

# Death Business: Searching Funeral Home Collections

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## A Grave Business

- Once an individual had been declared as deceased, the funeral home was a business entity hired to handle the activities prior to burial or cremation.
- The families or heirs hire the funeral home to prepare the deceased for burial or cremation, which creates a paper trail. The funeral home may be responsible for the following:
  - Purchase of the coffin
  - Transportation of the deceased
  - Purchase of the tombstone
  - Copies of death records
  - Obituary announcement
  - Visitations and funeral service arrangements
  - Acknowledgement of military service at the funeral or on the tombstone
  - Burial or cremation service
  - And much more
- The records can have limited hints or full details concerning the deceased and the family. These hints and details should be further researched to learn more about the family.  
Hint: These documents are being created at an emotional time and not by the deceased, so some of the details can be inaccurate.
- Funeral home records are another death source. They typically provide the name, date, and place for the deceased. Funeral home records can direct you to other death sources and vice versa. Following the paper trail, the records can also provide information that expands your research.
- The records maintained by the funeral home are documents pertaining to the activities of a business. Unlike other genealogical records, funeral home records were not legally required to be maintained since they were private business documents. Some of these collections have been donated or collected to local and state libraries and archives, genealogical and historical societies, and university libraries. Search the organizations in the region where your ancestor died or resided for funeral home records.

## Paper Trail

- Ways to discover the name of the funeral home:
  - Obituary and funeral notices in the newspaper can name the funeral home that is handling the arrangements or the location of the visitation.
  - Death records also can name the funeral home that processed the deceased.
  - Cemetery transcription books or sites, such as FindAGrave.com, may mention the funeral home.
  - Search the business section of city directories for the specific years and location to have a list of possible funeral homes.

- Funeral home records **may** provide:
  - Birth and death date and place
  - Most recent residence
  - Occupational information
  - Military details
  - Name of spouse, death date if deceased, and marriage date
  - List of surviving and deceased children and siblings and residences
  - Number of grandchildren, etc.
  - Name of parents
  - Funeral service and visitation details
  - Burial details
  - Transportation details if the deceased was being transported to or from elsewhere
- These records can lead to other death-related documents and vice versa. They can also hint at information that can direct your research to other record sets and individuals.

### **Genealogy Center Funeral Home Collections**

- At The Genealogy Center, funeral home collections can be found by searching the catalog at <http://www.genealogycenter.org>
- Currently, there are more than 900 Funeral Home collections in print or digital for varying states in The Genealogy Center.
- The first search box on the site will search the ACPL catalog for materials.
- Search terms can include “funeral home” or “mortuary,” the county and/or city, and state.
- If a physical book, a call number is listed to locate the book on the shelves.

Quantity	Status	Branch	Location
1 x	✓ Reference only, cannot be borrowed	Genealogy department	Indiana 977.202 F77T0 S-U
1 x	✓ Reference only, cannot be borrowed	Genealogy department	Indiana 977.202 F77T0 P-R

- If a digital record, click on the “More Info” tab.

Quantity	Status	Branch	Location
1 x	✓ Reference only, cannot be borrowed	Genealogy department	Online, click More Info tab XX(945215742.1)

- Then scroll to the bottom of the page to access the “Weblink” to the records.

<b>Title</b>	Tom Mungovan Funeral Home records, 1980-2014 (Electronic Resource)
<b>Subject</b>	Funeral homes ; Indiana ; Fort Wayne ; Records and correspondence Tom Mungovan Funeral Home (Fort Wayne, Ind.) ; Records and correspondence
<b>Weblink</b>	<a href="http://genealogycenter.info/search_tommungovan.php">http://genealogycenter.info/search_tommungovan.php</a>

- For digital content only, click on the “Our Resources” button on the Genealogy Center page <http://www.genealogycenter.org>
- Select “Free Databases” and choose from “Allen County, Indiana Resources,” “Indiana Resources,” or “Other State Resources.”