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FUNERAL HOME RECORDS AND THEIR VALUE IN GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH, PART I

by Denise Kelley & Randy Bobbitt

Few detective novels would be complete without a description of the hero or heroine poking around a cemetery in search of clues to a mystery. If you decide to unravel mysteries of your own, such as those encountered in writing your family history, you will probably poke around a few cemeteries and many other places. Funeral homes are one of many locations genealogists find helpful in conducting a search.

Tracing your family history involves discovering information about your ancestors from many sources. The goal is to find records that give information to identify specific relatives and certify a family relationship.

Primary sources that document family relationships include civil records from such government offices such as those of the Clerk of Court or the Health Department. The office responsible for these records will need certain information to conduct a search. The full name of the relative, date of the vital event, place where the event occurred, your relationship and purpose for needing the information will be the main considerations of the official who will determine if a search can be conducted.

Requirements vary as to how specific the information must be before an agency will conduct a search. In Florida, a search can be costly if you cannot provide the State Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services Office with a specific date. You will be charged a fee for each five years searched.

Funeral home records can provide help in two ways. First, specific dates from funeral home records can be used in meeting the information request criteria of government offices. Second, funeral home records can be used in lieu of government records when responses to requests for information indicate no record exists at a public agency. Funeral home information can provide leads to other sources of information such as cemetery records and markers, obituaries, and church records. Often these sources give additional information about the ancestor you are searching and also about other family members, thus adding more to the picture you are composing of your family genealogy.

Florida funeral home records date back to the late 1800s in some instances. Records may be retained by the original owner after the sale of a business. If not, the records may be maintained by successive owners. Funeral home information is more complete after the 1930s and 1940s in Florida.

Use the same guidelines when corresponding with funeral home directors as those previously mentioned when writing to government bureaus. Write in simple language and be specific. Contact the public library for telephone directories of the locality in which the relatives's death occurred or request a funeral home directory compiled by state associations and the National Funeral Directors Association of the United States. A letter to the State Funeral Home Association in the state where you are searching should prove helpful as well.

The following list of Florida funeral homes should prove valuable as a tool in searching your family genealogy in Florida. Most funeral directors are receptive to the needs of persons making inquiries about their relatives and express a willingness to provide assistance useful to a genealogical search. This assistance is considered vital in tracing a family history and certifying family relationships. Comments by directors are added as needed to further assist you with your search.

FUNERAL HOME	COUNTY	DATE RECORDS BEGIN
	ALACHUA	
Huggins-Copeland Funeral Home P.O. Box 1305 - Gainesville, FL 32601		January 1, 1970
Johnson-Hayes Funeral Home P.O. Box 1248 Gainesville, FL 32601		1926 (old records from 1926 to 1943 are limited; from 1943 to the present records are good)
Williams-Thomas Funeral Home P.O. Box 1290 - Gainesville, FL 32601		1929 (earlier records were destroyed in a fire)
	BAKER	
John M. Brinkley Mortician P.O. Box 491 - MacClenny, FL 32603		15 May 1949
	BAY	
Smith Funeral Home 505 N. MacArthur Ave. - Panama City, FL 32401		1947
	BREVARD	
Wylie-Baxley Funeral Home P.O. Box 428 Cocoa, FL 32922		1894 (1894 to 1945 sketchy; 1945 to present more complete)
Brevard Funeral Home South 1001 S. Hickory St. - Melbourne, FL 32901		1971
Davis Funeral Home 36 E. Brevard Dr. - Melbourne, FL 32935		December 1959
Smith Funeral Home P.O. Box 1497 - Titusville, FL 32780		November 16, 1924

BROWARD

Kraeer Funeral Home 217 E. Hillsboro Blvd. - Deerfield Beach, FL 33441	1952
Case Funeral Home 4343 N. Federal Hwy. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308	
Fairchild Funeral Home 299 N. Federal Hwy. Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301	February 1, 1930 (older records not as detailed as later ones)
Fannin Funeral Home 326 E. Las Olas Blvd. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312	February 2, 1930
Jennings Funeral Home 3904 W. Commercial Blvd. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309	February 1963
Jordan-Thomas Funeral Home 5110 N. Federal Hwy. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308	1964
Kahs Funeral Home 2505 N. Dixie Hwy. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33305	1959
Kraeer Funeral Home 4061 N. Federal Hwy. - Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308	1952
Boyd's Funeral Home 6400 Hollywood Blvd. - Hollywood, FL 33021	May 1958
Fred Hunter Funeral Home P.O. Box 6969 - Hollywood, FL 33021	February 1960
Pancier Memorial Home 4200 Hollywood Blvd. - Hollywood, FL 33021	1951
Wadlington-Brown-Cooper Funeral Home 140 S. Dixie Hwy. - Hollywood, FL 33020	December 1951
Wintter Funeral Chapel 1050 N. Federal Hwy. - Hollywood, FL 33020	1961
T. M. Ralph Plantation Funeral Home 7001 N.W. 4th St. - Plantation, FL 33313	December 1965
Kraeer Funeral Home	July 1961

1199 N. 36th St. E. - Pompano Beach, FL 33064

Kraeer Funeral Home 1952
200 N. Federal Hwy. - Pompano Beach, FL 33062

Stitely Funeral Home 1963
6107 Hallandale Blvd. - West Hollywood, FL 33023

CALHOUN

Adams Funeral Home 1976
1115 Hwy. 71 North - Blountstown, FL 32424

Blountstown Chapel 1978
707 Preston Ave. - Blountstown, FL 32424

CHARLOTTE

Kays Funeral Home April 25, 1959
P.O. Box 2056 - Port Charlotte, FL 33950

Kays-Ponger Funeral Home January 6, 1945
619 E. Marion Ave. - Punta Gorda, FL 33950

CITRUS

Strickland Funeral Home February 1962
P.O. Box 398 - Crystal River, FL 32629

Hooper Funeral Home 1946
P.O. Box 305 - Inverness, FL 32650

CLAY

Helm Funeral Home September 18, 1961
P.O. Box 445 - Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

Westberry Griffis Rivermead Funeral Home July 1, 1965
950 Park Ave. - Orange Park, FL 32073

COLLIER

Brister Funeral Home October 20, 1968
707 N. Hwy. 29 - Immokalee, FL 33934

Earl G. Hodges Funeral Chapel August 10, 1962

3520 Tamiami Trail - Naples, FL 33940

Pittman Funeral Home 1954
6th Ave. - Naples, FL 33940

Pittman Funeral Home 1974
Tamiami Trail - E. Naples, FL

COLUMBIA

Biggs-Wilson Funeral Home 1902 (partial to present)
P.O. Box 846 - Lake City, FL 32055

DADE

Carl F. Slade Funeral Home October 1955
800 Palm Avenue - Hialeah, FL 33010

Lowe-Hanks Funeral Home June 1, 1963
151 East Okeechobee Road - Hialeah, FL 33010

Branam Funeral Home 1949
809 North Krome Avenue - Homestead, FL 33030

Bennett-Ulm Funeral Home September 17, 1964
15201 Northwest 7th Avenue - Miami, FL 33169

Bess Memorial Mortuaries 1906
10936 N.E. 6th Avenue - Miami, FL 33161

Brake-Saunders Funeral Home January 1, 1959
4100 N.W. 7th Street - Miami, FL 33126

Lithgow Funeral Center Late 1940s
15501 W. Dixie Highway - N. Miami, FL 33161

Lithgow Funeral Center Late 1940s
485 N.E. 54th Street - Miami, FL 33137

Lithgow Funeral Center Late 1940s
3232 Coral Way - Miami, FL 33129

Lithgow Funeral Center Late 1940s
8080 S.W. 67th Avenue - South Miami, FL 33173

Lithgow Funeral Center Late 1940s

17475 N.W. 27th Avenue
 Carol City (Opa Locka), FL 33056

Reid-Lowe Funeral Home
 2360 N.W. 36th Street - Miami, FL 33142

December 1958

Stanfill Funeral Home
 10545 S. Dixie Highway - Miami, FL 33156

1956

Van Orsdel Mortuary
 3333 N.E. 2nd Avenue - Miami, FL 33137

1924

Newman Funeral Home
 1333 Dade Blvd. - Miami Beach, FL 33139

Early 1940s

Riverside Memorial Chapel
 1920 Alton Road - Miami, FL 33139

Records kept for
 7 years

Walsh-Wood Funeral Home
 7140 Abbott Avenue - Miami Beach, FL 33141

May 1950

Alligood-Carroll Funeral Home
 17300 S. Dixie Highway - Perrine, FL 33157

Late 1965

DE SOTO

Robarts-Grady Funeral Home
 P.O. Box 47 - Arcadia, FL 33821

1936

DIXIE

Richard P. Gooding Funeral Home
 P.O. Box 307 - Cross City, FL 32628

Mid 1930s
 Early 1940s

DUVAL

Corey-Kerlin Funeral Home
 1426 Rowe Avenue - Jacksonville, FL 32208

August 20, 1963

George H. Hewell and Son Funeral Homes
 4747 Main Street - Jacksonville, FL 32206

April 4, 1934

Giddens-Griffith Funeral Home
 1129 S. Edgewood Avenue - Jacksonville, FL 32050

Early 1930s

Giddens-Griffith Funeral Home

Early 1930s

1701 Beach Blvd. - Jacksonville, FL 32250

Giddens-Griffith Funeral Home
6940 Atlantic - Jacksonville, FL 32211
Early 1930s

Giddens-Griffith Funeral Home
4607 Lexington - Jacksonville, FL
Early 1930s

Hardage & Sons, Estes-Krauss Funeral Home
517 Park Street - Jacksonville, FL 32204
June 1930

Hardage & Sons, Estes-Krauss Funeral Home
415 Hendricks Avenue - Jacksonville, FL 32207
June 1930

Hardage & Sons, Estes-Krauss Funeral Home
Arlington Road - Jacksonville, FL
June 1930

Hardage & Sons, Estes-Krauss Funeral Home
Blanding Blvd. - Jacksonville, FL
June 1930

Peoples Northwoods Funeral Home
2220 Soutel Drive - Jacksonville, FL 32208
1968

Robert M. Naugle Mortuary
P.O. Box 5067 - Jacksonville, FL 32207
1919

ESCAMBIA

Fisher-Pou Funeral Home
P.O. Box 809 - Pensacola, FL 32502
December 1926

McNefl-Keyes Funeral Home
1380 N. Palafox Street - Pensacola, FL 32501
1936

Waters & Hibbert Funeral Home
P.O. Box 667 - Pensacola, FL 32502
1931

FRANKLIN

R. L. Rilley Funeral Home
P.O. Box 576 - Carrabelle, FL 32322

GADSDEN

Adams Funeral Home
P.O. Box 581 - Quincy, FL 32351
1950

Morgan-McClellan Funeral Home 1940
 P.O. Box 528 - Quincy, FL 32351

Smith-Morgan Funeral Home
 P.O. Box 36 - Chattahoochie, FL 32324

HARDEE

Coker Funeral Home Some records back
 P.O. Box 545 to 1925; becoming more
 Wauchula, FL 33873 accurate in 1930s

HERNANDO

Brewer Memorial Funeral Home 1965
 P.O. Box 216 - Brooksville, FL 33512

Turner Home for Funerals November 1959
 504 E. Jefferson - Brooksville, FL 33512

HIGHLANDS

Stephenson-Smith Funeral Home 1921
 P.O. Box 1466 - Avon Park, FL 33825

Stephenson Funeral Home 1925
 P.O. Box 193 - Sebring, FL 33870

Warren Funeral Home February 1950
 P.O. Box 166 - Sebring, FL 33870

HILLSBOROUGH

Stowers Funeral Home January 1961
 401 E. Brandon Blvd. - Brandon, FL 33511

Colonial Funeral Home 1918 to 1936 are not
 P.O. Box 1148 - Plant City, FL 33566 complete; 1936 to present
 complete

Lewers Shannon Funeral Home June 1959
 308 E. College Ave. - Ruskin, FL 33570

F. T. Blount Company 1917
 5101 Nebraska Ave. - Tampa, FL 33603

Curry Funeral Home 605 S. MacDill Ave. - Tampa, FL 33609	1957
Duval Funeral Home 3806 Nebraska Ave. - Tampa, FL 33603	1951
Jennings Funeral Home 6900 Nebraska Ave. - Tampa, FL 33604	Dec. 8, 1954
Marsicano Funeral Home 4040 Henderson Blvd. - Tampa, FL 33609	November 1956
J. L. Reed & Son 3410 Henderson Blvd. - Tampa, FL	1887
B. Marion Reed Company Funeral Homes 258 Plant Ave. - Tampa, FL 33606	1917
Roel & Curry Funeral Home 4730 N. Armenia Ave. - Tampa, FL 33603	1977
Snipes Funeral Home 6718 N. Armenia Ave. - Tampa, FL 33604	1968

(MORE TO FOLLOW IN THE NEXT ISSUE.)