furniture
Company for one year. In 1905 he returned to Des Moines to work. In 1908 Dunn purchased a half interest in the business of Ezra J. Selover with Selover-Dunn located at 630 East Grand. A year later the partners purchased the west side business of Henry Gray. This location in the 1100 block of Locust was known as Dunn-Selover, and Dunn remained on the west side when he and Selover ended their partnership. Dunn bought out Lewis Shank, then located at Ninth and Locust, and opened his own firm.

Lee Hamilton was born in Rigdon, Indiana, and in 1901 came to Conrad, Iowa, where his maternal grandparents and cousins lived, to farm. Three years later he moved to Des Moines and began working at the Rothert McBride Undertaking firm, which was located across the street from the house where Hamilton boarded. By this time Hamilton was an Iowan at heart. When he returned to Indiana in 1905, he found himself so homesick for Iowa that he came back in two weeks. When the money he had in his pocket would only get him as far as Peoria, Illinois, he pawned his overcoat for the rest of the fare to Des Moines. A member of several lodges, Hamilton began to develop the acquaintances that would become his following as a funeral director. He met Blanche Vennerstrom at a Rebekah’s meeting and married her in June 1910. During his early years in Des Moines, Hamilton not only worked for McBride but also for Henry Shank and James W. Partick.
In 1913 Hamilton purchased an interest in a funeral home with Ezra J. Selover and Otto Knight. Within a few years Hamilton bought out Knight and the business became known as Selover-Hamilton. Knight, known as “Jack” by his friends, sought new horizons in the western part of the United States. He settled in California, first working for Bresee Brothers and then for Pierce Brothers Mortuaries, both of Los Angeles. In the 1940s he became manager of Pierce Brothers’ Lincoln Heights facility and remained there until his retirement.

Although the Dahlstrom, Dunn, and Hamilton firms would carry those names into the twenty-first century, three other emerging firms of this first decade of the new century would serve Des Moines families for over a quarter of a century before closing: McBride’s, O’Donoghue’s, and Tomlinson’s.

Rothert R. McBride had been in Des Moines since the 1890s. He was born in 1876 in Adair County and farmed with his father for a short time before coming to Des Moines. He started learning the embalming business at Harbach’s and in 1896 went to work for James W. Patrick for about ten years. He then went into business for himself at Partick’s East Grand location. By many reports,
McBride’s popularity quickly made his undertaking firm one of the largest of the day, serving perhaps as many as 300 families per year. He was elected president of the Iowa Funeral Directors Association in 1910, the first Des Moines undertaker to have this honor. During these years his name was linked with Patrick’s several times, but by 1914 the firm carried McBride’s name only. McBride championed the funeral director’s participation in examining and licensing. He put his time where his words were and served ten years on the licensing examination board for the State of Iowa.

William O’Donoghue was a Des Moines street car conductor when he started studying embalming. He came from a family of four boys raised in the Norwoodville area of the city. In fact, a portion of the family’s farm was given as a school site (2003 Norwoodville school, Broadway and East Twenty-Ninth). Members of O’Donoghue’s local union backed him in his move to a new profession by loaning him funds to get the new venture off the ground. In 1908 he and partner Mark Hoskins went into business at 500 East Grand. Over the years the firm served many working class people, including a number of east side Roman Catholic and Protestant families.
William O’Donoghue noted on the back of this picture: “This one the boys snapped when I was not looking. I was just getting up on the carriage.”

(Courtesy of Groden O’Donoghue)

The partnership itself continued only two years, ending when Hoskins left to enter an undertaking business with his brother Frank in Keota, Iowa. Hoskins was then in business in Ollie, Iowa, and worked as a salesman for National Casket Company before buying the Davies Undertaking Company in Fairfield, which he operated under his name until his death in 1954.

O’Donoghue continued in business in Des Moines, meeting his future wife, Nellie, at a funeral in Creston in 1910. She worked for McGregor-Coen Brothers (later known as the Beaty-Coen Funeral Home) in that southern Iowa town. The couple married in 1915.

Unlike many of the other undertakers of the day, Charles B. Tomlinson had garnered his embalming education before he came to Iowa. Born in 1857 in Zanesville, Ohio, Tomlinson had first worked as a buggy maker in his native state before going into his brother-in-law’s undertaking business, Pletcher and Son in 1888. (Pletcher and Son of Columbus, Ohio, closed in the mid-1940s.) Tomlinson, his wife, and teenage son came to Iowa in 1908 and located his
business at 1107 Walnut. Tomlinson was very active in the First Church of Christ, and many of the families that he served came from that congregation. (Tomlinson's son continued in the family tradition of funeral service, but not in Des Moines. In 1917 he became a partner in the Osborne-Tomlinson firm in Atlantic, Iowa, buying out his partner's share in 1929. The younger Tomlinson remained in business in Atlantic until 1943.)

M.L. Duley, Henry Gray, and Roy S. Ross were other undertakers who operated firms at this time. Each was in business fewer than ten years.

M.L. Duley worked for the railroad for twenty-three years before studying embalming. He came to Des Moines from Peoria, Illinois, in 1901 and started a business at 815 Locust, which continued until 1910. During the late 1880s this location had been the site of L.J. Wells' livery and undertaking business which advertised “Finest Funeral Furnishings and Coaches.”

Henry Gray, a Vermont native, came to Des Moines from Hampton, Iowa, in 1901. In Hampton he was first in the hotel business and, after taking an embalming course locally, he became an undertaker. In Des Moines he went into business in the 1100 block of Locust, a location formerly occupied for several years by the livery and undertaking business of W.B. Porter and W.L. Tetley. Eight years later Gray sold out to the Selover and Dunn partnership, and Gray went into the real estate business.

Ross Livery and Undertaking at 515-517 East Grand, which was later listed as Ross and Ross (Nettie and Roy S.), was in business from 1908 to 1914.

The first ten years of the twentieth century also saw the development of businesses closely allied to the local undertaker: the Des Moines Casket Company and the Hohenschuh-Carpenter School of Embalming. Casket manufacturing would continue in Des Moines into the 1970s. The embalming school would have a thirty-year tenure in the city.

The development of the casket manufacturing industry was a natural outgrowth of the changes in furniture manufacturing and in the services provided by funeral directors. The new undertakers were coming from a variety of backgrounds; no longer did they rely on cabinetry or livery as an entry into the profession.

Around the turn of the century, Des Moines Cabinet Company became known as Des Moines Casket Company. This growing business was located at 416-420 East First Street (2003 site of Des Moines City Hall). The company's wares included caskets and fine funeral hacks. W.H. Antes was president of
While the automobile was quickly becoming the preferred means of transportation, the livery-undertaking business was still an important element in Des Moines. This advertisement is taken from a 1909 city directory.
the company and F.L. Hartung, its treasurer. The two were also listed in 1900 in the same offices for the Wells and Antes Undertaking Company. Hartung had previously served as president and manager of the cabinet company.

The establishment of the Hohenschuh-Carpenter School of Embalming in Des Moines was not only significant to undertakers in the capital city and the rest of the state, but also to the growth of the profession throughout the United States. The school was named for its founders: William Price Hohenschuh, who had already earned a nationwide reputation for the reformation and upgrading of early embalming practices, and William S. Carpenter, a doctor who was serving the families of Altoona in eastern Polk County.

Hohenschuh was born in Iowa City, Iowa, where his father conducted an undertaking and furniture establishment. When his father's 1878 death cut the youth's college education short, he left his studies at the University of Iowa to manage the family business. Undaunted, Hohenschuh became a corresponding student of Dr. Auguste Renouard and embalmed his first case in 1879.
Not happy to be just a student and follower, Hohenschuh became a teacher of mortuary science in 1890 when he delivered his first lecture in Marshalltown, Iowa. The following year he established a touring school giving lectures and demonstrations throughout the United States. His reputation as a master embalmer and gifted teacher grew; embalmers throughout the nation looked to him for answers to their most technical problems.

In addition to lecturing and demonstrating embalming techniques, Hohenschuh was instrumental in the founding of the Iowa Funeral Directors Association and in promulgating legislation that governed embalming. In 1887, the first year the Iowa Funeral Directors met in Des Moines, members elected Hohenschuh to serve as their president. Seven years later he was elected president of the National Funeral Directors Association, and then re-elected the following year. By this time Hohenschuh had established the Iowa State School of Embalming in Iowa City and helped found two Chicago, Illinois, embalming schools: the Chicago College of Embalming and the Western College of Embalming.

Dr. William S. Carpenter advertised a two-week embalming course at his recently opened Des Moines College of Embalming in the August 1901 issue of Embalmers’ Monthly. (Courtesy of Arnold J. Dodge, The Dodge Corporation)
Diploma from the Hohenschuh-Carpenter School of Embalming, dated 1907, four years after Professor William P. Hohenschuh and Dr. William S. Carpenter joined their schools in Des Moines.

(Courtesy of the Undertaker’s Shop at the Living History Farms.)

One student at the Iowa City school was Dr. William S. Carpenter, a dedicated country doctor serving the Altoona community. Carpenter was born in Lucas County, Iowa, in 1871. Immediately after graduating from the School of Medicine at the University of Louisville in 1894, he entered medical practice in eastern Polk County and soon became interested in the emerging science of embalming. Around the turn of the century, the young doctor attended Hohenschuh’s Iowa City school and also taught some anatomy classes there. Dr. Carpenter founded the Des Moines College of Embalming at 1427-1428 Locust in 1901.
In 1903 Carpenter and Hohenschuh joined their schools in Des Moines with classes being held in the Securities Building. The school, with its reputation as one of the most progressive and advanced institutions of its kind, attracted not only Iowans but also students from all other states. Of course, Des Moines funeral service reaped the benefits of the young undertakers who came to the city for their education and apprenticeships.

Another city business related to funeral service was Rex Fluid Company. This manufacturer of embalming fluids was located at 908 Walnut from 1905 to 1911. Edward D. Pierce was the company's president and W.H. Mitchell served as secretary and treasurer.

At the close of the decade, Iowans and others around the nation were being introduced to the burial vault concept. The utility of the vault was graphically shown to Iowa State Fair goers. About six weeks before the fair, a vault loaded with paper documents was buried in the open stream that then ran through the fairgrounds. During the fair, the vault was dug up and opened, and its dry contents presented to the crowds.

Early motorized funeral coach.
The Teens:
The Move from Storefronts Begins

As the second decade of the century began, the city's population had jumped to 86,368, and the Lilly family name became part of Des Moines funeral service. Members of the Lilly family would serve Des Moines for nearly fifty years. The Lilly firm got its name from two brothers/owners, Joe and Evan Lilly, members of a Welsh mining family. Joe, the older of the two, was born in the early 1880s in Cleveland, Iowa, a small mining town. Life was not easy for the large family; young Joe started to work in the mines at the age of eight. He might have continued as a miner if it had not been for what he later termed “a lucky mining accident” when he was twenty-two. During the recuperation period he began spending time at Newlen’s and then went to work for Harbach’s and later for Shanks.

Younger brother, Evan, who had been employed as a baker's helper, served his apprenticeship at Barnard's Funeral Parlor in Sloan, Iowa, in 1910 and became licensed as an embalmer. The brothers, with the financial backing of an older brother Charlie, founded the firm in 1911 at 549 Chestnut Street which later became part of Keosaqua Way. (In 2003 this address corresponded to the southeast corner of the Watson Powell Jr. Way and Sixth Avenue intersection.) Since the new firm did not yet have enough business for both men, Evan

Inside William O'Donoghue’s storefront location at 500 East Grand in 1914.
(Courtesy of Groden O'Donoghue)
worked for Iowa firms in Whiting and Sioux City, Iowa, and then established a
funeral home in Runnells. He was in Runnells from 1916 to 1922 and operated
a furniture and grocery business in addition to being the town’s undertaker.

During this time several undertakers served the city’s black community. The
first of any record in city directories were Vivian L. Jones and George W. Lucas
in 1910 and 1911. As with many other undertakers, Jones was listed in several
partnerships during the first quarter of the century. After Lucas left, Jones
continued at 519 East Court for another four years and then moved to 1107
East Walnut with Americus Samuels in 1916. The Walnut Street building
housed the undertaker’s storefront and lodge meeting rooms. (Some accounts
indicate that one member of the Samuels family was a woman undertaker —
the first black woman undertaker in Iowa.)

Lafayette Fowler, founder of the city’s oldest black funeral home of the 1990s,
came to Des Moines in 1910 and started his own firm before the dawn of the
1920s. “Lafe,” one of seven children of a poor Kansas City family, left home in
the late 1800s at the age of twelve. He became a hobo, traveling about and
making a little money which he sent back to his family. When Fowler arrived in

L.F. Shank Undertaking Parlors (circa 1916). Note the
name of LeRoy Dunn, mortician, on far right hand window,
indicating that Dunn’s business was housed here prior to
his move to the late Richard Clarkson’s residence.
In 1916 Dunn’s Funeral Home moved into the remodeled residence of Richard Clarkson, deceased owner-editor of the *Iowa State Register*. The home, a showcase of fine woods and fine woodworking, was well known for the wall and ceiling detailing as shown in the above picture of the office and waiting room. This picture first appeared in the August 1916 edition of *The Embalmers’ Monthly*. The illustration of the funeral home was used in newspaper ads of the period.
Des Moines, he liked the city and decided to call a halt to his nomadic life. A childhood friend, Griffo, who had accompanied Fowler, didn’t care for Des Moines and returned to Kansas City.

Fowler tackled a number of jobs to earn a living including being a driver for the Reel Yellow Cab Company. This job put him in contact with Joe Lilly, who encouraged Fowler to open a business to serve the black community. With Lilly’s encouragement, Fowler learned embalming and for a short time worked for Lilly’s and Harbach’s. A brother Frank, who had also moved to Des Moines and worked for the Reel Yellow Cab Company, also studied embalming. The brothers took over the Samuels business in 1917. The brothers’ working together did not last long; Frank became affiliated for a short time with Vivian Jones. Lafe continued the family business with the assistance of his wife Ella, who had also come to Des Moines from Kansas City.

Establishment of casket companies followed a pattern similar to the establishment of undertaking firms. Individuals would learn the trade at an established firm and then start into business for themselves. Two employees of Des Moines Casket Company, Edwin and James Root (a father and son), founded the Root Casket Company in the 600 block of Cherry Street in 1913. The elder Root was born in Illinois in 1860. He owned and managed the Root Hardware Company in Bradford, Illinois, from 1884 to 1887 and then worked for ten years as general agent of the Walter A. Wood Harvester Company of Hossic, New York. In 1898 he came to Boone, Iowa, and worked as secretary and treasurer of the Stowel Furniture and Undertaking Company there. In 1902 he joined Des Moines Casket Company as its treasurer. Five years later, in 1907, his 23-years-old son James became a salesman for Des Moines Casket. The Root Casket Company would continue in business for over fifty years, and several other smaller casket manufacturers would go in and out of business in Des Moines during that time.

Although the tradition of funeral homes being linked with furniture and other businesses continues today in some small communities where the number of calls is low, Des Moines funeral directors began phasing out their related businesses quite quickly. One exception was J.E. McDermott, who continued to maintain a church supply house that served the Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches in conjunction with his funeral work.

The move from the undertaking establishment to a home for funerals, generally one of the larger residences of the city, began. Until this time the undertaker’s business had been housed in storefronts which had an office and sometimes a
chapel for services and/or casket display rooms. Since most embalmings were done in the deceased's home, any preparation room that did exist at the establishment was in the basement. Generally, when the embalmer received a call, he would pack up his equipment and go to the home, often via the street car, to prepare the body. The family would select a casket from those in stock at the undertaker's storefront office or be taken to the Harbach wholesale business or a local casket company to make a selection. Some firms trimmed out their own caskets, purchasing only a shell to which they added hardware and an interior. Visitations were held in the home and the funeral service in the church, home, or storefront chapel.

Some families like the Dahlstroms and the O'Donoghues lived above these storefront chapels or establishments. With the family close at hand and the number of calls smaller than other firms, little extra help was employed and the entire family took an active part. For example, Alfred Dahlstrom's wife did the cosmetics and the hair and dressed the deceased, often using needle and thread to fit a sleeve or a neckline. His daughter, Mabel, was answering the phone from the time she was nine years old. Although the family moved their home to a duplex on East Seventh in 1907, their participation continued and Mrs. Dahlstrom would often invite the families of the deceased over for a meal several days after the funeral.

The Iver Newlen Funeral Home moved into this residence at 1427 Woodland before 1920.

(Courtesy of Marie Newlen Martin)
The move from the storefront to the funeral home was not immediate for all the firms but had been completed by the mid-thirties. LeRoy Dunn leased the home of Richard Clarkson, deceased owner-editor of the Iowa State Register. The home at 805 Pleasant Street, which had served as the site of many political and legislative gatherings of importance during Clarkson's editorship, became Dunn's Funeral Home in 1916.

That same year Lilly's leased and moved to a frame house owned by Grover Hubbell. The brothers purchased the residence at Fifteenth and High three years later.

By 1920 Iver Newlen and Rothert R. McBride had moved their businesses from East Grand to houses on the west side of Des Moines, 1427 Woodland and 1025 High, respectively. McBride died in January 1931, three years after retiring from the funeral business.

The Harbachs constructed the first structure in Des Moines built exclusively for mortuary purposes. Located on the east side of the 700 block of Sixth Avenue, the two-story building of buff-colored tapestry brick had a chapel for funeral services; a white-tiled, amphitheater-styled preparation room; and garages so that family members and the deceased could be loaded into waiting vehicles protected from the weather. The facility housed not only the funeral home but also Harbach's wholesale business and the Hohenschuh-Carpenter School.

In August 1916, shortly after this building was completed, Louis Harbach died at the age of seventy-seven. Although his son William had been managing the retail and wholesale funeral firms for a number of years, the elder Harbach had remained active in other business interests until several days before his death. His obituary included a long list of accomplishments in the city of Des Moines: a number of building firsts including the new mortuary building, author of the idea for the city park system, and chairmanship of the commission that bought land for the new post office.

Two years later, in 1918, William Harbach signed over the funeral and wholesale business to Harry F. Schoen, who would carry on the business under the Harbach name for another thirty years until 1948. Schoen, a Des Moines native, was a banker by trade when he became the owner of Harbach's. Previously, he had been connected with both the Mechanics Bank and the Des Moines Trust and Savings. Schoen did not study embalming but instead relied on hiring or aligning himself with people who were licensed.
In spite of all the changes taking place in local funeral firms, the biggest single funeral story of the decade was the Spanish Influenza outbreak during World War I. Of course, the war itself had produced some changes in Des Moines funeral firms, with many apprentices and younger undertakers enlisting. Dr. Carpenter stepped aside from his work with the school to serve in the medical corps. But these difficulties were minor in comparison to the Spanish Influenza epidemic which arrived in the fall of 1918. The epidemic began in New England in mid-September and by early October had reached Des Moines. Here, like in many other cities, the greatest outbreak was at the army camp. Camp Dodge was under siege by the disease. More than 10,000 cases were

The first facility built exclusively for mortuary purposes was finished in 1916. It housed the Harbach Funeral Home and Crematory until the early 1940s and the Hohenshuh-Carpenter School of Embalming until the early 1930s. Within 10 years after the building was completed, Sixth Avenue was lowered, exposing the basement. More stairs were added to the main entrance. The building was used later by the College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery and was torn down in 1983.

(Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa.)
confirmed at the Des Moines military installation during the next few weeks and over 700 people (two of every 100 in the camp) died.

The camp was by no means equipped to take care of the large number of sick persons, let alone that number of deaths. The latter task fell to Des Moines funeral directors, who joined together to work around the clock during the emergency. Bodies were brought to the new Harbach facility for embalming, casketing, and shipping. Funeral directors reported that often the person who had helped load a body one morning would be the same person whose body was picked up the next day.

The city suffered from the epidemic but to a much lesser extent. Although an exact death count is not available, newspaper accounts indicate that in the city twenty-seven died the first week and seventeen the second, with additional deaths in the following weeks. The combination of military and city influenza deaths and the normal death rate of the city was a staggering load, creating a physical and mental toll on the city's funeral directors. Lee Hamilton's red hair turned nearly gray during the month.

By late October the crisis had ended; the quarantines, which had included such things as cancellation of classes and high school football games, were lifted; and Camp Dodge reported a return to a normal death rate. On the first Sunday of November, a memorial service was held for the victims from Camp Dodge.
An official list of licensed embalmers issued by the State of Iowa in 1918 included this directive to railroad personnel.

(Courtesy of Mabel Dahlstrom Borg)


The names listed for other Polk County cities include Thomas Anderson, Bondurant; Albert Carson, Mitchellville; Evan B. Lilly, Runnells,
The Twenties:  
The Move to Homes Continues

In 1920 the city bustled with 126,468 people; many who had come during the war decided to make Des Moines their permanent home. While existing funeral firms continued the move from their storefront locations to homes, four major new firms began: Caldwell's, McLaren's, Wilson's, and White's. Three of these businesses would continue into the 1990s: the Caldwell and McLaren names would remain for over sixty years, while the Wilson firm would be purchased by John Estes, Sr. The fourth new firm, White's, would enjoy a colorful career for the next twenty years.

Earl McLaren was forty-three years old when he arrived in Valley Junction to found Valley Funeral Home in 1921. (That western suburb of Des Moines would become West Des Moines in 1938.) Being a funeral director was McLaren's second career. He completed his education as a doctor of osteopathic medicine at Still College in 1902 and then practiced medicine for nine years in Brainard, Minnesota, and Denison, Iowa, before becoming a funeral director.

Newspaper and/or directory advertising provides the only information about some Des Moines Funeral Homes like Modlin's Funeral Home in 1927.
The first location of E. Carl White Funeral Home in Des Moines.
In 1911 he graduated from Hohenschuh-Carpenter. In this new profession he first partnered with I.B. Alfred of Denison in the furniture and undertaking business. In 1912 he returned to his hometown of Manilla, Iowa, and to McLaren and White Furniture and Undertaking. His last move before coming to Valley Junction was to Adair, Iowa, in 1917, where he owned McLaren Furniture and Undertaking Company. In Valley Junction he opened his undertaking business on the first floor of a storefront on the north side of the 200 block of Maple Street. (John Joice Photography occupied the second floor.) McLaren's furniture business was in the 100 block of Fifth Street. In 1927 the business moved to a residence at 300 Sixth Street. The McLaren family also lived at this location.

E. Carl White started his business at 2015 Grand in 1925 and moved across the street to 2140 Grand two years later. Born in Jacksonville, Illinois, in 1892, White was no stranger to Des Moines. In 1916 he attended Hohenschuh-Carpenter, and from 1917 to 1919 he was stationed at Camp Dodge where he served as director of mortuary service. From 1919 until coming to Des Moines

After two years at 2015 Grand, E. Carl White moved his firm across the street to this residence at 2140 Grand.
Joe (left) and Evan Lilly used this 1924 ad to show the progress of their firm from its store front location.

While the ad indicates that the Lilly Brothers may have opened their business as early as 1900, city directories indicate a later date. According to other information the firm started in 1911, although Joe Lilly was working as an undertaker in the city shortly after the turn of the century. By 1924, the location the firm occupied in 1916 (at left) had grown to the building shown in the ad.
he owned and operated the E. Carl White Funeral Home in Quincy, Illinois. Mrs. E. Carl White (Melva) was a Des Moines native and the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Heston of the city's Highland Park area. She was also a licensed embalmer and advertising noted that she was in charge of all “women's and children's cases.”

Roy Caldwell was born in Leon, Iowa, and came to Des Moines with his family in 1902. He attended Hohenschuh-Carpenter, the Worsham College of Embalming in Chicago, and Eckels-Derma Surgical College in Philadelphia. Before opening his own business, he worked for four years for Selover and Dunn, one year for Newlen Funeral Home, and then served as manager of the McDermott Funeral Home. He opened his own funeral home in 1929 at 1041 Sixth Avenue.

Although Roy Caldwell didn’t come from a funeral family, his wife, Esther (McIlhon), did. Her parents had been undertakers in the small Jasper County community of Valeria, about two miles east of the Polk County line. She, too, was licensed and both Caldwells taught classes at Hohenschuh-Carpenter.

The owner of the fourth new firm, Tug Wilson, came to Des Moines from the predominately black mining community of Buxton, Iowa. He worked for several years at the Yeoman building before receiving his mortuary training.

This 1929 advertisement features photos of Roy and Esther Caldwell, owners of Caldwell Funeral Home.
In the late 1920s he went into business with Vivian Jones, by now a familiar name in black funeral service, at 811 Fourteenth Street, and the firm quickly became known as Wilson’s.

Several other funeral directors had firms for short periods of time during the 1920s. Roy Handy served members of the city’s black community at 608 Eighth Street with an associate, J.W. Bland, and then at 1209 Center.

For several years in the middle of the decade, W. Harold McIntyre, a native of Hartford, Iowa, had a funeral home at 3217 Southwest Ninth (in 1999 part of the Park Avenue Christian Church property). McIntyre enjoyed this profession but did not have the finances to expand adequately. After he closed his funeral firm, he became a successful merchant. After operating several hardware stores, he built the McIntyre Furniture Store in West Des Moines in 1943. He operated that business until illness forced him into retirement in the 1970s. He died in 1983, the same year his wife Mildred sold the furniture business that she had continued to operate after McIntyre’s retirement.

Another funeral director who was briefly in Des Moines was Mark Elliott, who opened a funeral home at 3401 Sixth Avenue in May 1928. (Note that this was not the first account of a funeral director at the 3401 Sixth Avenue address. Joel Johnson of 3401 Sixth Avenue was included in the undertaker listing in the 1919 city directory.) The newspaper account of the new funeral home says that Elliott, the son of Dr. W.J. Elliott of Dawson who formerly practiced in Des Moines, was born and raised in the city and had worked at a Perry funeral home before coming back to Des Moines.

The city also had a new casket company. Des Moines Casket Company went bankrupt in 1921. When the factory at Southeast Eighth and Market was vacated, a number of horse-drawn hearses manufactured by the firm were taken to the city dump and burned. Three men: Lee Tucker, John Sloan, and Charles Wyandt, bought the company’s remaining casket inventory and started a new company at 108 Indiana. This new company was known as The Des Moines Casket Company, the name differing from that of the earlier firm only in the use of the capitalized word “The.”

Another funeral-related business of this period was Lagerquist Auto at Second and Keosauqua Way. This firm took late model used Lincolns, Cadillacs, and Packards; cut the cars in two and added extra doors to make vehicles for funeral service. The business, founded by Henry Lagerquist as a blacksmith shop in 1888, later became a carriage company and in 1910 an auto company. The firm sold its funeral vehicles throughout the Midwest until the mid-1930s.
Charles B. Tomlinson moved his business to 545 Sixth Avenue and later to a house at 915 Sixth Avenue. Selover and Hamilton leased and moved to the former home of prominent businessman H.C. Hansen at 520 East Ninth, and McDermott’s moved from Sixth Avenue to 1923 Grand, a house that abutted the rear of the family home on Ingersoll.

The residents of the city were quite pleased with the services and comfort afforded by these new homelike quarters. They welcomed the establishment of an embalming facility so that the preparation of the body did not need to be completed in the family home. At first the body was embalmed in the funeral home and then returned to the family home for visitations, but families soon began holding visitations in the funeral home, too.

Several segments of the community did raise questions about the concept of locating funeral businesses in former residences. Insurance people questioned whether this was now a home or business. Sometimes neighbors tried to keep

The L. Fowler and Son Funeral Home in the twenties or early thirties. Pictured from the top: Lafe Fowler, Jr.; Lafe Fowler, Sr.; Ella Fowler

(Courtesy of Larry Fowler)
the funeral home from moving into their immediate neighborhood, contending that it was not a home. Some said funeral firms should be allowed in districts designated for multiple dwellings, arguing that including them in commercial districts would only increase traffic congestion. Others pointed out that in past years funerals were held in homes or churches with no persons objecting, so these new funeral homes should be located in the same class of territory.

Since the city did not pass its first zoning law until 1926, there were no clear answers. At least two funeral homes were advised to move a body in during the night to establish the house as a funeral home. When the L. Fowler and Son Funeral Home moved into 1701 Walker, and the O’Donoghue Funeral Home moved to 1326 East Ninth, this tack was used. (Both families lived above the business at these locations.)

O’Donoghue Funeral Home, 1326 East Ninth, was across the street from Visitation Catholic Church. The funeral home served eastside families including many in this parish.

(Courtesy of Groden O’Donoghue)
Interestingly enough, the debate continued after the zoning laws were established. For example, when the Caldwells bought the dwelling at 1188 Twenty-First Street in 1931 with plans to remodel it as a funeral home, Attorney Clyde Kirk, who lived around the corner at 2118 University, objected. Even though the zoning ordinance permitted the use of the property in this manner he told the City Council that the establishment would be a nuisance and would lessen the value of his property.

William O’Donoghue’s joy in his new place of business close to Visitation Church was short-lived. In 1924 he moved in. In 1929 he contracted pneumonia while working a funeral and died. His widow, with the assistance of her husband’s longtime assistant Roland Davis, kept the funeral home open until 1935.

While some of the city’s funeral directors were moving businesses to their first home sites, LeRoy Dunn was making plans for a bigger funeral home at 2121 Grand. For this project he purchased three adjacent homes on the north side of Grand from three Harbach family members. An addition was built to join the two houses to the west, forming the new colonial style funeral home.

While several Des Moines funeral homes were making their first moves from storefronts, LeRoy Dunn was remodeling and joining two frame Harbach homes into a single structure in 1926. Dunn’s Funeral Home has occupied the resulting facility for over to seventy years.
Harbach's marked its 70th year with this October advertisement in the Des Moines Evening Tribune featuring Louis and William Harbach. A month later William Harbach announced that he had entered a business agreement with LeRoy Dunn and those wishing his services should contact Dunn’s Funeral Home.

(The original plans called for the third house to become a flower shop but that never materialized.) A sunken patio was dug by hand in the resulting structure and artist Grant Wood moved into the third floor to paint. The new facility opened in 1926, and several years later when a young daughter of William Harbach died, visitations were held in the room that had been her bedroom.
Within a month after Dunn's moved to its new facility, William C. Harbach announced that he had formed a business connection with LeRoy C. Dunn and advised “patrons who desired my [Harbach’s] personal services should call Dunn’s Funeral Home.” William Harbach’s name was dropped from advertising of the firm that still carried his family’s name.

Harry Schoen, the current owner of Harbach’s, responded to William Harbach’s announcement with one of his own a month later. Schoen’s facility had a new name – “Schoen and Slininger (Harbach)” – and a new business partner, Clyde L. Slininger. This newcomer was no stranger to the Des Moines business environment; he worked for Harbach’s in 1915. For the previous six years, he had been in business in Jefferson. This partnership lasted a short time. While Schoen’s son Carl, a licensed embalmer, joined his father’s business during the 1930s, the firm would continue to be referred to as Harbach’s, although some advertising would use the name Schoen’s.

While the opening of Dunn’s new facility was the subject of many newspaper stories of the day, it could not top the doings of Joe and Evan Lilly. In 1922 Evan Lilly moved to Ankeny and opened a funeral home at 302 Third Street, expanding the brothers’ operation to three locations. In 1923 they remodeled their High Street facility, and by 1925 Evan had joined Joe at the Des Moines facility.

In 1928 the Lilly brothers announced the creation of the world’s first funeral car in cooperation with eastern coach builders and General Motors. The vehicle accommodated “in the most luxurious comfort” twelve members of the
This advertisement appeared in the *Des Moines Register* several weeks after the merger of Hamilton-Powers and Dunn's Funeral Homes was announced.
immediate family, the minister, the funeral director and assistant, and six pallbearers. It also had casket and flower compartments. The Lilly brothers said the vehicle would take the place of the hearse and three limousines, thus reducing the cost of funerals. The vehicle did not have a long and useful life, as it had trouble navigating the sharp turns of the narrow cemetery roads.

Joe Lilly was very famous in his own right. He had become interested in big game hunting and in 1927 was off to Africa. Local newspapers and the wire service carried tales and photos of his exploits. One Des Moines columnist offered this comment: “The very least his friends can do for Joe Lilly, the lion hunting undertaker, is to run him for mayor or governor . . . Mr. Lilly has no right to the joys of private life when the public claims him.” Unfortunately, during a subsequent trip to Africa in 1929, Joe's son died of dysentery and Lilly had to use crude equipment and native help to embalm the body for the long journey home.

In 1927 Ezra J. Selover, one of the city's pioneer funeral directors, retired and sold his interest in the business to his partner of the past fourteen years, Lee Hamilton.

Shortly thereafter, Hamilton took on a new partner, Clarence Powers of Adel, Iowa. Powers, a native of Kansas, had been engaged in farming for eleven years before becoming a funeral director. He had worked first at Blockton, Iowa, and then at Adel where he also served as Dallas County Coroner from 1923 to 1927. Powers' enthusiasm for his work led three other family members to become funeral directors.

After Powers affiliated with Hamilton, the two of them entered a three-way partnership with Hamilton's personal friend, LeRoy Dunn. In announcing the Hamilton-Powers-Dunn partnership in January 1929, the trio said that the joining of the two interests “will mean better service and material savings, as equipment can now be used interchangeably between the homes and also the staffs can be utilized wherever most needed.” The partnership operated both funeral homes and used Hamilton's vehicles. Powers had an office at both locations and nearly every day walked the thirty plus blocks between the two funeral homes.

The three-way partnership was short-lived. On December 31, 1929, Clarence Powers bought the Cheesman Funeral Home in Oskaloosa, Iowa, which soon became known as the Powers Funeral Home. The next day, January 1, 1930, Lee Hamilton and LeRoy Dunn ended their partnership.
The Thirties:
Changes in Established Firms

In contrast to the growth in number of funeral businesses in Des Moines in earlier decades, the 1930s, with the Great Depression followed by clouds of war, was a time when only two new funeral homes with any longevity were established in the capital city. During the stinging years of the Depression, funeral directors found that they were paid much in the same way as doctors: $1 a week, produce or meat until the bill was paid. Of course, Lee Hamilton knew that some families would not be able to pay funeral costs, but he served them with the same dignity that he served those who could.

Lee Hamilton helped start and sponsor a soup kitchen during the Depression. His partners in this humanitarian effort were Louie Hast, who owned a meat market, and George Mack, a grocer. The soup kitchen itself was at East Sixth and Grand, near the present Hammer's Medical Supply.

However, in spite of all the threats of doom and gloom, the 1930s was a time for change and growth in the existing funeral business. A new alliance was formed with city government: in 1930 the Des Moines City Council voted to buy the devices for lowering caskets into the ground and other equipment and then rent the devices out (for a fee of $5) for each burial. In announcing the decision, the council noted that the move would not only make a slight income for the city but also reduce the cost of funerals, since each firm would no longer need to own the equipment.

Deaths in the 1930s brought changes to four funeral homes. The first death occurred in December 1932, when LeRoy Dunn died in a Texas airplane crash. Ironically, just before the trip Dunn had phoned Lee Hamilton and invited him to come along. Since Hamilton was busy serving two families, he declined the invitation. Dunn was survived by his wife of twenty years and three children.

Clarence Bigelow, a former Christian minister, took over the management of the funeral home after Dunn's death, continuing in that role until 1947. Bigelow, a graduate of Drake University, held pastorates at University Christian in Des Moines and in Adel, Iowa, before returning to Des Moines in the late 1920s and becoming associated with Dunn's. During his employment at Dunn's, he also assisted at University Church of Christ.

The second Des Moines funeral director to die during the 1930s was Roy Caldwell, the victim of a blood disorder caused by an injury on a fishing trip. The forty-one-year-old Caldwell died in October 1933 shortly after the firm had
moved to its new location at Twenty-first and University (built originally as the home of Valley Bank president Nicholas Johnson in 1896). Caldwell's widow Esther, known simply as “Mrs.,” took over as manager of the business. She was soon aided by a nephew Dan McIlhon, whom she had helped rear. Although the McIlhon name was included in the firm’s name for nearly fifteen years, “Mrs.” retained complete ownership of the firm.

Tug Wilson, the third funeral director to die during the decade, was the victim of an automobile accident near Colfax, Iowa, in the fall of 1934. Vivian Jones managed the business for Wilson’s widow, Lena, until John Estes, Sr., purchased the firm in the fall of 1937. Estes was a native of Baxter Springs, Kansas, where his father owned lead mines. He had come to Des Moines about a year earlier. A graduate of Williams Institute of Mortuary Science in Kansas City, Kansas, he had been licensed in 1929 and had worked for a brother’s funeral firm in Pittsburg, Kansas, before coming to Des Moines.

The death of J.E. McDermott in April of 1936 brought about the closing of that firm. In 1939 the funeral home was sold to Caldwell’s, who continued to
operate an ambulance service out of the facility for a short time and then closed the location.

The decade also marked the end of another era. Des Moines and the state of Iowa lost their embalming school. In 1931, Dr. Carpenter announced to the incoming class at Hohenschuh-Carpenter that the school would be moving immediately to St. Louis, Missouri, and merging with the Williams Institute of Mortuary Science. This move was in part prompted by the large number of unclaimed bodies (about 900 per year) available there for the practicum. Dr. Carpenter worked to ease the concerns caused by this sudden move by helping students from his Iowa school find jobs in the St. Louis area.

Despite the troublesome economic climate, some of the city's funeral homes took the opportunity to build and grow. Lee Hamilton purchased the former residence that housed his firm and in 1933 built on a chapel and garages. The Lilly brothers' remodeled and expanded facilities included a 600-seat chapel.

By the early 1930s, Alfred Dahlstrom was getting ready to retire. He closed his establishment on East Grand in 1931 and began operating from a desk at Harbach's on the west side of the river. It seemed as if the Dahlstrom name might even disappear from the roster of funeral homes in the city until son Roy decided to become a funeral director. Roy took the necessary schooling. His father, secure in the knowledge that the family would carry on the business, built a new modern funeral home. The building was completed in 1934 and included an air conditioning system (fans blowing air over tons of ice, circulating it through the funeral home, and lowering the temperature ten degrees).

In 1937, three years after the new building was completed, Dahlstrom announced that he was giving the business to his three children: Roy, who had recently joined the family business, and daughters,
Alice and Mabel. The latter had married Carl Borg and was now teaching school. Pointing out that war was threatening, Dahlstrom advocated Mabel’s becoming a licensed embalmer in case her brother was drafted.

Mrs. Borg followed her father’s wishes and attended the Hohenschuh-Carpenter School of Embalming in St. Louis. The three Dahlstrom children took over the business. Mabel and Roy were licensed funeral directors and sister Alice served as receptionist. Alfred Dahlstrom died in 1948.

On the west side of the city, E. Carl White, who had been elected president of the Iowa Funeral Directors in 1929, had acquired a reputation as a maverick among other funeral directors. He openly sought public attention by wearing a white suit at many social functions and frequently carrying price advertising on billboards and in local newspapers. In 1936 he moved his business west to 2505 Grand Avenue to the remodeled Hippee home. According to a newspaper account, the project cost $10,000 and included a large 45-by-60 foot addition with a service room that would seat 1000.

Within several years E. Carl White had expanded to the city’s east side, with a funeral home at 1204 East Grand. This large residence was built by Isaac Brandt, an Iowa legislator, around 1858, and was known as Cherry Place.

Iver Newlen also sought and won office in the Iowa Funeral Directors Association. He was elected to its presidency in 1936 and then secretary for the organization for thirteen terms from 1939 to 1951. A small man in stature, Newlen would frequently climb up on a chair to get the attention of members at meetings.

The business of the Lilly brothers – Joe, with his red ties and coatless even in the coldest weather, and Evan, the businessman of the firm – continued to grow as did their reputation for innovation and the frame house at 1428 High. They added a white Austin as a hearse for babies. (The vehicle doubled as a flower car for other funerals.) The brothers departed from the traditional white ambulance to a red one. People gathered on the lawn of the funeral home to hear the music broadcast from the lighthouse style tower constructed on the funeral home grounds.

In 1935 the Lilly Funeral Home in Ankeny moved two blocks east to a brick residence at 122 East Third Street. A year later Ken Lilly joined his father and uncle. Young Lilly left after several years to operate a funeral home in Nevada during the war years.

Only two firms with any longevity started during the 1930s: O’Meara’s and the Iowa Jewish Funeral Home.
E. Carl White Funeral Home moved to the former Hippee residence on West Grand (above) in 1936; several years later White opened a second facility in the former Cherry Place on East Grand (below).
As the Lilly brothers’ business continued to grow, so did the funeral home. Above in 1932, a 600-seat chapel was added resulting in this structure. Below, the basement displayed Joe Lilly’s wild game trophies.

[Courtesy of Jim Lilly]
The White-O’Meara Funeral Home opened in a house at 1041 Sixth Avenue in 1933. (This house had previously been the site of the Caldwell Funeral Home.) Joe O’Meara of Williamsburg, Iowa, the funeral director at the firm, had become interested in the profession through his father-in-law Frank Rock, a Williamsburg mortician. O’Meara attended embalming school in Kansas City and returned to his hometown to work with Rock. Several years later, with the financial backing of a local investment banker, Jim White, the White-O’Meara Funeral Home opened. While the business name included the name of the investor for a short time, White was never active in the day-to-day operations.

In 1937 the O’Meara Funeral home moved to 2413 Grand across the street from the O’Meara family home. The new location was the former home of Dr. Hugh
Gilmer Welpton, a medical missionary in China, who later practiced as a physician and surgeon in Des Moines from 1902 to 1929. The house was demolished in the mid-1950s.

The Iowa Jewish Funeral Home was established and built at 1102 Fifth Avenue in 1939 with money raised by the Bethel Jacob Synagogue, located at that time at Fifth and University. It was the only funeral home established by a religious faith in the city's history. The purpose of the non-profit funeral home was to provide funeral service for Jewish people who were unable to afford it so that they could honor their dead with the orthodox ritual. This included facilities for the ritual washing of the body and provision for a correct casket (no metal nails in a wooden casket). Although the setting met these criteria, the funeral home was used infrequently and possibly never for a funeral. The washing of the body took place at the Jewish Funeral Home, but generally the funeral itself was conducted at Harbach's and later Dunn's. In the early 1950s Dunn's Funeral Home agreed to provide a room for the ritual and bought out the caskets in stock. The Jewish Funeral Home was closed and the building sold.

As the decade came to a close, the December 17, 1939, issue of the Des Moines Sunday Register announced the death of William Harbach. The banner head eclipsed a smaller headline about the death of Beryl Carroll, two-time governor of Iowa. Harbach had not been associated for more than thirteen years with the firm that carried his family name; instead he had listed himself as a funeral director with Dunn’s while pursuing banking interests.

The Des Moines Sunday Register banner headline for December 17, 1939 tells of the accidental death of William Harbach.

[Courtesy of the Des Moines Register and Tribune]
This softball team coached by Ardis Peterson of Hamilton’s Funeral Home captured the heart of Des Moines, a state championship, and a berth in national competition in 1940.

Back row left to right: Carleen Koeling, Ruth Chase, Mary Miller, Benola Stoppkotte, Rosie Host. Middle row left to right: Helen Finch, Theone Bassett, Irma Robb, Mary Sykes. Front row left to right: Mona Lee Mentzer, Charlotte Burcher, Wilma Miller, Martha Jane Shannahan, Joan Sovey.
The Forties:  
War and New Faces

The 1940s, a decade challenged by war and its effects, meant many new faces among the city's funeral directors. One of the city's oldest firms added two new partners. Lee Hamilton marked the first day of the new decade by taking on two partners: his son-in-law, Ira Moller, and a valued employee, Ardis Peterson. Hamilton had carefully chosen a new generation of owners for the firm founded by Ezra J. Selover in the late 1800s. He had selected men who would carry on a tradition of excellent service to Des Moines families.

Ira Moller, a native of Fremont, Nebraska, had worked at the Hartman Funeral Home in that community while attending high school. In 1933 he left Fremont with $40 in his pocket for three years' study of chiropody in Chicago. When he returned to Fremont in 1936, he opened a practice treating minor foot ailments.

These biographical sketches of Esther Caldwell and Mabel Dahlstrom Borg appeared in “Women Successful in Mortuary Science.”

Dr. William Carpenter, M.D., President of the College of Mortuary Science in St. Louis, formerly Hohenschuh- Carpenter, wrote this brochure during World War II.

(Courtesy of Mabel Dahlstrom Borg.)
During this time he met Lee Hamilton's daughter, Lucille, who was a student at Midland College. Moller came to Des Moines in the latter part of 1938 and established a practice in the East Des Moines clinic located in the Teachout building. He and Lucille were married. After the partnership with Hamilton and Peterson was formed on January 1, 1940, Moller headed to St. Louis, Missouri, so that he, too, could become a licensed funeral director. His previous education held him in good stead, and he taught classes in chemistry and etymology while attending school.

Ardis Peterson was a farm boy from Ellsworth, Iowa, with an interest in becoming a funeral director. He arrived in Des Moines in 1931 to serve a year of apprenticeship before going to school. After inquiring about positions at several places, he was hired by E. Carl White. There he went on three ambulance calls before discovering that White had more apprentices than allowed by state rules. Peterson heard that Lee Hamilton was looking for additional help and contacted him. Hamilton told the young man to give White proper notice and that a position would be available for him when he was released from his present employment. Peterson's hopes for going to school the next year were almost dashed when Hohenschuh-Carpenter moved to St. Louis. Although young Peterson had saved money from raising beef cattle for his education, he hadn't planned on the school being moved. Hamilton assured Peterson that he would see that money was available for the younger man's education. Peterson went to St. Louis and returned to work for Hamilton.

Interestingly enough, one of the deaths of the early 1940s was pioneer funeral director Ezra J. Selover. He had retired and sold out to Hamilton about sixteen years before he died on January 24, 1943. The morning after his death, the staff at Hamilton's were presented a death certificate Selover had filled out in part nearly thirteen years earlier. Also among Selover's personal effects was a list of pallbearers, four of whom had died since he drew up the list.

On the same day that Selover died, a longtime friend of Iowa and Des Moines funeral directors, R.L. “Red” McLaren also died. McLaren was associated with Des Moines funeral directors by the nature of his work with the Iowa Department of Health and later from 1936 to 1941 as executive secretary of the state association.

Charles B. Tomlinson also died early in the decade. In contrast to Selover, Tomlinson had never completely retired as a funeral director. Although he had closed his funeral home in the late 1930s, he was operating from a desk at Harbach's when he died in 1943.
In the early 1940s, Newlen Funeral Home closed, although Iver Newlen continued to live in the house and to carry out business matters for the Iowa Funeral Directors Association. Newlen died in 1957.

Also in the early 1940s, Harry Schoen moved Harbach’s Funeral Home, including the wholesale business, to 2143 Grand, formerly the residence of R. A. Crawford, pioneer banker and longtime president of the Valley Savings Bank. The Sixth Avenue building was sold to Still Osteopathic College. The structure, which had been built especially for mortuary purposes, was demolished in the early 1980s.

Area casket companies also underwent changes. In 1940 Henry Betts bought The Des Moines Casket Company and moved his millworks to that site, continuing the casket business as a sideline. About that same time Des Moines lawyer, Charles Elmquist, purchased Heggan Casket Company, one of the smaller casket companies that started in the 1930s. Since this was a new endeavor for him, Elmquist decided to learn the business by becoming a
salesman. He continued this work until 1942 when he went to work for the FBI for about four years. When he returned, he renamed his business the Iowa Casket Company.

With the United States engaged in World War II, Des Moines became the first training center for the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps in 1942. Several downtown buildings were used for this purpose until Fort Des Moines could be expanded. The war effort presented challenges for Des Moines funeral directors in terms of adequate personnel, caskets, and other items. The drafting of the younger men severely reduced the availability of help. Since all metal production was directed to the war effort, funeral homes were often faced with an inferior casket product from the standpoints of workmanship and materials used. Metal vaults were also unavailable, which led to the development of a poured concrete product.

After the war, funeral directors were faced with another question as families considered whether to disinter loved ones who had died and been buried on foreign soil. The first time a family asked Ardis Peterson what he would do under those circumstances, he stopped to give the question careful thought and then replied that if he had a son, he would want him home. Many Des Moines families felt the same way. They brought their war dead home and funeral services were held with American flags draped on the closed caskets.

The end of the war brought a number of new faces to the management and ownership of existing firms.
In West Des Moines John McLaren returned to work with his father. (The McLaren Funeral Home had relocated from Sixth Street to a residence at 528 Fifth Street in 1935.) John had been a pre-med student at Iowa State College in Ames before he decided to go into the family business. He took his training at Williams Institute in Kansas City and in 1941 started working for his father. The following year he left for the army, rejoining his father’s business after the war. McLaren’s, formerly known as Valley Funeral Home, became a second generation firm in 1949 when young McLaren bought out his father’s interest.

In 1945 E. Carl White sold his funeral business with locations on West and East Grand to Newton F. Mack and Mitchell O. Bumgardner. The funeral home on the east side carried the White-Bumgardner-Mack name for the next fourteen years while the west side facility was closed a few years after the purchase. Newton Mack, a native of Storm Lake, Iowa, graduated from Buena Vista College in that city in 1937 and graduated from Hohenschuh-Carpenter the following year. For a short time he was associated with firms in Terrill and Estherville, Iowa, until he joined Mitchell Bumgardner in purchasing the Des Moines funeral homes.

Bumgardner, a native of Nora Springs, Iowa, worked at a Storm Lake, Iowa, funeral home from 1932 to 1943 and then came to central Iowa where he purchased the funeral home in Colfax. He continued to operate the Colfax facility after he joined Mack in the partnership.

After E. Carl White left the funeral business, he started selling combination windows. Eventually he moved to Mason City, Iowa, but had returned to Des Moines by the time of his death in 1960.

Just down the street from the White-Bumgardner-Mack Funeral Home on the west side, there was another new name. The Conley Funeral Home opened in May 1946 in the former O’Meara Funeral Home. Joe Conley, the new owner, was a native of Des Moines and had started his career in funeral work in the city about a dozen years earlier. A second cousin, a funeral director in Ottumwa, had piqued his interest in the profession. After graduating from high school, Conley began working as an apprentice at McDermott’s. Since his apprentice wages were low, fifty cents for going out to pick up a body and one dollar for driving for a funeral, Conley also worked at a filling station. He completed mortuary school in 1937 and then returned to Des Moines to continue working at McDermott’s. When that firm closed in 1939, Conley left Des Moines and worked for firms in Clinton and Council Bluffs. In 1944 he enlisted in the
army and served twenty-one months before returning to civilian life and purchasing the O’Meara Funeral Home.

After Joe O’Meara sold his business, he worked developing and marketing combination windows for several years. He then became a casket salesman and worked for several companies, including a longtime position with the Batesville Casket Company in Wisconsin. O’Meara died in the early sixties.

On the north side of Des Moines, a new funeral firm opened in a new location. J.P. Arnold, a native of Lenox, founded the Highland Park Funeral Home in 1948. Before spending some time in the Navy Hospital Corps, Arnold had worked with his father in the family’s funeral home in Lenox and then started a funeral home in Corning. After the war Arnold came to Des Moines looking for a site for his own funeral home. He chose the Highland Park neighborhood, which, in spite of its annexation to Des Moines in 1890, maintained an intense community loyalty.

J. P. Arnold at his desk in the Highland Park Funeral Home.
Arnold purchased a house at 3500 Sixth Avenue, built around the turn of the century by Oliver P. “Pink” Herrick, one of the city's biggest contractors at that time. Most recently the structure had housed the Highland Park American Legion Post. The Legion had enclosed the front porch of the dwelling and added the area which would become the funeral home's chapel. The curly-headed Arnold and Highland Park seemed to hit it off right away. Within two and one-half years, Arnold built on to the home because the number of calls had doubled. Although Arnold had named the home after the neighborhood when he first arrived, the funeral home quickly became known as Arnold's Highland Park.

New faces also appeared in funeral service elsewhere in eastern Polk County. Harry Tuttle opened the Tuttle Funeral Home in Runnells in southeastern Polk County in the summer of 1944. Runnells had been without a resident funeral director since Evan Lilly left the community in 1922, except for a few years in the early 1930s when Glenn Buftin, son of a local doctor, had a firm there. (Buftin moved from Runnells to Stuart, Iowa, where he operated a funeral home for many years.) The Tuttle Funeral Home remained in business until the early 1950s.

In another change in the funeral business in Polk County, Robert Moffitt bought the funeral home in Mitchellville from Lyle Burr in 1947. Burr, who had bought the longtime Carson Funeral Home about seven years earlier, left the area and went into the hotel business. Moffitt’s name would be associated with the Mitchellville home for more than thirty years. Moffitt was a native of the Newton, Iowa, area and had served his apprenticeship time in Newton, Baxter, and for Carson at Mitchellville. For the previous seven years he had been managing the Buchner Funeral Home at Maquoketa, Iowa.

In 1948 there were two major related changes in long-time firms. The Harbach family name dropped out of Des Moines funeral service when Harry Schoen, who had owned and operated the firm for thirty years, sold his business to Joe Lilly. The long-time partnership of brothers had broken up. Joe moved his business and wild game trophy collection to Grand Avenue. Evan remained in business at 1428 High Street with his sons Gary and Jim. Ken, who had been in business with his father and uncle in the 1930s and had started a funeral home in Greeley, Colorado, following the end of World War II, returned to Iowa to work with his father and brothers. Father and sons also continued to operate the funeral home in Ankeny and a new corporation – Evan Lilly Funeral Home, Inc. – was formed. (Gary and Jim left the family business in 1952.)
Lyle Burr announces the transfer of the Burr Funeral Home to Robert Moffitt in 1947.
Harry and Carl Schoen moved the wholesale funeral supply business to the east side. When the business closed in the 1950s, Harry Schoen retired; his son Carl went into construction and then sales. Harry Schoen died in 1960; Carl Schoen, in 1968.

Joe Lilly stayed in business alone for only a short time. He retired to Florida in June 1954 and died in 1962.

About the same time Schoen sold the Harbach Funeral Home business, there were also changes at the Caldwell-McIlhon Funeral Home. Dan McIlhon decided to stop working for his aunt, Esther Caldwell, and go into the monument business on his own. When McIlhon left, he located others to help her manage the firm, including Ben Robbins, Boyd Braman, and Des Moines lawyer Jim Brien.

Ben Robbins, a native of West Des Moines, completed two years at Drake University in the early 1930s. Although he planned to go on to medical school, his father, a railroader by trade, said the money was simply not available. Robbins then elected to go into funeral work. He started with McLaren's in Valley Junction and worked with that firm until John McLaren joined his father's business. After a stint in the service, Robbins came back to Iowa and worked two years for Sherman-Eden in Washington. In 1947 he returned to the Des Moines area and started working for Harbach's. He was with Harry Schoen until the business was sold to Joe Lilly and was working for Lilly when McIlhon approached him.

Although Jim Brien, a lawyer in private practice for nearly twenty years, had no experience in the funeral business, he had a long relationship with Caldwell's. In his youth Brien had participated as an altar boy in many funeral masses at the nearby Basilica of St. John. Arrangements for most of the funerals held at the Basilica were handled by Caldwell's. Brien became the firm's legal advisor and then became a licensed funeral director.

When Brien went off to mortuary training, Boyd Braman stepped into a management role. Braman, who had been with the Lilly Brothers from 1940 until the partnership dissolved and then with Joe Lilly, worked at Caldwell's until 1955. He left Des Moines for Omaha, Nebraska, where he opened his own business and was later joined by a son and grandson. Braman remained active in the funeral business until his death in 1996.

Although Brien's name was added to the Caldwell firm's name, Jim Brien never owned any part of the firm. He died of cancer in 1967.
The Fifties:

Expansion on the South Side

As the mid-point of the century approached, Dunn's had a new face on the management team: Tom Glidden, son-in-law of the late LeRoy Dunn. Encouraged by Dunn's widow Isabel, Glidden left his work as a musician with Twentieth Century Fox, took mortuary training, and came to Des Moines to take over the management of Dunn's. The affable Glidden was elected secretary of the Iowa Funeral Directors Association every convention from 1952 to 1957 and served as treasurer until 1966. He was one of four Iowans to be elected president of the National Funeral Directors Association, serving from 1960 to 1961.

Until the 1950s there were no funeral homes located on the south side of Des Moines for any period of time. That changed in the early part of the decade with the addition of two facilities to serve the area's growing population. The first, Tonini Funeral Home at 2135 Southwest Ninth, added another name to the list of Des Moines funeral families. The second, Dunn's South Side Funeral Home at 5400 Southwest Ninth, represented expansion of an existing firm.

Mando Tonini followed the tradition of many of the city's earliest funeral directors. Born in Italy, he immigrated to the United States and Des Moines with his family in the 1920s. He took quickly to the American education system and graduated from Lincoln in 1938 near the top of his class, going into the service in 1942. After completing mortuary school in 1947, he went to work for the Caldwell-Brient Funeral Home and remained there for five years. In 1952 he opened his own business at 2135 Southwest Ninth. The house, which had once been a popular inn for people approaching the city from the south, was two doors south of one of the locations of the short-lived Cardinal Funeral Home of the 1930s.

Tonini quickly built a business serving Italian Catholics and other south side families. During the first six months of operation, he had twenty-five calls and promptly built on a chapel.

Five years after the Tonini Funeral Home opened, Dunn's Funeral Home built a second location, the South Side Funeral Home at 5400 Southwest Ninth. Gail Boltinghouse, who previously worked at Dunn's on Grand Avenue, managed the new location.
A new firm also began serving the city's black population. The Hammitt-Robinson Funeral Home opened in March 1951 at 1010 Fourteenth Street Place. Henry G. Hammitt, a graduate of East High and St. Louis College of Embalming, and George W. Robinson, Jr., a graduate of North High, Drake, and Worsham College, were the owners.

At the time of its establishment, the Tonini Funeral Home appeared much the same as it did in this 1935 photo.

(Courtesy of Mary Tonini.)
The Hammitt-Robinson Funeral Home opened
Easter Sunday 1951.
(Courtesy of Dorothy Hammitt)
A 1950's gathering of Des Moines area funeral directors

Funeral directors at Dunn's Funeral Home in the 1950s. From left to right: Clarence Eicher, manager; Fritz Kopeche; Andrew Reid; Robert Oppold; Tom Glidden, owner; and Gordon Rosson.

(Courtesy of Jack Reid of Greene, Iowa, son of Andrew Reid.)
Both men continued other careers in addition to their work as funeral directors. Hammitt had a trucking and hauling business. Robinson, whose father, George W. Robinson, Sr., was widely known as pastor of the Corinthian Baptist Church for thirty-one years, worked for the post office.

About the same time, Estes and Son became a two-generation firm when John Estes, Jr., joined his father in business. Young Estes attended North High, the University of Iowa, and Chicago School of Restorative Art. To follow his father’s footsteps in the business, he also attended his father’s alma mater, Kansas City College of Mortuary Science, formerly known as Williams Institute of Mortuary Science.

In 1954 Evan Lilly began to retire and his son, Ken, took over the business. That year the younger Lilly and Dan McIlhon, who was in the monument business, approached Joe Conley about forming a three-way partnership, closing Conley’s Grand location and consolidating the business into the Evan Lilly Funeral Home at 1428 High Street. McIlhon quickly dropped out of the agreement, but Conley and Ken Lilly went into business together. The partnership lasted only five years. In the fall of 1959 Conley was back on his own with a west side location at Thirty-Fifth and Grand (where the Conley family lived). He also had an east side location at 1204 East Grand, the former location of White-Bumgardner-Mack, which Conley renamed Conley’s Capitol Hill. (Following the sale, Newton Mack embarked on a sales career in Nebraska and southwest Iowa, representing the Embalming Burial Case Company until 1972 and then the Hastings Casket Company until his 1981 retirement.)

Beaverdale Mortuary, owned by Don Wright and Eugene Ridge, opened up at Forty-Fourth and Hickman in 1954. Wright served his apprenticeship with Caldwell’s and Joe Lilly. He then worked for five years for Caldwell’s before joining with Ridge, a classmate from mortuary school. The two were only in business a year and then sold out to Ken Lilly, who operated the home for several years and then closed it.

The expansion of the Moffitt Funeral Home to the Altoona area in 1958 added another funeral facility in eastern Polk County. Moffitt had been in business in Polk County for more than a decade when he purchased a large residence in Altoona. The dwelling, which had previously housed the superintendent of schools and some classrooms from time to time as the school grew, was converted into a funeral home.

John McLaren’s business also expanded during this time with the purchase of the Galloway Funeral Home in Norwalk in 1958. Benjamin Franklin Galloway,
a native of Michigan, came to Bradgate, Iowa, in 1911 and served as minister of several Protestant congregations in Iowa and Illinois before coming to central Iowa. He became interested in the funeral business and completed his education as an embalmer through a correspondence course from a St. Louis school. He arrived in Norwalk as a minister and funeral director and opened his funeral home in the early 1920s. After John McLaren purchased the business, Benjamin Galloway continued to serve the people of his community. He retired in 1964 at the age of 85 and died in December 1967.

For the Hamilton Funeral Home, the 1950s marked the end of an era. Lee Hamilton suffered a stroke in December 1949 and was incapacitated until his death on March 31, 1956.

Just one year before Hamilton’s death, another era ended. The College of Embalming in St. Louis, Des Moines’ transplanted Hohenschuh-Carpenter School, closed. The school had been under the management of Helene Carpenter Craig since the 1946 death of her father, Dr. William Carpenter.

In the late fifties, Joe Conley opened a funeral home in the former B.F. Kaufmann residence on West Grand. The Conley family also lived at this location.

In the late fifties, Joe Conley opened a funeral home in the former B.F. Kaufmann residence on West Grand. The Conley family also lived at this location.
The Sixties: Family-owned or Public Corporation

Des Moines’ population peaked at 208,982 with the 1960 census. Several new funeral homes were built. The 1960s were also marked by the death of longtime funeral director Lafayette Fowler, Sr., in November 1961. The senior Fowler remained active in the business until his death. His son, Lafayette Fowler, Jr., took over the business at 1701 Walker.

Earlier, in August of 1960, Hamilton’s Westover Funeral Home opened up on the far west side of the city at 6637 Hickman. This new firm was built by Charles Iles in partnership with Hamilton’s Funeral Home. Iles, the son of Charles F. Iles (Des Moines mayor from 1958 to 1960 and from 1962 to 1966), was a member of the last class to graduate from the College of Mortuary Science in St. Louis in 1955. For the next three years, he worked at Beckman Funeral Home in Iowa City, Iowa, and began investigating the purchase of a funeral home of his own. In August 1958, he left Iowa City and came to Des Moines to find a suitable tract of land for a funeral home. The growing west side looked promising since there was not a funeral home in the immediate area. The problem was finding a property large enough to accommodate the business. When Iles located the property on the northeast corner of the intersection of Hickman and Westover, he took out an option to buy and then approached Ira Moller and Ardis Peterson at Hamilton’s about a partnership. They agreed to the arrangement.

Planning and building took about one year and the actual construction another. Iles was so busy working with the building process and at Hamilton’s on the east side that he didn’t give much thought to what the name of the new funeral home would be. However, whenever anyone questioned Iles’ mother about the project, she would refer to it as “the one out on Westover,” and the name quickly became Hamilton’s Westover Funeral Home. After the new site opened, its business grew quickly. By the late 1960s Hamilton’s Westover was staffed independently of the Hamilton’s Funeral Home on the east side of the city.

Meanwhile, three of the city’s established funeral homes were forced to move from their long-time locations. The Hammitt-Robinson Funeral Home moved twice. In the early 1960s construction of the freeway sent the business from Fourteenth Street Place to 840 Fifteenth Street (Hammitt’s former residence). Within the decade the Oakridge renewal project forced another move to 1425 University.
Hamilton's Funeral Home on East Ninth prepared to meet the wrecking ball in 1968 in the wake of Capitol expansion.

Nearby a new facility took shape at 605 Lyon Street.

When Henry Hammitt died in 1975, George Robinson closed the funeral home and continued to work at the post office until his retirement in 1983. Robinson died in June 1999.

The Oakridge project also caused Estes and Son to move from its longtime Fourteenth Street address just northwest of the city's main business district. The search for a site was difficult with the business making two moves before finding a permanent location. The firm was located at 1052 Harding Road for three years before being moved to 1216 Forest in 1972. John Estes, Sr., retired about a half dozen years after the move but kept an active interest in the business until his death in September 1984.

Expansion of the capitol grounds occasioned the 1969 move of Hamilton's Funeral Home from its East Ninth Street location of more than forty years to one several blocks west at 605 Lyon. The new building blended in familiar furnishings; two fireplaces were relocated from the East Ninth building.

Buildings were not the only part of the business that was changing. The growing dollar values of the business and associated properties meant changes in firms' financial structures. Like the family farm, the family funeral home partnership became a family corporation.
Rather than form a family corporation, some funeral directors looked toward public corporations as an answer to financial management. One of these was Paul Hamilton, who came to Des Moines in 1961 from Greene, Iowa. He purchased the Lilly Funeral Home at Fifteenth and High, renaming it Hamilton-Lilly Funeral Home, and also the Lilly location in Ankeny, which was later renamed Ankeny Funeral Home. (Ken Lilly died in 1964 and his father, Evan, died two years later.) This purchase ended fifty years of the Lilly family name being associated with Des Moines funeral service.

When Paul Hamilton came to Des Moines, he had been in funeral work for nearly two decades, starting with mortuary training in California in 1942. He started business in Greene in 1952 and by the time he came to Des Moines nine years later, Hamilton was operating four funeral homes and two furniture stores in that area and a funeral home and furniture store in Glenwood, Iowa. In 1963, two years after Hamilton arrived in Des Moines, he acquired Conley’s Capitol Hill on East Grand with Joe Conley becoming part of the Hamilton-Lilly staff. Subsequently, Conley’s Capitol Hill closed, and in the 1970s the magnificent structure was razed as part of the eastern expansion of the capitol grounds. (The property is now a parking lot.) Conley continued to work for International Funeral Services until an injury in 1982 forced his retirement. He died in December 1984.

In another funeral home venture in Des Moines, Paul Hamilton remodeled a former restaurant at the southwest corner of Beaver and Urbandale Avenues into a funeral home in the early sixties. The facility, the Beaverdale Chapel, was only open a short period of time, and only a few funerals were held there. Paul Hamilton also leased and operated Arnold's Highland Park from 1964 to 1970. By 1966, after having personally acquired several funeral homes, Paul Hamilton was no longer involved in mortuary duties and had turned his energies to management responsibilities.

That year he founded International Funeral Services (IFS), a publicly-owned company headquartered in Des Moines, designed to consolidate funeral service. In the early seventies, the Hamilton-Lilly Funeral Home, by then known as the Colonial Funeral Home, was sold for other purposes. The building was demolished.

International Funeral Service (IFS) also purchased McLaren Funeral Home in West Des Moines and McLaren-Galloway Funeral Home in Norwalk in 1967. John McLaren joined the IFS staff and served as manager of IFS operations in Des Moines until his retirement in 1983.
The Seventies: Third Generation Owners

A new generation — the third generation — was moving into the Hamilton partnership as the 1970s opened. Although Bill and John Moller, grandsons of Lee Hamilton and sons of Ira Moller, and Carlton Peterson, son of Ardis Peterson, had been part of the Hamilton’s staff since the 1960s, they actually joined the partnership in the 1970s as they began to buy out their fathers’ interests in the business. Ardis Peterson retired in 1975; Ira Moller retired in 1978.

Carlton Peterson was a high school sophomore in 1957 when he began working summers at Hamilton’s. As he washed cars, mowed grass, and swept the parking lot, he began to realize that he wanted to be a part of this family business. In 1965 Peterson, the oldest of the three, came into the business after graduating from Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science. Peterson, who was also a graduate of Grinnell College and the State University of Iowa, served on the traditional staff rotation and from that perspective became deeply involved in the planning for the new facility built in 1969. He provided first-hand input about the needs of staff people.

The Moller brothers joined the staff in the late 1960s. Bill Moller, the older of the two sons of Ira and Lucille Moller, joined the staff in 1968. He had graduated from Kemper Military School and College in Booneville, Missouri, in 1964 and worked various jobs before joining the staff. He graduated from Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science in 1971. His younger brother John joined the staff in 1969 as an apprentice after graduating from Kemper and Miami Dade Junior College in Florida.

Both served on the traditional staff rotation, moving into management roles as they began to buy out their father’s interest in the business.

The third generation also came into the ownership of Fowler and Sons Funeral Home. After the October 1978 death of Lafayette Fowler, Jr., his son Larry became owner of the firm.

Two new funeral homes opened in the city during the early 1970s. The first was Gregory Gulick’s Grandview Funeral Home, which opened at 3211 Hubbell in 1970; the second, Merle Hay Funeral Home, opened two years later. Gulick’s funeral home career started more than a dozen years earlier when as a high school student he secured a position doing various odd jobs at Dunn’s Funeral Home.
He continued working for Dunn's while attending Drake University, and by the time of graduation Gulick saw that funeral service was the profession he wished to pursue. He attended Worsham, served his apprenticeship at Dunn's, and became licensed in 1967. Over the years he had become quite close to the Dunn and Glidden families; and so when Tom Glidden retired to Laguna Beach, California, in 1969, Gulick was asked to prepare weekly confidential reports on the business for the family.

But Gregory Gulick had another dream, a funeral home of his own on the east side, where his family had lived for three generations. He located a four and one-half acre piece of property near East Thirty-fifth and Hubbell and began plans to build a funeral home. Although Tom Glidden offered financial assistance, the idea waned as the two could not agree on the construction details.

Grandview Funeral Home opened in the fall of 1970 to a gratifying public response. Within one day the new firm had a death call, and the total at the end of the first year was fifty. The convenient location and Gulick's longtime ties to the east side proved advantageous.

In 1972 Gulick started a rapid expansion of his funeral home holdings by buying the Fisher Funeral Homes at Adel, Redfield, and Van Meter, Iowa. He added the Moffitt Funeral Homes in Mitchellville and Altoona, the Brohert Funeral Home in Zearing, and Phil Youman's Berg Vault company in 1973 and the Loehr Funeral Home in Newton in 1974. That same year on a trip to his wife's Philippine homeland, he saw the beautiful caskets made there. He arranged to export them to this country, where an interior would be added by local manufacturers. The first order arrived in this country in December 1974, but the next month the business soured as the caskets began to crack.

Trying to solve the problems of the casket company exhausted Gulick's financial resources, which were already weakened by the drain of rapid expansion. In December 1975, just five years after opening his new funeral home, Gulick filed for bankruptcy; the out-of-town funeral homes reverted to their original owners, and Grandview Funeral Home was purchased by Planning and Service Corporation.

The other new funeral home of the 1970s was Merle Hay Funeral Home at 4400 Merle Hay Road in Urbandale. This home was built by a public corporation, Planning and Service Corporation, founded in 1971 by Chuck Doggett, a Des Moines native.
Doggett, a 1950 graduate of Drake University, worked in management in the construction and machinery trades until 1964 when he took a position as secretary/treasurer and comptroller for Midwest Development Company, which at that time operated fourteen cemeteries and three funeral homes. In 1965 he purchased Chapel Hill, a private cemetery established in the 1930s on Merle Hay Road.

An attempt to merge Doggett’s property with Consolidated Industries in Denver, Colorado, (which operated cemeteries throughout the West), failed in 1969. But in the process, Doggett became convinced that he would like to offer complete “one-stop shopping” for both funeral and cemetery arrangements. He felt that this type of situation would reduce the number of long funeral processions and would benefit consumers since they would only need to discuss their arrangements with one professional.

Doggett began to plan for a funeral home, mausoleum, and crematory facility at Chapel Hill. Stock in Planning and Service Corporation was sold to the public. The facility was constructed and opened on Memorial Day 1973. In addition to Chapel Hill and the Merle Hay Funeral Home and Mausoleum, Planning and Service’s holdings included Sunset Memorial Gardens Cemetery at 7601 Fleur Drive. (The southside cemetery had been established in 1954 by Chester A. Brown and Sid Kurtz on the site of the former Burnstedt Dairy.) Grandview Funeral Home on the east side of Des Moines was added to the corporation’s holdings in 1975.

International Funeral Services also built new facilities during the 1970s, moving two funeral homes from longtime locations. Ankeny Funeral Home moved from its location at 122 Southwest Third Street in the older part of the growing suburb to a new facility at 1501 West First Street in 1976.

Two years later, a new McLaren’s Funeral Chapel opened at Resthaven Cemetery, moving the business from the downtown area where it had been located for fifty-seven years to the cemetery on Ashworth Road. (International Funeral Service had purchased the cemetery from Carl Ripper a year earlier.)

In addition to these new funeral facilities, ownership changes occurred at other existing firms. Robert L. Major, a member of a longtime funeral family in Mason City, Iowa, leased Arnold’s Highland Park Funeral Home from J.P. Arnold in 1970 and purchased it the following year.
A 1941 graduate of the School of Embalming in St. Louis, Major was in the armed services during the war and then returned to Mason City to join the family firm which started about 1920. He remained there until 1957, then spent about eleven years in construction in Phoenix, Arizona, and returned to Iowa to work as a funeral director in Sioux City before coming to Des Moines.

Caldwell-Brien-Robbins also had a new owner. After working for the firm for a quarter century, Ben Robbins bought the funeral home from Esther Caldwell in 1972. Mrs. Caldwell died in December 1975 at the age of 80 years.

Three years later in April 1975, Dahlstrom Funeral Home also had a new owner, American Funeral Service, an Iowa-based funeral home corporation. The Dahlstrom name remained in Des Moines, but the Dahlstrom family no longer managed the firm. The holdings of American Funeral Service, including the Dahlstrom Funeral Home, were purchased by International Funeral Services in 1977.

Consolidation of Des Moines' casket companies had continued over the years. The sale of the Iowa Casket Company, which included the Root Casket Company (acquired in 1967), to the Missouri Casket Company of Omaha, marked the end of casket manufacturing in Des Moines. The company had closed out its wood production just prior to the sale.

In 1976 Hamilton's bought the Moffitt Funeral Homes in Altoona and Mitchellville with Bill Moller assuming the management of these two facilities.

In the last change of ownership during the 1970s, Charles Iles became the owner of Dunn's on June 1, 1978, about two years after the death of Tom Glidden. He then bought out the Westover interest of his partners at Hamilton's, and in turn Hamilton's purchased Dunn's South Side (5400 Southwest Ninth) which became known as Southtown Funeral Home.
The Eighties:
Family Firms Grow

While the population of Des Moines had fallen nearly nine percent in the past two decades, the surrounding area was growing rapidly. In 1980 Polk County population pushed past a new landmark and stood at 303,170. Family funeral firms continued to look to adjacent and nearby communities as they expanded their businesses and built new locations.

For Charles Iles, the eighties was a decade of business expansion both in the participation of family members in the firm and in the number of facilities. His son Mark joined the business as executive vice president in June 1988. With a large staff of funeral directors in place, the elder Iles looked to his son, a graduate of Iowa State University in business, for help in the overall day-to-day and long-term management of the operation.

Iles Funeral Homes also added facilities to their initial holdings: Dunn's and Westover. The first was Grandview Funeral Home in December 1987. To delineate the change in ownership, Iles did extensive remodeling and changed the name to Grandview Park Funeral Home. The next month, January 1988, Iles Funeral Homes purchased the fifty-plus-year-old Brandt Funeral Home of Dallas Center.

August Brandt, Jr., a native of Adair, Iowa, founded the Dallas Center business in the early thirties and was joined by his son Don, a graduate of St. Louis, in the late forties. The elder Brandt remained active in the family business until his death in an automobile accident in April 1966. A veteran of World War II, Don was active in the Iowa Funeral Director's Association, being elected secretary during the 1980s. Although semi-retired, Brandt continued to work as a funeral director until his death in July 1995.

A facility in Woodward, Iowa, previously known as the Fouch-Murdock Funeral Home, was purchased by Iles Funeral Homes in 1988 and was renamed the Brandt Funeral Home.

Hamilton's Funeral Home was also expanding, building a new funeral home facility at 121 Northwest Sixtieth Avenue, just across the street from Highland Memory Gardens, a cemetery established in 1930. The new facility took its name from its location. At the August 1987 dedication of Hamilton's Near Highland Memory Gardens, Carlton Peterson, a member of the third generation of owners, pointed out that the building marked a progressive step in funeral service for the community and job security for Hamilton personnel.
Iles Funeral Homes purchased these funeral homes outside of Polk County between 1988 and 1998.

Brandt Funeral Home*
Dallas Center

Cramer-Link Funeral Home** Stuart

Brandt Funeral Home*
(Formerly known as Fouch- Murdock)
Woodward

Sunberg-Kirkpatrick
Funeral Home**
Madrid

*1997 Photo
**1998 Photo
He explained that the new funeral home was designed for all families, both those desiring traditional services and those desiring non-traditional services.

Caldwell-Brien-Robbins Funeral Home also had a new owner. In April 1987 Jim Raddatz purchased the business from Ben Robbins, who retired. Although Raddatz had strong Minnesota roots, his name was quite familiar to many Des Moines area families. A native of Concord, Minnesota, Raddatz lived in a funeral home while he was a student at Mankato State in Mankato, Minnesota; and the experience whetted his interest in funeral service. Raddatz attended the University of Minnesota Mortuary School and took his apprenticeship in Rochester, Minnesota. Then after a stint in the Marine Corps, he managed a funeral home in Breckenridge, Minnesota, for sixteen years.

In 1978, Raddatz came to the Des Moines area to work for the Planning and Service Corporation. He worked the first two years at the corporation's Grandview facility; then his duties expanded to include being the funeral director for Merle Hay Funeral Home. After the dissolution of Planning and Service, he continued to work for both homes and was working in that capacity when he was approached by Robbins about the sale. Within a short time the business became known as the Caldwell-Raddatz Funeral Home.

While growth and ownership changes impacted the city's family-owned funeral facilities, many things were happening in public corporations that affected their Des Moines holdings. By 1981, Paul Hamilton’s International Funeral Services corporation had grown to 130 mortuaries and cemeteries. That year IFS merged with Service Corporation International (SCI) to form the largest funeral corporation in the world, with Hamilton serving as the group’s vice chairman and as a member of the executive committee and board of directors.

The other publicly held funeral corporation in the city — Planning and Service Corporation — was dissolved midway through the decade. Chuck Doggett, who had served as president of Planning and Service Corporation since its formation, resigned that position in the early 1980s, continuing as a member of the board of directors. Under new leadership, Planning and Service Corporation experienced financial difficulties including mortgage arrears of nearly $221,000. Doggett, aware of these problems, regained the presidency of the corporation in 1985. He concluded that the best way to protect customers was to sell the company to a private investor. The sale to Hawkeye, Inc., a company solely owned by Doggett, was completed in August 1986 and resulted in the dissolution of Planning and Service Corporation. Doggett pumped his own funds into the business and sought out a new owner.
In January 1988 Leopard Enterprises, headed by Don Leopard of Madison, Wisconsin, purchased Hawkeye, Inc., including Merle Hay Funeral Home and Mausoleum, Sunset Memorial Gardens, and Chapel Hill Cemetery. (Charles Iles purchased the Grandview Funeral Home in 1987.)

Under the ownership of Leopard Enterprises, the problems of Merle Hay Funeral Home and the cemeteries escalated. In August 1989, the insurance division of the state of Iowa charged the newest owner with fraud citing the improper mingling of advance payments for funerals with other payments made to the business. With an estimated $200,000 to $300,000 reportedly missing from trust accounts, the company filed bankruptcy in November 1989. The following January, Leopard Enterprises was stripped of operating authority. Merle Hay Funeral Home and the cemeteries were placed under the supervision of court-approved trustees, and the state began the search for new owners.
The Nineties:  
Preparation for the Millennium

New funeral families, new generations, new facilities, and new funeral firms came into Des Moines funeral service as the twenty-first century approached.

The first of the new families was Jon Peterson, who took over operation of the Highland Park Funeral Home from Bob Major in December 1991. The Peterson name was familiar to many — after all it had been a mainstay in Warren County funeral service since shortly after World War II. In addition, Jon’s father, Willard W., was the younger brother of Ardis Peterson, a member of the second generation of Hamilton’s ownership. In 1946 Willard bought the J.J. Orr and Son Funeral Home, which was founded in Indianola in the early 1900s. Jon graduated from the Wisconsin Institute of Mortuary Science and served on the Hamilton’s staff in Des Moines for six years. In 1974 Jon moved to Carlisle and bought the Richardson Funeral Home, which had been in operation since the early part of the century (since 1948 under the Richardson name). In 1981 Peterson purchased the Peterson Funeral Home in Indianola from his father. (In 2002 two of Jon’s four sons continued the family tradition of careers in funeral service: James at the Indianola facility, Kasey at the Carlisle facility.)

Peterson’s operation of Highland Park was interrupted by an April 1994 fire which extensively damaged the second and third floors of the facility and caused smoke and water damage on the main level. After being closed seven months for repair, the home reopened in December 1994 with Kevin Seely as manager. (Seely, a graduate of Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science, worked for Hamilton’s Funeral Homes for thirteen years before taking over management of the Highland Park Funeral Home.)

A second change in ownership during the decade brought a family name which, while new to Des Moines, was well known to funeral business in the Midwest.  In August 1992, D.W. Newcomer and Sons (Memorial Heritage, Inc.) of Kansas City purchased the problem-ridden Merle Hay Funeral Home, the adjacent Chapel Hill Gardens cemetery, and the Sunset Memorial Gardens cemetery on Des Moines’ south side. D.W. Newcomer, founder of the firm in 1892, had started in the business in the same manner as many early Des Moines funeral directors, making his living as a woodworker and livery owner. The current generation of owners was a partnership of the founder’s three great-grandsons, Pete, Chip and David.  In addition to this newest purchase, the firm’s holdings...
included a number of funeral homes and cemeteries in the metropolitan Kansas City area and two of each in Wichita, Kansas.

As part of their purchase, the new owners agreed to credit customers for every dollar they had spent on prepaid contracts with previous owners.

The Merle Hay Funeral Home, which had not been redecorated since it opened in the 1970s, had fallen into great disrepair during the two-year period of bankruptcy receivership. The first consideration of the new owners was to renovate the building so that it would once again provide a comforting welcome to grieving families. The changes were more than cosmetic. In addition to putting on a new roof — the old one leaked, installing new heating and air conditioning, and making a myriad of other improvements, the new owners brought the building up to compliance with OSHA and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Newcomer firm hired Scott Wagler, a member of a third generation Iowa funeral family, to manage the Des Moines facilities. In 1907 Grandfather Clarence Wagler had opened the Bloomfield, Iowa, firm which in 1998 was still operated by the members of the Wagler family. Scott Wagler graduated from the Wisconsin Institute of Mortuary Science in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and had worked in the family business and the Easter Seal Society before taking the management role at Merle Hay.

While some thought a name change would be appropriate to separate the Merle Hay Funeral Home from its past, the owners opted to change the name only slightly to Merle Hay at Chapel Hill. They felt that the time-honored name of war hero Merle Hay coupled with the new owners' commitment to service would soon outdistance the reputation of any past operations.

Wagler retired in 1999 and Hugh Myers became manager. The first of his family to be in funeral service, Myers worked as a funeral director in Ottumwa before coming to Des Moines at the time the Newcomer firm took over the ownership of Merle Hay Funeral Home.

The change in ownership at Estes and Son Funeral Home did not change the name of that firm immediately. On April 1, 1995, John Estes, Jr., sold his business to Fredrick Nichols, a native of Mississippi and a resident of Des Moines since 1982. A graduate of the University of Mississippi with a degree in forensic chemistry, Nichols worked for the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation from 1982 until 1987 when he became a health professional
investigator for the Iowa State Board of Medical Examiners. Nichols resigned from that position just before buying the Estes facility. While no stranger to the business — he had worked for the Brantley Funeral Home (known as the Gillespie Funeral Home in 1997) in Olive Branch, Mississippi, during his high school and college years — Nichols needed to become licensed.

To that end, he graduated from mortuary school at Kansas City Community College in May 1996 and immediately began his internship with John Estes, who stayed on as manager of the funeral home after the sale. When Nichols finished his internship, Estes retired and the business became known as Estes-Nichols Funeral Home. In 2000 the business became known as Nichols Funeral Home.

Meanwhile, a name that had played a significant role in the area's funeral business returned to the industry. Paul Hamilton, who founded International Funeral Services in Des Moines nearly three decades earlier, reentered the business. In recent years, Hamilton had turned his energies to another interest. He formed FNCO, a California-based company, which bought and operated weekly newspapers and shoppers throughout the country, including several in the Des Moines area. In 1992 Hamilton started a new private corporation for the purpose of buying and operating funeral homes and cemeteries. In 2000 Hamilton Funeral Service Centers (HFSC), with headquarters in San Diego, California, had over 100 facilities in seven states.

New generations continued to join longtime family funeral firms. Michael Tonini, son of founder Mando Tonini, became president of the Tonini Funeral Home in 1990. Having lived in the funeral home on Southwest Ninth all his life, it was only natural that Michael would assume this role. A graduate of Simpson College in Indianola and the Dallas Institute of Mortuary Science in Dallas, Texas, the younger Tonini worked for the State Department of Social Services until 1983. He then started managing Des Moines Limousine Service, a business of the Tonini Corporation, and began working full-time with his father at the funeral home in 1986.

At the city's larger family-owned corporations, family members joined the staffs, but not in the traditional role of funeral director. The larger firms needed owners who could fill roles in overall management — both day-to-day and long-term. At Iles Funeral Homes, a second son of Charles Iles — Mike — joined the family business January 1, 1995. With a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Iowa in Iowa City and a masters in business from the Sloan Institute of Business at MIT in Boston, Mike Iles took on managing the marketing...
and technological issues for the family’s central Iowa funeral homes. The
ownership of Iles Funeral Homes continued to shift to the second generation.

At Hamilton’s Sasha Mudlaff took on an entirely different role as she entered the
business of her father, Carlton Peterson, and grandfather, Ardis Peterson. After
serving two years as a grief consultant for Hamilton’s, Sasha became family
services coordinator and a full-time member of the staff in 1993.

When Hamilton’s launched its Academy of Grief and Loss as a separate division
of the family corporation in 1996, she was named the director of those services.
Mudlaff, who received her bachelor’s degree in psychology from Cornell College
in Mount Vernon, Iowa, and her master’s degree in developmental psychology
from Columbia University in New York, had not intended to go into the family
business. However, an internship with Hamilton’s Little Hands Group piqued
her interest and opened the door to a career that combined her educational
interests and family ties.

Hamilton’s Academy of Grief and Loss provided grief information and resources,
grief related education, and grief-recovery services to all ages in the community
and the state. These services expanded the ways that Hamilton’s fulfilled their
mission of serving client families and one another, adapting to the desires of
each person seeking help.

During the decade, five longtime owners of area funeral homes died. Mabel
Dahlstrom Borg, the last member of the Dahlstrom family, died in 1992. (Roy
Dahlstrom died in 1984.) Although the Dahlstrom Funeral Home had been a
part of Service Corporation International for many years, as long as her health
permitted Borg continued to meet with families at their request. Ira Moller,
son-in-law of Lee Hamilton and a member of the firm’s second generation of
owners, died in 1993.

After nearly eight decade of service from the Walker street location, the
Fowler Funeral Home closed.
Ben Robbins died in April 1997, 10 years after selling the Caldwell-Brien-Robbins Funeral Home to Jim Raddatz. J. P Arnold, founder of Highland Park Funeral Home, died in September 1997. He had retired from the funeral business several decades earlier. Mando Tonini, Founder of the Tonini Funeral Home on the city’s south side, died in November 1997. Tonini was active in the funeral home’s operation until his death.

The decade also saw the closing of longtime family businesses. In the early part of the decade, the Galloway-McLaren Funeral Home in Norwalk closed permanently after more than sixty years of operation, leaving that city to look to nearby communities for funeral service. Fowler Funeral Home closed shortly after the 1995 death of Richard Williams (longtime funeral director for the firm and nephew of founder Lafe Fowler) and because of health problems of current owner Larry Fowler.

Iles Funeral Homes continued its growth. In September 1997 they purchased Link Funeral Home in Stuart from Tom Link. This Stuart firm had been established by Glenn Bufkin, who operated a funeral home briefly in the small southeastern Polk county town of Runnells before going to Stuart. (In 2002, the Link Funeral Home became known as the Cramer-Link Funeral Home when the Iles family added the name of the manager of the Stuart location, Brian Cramer.)

In January 1998 the Iles firm purchased the Sundberg-Kirkpatrick Funeral Home of Madrid from Gary Kirkpatrick. A.M. (Andrew Merrill) Sundberg, a cabinetmaker, founded the firm in 1882. He built a two-story brick building in Madrid (which still stands today) to house his two businesses. The first floor was furniture and the second the undertaking services. In 1940 the funeral home moved to the private residence it occupies today. J. Edwin Sundberg took over the business from his father; A. M. Sundberg, grandson of the founder, was the third generation to own the firm. In 1973 Kirkpatrick purchased an interest in the firm and in 1979 bought out the youngest Sundberg. Kirkpatrick continued to work in the funeral home after it was purchased by the Iles Funeral Homes.

The new funeral service businesses and consumer direct casket sales business that opened in the greater Des Moines area in the decade illustrate how the city's funeral business continues to balance traditional and non-traditional funeral services. With their niche marketing perspectives, these new businesses not only continued the values of the past, but also opened up new ways of serving the consumer.
John Bethel, a Marshalltown native, became a member of the Ankeny business community more than three years earlier when he purchased Ankeny Memorial Gardens in 1994. The private cemetery was established in 1968 just north of the city. In 1995 Bethel expanded his business with the purchase of Story Memorial Gardens in Ames.

As Bethel worked with those making cemetery arrangements either pre-need or at the time of bereavement, he found some who did not wish to use traditional funeral service providers. With these requests in mind, Bethel and a partner David Noftsger founded the Cremation Society of Iowa in January 1997 at Surefine Road in the industrial park in southeast Ankeny. Prior to this business relationship, Noftsger had been active in sales and marketing of marine equipment.

In providing cremation services to people throughout Iowa from Waterloo to Denison to Iowa City, Bethel noted other death-related services that his clients needed but did not wish to purchase from traditional providers. Thus in the fall of 1997, Bethel established Assured Care Funeral Services. Initially, the firm occupied the same offices as the Cremation Society and had none of the accommodations of other area funeral firms. It had no facilities for visitations or memorial services but made arrangements for these in homes, churches, and other places as requested by the consumer.

In March 1999 Bethel moved Assured Care Funeral Services to another Ankeny location separate from the Cremation Society. The building at 102 North Trilein was originally built as a savings and loan branch. It was remodeled to provide room for visitations and services.

Bethel also added a unique feature to his cemetery business: a pet cemetery, which allowed beloved pets to be buried in a perpetual care cemetery and alongside their owners.

Brooks Funeral Care opened in August 1997 at 7975 University Boulevard in Clive, a location formerly used for doctors’ offices. Partners Robert and Mary Jo Brooks and Timothy and Katherine Averill started this new business in an effort to offer the community lower funeral costs through encouraging families to hold memorial services in churches and visitations in homes or churches. However, the building included space for memorial services and visitations.

Three of the owners, Robert, Mary Jo, and Timothy, graduated from Worsham and were licensed funeral directors. Katherine provided follow-up services to families.
Robert Brooks, a West Des Moines native, graduated from Simpson College, Indianola, with an eye toward a career as an athletic director or coach. Disappointment in the funeral service provided for his father inspired him to change career directions. To determine if funeral service would be an appropriate career for him, Brooks first worked at McLaren’s in West Des Moines before attending mortuary school. He returned to Des Moines and worked at Hamilton’s before returning to McLaren’s, one of the Service Corporation International facilities in the area. In 1990 he started working for the corporation holding numerous positions in the Midwest. Robert Brooks retired as regional vice president of SCI in February 1997, six months before opening Brooks Funeral Care.

Robert and Mary Jo Brooks met while both were attending mortuary school and married a year later. Mary Jo, a native of Evergreen Park, Illinois, was a pharmacy major when she decided to enter mortuary school. She worked at McLaren’s until the new business opened.

Timothy Averill, the third licensed member of the partnership, grew up in Fort Dodge, Iowa. He attended Luther College in Decorah and Iowa State University in Ames. He set his sites on a career in funeral service after helping at his uncle’s funeral home. After completing his mortuary education, he served six months of his internship at Dunn’s-Westover and then was hired by Robert Brooks, then manager of McLaren’s. From 1988 to 1989 he served as manager of Galloway-McLaren in Norwalk. Averill was assistant manager at Bruce Funeral Home in Fort Dodge until he took over the post of manager of pre-need sales for SCI in Iowa and Nebraska in 1994. The Averills left the partnership in October 1998.

Several direct sales casket companies opened in Des Moines during the decade but closed quickly. Their goal was to give the public an alternative to buying from funeral homes. These businesses sold caskets made by small manufacturers at a discounted price.

For the people of Mitchellville, there was a new location. In 1991 Hamilton’s Mitchellville Funeral Home moved from its longtime facility in a two-story home near the town’s business area to 303 Center Avenue, a location that provided easier access for the families served.

The Newcomer firm’s commitment to updating their facilities continued beyond the initial round of building and cemetery improvements. 1996 improvements at Sunset Gardens included building an outdoor mausoleum and a funeral chapel.
The west side also had a new facility. In the mid-1990s Jim Raddatz started reviewing options for expansion. After looking around the city and its suburbs, he found a suitable parcel of land at 8201 Hickman Road in Urbandale. Ground was broken in 1995 and the new Caldwell-Raddatz chapel opened in the spring of 1996.
The Twenty-First Century:
A Fourth Generation.

As the twenty-first century opened, two long time funeral home sites closed, a publicly owned cremation corporation came into the community, and the fourth generation of a funeral family began to move into the ranks of ownership.

In 2000, Caldwell-Raddatz closed their University Avenue location and sold it to St. John’s Basilica. The Caldwell-Raddatz Chapel on Hickman continued to serve the firm’s families. In 2001, Service Corporation International closed the Dahlstrom Funeral Home, ending nearly a century of the Dahlstrom name in Des Moines funeral service. The Republican party of Iowa purchased the Dahlstrom building and moved there in the spring of 2002. Both of these locations had been open since the early 1930s.

Caldwell-Raddatz’s University Avenue facility (left) and Dahlstrom Funeral Home (below) were purchased and sold for other purposes in 2000 and 2001 respectively.
Nichols Funeral Home moved from the west side (1216 Forest Avenue) to east of the state house grounds in 2002. An insurance company had previously occupied the building on the southwest corner of East 15th and Grand.

In Ankeny, John Bethel sold his share of the cemetery business to his partner David Noftsger in 1999. A year later he sold the Cremation Society of Iowa and Assured Care Funeral Services to Neptune Society, a public corporation providing cremation services. The Neptune Society, with headquarters in Sherman Oaks, California, remodeled the chapel at the former funeral service facility to provide more room for meeting with families. The Society also made changes at the crematory facility providing for visitations and made arrangements with another funeral home to provide additional funeral services if the family desired. Bethel worked for the society for one year.

The Neptune Society hired Brian Tetrick, a member of a three generation Texas funeral family, as funeral director.

On the south side of Des Moines there was new ownership. After five decades of funeral service and two generations of family ownership, the Tonini Funeral home was sold to another Des Moines area family firm. However, the Tonini name continued. When Brooks Funeral Care bought the facility in 2002, they renamed the location Brooks Funeral Care Tonini Chapel. After the sale, Michael Tonini continued to meet with families at their request.

The city’s oldest funeral family, Hamilton’s, marked the death of second generation owner Ardis Peterson in 2003. The twenty-first century also brought a fourth generation of owners as the third generation began to retire. Bill Moller, Lee Hamilton’s grandson, retired in 2001.

In 2000 two new family member joined the Hamilton’s staff. John Moller, Jr., followed in the profession of his great grandfather, Lee Hamilton; his grandfather, Ira Moller; and his father, John Moller. John Jr. graduated from Worsham Mortuary School in 1999 and served his apprenticeship at Hamilton’s. In 2003 he serves the firm as staff services manager. Holly Peterson Miller, granddaughter of Ardis Peterson and daughter of Carlton Peterson, graduated from Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, and joined the firm’s central support staff as an administrator in 2000.
Epilogue

Today, the funeral professionals in Des Moines and the surrounding area look to the past, the present, and future. They look to the past — the rich heritage from the men and women who shaped the history of their profession with strong personalities and reputations for serving people. As they preserve the values of these pioneer undertakers and funeral directors, they look to the present — enriching that legacy with the most modern options and facilities for care of the dead and of those who grieve. And they look forward to the future — the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in this stronghold of private family funeral firms. Truly, future generations of Des Moines area residents can look forward to outstanding funeral service.
Present Day Polk County Funeral Firms

Altoona Funeral Home, 105 Fourth Street SW, Altoona

Ankeny Funeral Home, 1510 West First Street, Ankeny

All pictures in this section were taken in Spring 1997 except as noted. All locations are in Des Moines except where another Polk County city is indicated.
Brooks Funeral Care Tonini Chapel, 2135 SW Ninth Street

Brooks Funeral Care University Chapel, 7975 University Boulevard, Clive**

Caldwell-Raddatz Funeral Home, 8201 Hickman Road

**1998 photo
Dunn’s Funeral Home, 2121 Grand Avenue

Grandview Park Funeral Home, 3211 Hubbell Avenue

Hamilton’s Funeral Home, 605 Lyon Street
Hamilton’s Near Highland Memory Gardens, 121 NW 60th Avenue

Highland Park Funeral Home, 3500 Sixth Avenue

McLaren Funeral Chapel, 801 19th Street, WDM
Merle Hay at Chapel Hill, 4440 Merle Hay Road

Mitchellville Funeral Home, 303 Center Ave. S, Mitchellville

Neptune Society, 102 N. Trelien, Ankeny *

*2002 photo
Nichols Funeral Home, 1451 East Grand*

Southtown Funeral Home, 5400 SW Ninth Street

Sunset Funeral Chapel, 7601 Fleur Drive

*2002 photos
Westover Funeral Home, 6337 Hickman Road
### Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1838</td>
<td>Iowa Territory established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>Fort Des Moines built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Iowa becomes 29th state; First plat for City of Des Moines; Polk County established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>City of DM Population 502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>City of Des Moines incorporated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>Christian &amp; Lewis Harbach to USA from Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Des Moines River bridged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Cabinetmaker Christian Harbach (first undertaker of record) arrives in Des Moines 2nd between Court &amp; Walnut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First plat for City of Des Moines. Polk County established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>DM /East DM become one city, population 3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Louis Harbach joins Christian's undertaking business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Civil War (1861-1865) — modern embalming techniques begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Raccoon River bridged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Merrill, Keeney &amp; Co. Undertaking opens. (1866-1890) Near the point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cabinetmaker Gustaf Newlen comes to Des Moines E. Locust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Railroad arrives in DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>First Streetcar in DM (horse-powered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>City water installation begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>City of DM population 12,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Cabinetmaker Gustaf Newlen comes to Des Moines E. Locust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>William Lotz &amp; Co. Undertaking (1873-1880) 37 Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>James W. Patrick Livery opens 527 E. Grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Louis Harbach buys out Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>William Hohenschuh of Iowa City embalms first case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Gustaf Newlen Undertaking E. Locust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>James W. Patrick Livery opens 527 E. Grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Louis Harbach buys out Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>William Hohenschuh of Iowa City embalms first case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>First Streetcar in DM (horse-powered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Abel Carson opens furniture/undertaking business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>Mitchellville Funeral Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Mitchellville Funeral Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Mitchellville Funeral Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>Mitchellville Funeral Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Mitchellville Funeral Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Mitchellville Funeral Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Mitchellville Funeral Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Mitchellville Funeral Home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This timeline reflects the information detailed in A Legacy of Excellence. In some case, dates and events are only approximate — written sources and/or personal memories did not always confirm the same information. Also, note that street addresses have not been changed to reflect any changes in street numbering over the years. Populations listed on and after 1870 are census bureau numbers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>City of DM population 50,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Ezra J. Selover Undertaker 620 E. Grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>M.E. Patzig &amp; J.C. Clos Undertakers (also picture framers) 414 6th Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Merrill, Keeney, &amp; Co. Undertakers closes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Iver Newlen begins working with father Gustaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>T.S. Keeney &amp; M.E. Patzig Undertakers (1892-1896) (Patzig and Flora A Patzig in 1897) 317 7th St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>New Harbach enterprise: undertaker supplies 417 Walnut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>John N. O'Boyle Undertaker (1894-1896) 505 Locust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Listed with Frank Bice '94, hairdresser Frank W. Franz '95, Muehler '96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Iowa adopts first rulers for embalming (licenses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>R.R. McBride begins to work for James W. Patrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Alfred Dahlstrom opens livery business 624 E. Grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>James W. Patrick Undertaker &amp; Livery (1898-1914) 526 E. Grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>James E. McDermott Undertaker 420 6th Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>McDermott (Undertaking) Funeral Home 1898-1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>City of DM population 62,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Des Moines Casket Company opens (1900-1921) 416-420 E. 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Gustaf Newlen dies; Iver continues to operate Newlen business which moves 619 E. Grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Dr. William S. Carpenter opens embalming school 1427-28 Locust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>M.L. Duley Undertaker (1901-1910) 815 Locust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Henry Gray Undertaker (1901-1909) Locust 1100 block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Lewis Shank moves business 424 Locust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Dr. William S. Carpenter &amp; William P Hohenschuh join schools in Des Moines Securities Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Lee Hamilton arrives in DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Rex (embalming) Fluid Company (1905-1911) 908 Walnut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>LeRoy C. Dunn/Ezra J. Selover partnership 630 E. Grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Alfred Dahlstrom opens undertaking business 609-611 E. Grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Dahlstrom Funeral Home 1906 to 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Iver Newlen elected Polk County coroner (1906-1909)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>R.R. McBride buys out James W. Patrick eastside location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Dunn/Selover partnership buys out Henry Gray 1100 Locust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>All or part of 20 districts consolidate into DM Independent school district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Roy S. Ross (and Nettie) livery and undertaking (1908-1914) 515-517 E. Grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>William O'Donoghue opens funeral business (1908-1935) 500 E. Grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Charles B. Tomlinson opens funeral business 1107 Walnut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Tomlinson (Undertaking) Funeral Home 1908-1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>LeRoy C. Dunn opens funeral business 9th and Locust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Dunn's Funeral Home 1908 to Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Des Moines Casket Company moves SE. 8th &amp; Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Dahlstrom Undertaking moves 634 E. Grand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>City of DM population 86,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>R.R. McBride elected president of Iowa Funeral Directors Association; McBride also member of licensing board for State of Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Vivian Jones/George Lucas in partnership (1910-1911) 519 E. Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Lafayette &quot;Lafe&quot; Fowler arrives in DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Building of East High School begins 815 E. 13th St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Brothers Joe and Evan Lilly open funeral business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Lilly Funeral Home</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1911-1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Vivan Jones funeral business (1912-1916)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Root Casket Company (1913-1963)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lee Hamilton buys interest in Selover-Knight business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Hamilton’s FH</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1913 to Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Vivan Jones/Americus Samuels funeral business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lilly Brothers FH moves. Evan Lilly opens funeral/ furniture/grocery business in Runnells.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harbachs complete construction of first building in DM built especially for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>funeral home purposes. Also houses Carpenter/Hohenschuh Mortuary School,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harbach Wholesale business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Louis Harbach dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dunn’s FH moves to former Richard Clarkson residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Lafe &amp; Frank Fowler open funeral home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Fowler &amp; Sons Funeral Home</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1917 to 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>E. Carl White, director of mortuary service at Camp Dodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spanish influenza epidemic: over 700 dead at Camp Dodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Harry Schoen (a banker) buys Harbachs FH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newlen FH moves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McBride FH moves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ownership/management municipal water system handed over to city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>City of DM population 126,468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roy Handy with J.W. Bland for several years on 8th St. and then alone on Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of DM adopts first zoning laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Harbach affiliates with Dunn’s FH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Earl McLaren opens funeral and furniture businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>McLaren’s Funeral Chapel</strong> (Originally known as Valley Funeral Home)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Des Moines Casket Company goes bankrupt, new business known as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Des Moines Casket Company opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lilly Brothers open a location in Ankeny (their third)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Ankeny Funeral Home</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1922 to Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Hamilton’s FH moves to H.C. Hanson home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O’Donoghue Funeral Home moves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>E. Carl White opens funeral home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tug Wilson goes into business with Vivian Jones. (Wilson’s FH 1925-1937)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First traffic light in DM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Dunn’s FH moves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City of DM adopts first zoning laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Harbach affiliates with Dunn’s FH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ezra J. Selover sells all interest in FH to Lee Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lee Hamilton adds new partner Clarence Powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. Carl White FH moves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McLaren Funeral Home moves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>R.R. McBride closes funeral business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1929 | Roy & Esther Caldwell open funeral home  
  **Caldwell-Raddatz Funeral Home**  
  **1929 to Present**  
  Hamilton-Powers-Dunn partnership forms in January; dissolves end of year. (Powers moves to Oskaloosa)  
  E. Carl White elected president of Iowa Funeral Directors  
  William O’Donoghue dies |
| 1930 | City of DM population 142,559  
  City of DM becomes owner of equipment for lowering caskets into ground  
  Hohenschuh-Carpenter school moves to St. Louis  
  Alfred Dahlstrom operating out of desk at Harbach’s |
| 1931 | Caldwell FH moves  
  1118 21st St.  
  Joe O’Meara opens funeral home (1933-1946)  
  1041 6th Ave.  
  Caldwell FH becomes known as Caldwell-McIlhoun FH |
| 1932 | Roy Caldwell dies  
  Tug Wilson dies in auto accident  
  New Dahlstrom Funeral Home built  
  621 E. 9th  
  Lilly FH, Ankeny, moves  
  122 SW. 3rd St., Ankeny  
  O’Donoghue FH closes  
  McLaren FH moves  
  312 5th St. WDM  
  E. Carl White FH moves to former Hippee home  
  2505 W. Grand  
  Iver Newlen, president of Iowa Funeral Directors of Association  
  J.E. McDermott dies |
| 1933 | John Estes Sr. buys Wilson FH  
  O’Meara FH moves  
  2413 Grand  
  Estes and Son Funeral Home  
  **1937 to 2000** |
| 1938 | Valley Junction renamed West, Des Moines  
  E. Carl White FH opens eastside location in Cherry Place  
  1204 E. Grand  
  A. Dahlstrom gives business to children: Roy, Mabel, Alice  
  Bethel Jacob Synagogue founds Iowa Jewish FH (1939 - to early 1950s)  
  William Harbach dies  
  City of DM population 159,819  
  Lee Hamilton names partners: Ira Moller, Ardis Peterson  
  Lyle Burr buys Carson FH Mitchellville, renames it Burr FH |
| 1940 | Harbach FH moves to former R.A Crawford residence  
  2143 Grand  
  DM site of first Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps training center  
  Newlen FH closes  
  Charles Tomlinson dies  
  Tuttle FH opens in Runnells (1944 - early '50s)  
  Newton F. Mack, Charles O. Bumgardner buy E. Carl White FHs; renames them White-Bumgardner-Mack FHs.  
  Joe Conley buys O’Meara FH, renames it Conley FH  
  Robert Moffitt buys Burr FH, Mitchellville; renames it Moffitt FH.  
  City of DM approves parking meters  
  J.P. Arnold opens Highland Park FH  
  3500 Sixth Avenue  
  Highland Park Funeral Home  
  **1948 to Present**  
  Harry Schoen closes Harbach FH, continues wholesale business until '53  
  Lilly brothers partnership dissolves: Joe moves to former Harbach location (2143 Grand);  
  Evan remains at longtime Lilly location.  
  107 |
Des Moines Art Center opens
Ben Robbins, Jim Brien join Caldwell firm (Caldwell-Brien-Robbins)

1949
John McLaren buys his father’s business
Stroke incapacitates Lee Hamilton until his 1956 death

1950
City of DM Population 177,965
DM begins Council-Manager government
Tom Glidden (Dunn’s son-in-law) becomes manager of Dunn’s FH

1951
Hammitt-Robinson Funeral Home opens 1010 14th St. Place
Mando Tonini opens first funeral home on south side 2135 SW 9th
Brooks Funeral Care Tonini Chapel (Formerly known as Tonini Funeral Home)
1952 to Present

1952
1954
Don Wright, Eugen Ridge open Beaverdale Mortuary Conley FH closes; Joe Conley enters partnership with Ken Lilly
First DM television station (WHO-TV) begins broadcasting

1955
Ken Lilly buys Beaverdale Mortuary, closes it several years later. The College of Embalming in St. Louis (Hohenschuh-Carpenter) closes

1957
Dunn’s FH opens South Side FH 5400 SW 9th

1958
Park Fair – Iowa’s First Shopping Center opens 2nd Ave. & Euclid
Moffit FH opens a funeral home in Altoona Altoona Funeral Home
1958 to Present

1959
Joe Conley leaves partnership with Ken Lilly, buys White-Bumgardner-Mack facility on E. Grand (Conley’s Capitol Hill FH), also opens funeral home in family home 35th & W. Grand
Last polio epidemic in Polk County
Merle Hay Mall opens

1960
City of DM population 208,982 (peak year)
Tom Glidden elected president of National Funeral Directors Association
Hamilton’s Westover FH built by Charles Iles in partnership with Hamilton’s FH, opens 6637 Hickman Westover Funeral Home
1960 to Present

1961
Fowler FH founder Lafe Fowler dies
Paul Hamilton buys Lilly FHs (Ankeny & DM)

1963
Joe Conley sells Conley’s Capitol Hill to Paul Hamilton. Beaverdale Chapel opens for a few years Beaver & Urbandale Ave.

1964
Paul Hamilton leases and operates Arnold’s Highland Park FH. (1964 to 1970)

1966
Paul Hamilton founds International Funeral Service (IFS)

1967
IFS buys McLaren FH and Galloway-McLaren FH

1969
Estes & Son FH moves 1052 Harding Ave.
Hamilton’s FH moves 605 Lyon
Hammitt-Robinson FH moves 1425 University
Tom Glidden retires from Dunn’s FH
Last passenger train service in DM
DM adopts city manager-ward system
1970 City of DM population 201,404
Hamilton-Lilly FH closes
Gregory Gulick's Grandview FH opens 3211 Hubbell
Robert Major buys Arnold's Highland Park FH
New Des Moines Post Office opens 2nd & University

1971 Third generation joins Hamilton's partnership: Bill and John Moller, Carlton Peterson

1972 Estes & Son FH moves. 1216 Forest Ave.
Ben Robbins buys Caldwell-Brien-Robbins FH
Gregory Gulick buys Fisher FHs (Adel, Redfield, Van Meter)

1973 Gregory Gulick buys Moffitt FHs (Mitchellville, Altoona), Brohert FH (Zearing), Berg Vault Company
Planning & Service Corporation opens Merle Hay FH 4400 Merle Hay Road
Gregory Gulick buys Loehr FH (Newton)
Tornado rips Ankeny

1975 Henry Hammitt dies; Hammitt-Robinson FH closes.
Dahlstrom FH sold to American Funeral Service
Gregory Gulick files bankruptcy; Planning & Service Corporation buys Grandview FH.
Casket manufacture ends in DM

1976 Hamilton's buys Moffitt FHs (Altoona, Mitchellville)
Ankeny FH moves 1501 W. 1st (Ankeny)

1977 IFS buys American Funeral Service including Dahlstrom FH

1978 Third generation at Fowler & Sons FH: Larry Fowler becomes owner upon death of Lafayette Fowler, Jr.
Charles Iles buys Dunn's FH and Hamilton's interest in Westover FH.
Hamilton's buys Dunn's South Side, renames it Hamilton's Southtown FH
McLaren FH moves to chapel in Resthaven Cemetery 801 19th St. (WDM)
Pope John Paul visits Living History Farms

1980 City of DM population 191,003; Polk County population 303,170

1981 IFS merges with Service Corporation International

1986 Hawkeye, Inc. buy Planning & Service Corporation

1987 Jim Raddatz buys Caldwell-Brien-Robbins FH; renames it Caldwell-Raddatz FH
Charles Iles buys Grandview FH, renames it Grandview Park FH.
Hamilton's FHs opens Hamilton's Near Highland Memory Gardens 121 NE 60th Ave.
Iles FHs buys Brandt FH (Dallas Center) and funeral home in Woodward
Mark Iles joins Iles FHs partnership
Leopard Enterprises buys Merle Hay FH, Sunset Memorial Gardens, Chapel Hill Cemetery

1989 Leopard Enterprises files bankruptcy

1990 City of DM population 193,187
Mike Tonini president of Tonini FH
Principal Financial Building at 44 floors—tallest DM building 801 Grand

1991 Hamilton's Mitchellville FH moves 303 Center Ave., Mitchellville
Galloway-McLaren FH Norwalk closes
Jon Peterson takes over operation of Highland Park FH

“Five hundred year flood” closes DM waterworks; City's downtown closed for ten days.

1995 Fredrick Nichols buys Estes & Son FH
Mike Iles joins Iles FHs partnership

1996 Caldwell-Raddatz Chapel opens 8201 Hickman
Newcomer firm builds chapel at Sunset Memorial Gardens 7601 Fleur Drive

1997 Cremation Society of Iowa, Assured Care Funeral Services open 128 SE Surefine Dr. Ankeny
Brooks Funeral Care Service opens 7975 University Blvd. Clive

1999 Assured Care Funeral Services moves 102 N Trilein Ankeny
1999  John Bethel sells his share of cemetery business
2000  John Bethel sells Assured Care Funeral Service, Cremation Society of Iowa to Neptune Society.
      Caldwell-Raddaatz closes University Avenue location
      Estes-Nichols FH becomes known as Nichols FH
2001  SCI closes Dahlstrom FH
2002  Nichols FH moves to east side
      Brooks Funeral Care buys Tonini FH
      Fourth generation moves into Hamilton’s ownership: John Moller Jr., Holly Peterson Miller, Sasha Mudlaff.

Acknowledgments

This history of Des Moines Funeral service was compiled from city directories from 1866 to the present, newspapers, history volumes, and through conversations with a number of people. The author wants to thank all those who shared their own stories and those of their families in the search for information for the 1984 edition and this revised edition. Their memories are the foundation of this written history. The author would also like to give special thanks to Iles Funeral Homes for the loan of Mrs. LeRoy Dunn’s scrapbooks for use in this revision project.

Index of Funeral Businesses & Personalities

Altoona FH, 73, 81, 97
American Funeral Service, 81
Anderson, Thomas, 17
Ankeny FH, 48, 54, 80, 97
Ankeny Memorial Gardens, 91
Antes, W.H., 23
Arnold, J.P., 65-66, 72, 90
Arnold’s Highland Park, See Highland Park FH.
Assured Care Funeral Services, See Bethel, John.
Averill, Timothy & Katherine, See Brooks Funeral Care.
Beaverdale Chapel, 77
Beaverdale Mortuary, 73
Bethel, John, 91, 95
Betts, Henry, 62
Bice, Frank, 15
Bigelow, Clarence, 51
Bland, JW, 43
Boltinghouse, Gail, 69
Borg, Mabel Dahlstrom, 33, 53-54, 60, 89
Braman, Boyd, 68
Brandt FH, Dallas Center (August & Don Brandt), 82-83
Brandt FH, Woodward, 82-83
Brien, Jim, 68, 72
Brooks Funeral Care (Robert & Mary Jo Brooks), 91-92, 95, 98
Brooks Funeral Care Tonini Chapel, 95, 98
Brooks Funeral Care University Chapel, 98
Bufkin Glenn, 66, 90
Bumgardner, Mitchell, 64
Burr FH (Burr, Lyle), 66-67
Caldwell FH (Caldwell-Brien, Caldwell-Brien-Robbins, Caldwell-McIlhoun), 38, 42, 46, 51-52, 57, 68, 72, 81, 84
Caldwell, Esther McIlhoun (Mrs. Roy Caldwell), 42, 52, 60, 68, 81
Caldwell, Roy, 42, 51
Caldwell-Raddatz FH, 84, 93-94, 98
Cardinal FH, 69
Carpenter, William S., 25-28, 35, 53, 60, 74
Carson Furniture & Undertaking (Abel & Burt Carson), 17
Chapel Hill Cemetery, 80, 85, 86
Clos, J.C., 15
Colonial FH, See Hamilton-Lilly.
Conley FH, 64-65, 72-73, 74
Conley, Joe, 64-65, 72-73, 77
Conley's Capitol Hill, 73, 77
Cramer-Link FH (Brian Cramer), See Link FH.
Cremation Society of Iowa, See Bethel, John.
Dahlstrom FH, 18-20, 33, 59-54, 60, 81, 94
Dahlstrom, Alfred, 18-19, 53-54
Dahlstrom, Alice, 53-54
Dahlstrom, Mabel, See Borg, Mabel Dahlstrom.
Dahlstrom, Roy, 53-54, 72, 89
Davis, Roland, 46
Des Moines Casket Company, 23, 25, 32, 43
Des Moines Casket Company (The), 43, 62
Des Moines School of Embalming, 26-28
Doggett, Chuck, 79-80, 84-85
Duley, M.L., 23
Dunn, LeRoy C., 18-20, 30-31, 34, 46-51, 69
Dunn's FH, 18-20, 30, 31-34, 46-51, 58, 69, 72, 81, 99
Dunn's South Side FH, 69, 81
Dunn-Selover FH, 19
E. Carl White FH, See White, E. Carl FH.
Elliott, Mark, 43
Elmquist Charles, 62-63
Estes and Son FH, 52, 73, 76, 87-88
Estes, John Jr., 73, 87-88
Estes, John Sr., 38, 52, 63, 76,
Estes-Nichols FH, 88
Fouch-Murdock FH, See Brandt FH, Woodward.
Fowler, Frank, 32
Fowler, L. and Son FH, 30-32, 44-45, 75, 78, 89-90
Fowler, Lafayette Jr., 44, 75, 78
Fowler, Lafayette Sr. ("Lafe"), 30, 32, 44, 75
Fowler, Larry, 78, 90
Franz, Frederick W., 15
Galloway FH, See McLaren-Galloway FH.
Galloway, Benjamin Franklin, 73-74
Glidden, Tom, 69, 72, 79
Grandview FH, 78-80, 82, 85
Grandview Park FH, 82, 99
Gray, Henry, 20, 23
Grinnell, E., 15
Gulick, Gregory, 78-79
Hamilton, Lee, 1-10, 18-20, 36, 49-61, 53, 60, 74
Hamilton, Paul, 77, 84, 88
Hamilton's Academy of Grief and Loss, 8-9, 89
Hamilton's FHs, 1-10, 18-20, 36, 44, 49-50, 53, 59-61, 74, 76, 78, 81-82, 89, 97, 99-102
Hamilton's Near Highland Memory Gardens, 5, 82, 100
Hamilton's Westover FH, 5, 75, 81
Hamilton-Lilly FH, 77
Hamilton-Powers-Dunn, 49-50
Hammitt and Robinson FH (Henry G. Hammitt & George W. Robinson, Jr.), 70-71, 73, 75-76
Handy, Roy, 43
Harbach FH, 12-13, 16-17, 29, 32, 33, 34-36, 46-48, 53, 62, 66
Harbach, Christian, 12-13
Harbach, Louis, 12-13, 16-17, 34, 47
Harbach, William, 17, 34, 46-48, 58
Harlan, O., 15
Hartung, F.L., 25
Hawkeye, Inc., 84
Heggen Casket Company, 62
Herman, J.C, 15
Highland Park FH, 65-66, 80, 86, 100
Hohenschuh, William Price, 25-28
Hohenschuh-Carpenter School of Embalming, 23,
Hohenschuh-Carpenter School of Embalming, 23, 25-28, 35, 42, 53, 60, 74
Hoskins, Mark, 21-22
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iles FHS</td>
<td>82-83, 88-89, 99, 103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iles, Charles</td>
<td>75, 81-82, 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iles, Mark</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iles, Mike</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Funeral Services (IFS)</td>
<td>77, 80, 81, 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Casket Company</td>
<td>63, 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Funeral Directors Association</td>
<td>21, 26, 54, 61-62, 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Jewish FH</td>
<td>54, 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, Joel</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones, Vivian</td>
<td>30, 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeney, T.S.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkpatrick, Gary</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knight, Otto</td>
<td>3, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagerquist Auto</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leopard Enterprises (Don Leopard)</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilly (Lilly Brothers FH)</td>
<td>29-30, 32, 34, 41, 48, 50, 53-54, 56, 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilly, Evan</td>
<td>29-30, 41, 48, 50, 54, 66, 72-73, 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilly, Gary</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilly, Jim</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilly, Joe</td>
<td>29-30, 32, 41, 48, 50, 54, 56, 66, 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilly, Ken</td>
<td>54, 66, 72-73, 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link FH (Tom Link)</td>
<td>83, 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotz, William and Company</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas, George</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mack, Newton F.</td>
<td>64, 72, 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major, Robert L.</td>
<td>80-81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McBride, Rothert</td>
<td>19-21, 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCord and Clements</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDermott FH (J. E. McDermott)</td>
<td>16-17, 32, 42, 44, 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mcilhoun, Dan</td>
<td>52, 60, 68, 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McIntyre, W. Harold</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLaren FH (McLaren Funeral Chapel)</td>
<td>38, 64, 77, 80, 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLaren, Earl</td>
<td>38, 40, 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLaren, John</td>
<td>64, 72, 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLaren, R.L. &quot;Red&quot;</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLaren-Galloway FH</td>
<td>73-74, 77, 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial Heritage Inc.</td>
<td>86-87, 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merle Hay at Chapel Hill</td>
<td>87, 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merle Hay FH</td>
<td>78-80, 85-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrill, Keeney and Company</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merrill, William</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller, Molly Peterson</td>
<td>10, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell, W.H.</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchellville FH</td>
<td>92, 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Also see Carson FH, Burr FH, Moffitt FH.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modlin FH</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moffitt FH (Robert Moffitt)</td>
<td>66-67, 73, 79, 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moller, Bill</td>
<td>6, 78, 81, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moller, Ira</td>
<td>5, 60-61, 72, 75, 78, 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moller, John</td>
<td>6, 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moller, John, Jr.</td>
<td>8, 10, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan, Dr.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mudlaff, Sasha</td>
<td>8-10, 89, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muehler</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myers, Hugh</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Funeral Directors Association</td>
<td>7, 26, 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neptune Society</td>
<td>95, 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcomer, D.W. &amp; Sons</td>
<td>See Memorial Heritage, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newlen FH</td>
<td>13, 17, 29, 33-34, 42, 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newlen, Gustaf</td>
<td>13, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newlen, Iver</td>
<td>17, 33, 34, 54, 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nichols, Fredrick</td>
<td>87-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nichols FH</td>
<td>88, 95, 102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noftsgar, David</td>
<td>91, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Boyle, John H.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Donoghue FH (William O'Donoghue)</td>
<td>20-22, 29, 45-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Meara FH (Joe O'Meara)</td>
<td>54, 57-58, 64-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orr, J.J. and Son FH</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick, James W.</td>
<td>16, 19-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterson, Peter</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patzig, Flora</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patzig, M.E.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson FH</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson, Ardis</td>
<td>5-6, 59-61, 63, 72, 75, 78, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson, Carlton</td>
<td>6, 78, 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson, Jon</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterson, Willard W.</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierce, Edward D.</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Service Corporation</td>
<td>79, 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Page Numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter, W.B.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powers, Clarence</td>
<td>49-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raddatz, Jim</td>
<td>See Caldwell-Raddatz FH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resthaven Cemetery</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rex Fluid Company</td>
<td>(Edward D. Pierce &amp; W. H. Mitchell), 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reynolds, H.R.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richardson FH</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridge, Eugene</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbins, Ben</td>
<td>68, 72, 81, 84, 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, George W. Jr.</td>
<td>See Hammitt &amp; Robinson FH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root Casket Company</td>
<td>(Edwin &amp; James Root), 32, 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross Livery and Undertaking</td>
<td>(Roy S. &amp; Nettie Ross), 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuels, Americus</td>
<td>30, 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoen and Slininger</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoen FH</td>
<td>47, 48, 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoen, Carl</td>
<td>48, 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoen, Harry</td>
<td>34, 48, 62, 66, 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seely, Kevin</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selover-Hamilton</td>
<td>3, 20, 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selover, Ezra J.</td>
<td>3, 16, 19, 50, 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selover-Dunn</td>
<td>19, 23, 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selover-Knight</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Corporation International (SCI)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shank Brothers</td>
<td>14-15, 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shank, Henry</td>
<td>14-15, 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shank, Lewis F.</td>
<td>14-15, 19, 24, 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slininger, Clyde</td>
<td>See Schoen-Slininger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sloan, John</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snyder, A.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Side FH</td>
<td>See Dunn’s South Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southtown FH</td>
<td>81, 102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundberg-Kirkpatrick FH</td>
<td>83, 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundburg, A.M. &amp; J. Edwin</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset Memorial Gardens</td>
<td>(Sunset Funeral Chapel), 80, 85-86, 92, 102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetley, W.L.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tetrick, Brian</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomlinson FH (Charles B. Tomlinson),</td>
<td>22-23, 44, 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonini FH</td>
<td>69-70, 88, 90, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonini, Mando</td>
<td>69, 72, 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonini, Michael</td>
<td>88, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucker, Lee</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuttle FH (Harry Tuttle)</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley FH</td>
<td>See McLaren FH.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagler, Scott</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter’s Furniture and Undertaking</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells and Antes Undertaking Company</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells, L.F. Livery and Undertaking</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westover FH</td>
<td>81, 103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, E. Carl FH</td>
<td>(E. Carl White), 38-40, 42, 53-55, 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Jim</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Melva Heston (Mrs. E. Carl White)</td>
<td>39, 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-Bumgardner-Mack FH</td>
<td>64, 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-O’Meara FH</td>
<td>See O’Meara FH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams, Richard</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson FH (Tug Wilson)</td>
<td>38, 42, 43, 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright, Don</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyandt, Charles</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>