ADDRESS: 238 N 53RD ST
Name of Resource: The Frankenfield-Allmond House & Funeral Establishment
Review: Designation
Property Owner: DHI Holdings L.P.
Nominator: University City Historical Society
Staff Contact: Dan Shachar-Krasnoff, daniel.shachar-krasnoff@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 238 N. 53rd Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The Italianate residence and funeral parlor was constructed between 1856 and 1878 by Samuel P. Frankenfield and his father-in-law David H. Goucher. For nearly a century, the property was used as a funeral parlor by the prominent firm of S. P. Frankenfield & Sons. Additions were constructed between 1891 and 1927. In 1943, Clarence T. Allmond purchased the property for his prominent funeral parlor business, which served the African-American community until his death in 1963. The current structure is a stucco-clad building bearing little resemblance to the original Italianate structure. It appears that the building's stucco cladding dates to the enclosure of the front porch and construction of the south addition in 1926 and 1927, 36 years prior to 1963, the end of the period of significance. The nomination argues that this property exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of the West Philadelphia community, and is worthy of designation under Criterion J.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that, while the property at 238 N. 53rd Street arguably satisfies Criterion for Designation J, it does not merit historic designation, owing to the numerous, significant alterations that render the building unable to convey its history.



Figure 1: Photograph of subject property from the nomination.



Figure 2: The subject property is located at the southwest corner of N. 53rd Street and Vine Street and extends to N Peach Street.



Figure 3: Photograph of the subject property use to illustrate an advertisement for the Frankenfield funeral parlor in the endpapers of M. Laffitte Vieira, *West Philadelphia Illustrated* (Philadelphia: Avil Printing Company, 1903).

NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: 238 N 53rd St

Postal code: 19139

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Frankenfield-Allmond House & Funeral Establishment

Current/Common Name:

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☑ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Site ☐ Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: ☐ excellent ☐ good ☑ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☐ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☑ unknown

Current use: Commercial

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1856 to 1963

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1856-1858

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Unknown

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: David H. Goucher and Samuel P. Frankenfield

Original owner: Samuel P. Frankenfield

Other significant persons: Samuel P. Frankenfield and Clarence T. Allmond

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- ☐ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- ☐ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- ☐ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- ☐ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- ☐ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- ☐ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- ☐ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- ☑ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization: University City Historical Society Date: 8/23/2026

Name with Title: Oscar Beisert Email: KEEPER@KEEPINGPHILADELPHIA.ORG

Street Address: PO Box 31927 Telephone:

City, State, and Postal Code: Philadelphia, PA 19104

Nominator ☐ is ☑ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: 8/24/2026

☑ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 10/14/2026

Date of Notice Issuance: 10/16/2026

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: DHI Holdings LP

Address: 256 Eagleview Blvd, #154

City: Exton State: PA Postal Code: 19341

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 11/18/2026

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 12/11/2026

Date of Final Action:

☐ Designated ☐ Rejected

Nomination

for the

Philadelphia Register of Historic Places



Figure 1. The primary (east) elevation. Source: Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2026.

The Frankenfield – Allmond House & Undertaking Establishment

Formerly

Samuel P. Frankenfield Sons
Clarence P. Allmond

▪

Built ca.1856-58

▪

238 N. 53rd Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19139-1403



Figure 2. The proposed boundary is delineated in blue. Source: Atlas, City of Philadelphia.

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground with the buildings and improvements thereon erected. BEGINNING at a point being the intersection of the West side of N. 53rd Street (60 feet wide) with the south side of Vine Street (80 feet wide), thence extending south five degrees, thirty-seven minutes, thirty-nine and 82 hundredths seconds east along the said side of N. 53rd Street at a distance of 79 feet, one and five-eighths inches to a point, thence extending south 83 degrees, 59 minutes, thirteen seconds West, at a distance of 110 feet, two-and-one-half inches to a point, thence extending south by two degrees. twenty-eight minutes, twenty-eight seconds east at a distance of nine feet, three and five-eighths inches to a point, thence extending north 89 degrees, fourteen minutes, 55 seconds west, at a distance of ten feet, three and seven-eighths inches to a point on the southeast side of N. Peach Street (forty feet wide), thence extending along same north eleven degrees, one minute east, at a distance of 118 feet, eleven and seven-eighths inches to a point on the south side of Vine Street aforesaid, thence along the same South seventy-eight degrees, fifty-nine minutes east at a distance of 90 feet, eight and one-half inches to the place and point of beginning.

OPA Property No.: 882006000
Philadelphia Deed Register No.: 060N240162

6. Physical Description

The Frankenfield-Allmond House is a three-story Italianate residence and funeral parlor at the southwest corner of N. 53rd and Vine Streets. Known today 238 N. 53rd Street, the historic address was 5300 Vine Street. Set off by an ample yard, the subject building projects a sense of importance, extending at the rear to N. Peach Street. With two sets of twins of a similar age nearby, the neighborhood is largely comprised of rowhouses and twins built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

One of the older residential structures in the vicinity, the subject building is a complex accretion of additions and alterations including: the main block (ca.1856-58); the rear wing (ca.1856-78, third-floor with mansard added 1901[1]), the east addition (ca. 1891[2]), the west addition (ca.1901[3]), the south addition (ca. 1926-27), and the enclosed porches (1926-27).[4]



Figure 3. Approximate construction chronology of subject building.

The main block is three-stories in height, three bays in width, facing east on N. 53rd Street; and two bays deep, facing north on Vine Street. This volume is of brick construction clad in stucco.

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[1] This volume may be original to the house or an early addition. J.D. Scott, *Atlas of the 24th and 27th Wards, West Philadelphia,* 1878, plate N (Figure 17), shows the building with a rear wing. In 1901, the third-floor mansard was added. "Permits Issued Yesterday," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 3, 1901, p 16; "Building Notes," *Philadelphia Times*, October 3, 1901, p 10.

[2] This small volume can be seen in the 1903 photograph (Figure 11) and is documented as early as the Hexamer & Son, *Insurance Maps of Philadelphia*, Volume 24 (1894), plate 573 (see Appendix). In 1891, T. H. Burrows built a "one-story office" measuring "12x6," likely this volume. "Building Permits," *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* May 4, 1891, p 7.

[3] This addition is likely the "two-story rear add[ition]" erected by T. H. Burrows in August 1901. "Building Permits," *Philadelphia Builders' Guide and Real Estate Record,* Vol. 16, no. 33, August 14, 1901, p 535.

[4] Philadelphia Bureau of Building Inspection. *Application for Permit* nos. 10219 (8 November 1926), 11011 (18 November 1926), and 8396 (13 September 1927). City of Philadelphia Department of Records. See "Historic Context: S.P. Frankenfield Sons and Proliferation of an Undertaking Legacy" below.

While the first floor is obscured by the enclosed porch, the original fenestration of the second and third floors is still visible from N. 53rd and Vine Streets. The six windows of the primary (east) elevation feature original sills and architraves; however, the actual window fabric is obscured by permanent awnings. The same is true of the four windows serving the side (north) elevation. It appears that the original bracketed cornice is concealed by metal siding. The side (south) elevation features one window on each of the second and third floors.





Figure 4. Top: The primary (east) elevation. Source: Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2026.
Figure 5. Bottom: The side (north) elevation. Source: Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2026.

The building once featured an ornate Italianate porch (Figure 11); however, the porch was enclosed and/or rebuilt in 1926-27. [5] Incorporating the earlier east addition, the enclosed porch

[5] Philadelphia Bureau of Building Inspection. *Application for Permit* no. 8396, 13 September 1927. City of Philadelphia Department of Records, Philadelphia. In 1900, carpenters were solicited for "porch work" but it is unclear the scope of that work. "Help Wanted," *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* Dec 5, 1900, p 12.

extends five bays along the first floor of the main volume's primary (east) elevation and wraps around the main volume at the side (north) elevation for three bays. Like the main block, the porch is clad in stucco and features a densely bracketed cornice of pressed tin metal. The fenestration includes a modernized central entrance with glazed replacement doors, which is served by a vintage awning and a flight of five brick steps. To the south of the central entrance is a single window followed by a single door. To the north are two windows. The southernmost door features a projecting entrance porch awning that is supported by brackets and likely dates to the early twentieth century. A low brick retaining wall runs along the sidewalk of the primary elevation. A brick sign structure rises from the retaining wall at the corner.



Figure 6. Top: The primary (east) elevation of the front porch. Source: Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2026. Figure 7. Bottom: The pedestrian door within the primary (east) elevation. Source: Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2026.



Figure 8. The side (north) elevation of the rear wing and later additions. Source: Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2026.

A three-story rear wing appends the west elevation of the main block and features a mansard roof. This structure appears to be of brick and frame construction and is clad in stucco. A two-story rear addition appends the west elevation of the rear wing. This structure appears to be of brick construction and is clad in stucco. A one-story addition, likely another enclosed porch, appends the north elevation of the rear volumes and is two bays wide, featuring a historic wooden door. The construction materials are not discernable; however, the structure is clad in stucco.

The side yard to the north of the structure along Vine Street features a very old tree. The rear yard along N. Peach Street is largely paved and demarcated by a cyclone fence.





Figure 9. Left: The side (south) elevation. Source: Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2026. Figure 10. Right: Rear (west) elevation. Source: Keeping Society of Philadelphia, 2026.



Figure 11. The primary (east) and side (north) elevations of the subject building in ca.1903. Source: Endpaper advertisement in M. Laffitte Vieira. *West Philadelphia Illustrated.* (Philadelphia: Avil Printing Company, 1903).

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Frankenfield-Allmond House and Undertaking Establishment at 238 N. 53rd Street is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Located in West Philadelphia, the building satisfies the following Criteria for Designation as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

> *(j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.*

Period of Significance: ca.1856-58 to 1963.

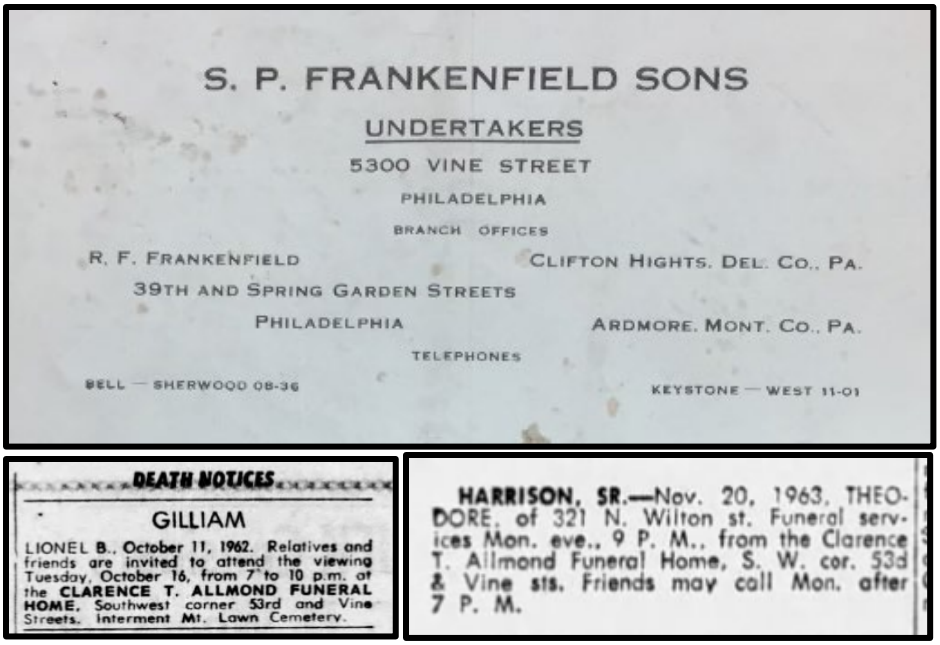


Figure 12. Top: An advertisement for S.P. Frankenfield Sons. Source: *The Parish Messenger*, February 1909. Figure 13. Bottom left: Death notice advertising the Clarence T. Allmond Funeral Home. Source: *Philadelphia Daily News*, 16 October 1963, 62. Figure 14. Bottom right: Death notice advertising the Clarence T. Allmond Funeral Home. Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 24 November 1963, 70.

Criterion J

The Frankenfield-Allmond House and Undertaking Establishment, originally the House of S.P. Frankenfield & Sons, Undertakers, historically at 5300 Vine Street, is significant under Criterion J of the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places as a landmark that exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of the West Philadelphia community through its long association with Samuel P. Frankenfield (1826-1894), one of the most prominent nineteenth-century undertakers in Philadelphia. In fact, through a partnership with his father-in-law, David H. Goucher, Frankenfield erected the subject building in ca.1856-58 to serve as both his undertaking establishment and his private family residence.[6] This occurred during an era when West Philadelphia was undergoing its primary development as an important suburban enclave, though the area surrounding the subject property was far less dense.[7] Arriving at the site with a young family, he would create a consequential, local undertaking dynasty proliferated by his seven surviving sons. From the time the subject building was constructed until he died in 1894, Frankenfield operated his successful business for approximately 40 years. Historical significance under Criterion J extends beyond the life of Samuel P. Frankenfield to his wife and children, who continued to occupy the subject house and operate the business there until 1917, when the property was deeded to Samuel I. Frankenfield, the third oldest child, who would continue to own and operate the family business on the site until 1943. Additional significance was gained after the

[6] Deed: James Miller to David Goucher and Samuel P. Frankenfield, February 1856, Philadelphia Deed Book R.D.W., No. 102, p. 271. Source: CAP.

[7] This information was taken from various contexts written by the Keeping Society of Philadelphia on the development and history of West Philadelphia.

building went out of the Frankenfield family, as it was sold to an important African American funerary legacy—specifically, Clarence T. Allmond, the scion of the William P. Allmond Undertaking Establishment in 1943. Around the time of the sale, Allmond had been operating a "funeral parlor" at "17th and Fitzwater Streets" in South Philadelphia.[8] As the Black population surged with the middle wave of the Great Migration in this part of West Philadelphia, Allmond purchased the subject property, where he operated a new branch of the family business, serving his community in that location. Like the Frankenfields before him, Allmond made the subject building both his funeral parlor and his private residence. The Frankenfield-Allmond House and Undertaking Establishment was associated with the Allmond legacy until Clarence T. Allmond died in 1963. After that time, it continued to serve the Black community of West Philadelphia as a funeral home until 2025, when the last business at the site was closed. The Frankenfield-Allmond House and Undertaking Establishment embodies the evolution of the undertaking profession, the growth and heritage of West Philadelphia, and the important role of family-owned businesses in shaping the civic and social identity of Philadelphia's neighborhoods, satisfying Criterion J.

Historic Context: Samuel Patch Frankenfield (1826–1894) and the Funeral Establishment at 5300 Vine Street

A descendant of Simon Frankenfield, who arrived at Philadelphia in the mid-eighteenth century from the Rhine Palatine to plant roots in Bucks County, Samuel Patch Frankenfield was born on a farm in Doylestown on October 8, 1826, to Isaac Frankenfield (1800-1863) and Elizabeth Cunard (1803-1885).[9] Educated in the local public schools, he worked on the Frankenfield family farm until he was roughly 18, going on to apprentice as a cabinet maker. In March 1848, he moved to Philadelphia, where he worked as a carpenter.[10]

By 1850, Frankenfield appears to have made a fortuitous move to the residence and likely employment of David H. Goucher (b. 1812), a carpenter, who lived with his wife Harriet and their daughters Rachel and Mary in Blockley Township. The Goucher household included four other young male carpenters.[11] Frankenfield's profession as a carpenter is confirmed in an 1850 city directory, where he is listed as residing in Blockley.

In 1853, Rachel Goucher married Samuel Frankenfield, a union that would lead to ten children.[12] The marriage no doubt motivated other business endeavors between David H. Goucher and Samuel P. Frankenfield, including procurement of the subject property.

In the early 1850s Samuel Frankenfield applied his skills in cabinet making and carpentry to the construction of both buildings and coffins. The former enabled him to construct the subject building with his newly minted father-in-law, and the two also built a public school in West Philadelphia, the Blockley Baptist Church (demolished), and the Monroe Engine House

[8] *The Afro-American,* Week of January 26, 1935, 22.
[9] Alfreda Patton. *Frankenfield Kin and Family Data.* (York, PA: Frankenfield Kin and Family Data, 1987), 178-79.
[10] Joseph H. North, ed., *Philadelphia and Popular Philadelphians,* (Philadelphia, 1891), 286.
[11] See Appendix. *Seventh Census of the United States*, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
[12] *Find a Grave*. Find a Grave®. http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi.

(demolished) in Hestonville.[13] The latter led Frankenfield to ultimately work in the undertaking profession, the early history of which is somewhat confused in various accounts of his life. About 1852, Frankenfield purchased the undertaking firm of Evan Lewis, which was established in 1842, operating for a time at 57th Street and Haverford Avenue.[14] By 1858, Frankenfield had moved his business to the subject property at the corner of N. 53rd and Vine Streets.

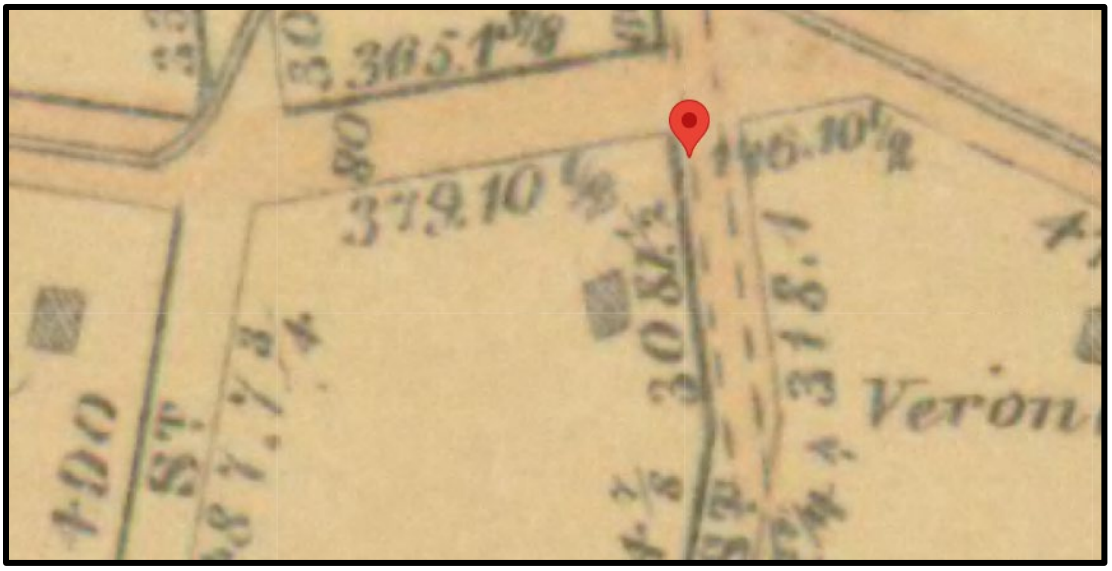


Figure 15. The subject property on the 1862 Philadelphia Atlas. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

Prior to the Frankenfields' ownership, the subject property was part of a larger parcel located at what was then known as the southwest corner of Church Street (formerly Meeting House Lane, now 53rd Street) and Vine Street in what was formerly Blockley Township, then consisting of 220 feet front on 53rd Street and 261 feet on Vine Street. After 1854, the property was briefly owned by Eliza Mather, a widow, and sold by her, along with two other parcels, to James Miller, a surveyor and conveyancer, in March 1855. Less than a year later, in February 1856, Miller sold the subject property to David H. Goucher and Samuel P. Frankenfield, both identified in the deed as "House Carpenters," for $1,300.[15] Between 1856 and 1858, the subject house was built by Goucher and Frankenfield.[16] Designed in the Italianate style, the main volume of the Frankenfield-Allmond House and Undertaking Establishment stands three stories, originally featuring a bracketed cornice and porch, the former likely being extant under metal siding. Based on preliminary deed research and various atlases, it appears that Goucher and Frankenfield also built two sets of twins immediately adjacent to the south of the subject property.

Samuel Frankenfield lived where he worked, and so did his growing family. The Frankenfield marriage produced a brood of ten children including Robert Frailey Frankenfield (b. 1855); Samuel

[13] Endpaper advertisement in M. Laffitte Vieira, *West Philadelphia Illustrated.* (Philadelphia: Avil Printing Company, 1903); Joseph H. North, ed., *Philadelphia and Popular Philadelphians,* (Philadelphia, 1891), 286.
[14] Endpaper advertisement in M. Laffitte Vieira, *West Philadelphia Illustrated.* (Philadelphia: Avil Printing Company, 1903). Sam Hudson. *Pennsylvania and Its Public Men*. (Philadelphia: Hudson & Joseph, 1909), 76.
[15] Deed: James Miller to David Goucher and Samuel P. Frankenfield, February 1856, Philadelphia Deed Book R.D.W., No. 102, p. 271. Source: CAP.
[16] *Boyd's co-partnership and residence business directory of Philadelphia city [1st] year [1858].* Philadelphia. Pa.: C. E. Howe company.

Issac Frankenfield (1857-1946); John Williamson Frankenfield (1858-1912); Howard Kirk Frankenfield (1861-1863); Elizabeth F. Frankenfield (1862-1865); Delaplaine Smith Frankenfield (1864-1866); David Goucher Frankenfield (1866-1934); George Bruner Frankenfield (1869-1930); Francis Bridge Frankenfield (1871-1935); and William Goucher Frankenfield (1876-1958).[17] The company records, now housed at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, begin in August of 1859. By the close of that year, Frankenfield had completed 24 funerals.[18]

The firm flourished in the 1860s with more than 1,200 bodies processed, with children and stillborn babies comprising the largest discernible demographics. The precise ethnic and socio-economic statistics of those buried are almost impossible to ascertain; however, most of the bodies processed were likely people of European ancestry with loved ones of sufficient means to contract a private undertaker. Frankenfield regularly interred bodies at the following cemeteries: Asbury Vault, Mt. Moriah, Woodlands, Laurel Hill, West Laurel Hill, Odd Fellows, and Philadelphia. With the Civil War beginning in 1860, the firm processed occasional soldiers, including Charles Monday and John M. Bising, who died of typhoid fever at the U.S. Hospital in 1862; Joseph Brunner, killed at Gettysburg and Nelson B. Harris, Co. J, 24th Michigan Volunteers, in 1863; Lieut. Col. George W. Hawkins and a group of soldiers from Haddington buried at Mt. Moriah in 1864; and Tobias Bauer, Captain Henry Eddy, killed at Richmond, and Hiram G. Hull, Co. B, 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry, in 1865. Records of the 1860s also indicate that Frankenfield occasionally handled African American funerals, approximately one or two a year. These entries include notes like "child of John Johnson, colored," in 1860; J. Allen in 1861; James Addens in 1863; the "child of Fiddler Carter, colored" in 1868; etc. In February of 1870, there were 28 bodies handled with services provided that included "a child's coffin ordered," "car to Blockley," etc.[19] Business was steady; in 1886, there were 21 bodies processed in February.[20]

Under Frankenfield's direction, the business expanded, earning a reputation for professionalism, reliability, and technical expertise. Unlike many undertakers who relied on outside suppliers, Frankenfield maintained a largely self-sufficient operation capable of handling every aspect of funeral service including manufacturing many of its own funeral supplies, including coffins and embalming materials.[21] As his children came of age and joined the firm, his establishment was known as Samuel P. Frankenfield and Sons and later, S.P. Frankenfield and Sons, becoming one of the prominent funeral businesses in the Philadelphia region.[22]

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[17] This information was compiled using Ancestry.com.
[18] See the funeral records at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
[19] Frankenfield Undertaker Records: 1859-1876. (Philadelphia: Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, 1963).
[20] Frankenfield Undertaker Records: 1877-1885. (Philadelphia: Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, 1963).
[21] Endpaper advertisement in M. Laffitte Vieira, *West Philadelphia Illustrated.* (Philadelphia: Avil Printing Company, 1903). As this assessment of S. P. Frankenfield & Sons (see full text in the Appendix) appears to have been an advertisement, this praise may entail some degree of exaggeration, but the family business appears to have been successful for three generations.
[22] Endpaper advertisement in M. Laffitte Vieira, *West Philadelphia Illustrated.* (Philadelphia: Avil Printing Company, 1903).

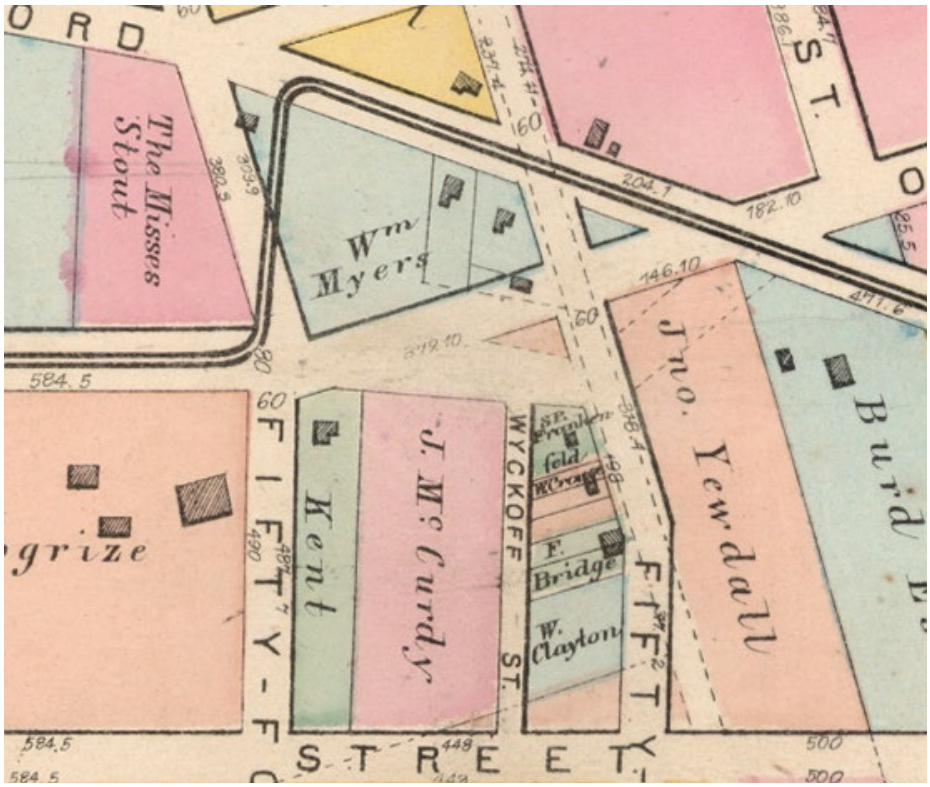


Figure 16. By 1878, the West Philadelphia Passenger Railway had arrived but the area around the Frankenfields' property remained sparsely developed. H. W. Hopkins, *Atlas of the 24th and 27th Wards, West Philadelphia,* 1978, plate J. The West Philadelphia Community History Center.

Frankenfield's success reflected the broader professionalization of funeral directing during the second half of the nineteenth century. As urban populations increased and embalming gained acceptance following the Civil War, undertakers assumed expanding responsibilities for preparing the dead, coordinating funeral ceremonies, and providing specialized mortuary services. Frankenfield was among the generation of Philadelphia undertakers who elevated the occupation into a recognized profession, helping establish standards of service that defined the modern funeral director.

Outside of his business, Frankenfield was active in Philadelphia's civic, religious, and fraternal life. He served as a trustee of the Blockley Baptist Church (he also led the choir) and held memberships in the Philadelphia Board of Trade, the Philadelphia Bourse, and numerous Masonic organizations, including the Oriental Chapter, Blue Lodge, and St. John's Commandery. He died on December 31, 1894, after nearly four decades in the undertaking profession.[23]

[23] Endpaper advertisement in M. Laffitte Vieira, *West Philadelphia Illustrated.* (Philadelphia: Avil Printing Company, 1903).



Figure 17. An advertisement for S.P. Frankenfield Sons in 1909. Source: *The Parish Messenger*, February 1909.

Historic Context: S.P. Frankenfield Sons and Proliferation of an Undertaking Legacy

After the patriarch's death, leadership of the business passed to his wife and sons, who organized the firm as S. P. Frankenfield Sons and continued operating from the subject property. Under their management, the company prospered as one of Philadelphia's oldest continuously operated family-owned funeral firms, preserving the reputation and traditions established by Samuel P. Frankenfield. The oldest child and son, Robert F. Frankenfield was an undertaker, living for a time with his only daughter in a house on North 39th Street. Known as "Uncle Sole," Samuel I. Frankenfield, the second child and son, went into undertaking as well, participating in an "acting troupe" during his spare time at Philadelphia. The third child and son, John W. Frankenfield worked as an independent coffin maker, he eventually married and had four children, residing for a time on Wilton Street in Philadelphia. The fourth, fifth, and sixth Frankenfield children died as youths.

The seventh child and sixth son appears to have been the most ambitious. David G. Frankenfield, who was an undertaker as well, remained in the neighborhood with his wife and children. Working for the family firm for many years, he ultimately opened his own funeral home, which became known as David Frankenfield & Sons. This branch of the family commissioned a three-story, purpose-built Georgian Revival funeral home at 317 North 52nd Street, which will be discussed later in this context. The eighth child and seventh son, George B. Frankenfield, who was also an undertaker, married and had one daughter, but died at the age of 30, leaving his only child to be raised by his immediate family. The ninth child and eighth son, Francis B. Frankenfield, known as Frank, was also an undertaker, working for the family firm, and residing with his wife and child nearby. He was a graduate of the Eckels College of Embalming.[24] The tenth child and ninth son, William G. Frankenfield, who served in the Spanish-American War, was yet another undertaker.[25]

In the early twentieth century, the Frankenfields opened several branches of the family business. The partnership of S.P. Frankenfield Sons included Rachel A. Frankenfield, Robert F. Frankenfield, Samuel I. Frankenfield, John W. Frankenfield, David G. Frankenfield, Frank B.

[24] "F.B. Frankenfield," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 8 November 1935, 2.
[25] Alfreda Patton. *Frankenfield Kin and Family Data.* (York, PA: Frankenfield Kin and Family Data, 1987), 178-79.

Frankenfield, and William G. Frankenfield.[26] By 1904, the firm had offices at Lancaster and Lansdowne Avenues, 437 N. 39th Street, 728 S. 51st Street, Clifton Heights in Delaware County, and Ardmore in Montgomery County. In ca.1904-05, George B. Frankenfield established himself in Delaware County, finally operating at 19 West Baltimore Avenue in Clifton Heights. He eventually became a leader in local politics, serving as borough treasurer, a member of the school board, and finally as the "Delaware County Coroner." Known as "Uncle George," he was also a volunteer fireman.[27] Around the same time, William G. Frankenfield relocated to Ardmore, where he opened a branch of the family business as well.

By 1900, the subject property continued to serve as headquarters of the family business, as well as the residence of the Frankenfields. Widowed, Rachel A. Frankenfield was then head of the household, living with her sons Samuel I. and William G. Frankenfield; a nephew, Frank Frankenfield; a granddaughter, Adell Frankenfield; Dora Ax, the housekeeper; and May Morton, a servant.[28] In January 1908, the firm prepared more than 60 bodies.[29] By 1910, Rachel A. Frankenfield continued to be head of the household, residing in the subject building with her son Samuel I. Frankenfield and granddaughter, Adell Frankenfield. At that time, there were two female servants in the house. David G. Frankenfield lived around the corner with his family on 53rd Street.[30]

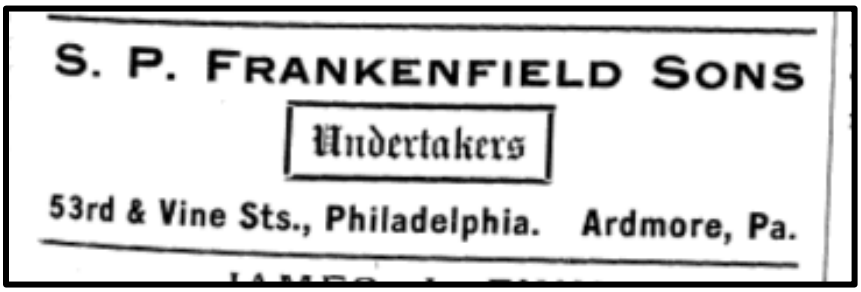
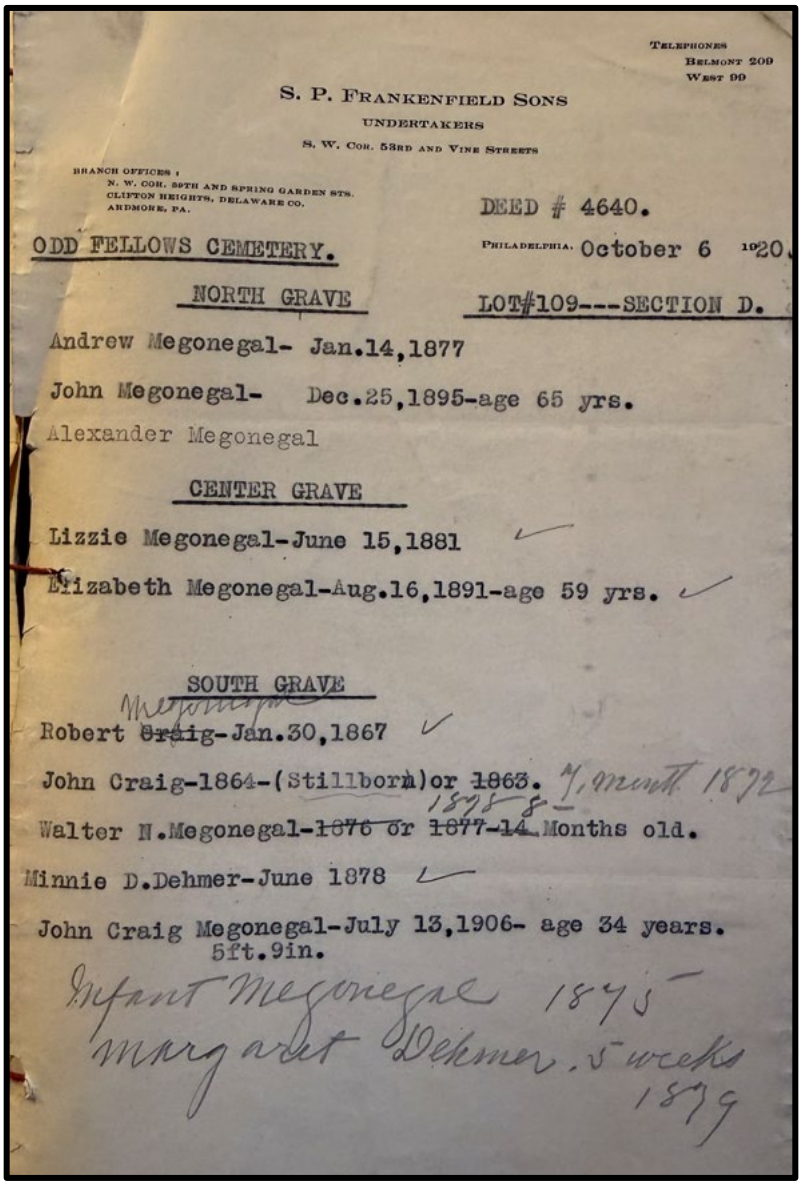


Figure 18. *The American Cricketer,* February 1914.

After the matriarch died in 1911, the subject building remained under the ownership of the family, as did the business. In January 1917, the Frankenfields received 56 bodies.[31] On May 23, 1917, the subject property was conveyed to Samuel I. Frankenfield from his brother David G. Frankenfield for $5,000.[32] He continued running the business, living there as well, and, in 1920, his cousin George Frankenfield was also in residence, working as a helper in the funeral home. The house also included four servants: Elizabeth Frawley, Susan Bottis, Augustine Stafford, and

[26] This information was gleaned from various period advertisements.
[27] "G.B. Frankenfield," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 November 1930, 29.
[28] United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900. T623, 1854 rolls.
[29] Frankenfield Undertaker Records: 1908-1910. (Philadelphia: Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, 1963).
[30] Ancestry.com. *U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.
[31] Frankenfield Undertaker Records: 1917-1919. (Philadelphia: Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, 1963).
[32] Deed: David G. Frankenfield, et. ux. to Samuel I. Frankenfield, 23 May 1917, PDB J.M.H., No. 157, p.558. Source: CAP.

Agnes Tuck.[33] The sale of the property indicates that David G. Frankenfield started his own funeral home in 1917, which is confirmed by city directories.



TELEPHONES
BELMONT 209
WEST 99

S. P. FRANKENFIELD SONS
UNDERTAKERS
S. W. COR. 53RD AND VINE STREETS

BRANCH OFFICES :
N. W. COR. 39TH AND SPRING GARDEN STS.
CLIFTON HEIGHTS, DELAWARE CO.
ARDMORE, PA.

DEED # 4640.

ODD FELLOWS CEMETERY. PHILADELPHIA, October 6 1920.

NORTH GRAVE LOT#109---SECTION D.

Andrew Megonegal- Jan.14,1877

John Megonegal- Dec.25,1895-age 65 yrs.

Alexander Megonegal

CENTER GRAVE

Lizzie Megonegal-June 15,1881

Elizabeth Megonegal-Aug.16,1891-age 59 yrs.

SOUTH GRAVE

Robert ~~Craig~~-Jan.30,1867

John Craig-1864-(Stillborn)or ~~1863~~. 1878 8 month 1872

Walter N.Megonegal-~~1876~~ or ~~1877~~-~~14~~ Months old.

Minnie D.Dehmer-June 1878

John Craig Megonegal-July 13,1906- age 34 years. 5ft.9in.

Infant Megonegal 1875

Margaret Dehmer. 5 weeks 1879

Figure 19. Stationary of S.P. Frankenfield Sons, 6 October 1920. Source: Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

By 1921, S.P. Frankenfield Sons included Samuel I. Frankenfield, Robert F. Frankenfield, George B. Frankenfield, Frank B. Frankenfield, William G. Frankenfield, and the Estate of John W. Frankenfield. The firm advertised the subject property as the headquarters with branches at 39th and Spring Garden Streets, Clifton Heights in Delaware County, and Admore. At the same time, David G. Frankenfield & Sons, a partnership that then included Robert F. Frankenfield, 2nd, and Oliver K. Frankenfield, was located at 317 N. 52nd Street, where they commissioned a modern

[33] *Fourteenth Census of the United States*, 1920. (NARA microfilm publication T625, 2076 rolls). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

three-story brick, steel, and terra cotta "Undertaking Parlor" in March 1922.[34] The new building was designed by Bruce C. Wenner, architect, and construction was completed by F.B. Davis & Sons, Inc.[35] Earlier in his life, around 1900, David G. Frankenfield, a well-known Republican, was elected to the "old Common Council," and in 1911 he was elected to the Select Council. When David G. Frankenfield died in December 1934, he had served as a Philadelphia Councilman for the 44th Ward for approximately 36 years.[36]





Figure 20. Left: David G. Frankenfield. Source: "D.G. Frankenfield, Councilman, Dies.," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 9 December 1934, 45. Figure 21. Right: Advertisement for David G. Frankenfield & Sons, showing their new building at 317 N. 52nd Street. Source: Ebay.



Figure 22. The David G. Frankenfield building at 317 N. 52nd St remains a marker of the Frankenfield legacy in the neighborhood. Cyclomedia.phila.gov.

[34] Ancestry.com. *U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011; *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide,* 8 March 1922, 155.
[35] *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 5 April 1922, 222.
[36] "Councilman Dies," Harrisburg Sunday Courier, 9 December 1934, 5.; and "D.G. Frankenfield, Councilman, Dies.," *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* 9 December 1934, 45.

In 1926, Samuel I. Frankenfield commissioned alterations and additions to the building, which appears to have included the enlargement and/or reconstruction of the front porch into an enclosed office space.[37] Three permits were filed between November 1926 and September 1927 for interior renovations, the erection of two one-story brick front additions for offices, each measuring 12 feet by 36 feet, and alterations to the front porch.[38] Comparing maps of the property from 1911 (Figure 24) and 1950 (Figure 25), it appears that the only additions to the building footprint is the enclosures of porches and a small addition to the south now measuring approximately 12 by 30 feet including a small porch on its west side.[39] These are probably the work performed in 1926-27.

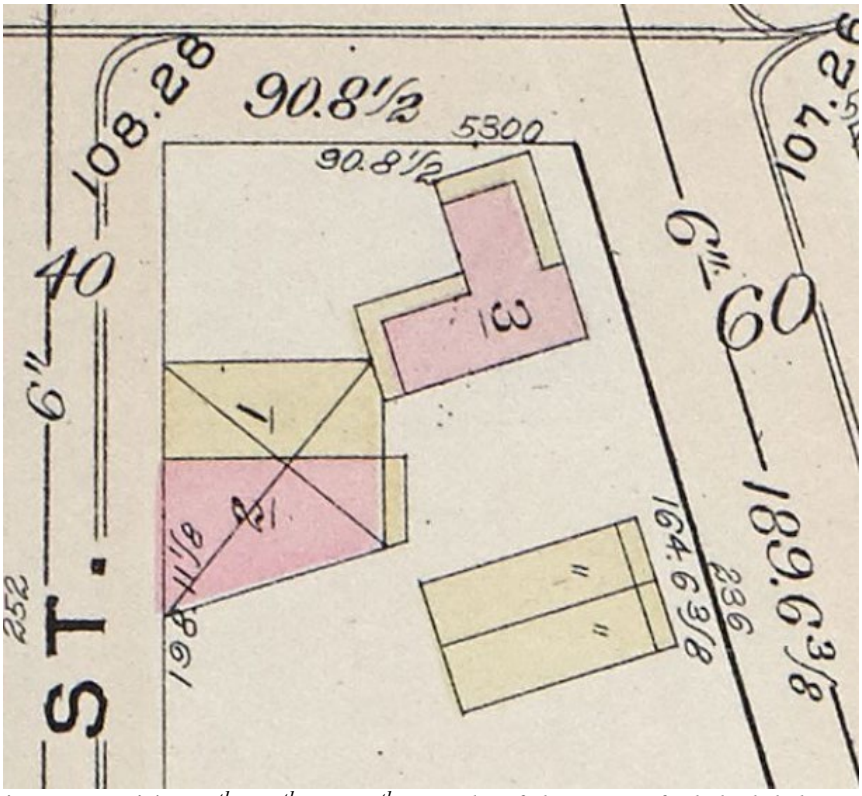


Figure 23. Elvino V. Smith, *24th, 34th, & 44th Wards of the City of Philadelphia*, 1911, plate 14. Accessed via *Fire Insurance Maps Online*.

[37] *The Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*, 24 November 1926, 750.
[38] Philadelphia Bureau of Building Inspection. *Application for Permit* no. 10219, 8 November 1926; *Application for Permit* no. 11011, 18 November 1926; *Application for Permit* no. 8396, 13 September 1927. City of Philadelphia Department of Records, Philadelphia.
[39] These dimensions were approximated using the aerial images and measurement tool at atlas.phila.gov.

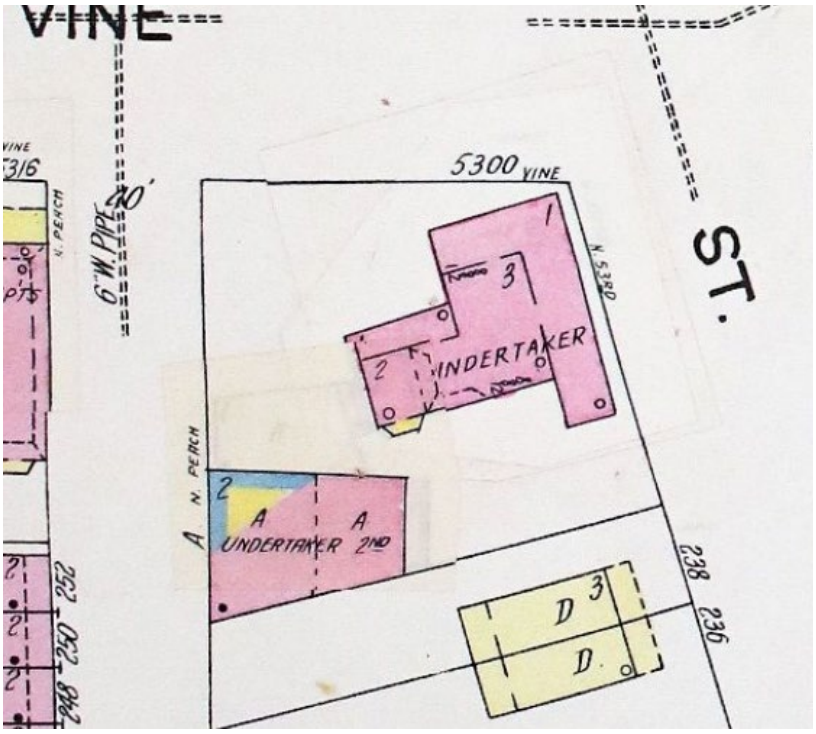


Figure 24. Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Philadelphia, Volume 19,* 1925, updated to 1950, plate 1822. Accessed via *Fire Insurance Maps Online*.

Samuel and George continued to live and work in the subject building through 1930, at which time Francis B. Frankenfield had joined them, also working in the family business. By that time Cousin George was the chauffeur. However, business may have slowed, as the Frankenfields had taken in six boarders.[40] While the late 1920s and early 1930s show continuing work, there was certainly a decline in business. In 1930, only 30 bodies passed through the parlor doors.[41] In 1937, the property was conveyed to William G. and Isabel O. Frankenfield, seemingly related to a potential sheriff's sale.[42] As a result, Samuel I. Frankenfield formed a partnership with H. Guy Boohar in 1938.[43] They offered a metal couch casket and cement vault for $275 with a low-cost funeral at $75.[44]

[40] United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1930. T626, 2,667 rolls.
[41] Frances Schive Smith, compiler. Frankenfield Undertaker: 5300 Vine Street, Philadelphia, Pa., Jan. 1, 1930 to April 2, 1937. (Magnolia, NJ, 1982).
[42] Deed: Charles M. Hamilton to William G. and Isabel O. Frankenfield, 1937, PDB D.W.H., No. 297, p.356. Source: CAP.
[43] "Firms Registered," *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* 9 Aug 1938, 23.
[44] Ephemera: Frankenfield & Boohar Matchbook (15 November 1939). Source: Ebay.com.



Figure 25. Various views of a matchbook dated 15 November 1939, may show the primary entrance as it appeared in the years after the porch was enlarged. Source: Ebay.



Figure 26. An advertisement for S.P. Frankenfield Sons, during the last period of its existence with S.I. Frankenfield and H. Guy Boohar as partners. Source: *St. Stephen's Witness*, December 1937.

In 1943, William G. and Isabel O. Frankenfield sold the property to the eminent Black undertaker, Clarence T. Allmond, for $9,000.[45] Frankenfield & Boohar moved to new premises at 314 S 52nd Street, but the partnership was cut short by S. I. Frankenfield's death in 1946.[46]



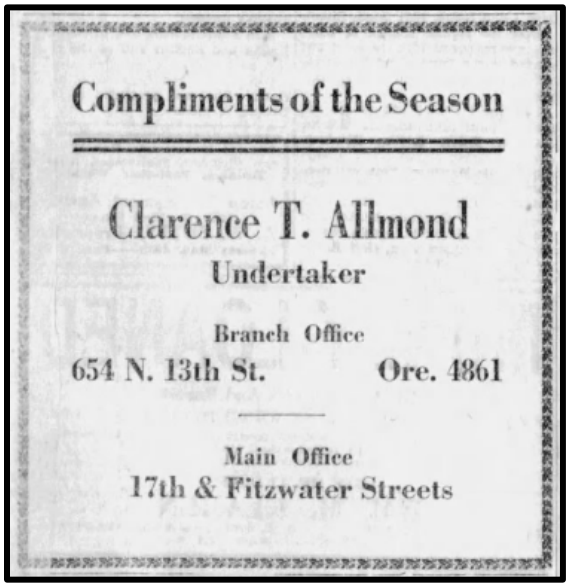


Figure 27. Left: Clarence T. Allmond. Source: "Enterprising Young Undertaker Opens His New Office," *The Philadelphia Tribune,* 3 July 1915, 1. Figure 28. Right: A 1928 advertisement for Clarence T. Allmond, when he was located at 17th and Fitzwater Streets. Source: *The Philadelphia Tribune*, 20 December 1928.

Historic Context: Clarence T. Allmond (1887–1963) & the Allmond Undertaking Legacy

Clarence T. Allmond was one of Philadelphia's most prominent African American undertakers of the twentieth century, carrying forward a family funeral service tradition that extended back to the 1850s. In 1943, Allmond purchased the subject property, continuing the building's long association with the undertaking profession after nearly 90 years of service under the Frankenfield family. He operated the Allmond establishment until his death in 1963, adding another significant chapter to the property's remarkable history as one of Philadelphia's longest continually used funeral homes.[47] During this time, he served the growing African American population in that locality of West Philadelphia.

The Allmond family's rise in the funeral profession was rooted in the remarkable life of Clarence's forbearer, Thomas W. Allmond (1829–1901).[48] Born into slavery on a plantation in Gloucester County, Virginia in October 1829, Thomas eventually secured his freedom and settled in Philadelphia with his wife, Phoebe Cox Allmond (1833–1899). Like many men who eventually

[45] Deed: William G. and Isabel O. Frankenfield to Clarence T. Allmond, 3 December 1943, PDB C.J.P., No. 399, p.595. Source: CAP.
[46] "Samuel I. Frankenfield," *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* 15 Aug 1946, 10. Map Registry Ledger 22 S 4 Row 84 shows that H. Guy Boohar bought 314 S 52nd St on 13 Aug 1943.
[47] "Clarence T. Allmond, 77; Negro Civic Leader," *Philadelphia Daily News,* 7 May 1963, 49.
[48] "Clarence T. Allmond, 77; Negro Civic Leader," *Philadelphia Daily News,* 7 May 1963, 49.

entered the undertaking profession during the nineteenth century, Thomas first earned his living as a carpenter.[49] By "the early fifties" Thomas had become an undertaker.[50]

At a time when economic opportunities for African Americans were severely limited, undertaking—alongside barbering and even catering—became one of the few professions in which Black entrepreneurs could establish successful and respected businesses. Thomas Allmond joined a distinguished group of early African American funeral directors in Philadelphia that included pioneers such as Harriet Duterte and Guy Burton. By the 1870 Federal census, Thomas had established himself as an undertaker with real estate holdings, reflecting both his business success and the growing prominence of his family within Philadelphia's African American community.[51] The founder of the family business was also involved in civic affairs, including attending the Colored National Labor Convention, December 6-10, 1869. He was then living at 1027 Rodman Street.[52]

Thomas's son, William P. Allmond (1856–1910), inherited and expanded the family undertaking business, ensuring that the enterprise would continue on to the next generation.[53] William, in turn, trained his own heirs in the profession, creating one of Philadelphia's earliest multi-generational African American funeral service dynasties. Clarence T. Allmond spent much of his career operating the family's funeral home at 1700 Christian Street alongside his older brother, William "Bill" Allmond (1883–1943). Bill was a member of the inaugural graduating class of the Philadelphia Training School for Embalmers in 1901, reflecting the family's commitment to professional education at a time when embalming was transforming the funeral industry.[54] The Allmond family also gained recognition for embracing technological innovation, receiving credit for conducting Philadelphia's first "automobile funeral," replacing traditional horse-drawn hearses with one of the city's earliest motorized funeral processions.[55]

Clarence T. Allmond continued this tradition of professionalism and innovation throughout his career. When he acquired the subject property in 1943, he not only expanded the family's business into West Philadelphia but also became the steward of a building that had served the undertaking profession since the 1850s. His ownership linked one of Philadelphia's oldest funeral establishments with one of its most distinguished African American funeral families, illustrating both continuity and change within the profession. During the mid-twentieth century, funeral homes such as Allmond's served not only as businesses but also as important community institutions, providing dignified services while supporting churches, civic organizations, and neighborhood life throughout West Philadelphia.

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[49] *Proceedings of the Colored National Labor Convention, Held in Washington, D.C., December 6–10, 1869* (Washington, D.C., 1869), listing Thomas W. Allmond, house carpenter, 1027 Rodman Street.

[50] "Enterprising Young Undertaker Opens His New Office," *The Philadelphia Tribune,* 3 July 1915, 1.

[51] *McElroy's Philadelphia City Directory* (Philadelphia: E. C. & J. Biddle, 1865), listing "Thomas W. Allmond, undertaker, 1027 Rodman Street"; U.S. Census Bureau, *Ninth Census of the United States*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1870; see also *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, "Funerals and Burial Practices."

[52] *Proceedings of the Colored National Labor Convention* (Washington, D.C., 1869) .

[53] This information was gleaned by searching various city directories of the period.

[54] Pennsylvania House of Representatives Archives, "Funeral Directors of the House: Serving Community in Life and Death," Fall 2024.; and Pennsylvania House of Representatives Archives, *Biography of William A. Allmond*.

[55] T*he American Musician and Sportsman Magazine* (1921).

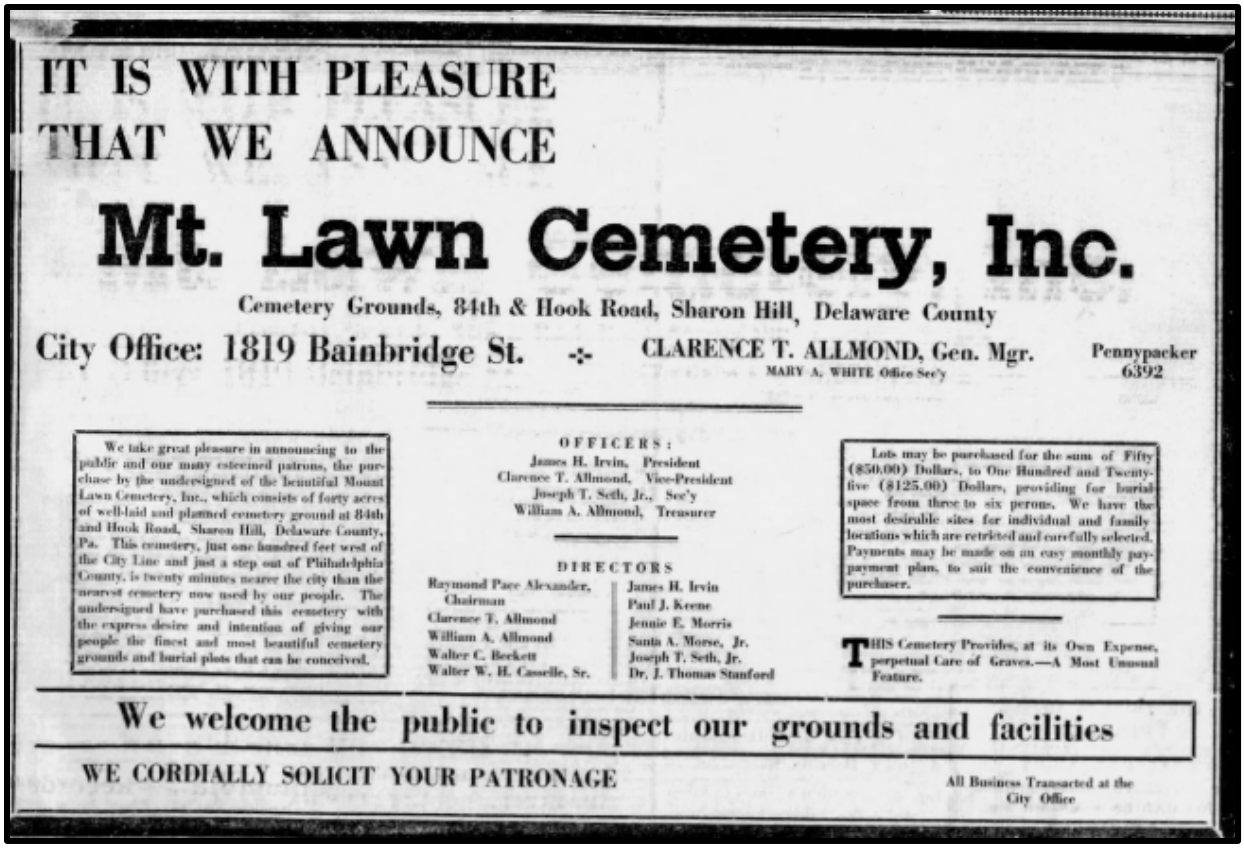


Figure 29. A 1928 advertisement for Mt. Lawn Cemetery, Inc. in Sharon Hill, Delaware County, which was then managed by Clarence T. Allmond. Source: *The Philadelphia Tribune*, 23 August 1928.

Clarence T. Allmond remained at the subject property until his death in 1963.[56] His career represents the culmination of more than one century of family achievement that began with Thomas Allmond's journey from enslavement to respected entrepreneur. The subject building stands as an important historic resource representative of the Allmond undertaking dynasty, a significant example of an important African American family enterprise, a source of professional advancement, and an emphasis on community leadership in Philadelphia. Additionally, Clarence T. Allmond's tenure at the subject property continued the building's extraordinary legacy as a place devoted to funeral service across successive generations and changing communities.

[56] "Clarence T. Allmond, 77; Negro Civic Leader," *Philadelphia Daily News,* 7 May 1963, 49.



Figure 30. Kirk & Nice Funeral Home, Germantown, ca.1900. Source: Germantown Historical Society.

The Development of Funeral Homes in America and Philadelphia: From Undertaking Trade to Professional Institution, ca. 1800–1950

The evolution of the American funeral home reflects profound changes in attitudes toward death, mourning, public health, commerce, and professional service during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. What began as a household responsibility gradually became the domain of trained funeral directors operating specialized commercial establishments. This transformation paralleled broader changes in American society, including urbanization, industrialization, advances in medical science, the professionalization of skilled trades, and changing expectations surrounding death and memorialization. Philadelphia played a central role in this evolution, serving as one of the nation's earliest centers of undertaking, embalming, and funeral service.

Before the nineteenth century, death care remained primarily a domestic responsibility. Individuals typically died at home, where family members and neighbors prepared the body, held visitations, and coordinated burial through local churches or cemeteries. Women were often in charge of preparing the body of a dead relative or friend.[57] The undertaker's role was generally limited to supplying the coffin and arranging transportation. In most communities, undertaking was not yet an independent profession but an extension of the cabinetmaking trade. Furniture makers, carpenters, and other skilled woodworkers manufactured coffins alongside household furnishings, gradually assuming additional responsibilities associated with funerals and the care of the deceased.[58]

[57] Kathleen Boswell. "Woman and Death in Nineteenth Century America." *History in the Making*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2024, 1-5.

[58] Virginia R. Remsberg. *Coffin-Making to Undertaking: An Archaeological Analysis of the Development of the Undertaking Industry in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1992), 1–78; and David Charles Sloane. *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 81–109.

Philadelphia emerged as one of the nation's earliest centers of this developing profession. Among the city's oldest funeral establishments were Frank A. Hookey, Undertaker, founded in 1813, and R. R. Bringhurst, established in 1822, both of which continued operating well into the twentieth century.[59] The Germantown firm of Kirk & Nice likewise originated as a cabinetmaking and coffin-building enterprise before evolving into one of the oldest continuously operating funeral businesses in North America.[60] Kirk & Nice started in an old house at Germantown Avenue and Washington Lane, which was later replaced by a purpose-built undertaking establishment in the 1880s. These firms illustrate the gradual transition from artisan cabinetmaker to professional undertaker that characterized the first half of the nineteenth century.

The transition from the cabinetmaker-undertaker to the modern funeral director, however, was neither immediate nor uniform. During the 1850s, a small number of undertakers began constructing buildings specifically designed to accommodate both their businesses and family residences. These purpose-built undertaking establishments represented an important intermediate stage in the evolution of the American funeral home. Unlike earlier undertakers, who typically worked from cabinet shops, storefronts, or existing dwellings adapted for funeral use, these buildings were conceived from the outset to support the specialized functions of undertaking while maintaining the domestic character families associated with mourning and remembrance.

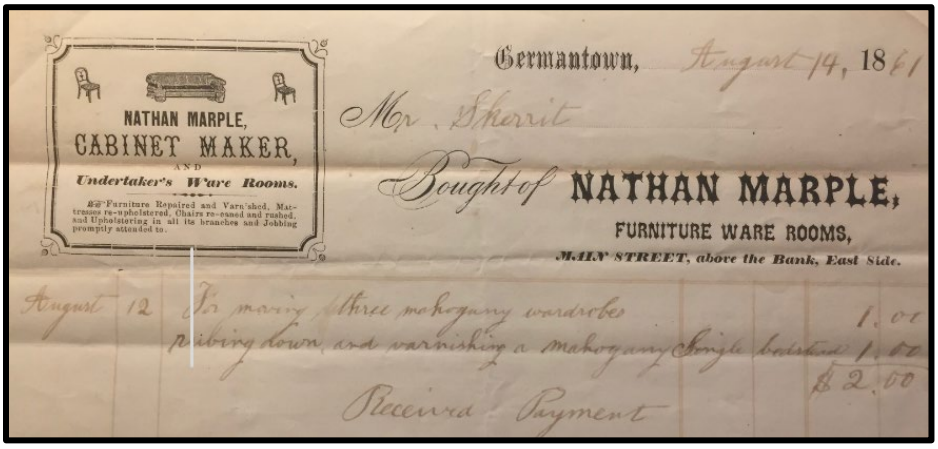


Figure 31. A receipt for Nathan Maple’s establishment, dated 1881. Source: Germantown Historical Society.

These early establishments commonly combined the proprietor's residence with spaces for coffin manufacture and display, offices, storage of funeral equipment, carriage access, and rooms for meeting with grieving families. Although more modest than the institutional funeral homes of the twentieth century, they demonstrate that by the mid-nineteenth century, undertaking had become sufficiently specialized to influence architectural design. Philadelphia's long tradition of cabinetmaking, rapidly expanding population, and growing funeral trade encouraged the construction of these hybrid buildings decades before the emergence of the fully commercial

[59] *McElroy's Philadelphia Directory* (Philadelphia: Edward C. and John Biddle, various editions, 1813–1900); *Philadelphia City Directory*, various editions; and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, various years.
[60] *McElroy's Philadelphia Directory*, various editions; *Boyd's Philadelphia Blue Book*, various editions; Kirk & Nice historical records; and Germantown Historical Society collections.

funeral home. This also changed the gender roles associated with preparing a body after death, shifting what had been a woman's domain to a male dominated profession.[61]

Among the earliest surviving examples of this building type is the Frankenfield Funeral Home, constructed between 1856 and 1858 expressly as a combined undertaking establishment and family residence. Rather than adapting an existing building to funeral use, the Frankenfield property was designed from its inception to accommodate both the family's domestic life and the specialized requirements of the undertaking profession. Its construction predates the widespread development of purpose-built funeral homes by more than half a century and demonstrates that specialized facilities for undertaking were emerging in Philadelphia before the Civil War. The building represents an important transitional stage between the cabinetmaker-undertaker tradition and the institutional funeral homes that became common during the early twentieth century. The Frankenfield family's long association with the property further illustrates the evolution of funeral service from a family-operated trade rooted in woodworking and apprenticeship to a modern profession grounded in embalming, technical training, and specialized facilities.[62]

The Civil War marked a turning point in the development of the profession. The widespread adoption of embalming, coupled with the transportation and public viewing of President Abraham Lincoln's embalmed body in 1865, transformed public expectations surrounding funeral service and elevated the status of the undertaker. During the decades following the war, undertakers increasingly evolved from suppliers of burial goods into trained specialists responsible for embalming, preparation of the deceased, funeral arrangements, and family services.



Figure 32. "Funeral Car Used at the Obsequies of President Lincoln, in Philadelphia, April 1865. Designed and Built by E.S. Early, Undertaker, Southeast Corner of Tenth and Green Streets, Philadelphia." Charles P. Tholey, artist. Jacob Haehnlen, publisher. The Edward S. Early Undertaker House and Business is visible in the background. Source: Library of Congress.

[61] Georganne Rundblad. "Exhuming Women's Premarket Duties in the Care of the Dead," *Gender & Society,* vol. 9, no. 2, April 1995, 173-192.
[62] Philadelphia Department of Records, deed records; Philadelphia atlases; and Virginia R. Remsberg. *From Coffin-Making to Undertaking*. 79–126.

The Edward S. Earley Undertaker House and Business, established during the 1860s at 549–551 North 10th Street, reflects this next phase in the profession's development. Like many post-Civil War undertakers, Earley combined his residence with his business while providing increasingly specialized funeral services. Earley's participation in the funeral ceremonies following President Lincoln's assassination illustrates the growing public stature and professional responsibilities of undertakers during the late nineteenth century.[63] Earley's was the urban version of what Frankenfield built in West Philadelphia.

The rapid growth of American cities during the late nineteenth century further accelerated this transformation. Smaller urban houses, changing family structures, and growing public health concerns made home funerals increasingly impractical. Undertakers expanded their services beyond coffin manufacture to include embalming, transportation, religious coordination, cemetery arrangements, and complete funeral management. Professional associations, trade journals, licensing laws, and educational institutions further established funeral directing as a specialized profession.

Philadelphia also emerged as a national center for funeral education. Eckels College of Embalming, founded in 1897 and later located on Arch Street, trained generations of funeral directors in embalming science, sanitation, and funeral management. The establishment of formal educational institutions reflected the profession's transformation from a trade learned through apprenticeship into one requiring technical expertise and standardized instruction.[64]

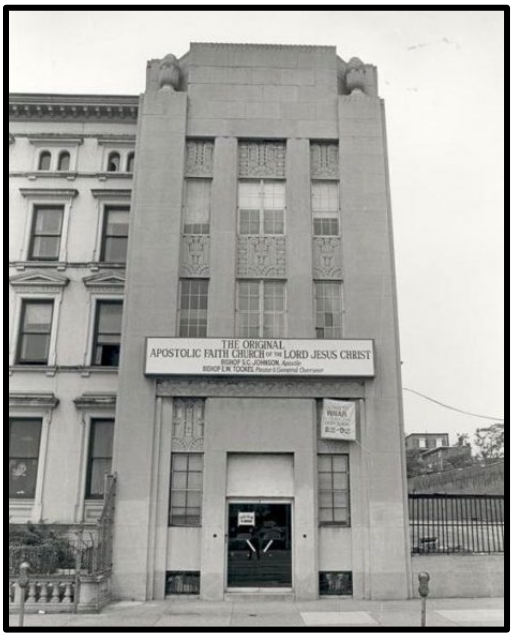


Figure 33. The Levine Funeral Home on N. Broad Street. Source: PhillyHistory.org.

[63] Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Edward S. Early, Undertaker, House and Business. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Historical Commission, 2025).
[64] Gary Laderman. *Rest in Peace: A Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth-Century America.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 29–67; Eckels College of Embalming catalogs and promotional publications; and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, various years.

Philadelphia's extensive stock of nineteenth-century houses initially proved well suited to this transition, and many funeral homes occupied converted residences before purpose-built institutional facilities became common. The Cieplinski Funeral Home at 1018 S. 2nd Street exemplifies the neighborhood funeral home serving South Philadelphia's immigrant communities. Similar firms appeared throughout the city, including W. M. Heaton, Undertaker and Embalmer, on Germantown Avenue; Marples, Undertakers, also in Germantown; and David H. Schuyler & Sons, whose imposing establishment occupied the corner of Broad and Diamond Streets. These neighborhood funeral homes became trusted institutions serving communities defined by geography, ethnicity, religion, and longstanding social ties.[65]

During the early twentieth century, Philadelphia's Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, and African American communities increasingly supported funeral directors who specialized in the customs and traditions of their respective congregations. Among the city's most significant purpose-built institutional funeral homes was the Levine Funeral Home at 1512–1516 North Broad Street, designed by Edwin Leo Rothschild and completed in 1933. Its restrained Art Deco design reflected the maturity of the profession, combining architectural distinction with specialized facilities for modern funeral service. Another notable example was Harold B. Mulligan's Funeral Home at 1119 West Lehigh Avenue, likewise designed in the Art Deco style. Although both buildings have since been demolished, they demonstrate the architectural sophistication and civic prominence achieved by Philadelphia funeral homes during the early twentieth century.[66]

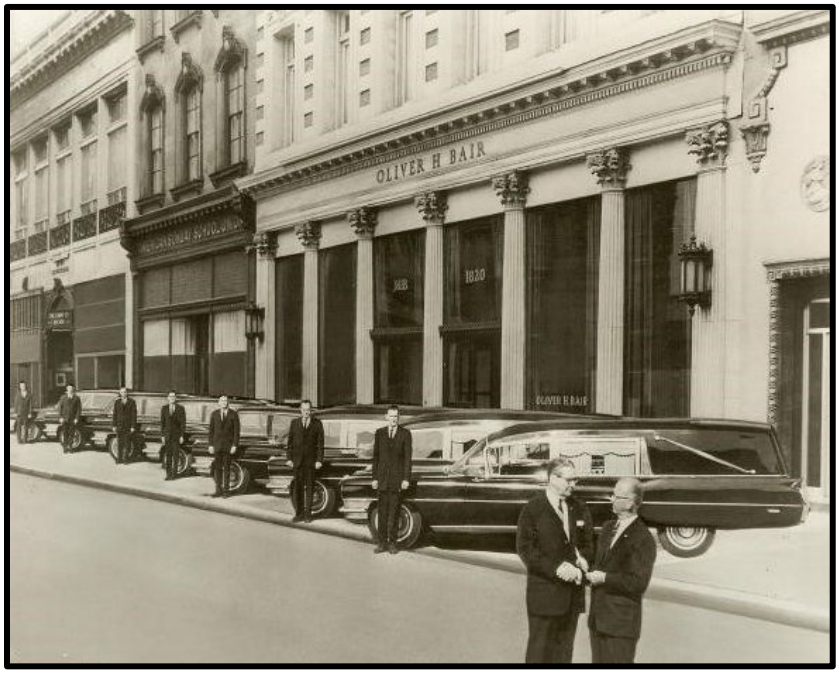


Figure 34. Oliver H. Bair Funeral Home on Chestnut Street in Philadelphia.
Source: Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[65] *Philadelphia Register of Historic Places Nomination: Cieplinski Funeral Home.* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Historical Commission, 2026.
[66] Kimberly Haas. "L&I Begins Demolition of Art Deco Landmark in North Philly," *Hidden City Philadelphia*, 1 July 2021.

By the first half of the twentieth century, hospitals increasingly replaced private residences as places of death, automobiles supplanted horse-drawn hearses, embalming had become standard practice, and funeral directors assumed responsibility for nearly every aspect of burial. Large metropolitan firms such as the Oliver H. Bair Company exemplified the fully professionalized funeral establishment, serving clients from throughout the region and conducting major civic funerals.[67] While the subject property was modernized over time, it always maintained its original form aside from the enlarged front porch, which dates to 1926-27. David G. Frankenfield's Georgian Revival building was the West Philadelphia version of Bair's Chestnut Street architectural and commercial achievement.

The evolution of Philadelphia's funeral industry therefore reflects a continuous progression: from cabinetmaker-undertakers operating from workshops to early purpose-built residence-and-undertaking establishments such as the Frankenfield Funeral Home, to the neighborhood funeral homes of the late nineteenth century, and finally to the institutional funeral homes of the twentieth century. Within this progression, the Frankenfield property occupies a particularly important place. Constructed between 1856 and 1858 specifically for funeral service and family residence, it is an exceptionally early purpose-built undertaking establishment that anticipated the specialized funeral homes erected decades later. As such, it documents a pivotal but often overlooked stage in the architectural and professional evolution of American funeral service and occupies a distinctive place within Philadelphia's social and architectural history.

[67] Gary Laderman. *Rest in Peace*, 68–118; Jessica Mitford. *The American Way of Death Revisited.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 17–67; and Oliver H. Bair company advertisements and publications. Additionally, it appears that some aspect of the Frankenfields' family business was eventually sold to Bair.

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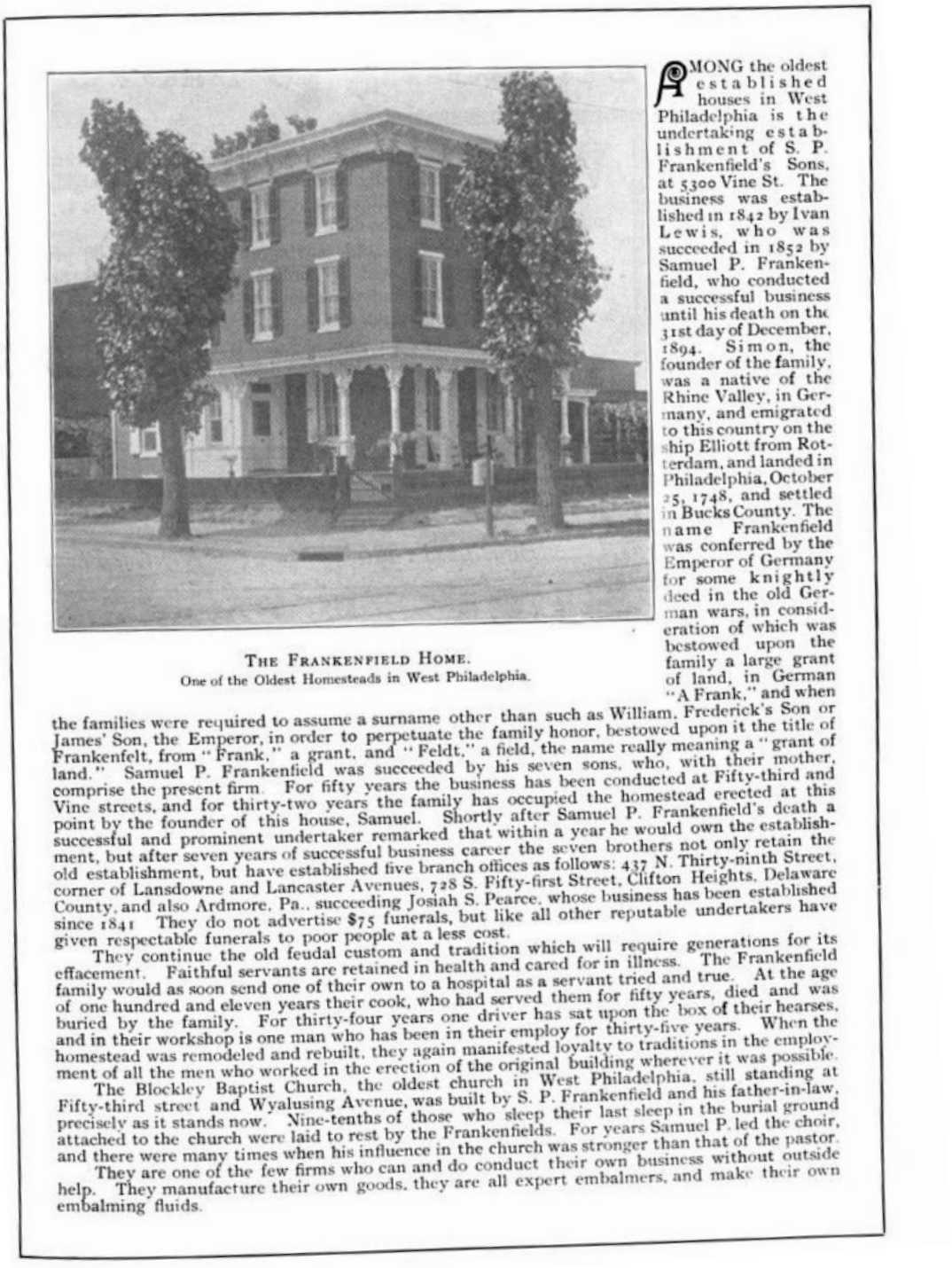
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James Miller to David Goucher and Samuel P. Frankenfield, February 1856, Philadelphia Deed Book R.D.W., No. 102, p. 271. Source: CAP.

William G. and Isabel O. Frankenfield to Clarence T. Allmond, 3 December 1943, PDB C.J.P., No. 399, p. 595. Source: CAP.

Appendix- Reproductions of Selected Sources

[Advertisement for S. P. Frankenfield's Sons], endpaper in Vieira, M. Laffitte, *West Philadelphia Illustrated.* (Philadelphia: Avil Printing Company, 1903), n.pag. Accessed via Google Books.



THE FRANKENFIELD HOME.
One of the Oldest Homesteads in West Philadelphia.

AMONG the oldest established houses in West Philadelphia is the undertaking establishment of S. P. Frankenfield's Sons, at 5300 Vine St. The business was established in 1842 by Ivan Lewis, who was succeeded in 1852 by Samuel P. Frankenfield, who conducted a successful business until his death on the 31st day of December, 1894. Simon, the founder of the family, was a native of the Rhine Valley, in Germany, and emigrated to this country on the ship Elliott from Rotterdam, and landed in Philadelphia, October 25, 1748, and settled in Bucks County. The name Frankenfield was conferred by the Emperor of Germany for some knightly deed in the old German wars, in consideration of which was bestowed upon the family a large grant of land, in German "A Frank," and when the families were required to assume a surname other than such as William, Frederick's Son or James' Son, the Emperor, in order to perpetuate the family honor, bestowed upon it the title of Frankenfelt, from "Frank," a grant, and "Feldt," a field, the name really meaning a "grant of land." Samuel P. Frankenfield was succeeded by his seven sons, who, with their mother, comprise the present firm. For fifty years the business has been conducted at Fifty-third and Vine streets, and for thirty-two years the family has occupied the homestead erected at this point by the founder of this house, Samuel. Shortly after Samuel P. Frankenfield's death a successful and prominent undertaker remarked that within a year he would own the establishment, but after seven years of successful business career the seven brothers not only retain the old establishment, but have established five branch offices as follows: 437 N. Thirty-ninth Street, corner of Lansdowne and Lancaster Avenues, 728 S. Fifty-first Street, Clifton Heights, Delaware County, and also Ardmore, Pa., succeeding Josiah S. Pearce, whose business has been established since 1841. They do not advertise $75 funerals, but like all other reputable undertakers have given respectable funerals to poor people at a less cost.

They continue the old feudal custom and tradition which will require generations for its effacement. Faithful servants are retained in health and cared for in illness. The Frankenfield family would as soon send one of their own to a hospital as a servant tried and true. At the age of one hundred and eleven years their cook, who had served them for fifty years, died and was buried by the family. For thirty-four years one driver has sat upon the box of their hearses, and in their workshop is one man who has been in their employ for thirty-five years. When the homestead was remodeled and rebuilt, they again manifested loyalty to traditions in the employment of all the men who worked in the erection of the original building wherever it was possible.

The Blockley Baptist Church, the oldest church in West Philadelphia, still standing at Fifty-third street and Wyalusing Avenue, was built by S. P. Frankenfield and his father-in-law, precisely as it stands now. Nine-tenths of those who sleep their last sleep in the burial ground attached to the church were laid to rest by the Frankenfields. For years Samuel P. led the choir, and there were many times when his influence in the church was stronger than that of the pastor.

They are one of the few firms who can and do conduct their own business without outside help. They manufacture their own goods, they are all expert embalmers, and make their own embalming fluids.

"Enterprising Young Undertaker Opens His New Office," *Philadelphia Tribune,* July 3, 1915, p 1. Accessed via ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

ENTERPRISING YOUNG UNDERTAKER OPENS HIS NEW OFFICE

Inherited Ability Has Furnished Him With Efficiency In His Line of Work

PATRONAGE SOLICITED

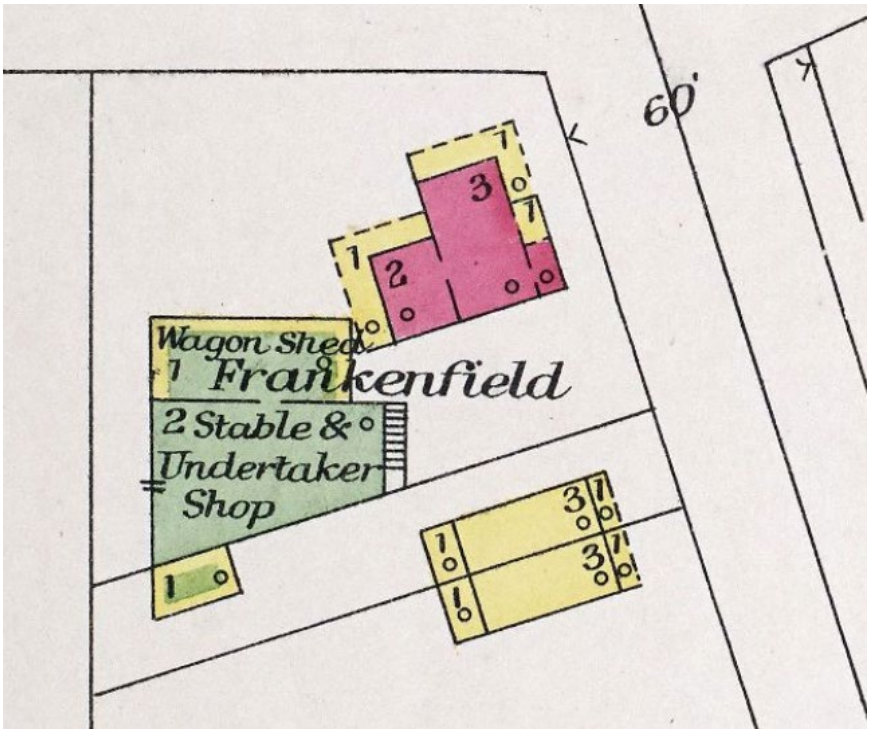
Mr. Clarence T. Allmond wishes to announce he has opened his new office at 616 So. 17th St. He is the son of the late Wm. P. Allmond, who up to the time of his death conducted the Wm. P. Allmond & Son Undertaking Establishment. The foundation of his establishment was laid by the late Thos. Allmond, of Gloucester, Co., Va., in the early fifties. With such a family history of four generations in the undertaking business, Mr. Allmond is naturally fitted for the work.

As an evidence of his fitness we have many years of close association with his father, such had up to the latters death, and the experience gained through conducting the establishment up to the present time. These statements coupled with the fact that he is a graduate of Eckels College of embalming eminently fit him for future service to the people of Philadelphia and recommend him to the most fastidious. There are many who can attest to his kind and courteous manner, his ability to man age and keen attention to the detail. His prices are most reasonable. Associated with him is Mr. George T. Hutchinson, with the undertaking equipment, Mr. Allmond has an automobile service, always at your command. Remember the new office, 616 So. 17th St., Phone, Dickinson 4861.

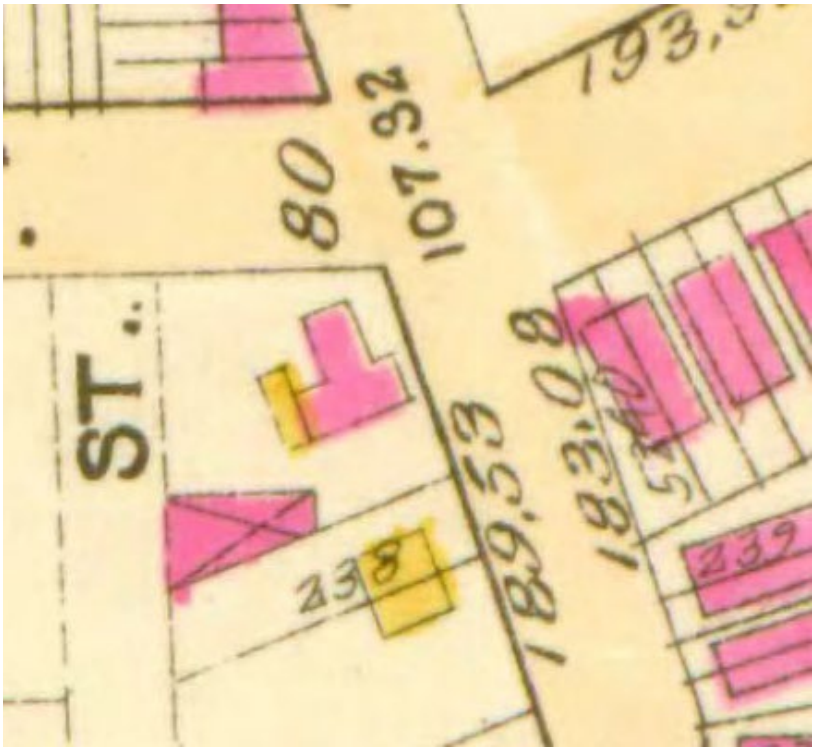


CLARENCE T. ALLMOND

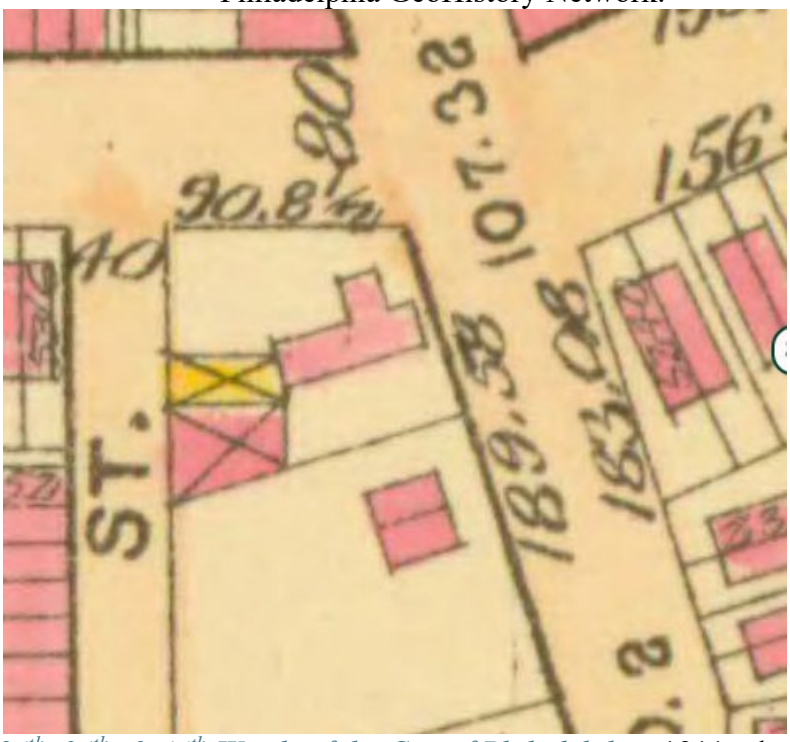
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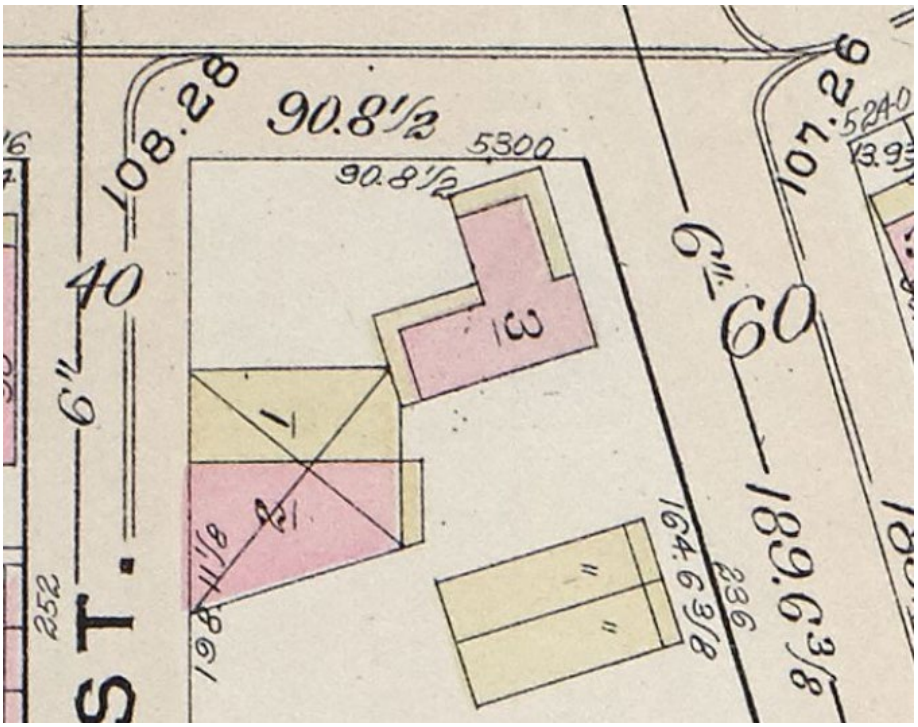
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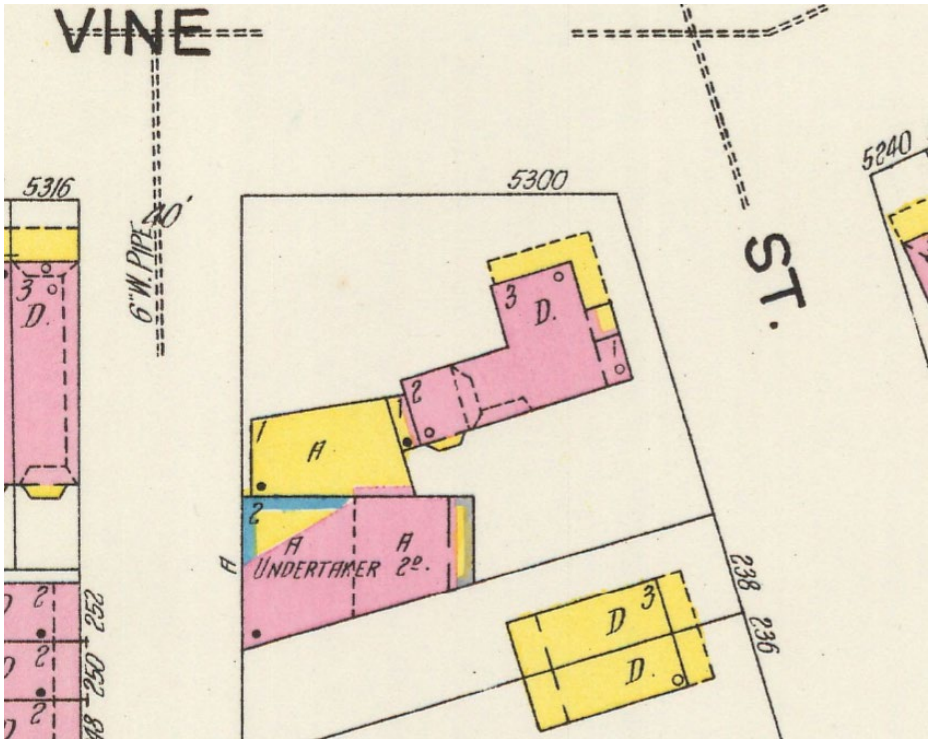
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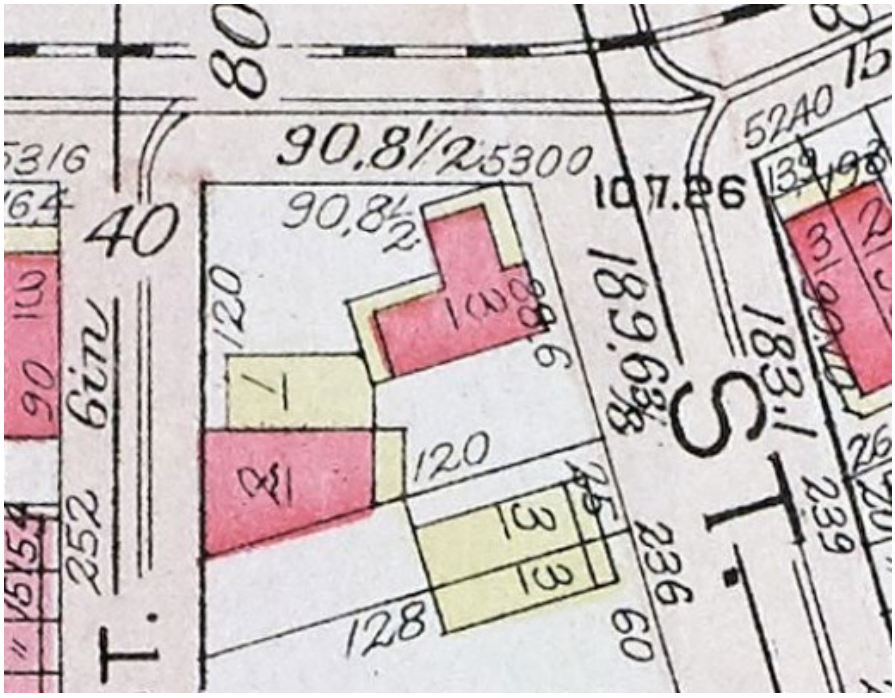
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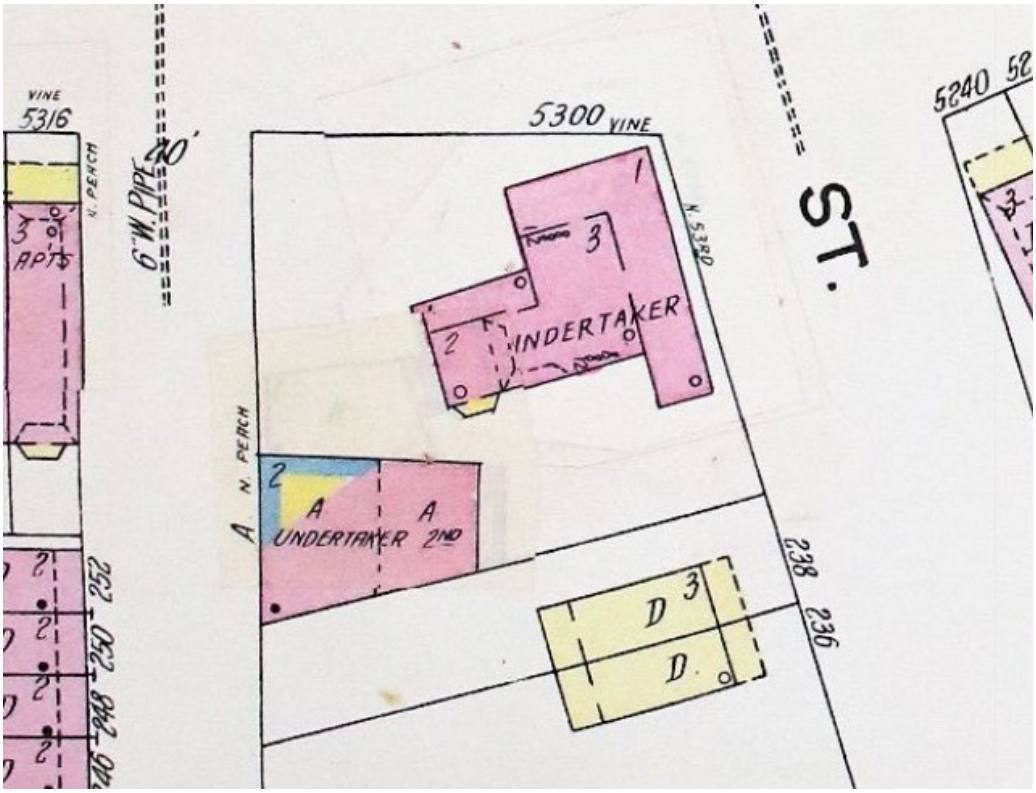
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David Goucher Household, 1850 Census

Blockley Township, 23 August 1850, p 52.

Name	Age	Sex	Color	Profession	Place of Birth	Attended School Within the Year
David H Goucher	38	M	[W][68]	Carpenter	Penn	
Hariett "	35	F	[W]		Penn	
Rachel "	16	F	[W]		Penn	(1)
Mary J "	13	F	[W]		Phila	(1)
William "	11	M	[W]		Phila	(1)
Samuel Frankenfield	22	M	[W]	Carpenter	Penn	
Richard Dear	22	M	[W]	Carpenter	Phila Co	
Reese Glascow	21	M	[W]	Carpenter	Penn	
John Moore	19	M	[W]	Carpenter	Penn	
Thomas Davis	16	M	[W]	Carpenter	Penn	

David Goucher Household, 1860 Census

Philadelphia, 3rd Precinct, 24th Ward, 29 June 1860, p 169.

Name	Age	Sex	Color	Value of Personal Estate	Profession	Place of Birth
David Goucher	55	M	[W]	200	Carpenter	Penn
Hariet Goucher	47	F	[W]			Penn
Rachel Bradford [Frankenfield]	25	F	[W]			Penn
Saml "	40	M	[W]		Carpenter	Penn
Robt "	5	M	[W]			Penn
Saml "	3	M	[W]			Penn
John "	1	M	[W]			Penn
Wm Goucher	22	M	[W]		Carpenter	Penn
June "	23	F	[W]			Penn

David Goucher and Samuel Frankenfield Households,[69] 1870 Census

Philadelphia, 80th Division, 24th Ward, 7 June 1870, pp 33-34.

Name	Age	Sex	Color	Profession	Value of Real Estate	Value of Personal Estate	Place of Birth	Parentage: Father/Mother of Foreign Birth	Attended School Within the Year
Frankenfield Samuel	44	M	W	Undertaker	3500	4000	Penna		
--Rachel	35	F	W	Keeping House			Penna		
--Robert	15	M	W				Penna		(1)
--Samuel	13	M	W				Penna		(1)
--John	11	M	W				Penna		(1)
--David	3	M	W				Penna		

[68] This column was not filled out for the subject household, but was completed for other (non-white) households on the same sheet.

[69] These appear to be separate but adjacent households, suggesting that David and Hannah Goucher were neighbors to the Frankenfields.

--George	1	M	W				Penna		
Berninger Jacob	25	M	W	Coachman			Penna	1/1	
Fox Sallie	25	F	W	Domestic			Penna		
Goucher David	59	M	W	Carpenter	3000	1000	Penna		
Goucher Hannah	54	F	W				Penna		

Samuel Frankenfield Household, 1880 Census

Philadelphia, Enumeration District 510, 2 June 1880, pp 2-3.

Name	Color	Sex	Age	Relationship to Head	Profession	Place of Birth
Frankenfield SP	W	M	53		Undertaker	Penna
--Rache	W	F	45	Wife	Keeping House	Penna
--Robert F.	W	M	25	Son	Engineer	Penna
--Samuel I.	W	M	23	Son	Signal Service	Penna
--John W.	W	M	21	Son	Carriage Driver	Penna
--David G.	W	M	13	Son	At School	Penna
--George B.	W	M	11	Son	At School	Penna
Frankenfield, Frank	W	M	9	Son	Coachman	Penna
--William G.	W	M	4	Son		Penna
Goucher, David H.	W	M	69	Father-in-law	Carpenter	Penna
Henry Ann	B	F	67	Servant	Servant	Delaware

Rachel Frankenfield Household, 1900 Census

Philadelphia, Enumeration District 890, 1 June 1900, sheet 1.

Name	Relation to Head	Color	Sex	Birth Date	Age	Marital Status	# of Children/ # Living	Place of Birth	Occupation
Frankenfield Rachel	Head	W	F	Aug 1834	65	Wd	10/7	Penna	
--Samuel	Son	W	M	Jan 1857	43	S		Penna	Undertaker
--William	Son	W	M	Jan 1876	24	S		Penna	Undertaker
--Frank	Nephew	W	M	Oct 1862	37	M		Penna	Cab Driver
Ax, Dora	Housekeeper	W	F	Oct 1856	43	S		Penna	Housekeeper
Frankenfield, Addel	Grand-daughter	W	F	June 1897	3	S		Penna	
Morton May	Servant	B	F	Oct 1876	23	S		MD	Servant

Rachel Frankenfield Household, 1910 Census

Philadelphia, Enumeration District 1129, 19 April 1910, sheet 8B.

Name	Relation to Head	Sex	Color	Age	Marital Status	Place of Birth	Occupation
Frankenfield Rachel A	Head	F	W	72	Wd	Penna	Dressmaker
--Samuel	Son	M	W	45	D	Penna	[illeg.]
--Adel	Grand-daughter	F	W	12	S	Penna	None
Ness Angeline	Servant	F	B	65	Wd	Penna	Servant
Vance Anne Mary	Servant	F	B	50	Wd	Penna	Servant

Samuel (I) Frankenfield Household, 1920 Census

Philadelphia, Enumeration District 1683, 20 February, 1920, sheet 7A.

Name	Relation to Head	Owner or Renter	Mort-gage?	Sex	Color	Age	Marital Status	Place of Birth	Occupation
Frankenfield Samuel	Head	O	M	M	W	63	S	Penna	Undertaker
--George	Cousin			M	W	56	Wd	Penna	Helper
Frawley Elizabeth	Servant			F	W[70]	87	Wd	Penna	None-Retired
Bottis Susan	Servant			F	B	73	Wd	Penna	Retired
Stafford Augustine	Servant			F	B	75	Wd	Penna	Retired
Tuck Agnes	Servant			F	B	49	Wd	Penna	Servant

Samuel (I) Frankenfield Household, 1930 Census

Philadelphia, Enumeration District 51-994, 2 April 1930, sheet 2A.

Name	Relation to Head	Owner or Renter	Value of Home	Radio Set?	Sex	Color	Age	Marital Status	Place of Birth	Occupation	Industry
Frankenfield, Saml I	Head	O	30k	1	M	W	73	S	PA	Undertaker	Own Business
--Francis B	Brother				M	W	58	M	PA	Undertaker	" "
--Geo H.	Cousin				M	W	68	Wd	PA	Chauffeur	Undertaking
Lord Earle	Roomer				M	W	28	S	PA	Retail [illeg.]	Ice Business
Bean Augustus	Roomer				M	W	50	S	PA	Laborer	House Laborer
Tuck Agnes	Roomer				F	Neg.	58	Wd	SC	Servant	Housework
Tucker Sallie	Roomer				F	Neg.	54	Wd	NC	Servant	Housework
Williams, Byron F	Roomer				M	W	31	M	PA	Embalmer	Undertaking
--Margaret	Roomer				F	W	26	M	PA	[illeg.]	Bell Telephone

H. Guy Boohar Household, 1940 Census

Philadelphia, Enumeration District 51-1843, 8 April 1940, sheet 3B.

Owner or Renter	Name	Relation to Head	Sex	Color	Age	Marital Status	Place of Birth	Hours worked the week of 3/24/1940	Occupation
R	Boohar, H. Guy	Head	M	W	39	M	PA	44	Undertaker
	--Dorothy	Wife	F	W	29	M	NY		

Clarence T. Allmond Household, 1950 Census

Philadelphia, Enumeration District 51-2458, 10 April 1950, sheet 12.

Name	Relationship to Head	Color	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Place of Birth	Occupation	Industry
Allman [Allmond], Clarence	Head	Neg	M	62	M	PA	Proprietor	Undertaker
--Ida	Wife	Neg	F	62	M	VA		
Gorgas, Alice	Employee	Neg	F	38	Never	PA	Receptionist	Undertaker
Pinston, David	Employee	Neg	M	25	Never	NJ	Apprentice	Undertaker
Gould, Robert	Employee	Neg	M	20	Never	NJ	Apprentice	Undertaker

[70] It appears the census taker wrote "B" before crossing it out with a W.