

2007

The Bucktrout Funeral Home, a Study of Professionalization and Community Service

Kelly Marie Brennan

College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd>



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brennan, Kelly Marie, "The Bucktrout Funeral Home, a Study of Professionalization and Community Service" (2007). *Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects*. Paper 1539626538.

<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-26m3-cx36>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.

The Bucktrout Funeral Home, a Study of Professionalization and Community
Service

Kelly Marie Brennan

Mountain Lakes, New Jersey

Bachelor of Arts, Rutgers University, 2005

A thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Department of History

The College of William and Mary
May, 2007

APPROVAL PAGE

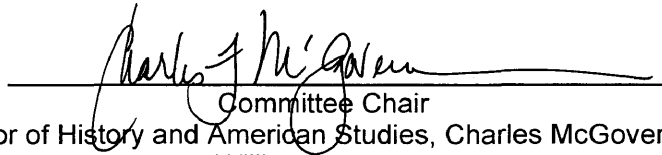
This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts



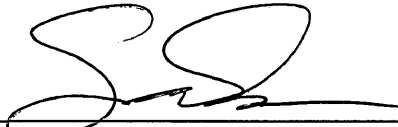
Kelly Marie Brennan

Approved by the Committee, March, 2007



Committee Chair

Associate Professor of History and American Studies, Charles McGovern, The College of
William and Mary



Leslie and Naomi Legum Associate Professor of History, Scott Nelson, The College of
William and Mary



Associate Professor of History, LuAnn Homza, The College of William and Mary

ABSTRACT PAGE

The Bucktrout establishment of Williamsburg, Virginia was founded in the late eighteenth century as a family-owned cabinetmaker and coffin shop. Over three generations and more than two centuries this family business grew and changed to specialize exclusively in funeral acutrements and arrangements. This paper explores the changes, continuities, and challenges the Bucktrout establishment faced through the nineteenth and earlier twentieth century. Technological, managerial, and market pressures changed the way American funeral establishments did business and the Bucktrout establishment was no exception. Yet while pressure to change altered Bucktrout's business, continuities with older practices remained. A strong commitment to community service is evident in a careful examination of the Bucktrout establishment. Its ability to navigate the tension between the market and service demonstrates that technological and managerial changes were more complex than previously understood.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	2
Chapter I. Cabinetmakers Build Coffins: Death, Society, and the Emerging Funeral Trade in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries	7
Chapter II. The Rise of the Undertaker: Changes in Attitudes towards Death, Undertaking, and Richard Manning Bucktrout	14
Chapter III. Undertakers Become Funeral Directors: National Changes in the Death Industry	30
Chapter IV. Funeral Homes: Twentieth Century Attitudes towards Death and the Bucktrout Funeral Home	38
Conclusion	48
Bibliography	50
Vita	53

INTRODUCTION

Sam and Martha Allen struck a “bargain” with Richard Manning Bucktrout, owner and manager of the Bucktrout establishment,¹ for a seven-dollar coffin on 26 September 1856.² Built for an unidentified member of Sam Allen’s family, the coffin cost more than the Allen’s could pay in cash. The family made payments with fresh oysters every May and November for four years after which Bucktrout considered the debt repaid,³ although the value of the gallons of oysters he received did not come close to the seven dollars owed. Bucktrout accepted goods and services in exchange for coffins and funeral expenses numerous times during the sixteen-year period recorded in his daybook.⁴ Such exchanges were similar to other contemporary transactions taking place in the southern economy. Barter and trade was common in the Williamsburg community and the Bucktrout establishment was an active participant.

This paper explores the changes, continuities, and challenges the Bucktrout establishment faced through the nineteenth and earlier twentieth century. Technological, managerial, and market pressures changed the way American funeral establishments did business and the Bucktrout establishment was no exception. Yet while pressure to change altered Bucktrout’s business, continuities with older practices remained. A strong commitment to community service is evident in a careful examination of the Bucktrout establishment. Its ability to navigate the tension

¹ “Bucktrout establishment” is a blanket term for the Bucktrout Shop (as it was known in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) and the Bucktrout Funeral Home (as it was named in the early twentieth century).

² Richard Manning Bucktrout’s Daybook, 26 September 1856. Hereafter “Daybook”

³ Daybook, 28 November 1860.

⁴ The daybook catalogues transactions between 1850 and 1866.

between the market and service demonstrates that technological and managerial changes were more complex than previously understood.

Many scholars agree that the experience of death changed for most Americans during the nineteenth century. Death was increasingly separated and distanced from everyday life. However, scholars differ on periodization and focus in understanding this process. Gary Laderman's *The Sacred Remains* centers American's changing attitudes towards death at the time of the American Civil War. He argues that the carnage of the Civil War, and the new technologies that emerged afterward altered Americans' understanding of death. Cremation, embalming, and mass-produced caskets and other funerary accoutrements developed during, or in response to, the Civil War and were responsible for increasing absence of death in the rhythms of everyday life.⁵

James Farrell's *Inventing the American Way of Death* instead places this transition between 1830 and 1920. He argues that the cultural and religious phenomena that encouraged the cemetery reform movement, along with the professionalization of the "undertaking" business, were critical forces in altering Americans' experiences of death. Rather than the war, new cemeteries and the spread of funeral homes displaced death from Americans' everyday lives.⁶

Significantly, both works focus their attention on Northern and occasionally Midwestern states and locate most cultural and technological innovations in these two regions. Without much detail, the two often assert that Southerners did not develop

⁵ Gary Laderman, *The Sacred Remains : American attitudes toward death, 1799-1883*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

⁶ James K. Farrell, *Inventing the American way of death, 1830-1920*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

the same technological or psychological methods in caring for or conceptualizing their relationship with the dead.⁷ Laderman explains his choice of using Protestant, Northern culture “because it was in this world that the corpse moved from a symbolically powerful though liminal object to a commodity at the heart of the nascent industry.”⁸ The Protestant Northeast gave rise to the market relations and technologies that fostered the spread of funeral parlors and changed attitudes.

The ‘nascent industry’ itself of which Laderman speaks has received considerably less attention from scholars. The history of funeral homes remains largely unexplored. Robert W. Habenstein’s and William M. Lamers’ *The History of American Funeral Directing* (1956) traces the different elements of American funerals (coffins, hearses, and other funeral accoutrements) on a national scale, and interprets those elements as central to American burial traditions. While *The History of American Funeral Directing* does not aspire to any grand analysis of American funeral homes, it does provide a useful history of funerary technology and customs through the mid-twentieth century.

Jessica Mitford’s *The American Way of Death* (1963) formally critiqued the funerary and cemetery industries by exposing examples of negligence and excess. While Mitford’s work is not historical in scope or method, it greatly influenced policy makers and the general public’s relationship with the funeral industry, and it has had a lasting effect on the way historians understand both early and late twentieth-century funeral home management. Mitford argued that the American funeral home of the

⁷ For examples, see Farrell, 184.

⁸ Laderman, 8.

mid-twentieth century was a corrupt and uncaring institution eager to take advantage of recently bereaved families at their most vulnerable.

One scholar has responded to Mitford's claims and has examined their historical validity. Gary Laderman's *Rest in Peace* (1996) carefully analyzes the development of the funeral home through the twentieth century. In contrast to *The History of American Funeral Directing's* simple narration, *Rest in Peace* not only critically engages with the history of funeral homes, it is in direct discourse with Mitford's work. Laderman devotes a large portion of *Rest in Peace* to refuting many of Mitford's historical claims as well as addressing the aftermath of her shocking exposé. He contends that the American funeral home of the twentieth century was not the calculating, emotionally-bankrupt institution the Mitford described but an evolving establishment providing goods and services to their local communities.

While Laderman's argument is an important departure from Mitford's assessment of the funeral industry, he does employ a modernizing narrative. This essay explores the development of the Bucktrout Funeral Home in Williamsburg, Virginia over two periods 1850-1866 and 1916-1945. These two periods bracket a significant, nation-wide change in the ways Americans understood death and the goods and services funeral establishments provided to bereaved families. While most of the literature on funeral homes for these periods indicates that professionalization, technology, and profit were the driving forces behind funeral home development, a careful examination of the Bucktrout funeral records demonstrate that this was only part of the story. The Bucktrout Funeral Home participated in many of the professionalizing activities of the period between 1866 and 1916 but retained a

commitment to community service often in professional literature stressed but rarely practiced by the funeral home industry. Modernization in the funeral business was uneven and was influenced greatly by local communities and customs. The history of the Bucktrout establishment may reveal that some funeral homes did not fit the models examined by Laderman or Mitford.

This work will begin with a discussion of death and burial rituals during the early years of the Bucktrout establishment in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It will then examine the changes in attitudes towards death and professional funeral planning within the context of Richard Manning Bucktrout's operation of the Bucktrout establishment in the middle of the nineteenth century. A study of national developments in funeral management and death rituals for the period between 1866 and 1916 will follow. Finally, we will explore the Bucktrout funeral records between 1915 and 1945 for a better understanding of the relationship between professional management of a business and performing community minded acts within the context of the national changes and developments of the late nineteenth century.

This case study will provide more insight into the rate at which Southern funeral establishments modernized. It will also provide further evidence that Mitford's assessment of American funeral home establishments was incorrect by demonstrating the continuities of community service throughout the Bucktrout establishment's existence. And finally it will offer some evidence that modernization as a historical narrative must be revised to reflect the diversity and complexity of local experience.

CHAPTER I

CABINETMAKERS BUILD COFFINS: DEATH, SOCIETY, AND THE
EMERGING FUNERAL TRADE IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY
NINETEENTH CENTURIES

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, death was “a friendly enemy and fearful friend.”⁹ While people feared death, popular theology provided space for joy and anticipation in the realm of the unknown. Deathbed scenes were an opportunity in which the dying individual and his relatives and friends could come together in prayer and the hope of heaven. These occurrences provided moral instruction to others on how to ‘die well.’¹⁰ These scenes were an understood part of everyday life in which family and friends joyfully participated. The heaven for which they hoped was a place of eternal worship in which “nothing human marred the perfection of God’s Home.”¹¹ Death became an opportunity to join God in His home.

Assisting the dying to God’s eternal home was the church minister, who tended to his flock in death as life. Along with church aldermen and a sexton, the minister oversaw the burial ground. Alderman and sextons, under the direction of the minister, set burial prices and saw to the care and improvement of the site. The minister had an additional expectation of tending to the spiritual and emotional needs

⁹ James Ferrell, *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980) 20.

¹⁰ Ferrell, 21.

¹¹ Colleen McDannell and Bernard Lang, *Heaven: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988) 230.

of the bereaved.¹² In the South, however, most people were buried on their rural property and there were few ministers to perform these duties. Southern mourners most often comforted each other without the aid of the clergy.¹³

The design and layout of churchyard burial grounds provided a temporal space in which pragmatism and theology intersected. All Christian burials were arranged with the corpse's feet facing East in anticipation of Judgment Day,¹⁴ so that all those interred on the site could rise from their grave when the trumpet sounded. This eastern-orientation facilitated predominately rectilinear designs for churchyard cemeteries. Arranged in neat but often poorly planned rows, these sites made the most of the increasingly limited space in busy downtown areas. The Williamsburg, Virginia Burton Parish Churchyard, in which many early clients of the Bucktrout establishment were buried, has a rectilinear layout in which the wealthiest and most prominent families were buried in the southeast portion of the yard. Additionally, families were often, but not always, buried in the same row.¹⁵ Located on the family farm, rural burial yards did not always subscribe to this orientation, as space was seldom an issue. Still, the bereaved were careful to bury the dearly departed facing east.¹⁶

¹² For an in depth discussion of the role of the minister in dealing with the dead, see Simon Newman's "Dead Bodies, Poverty and Death in Early National Philadelphia in *Down and Out in Early America* ed. Billy G. Smith (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Press, 2004).

¹³ William Byrd, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712*, ed. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling, (New York : Arno Press, 1972), 165.

¹⁴ Janice Sarapin, *Old Burial Grounds in New Jersey* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press: 1994) 12.

¹⁵ Examples of this can be seen at the in the Princeton Cemetery in Princeton, NJ and the Bruton Parrish Churchyard in Williamsburg VA.

¹⁶ Interview with Carl Lounsbury, 12 September 2005, notes in the possession of Kelly Brennan, Williamsburg, VA.

The orientation and layout of these cemeteries underscored the importance of using churchyard space efficiently and the theological importance of preparation for Judgment Day. These sites were laid out as if they placed a value on the entirety of the congregation's opportunity to reach heaven. The bodies were all facing the same direction, just as if they were sitting in pews during services, but now they were arranged in perpetual "pews" to worship God forever.

By the early nineteenth century, coffins were the material focus of the American funeral. Coffins replaced food and drink as the greatest cost associated with burial,¹⁷ indicating a greater focus on the corpse in the American funeral. A growing population, rising mortality rates, and a dedicated group of woodworkers, all facilitated a market demanding more stylish and functional coffins.¹⁸ Benjamin Bucktrout, like many of the cabinet makers of the period, began by furnishing coffins as a side item but, by the mid-nineteenth century, Bucktrout's establishment had launched an undertaking business.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the unpredictability of death and rapid decay of an unpreserved corpse made it impossible for Americans to import coffins.¹⁹ Elites had to find suitable substitutes to ensure their loved ones were buried according to the Anglo-Christian norms with which they were familiar in England. American coffins, built by cabinetmakers like Benjamin Bucktrout became a lucrative

¹⁷ Habenstein and Lamers, 258.

¹⁸ Habenstein and Lamers, 259.

¹⁹ Habenstein and Lamers, 255.

business in urban areas by the mid eighteenth century. Coffin shops and warehouses became common in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.²⁰

Coffin furniture and hardware such as coffin handles and hinges were imported from England for use on American built coffins.²¹ While most colonists were buried in coffins with wooden hardware, the wealthy purchased coffins with silver handles and brass hinges. Metal coffin furniture became more accessible to other segments of the population after the beginning of the nineteenth century with the growth of the nation's metal working industry.²² The availability of English-made silver furniture indicates that even colonial Americans demanded pricey accoutrements for their loved ones and put pressure on the cabinetmakers to procure and provide these extra (and expensive) flourishes.

The role of undertaker had not yet been established in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and multiple individuals performed duties that would later be associated with the undertaker. Often a female neighbor would wash and dress the body in a shroud made of muslin, wool, or cashmere.²³ The remains would then be placed in a made to order coffin furnished by the local cabinetmaker. These coffins often were made in a traditional octagonal shape with a hinged panel for viewing the body.²⁴ The body then remained in the house for a period of time (up to a week in the North, and two or three days in the South) both to provide family and friends with closure as well as insure the individual was not buried alive. The individual was

²⁰ Habenstein and Lamers, 256.

²¹ Habenstein and Lamers, 255.

²² Habenstein and Lamers, 255.

²³ Laderman, *Sacred Remains*, 29.

²⁴ Laderman, *Sacred Remains*, 31.

“persevered” during this period by a cloth soaked in vinegar placed over the face and, in hot weather, chunks of ice placed around the body.²⁵ Once the body was dressed and placed in its coffin, another individual stepped and provided transportation from the home to the grave. The cabinetmaker, or in more densely populated areas, the carriage master, would often own a hearse and provide this transport for an additional fee. In more remote areas, simple wagons would suffice in moving the remains to their final resting place.²⁶

Benjamin Bucktrout (B. Bucktrout, b.?,d.1813) and his son, Benjamin Earnshaw Bucktrout (B. E. Bucktrout, b. 1803, d.1846)²⁷ performed many of these tasks. B. Bucktrout emigrated from England to Virginia in the early 1760’s and worked in the Anthony Hay shop on Nicholson Street.²⁸ B. Bucktrout is most famous for the Master Mason’s Chair he built and decoratively carved for the Williamsburg Masonic Lodge No 6.²⁹ He also ran a dry goods shop on another property and built and operated a gunpowder mill during the Revolution.³⁰

These other enterprises indicate that B. Bucktrout, like other cabinetmakers of his day, did not rely on coffins as a major part of his business. B. Bucktrout secured his reputation as an arranger of funerals³¹ because he organized the funeral for Lord

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Robert W. Habenstein and William M. Lamers, *The History of American Funeral Directing*, (Milwaukee, WI: Bulfin Printers, 1956) 358-359.

²⁷ Susan H. Godson, *A Guide to the Memorials of Bruton Parish Church*, (Williamsburg, VA: Bruton Parish Church, 2006) 70.

²⁸ Gustler, 63.

²⁹ Gusler, 61.

³⁰ Gustler, 64.

³¹ “Undertaker” is an inappropriate term for B. Bucktrout because the term was the period’s equivalent to “contractor.” “Funeral Director” is also inappropriate because it does not emerge until the late nineteenth century.

Botetourt, the Royal Governor of Virginia, in 1770.³² B. Bucktrout did not make Botetourt's coffin but he did provide the silver handles and breastplate (the "Coffin Furniture") as well as the hearse. He also charged "His Lordship's" estate for "four days attendance" of the body.³³ This service demonstrates that a paid funeral specialist was beginning to emerge; Bucktrout was becoming more than a simple cabinetmaker.

Indeed by the 1770's coffin building and funeral arrangements were becoming an important part of B. Bucktrout's business endeavors. York County records show that he sued the estate of James Burwell for £6 for a coffin in 1777,³⁴ as well as the estate of Matthew Moody for funeral expenses in 1775.³⁵

The Bucktrout establishment's commitment to public service began with the elder Bucktrout's professional obligations outside of cabinetmaking and funeral arranging. He served as a purveyor of the Public Hospital (later Eastern Lunatic Asylum) from 1777 to 1779,³⁶ a position that established an important relationship between the Hospital and his establishment through the nineteenth century. When the City of Williamsburg decided to improve local transportation routes in 1804,³⁷ B. Bucktrout was appointed as the surveyor of the city's roads.³⁸ Bucktrout established

³² The modern Bucktrout Funeral Home incorrectly states its founding date as 1759. This date was chosen because it was the first time on record the Anthony Hay cabinetmaking shop charged for a coffin.

³³ Mills Brown, "Cabinet Making in the Eighteenth Century," Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series, 1959, 142.

³⁴ York County Orderbook No.4, 1774-1784, p 134

³⁵ York County Orderbook No.4, 1774-1784, p 99

³⁶ Gusler, 65.

³⁷ Elizabeth F. Butler, "Williamsburg and urbanization in antebellum Virginia : "a place-- a process-- a parade of change that continues forward," MA Thesis, The College of William and Mary, 2005, 33.

³⁸ Gusler, 65.

himself as a community fixture able to provide high-end funerals for the elites and, more importantly, to take positions looking after the public good.

The little evidence we have of Benjamin Earnshaw Bucktrout's time as the owner and operator of the Bucktrout establishment indicates that he ran the business in a manner similar to his father. Much like his father, he was a highly skilled craftsman that built beds, desks, and bookcases.³⁹ He extended the connection between public service and the funerary business. In June of 1832 the City of Williamsburg paid B. E. Bucktrout \$6 for making coffins for the city's poor.⁴⁰ His brother, Richard Manning Bucktrout, was two years his junior and likely learned from his brother the craftsmanship and community service that would be equally important during his management of the Bucktrout establishment. That combination fostered the rise of the undertaker and the gradual evolution of the Bucktrout establishment into a modern funeral home.

³⁹ Dr. Samuel Powell Byrd Papers: 1823-1859, 1 January 1831.

⁴⁰ Corporation of Williamsburg, State of Assessed Levy of Williamsburg, 23 June 1832.

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF THE UNDERTAKER: CHANGES IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEATH, UNDERTAKING, AND RICHARD MANNING BUCKTROUT

By the mid nineteenth century, Americans were beginning to understand death differently and reflected this change in the treatment of their dead. Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), a Swedish scientist, theologian, and philosopher, promulgated a concept of heaven that was adopted by many nineteenth century Americans. His ideas first came to prominence in the Northeast in the early 1830's and they soon spread to the Midwest and Upper South. Swedenborg argued that social relationships were uninterrupted by death, that there was a "continuation and fulfillment of material existence," and that the propinquity of heaven to earth indicated that the dead were near their loved ones and eagerly awaiting their families joining them in heaven.⁴¹ This liberalization was an important milestone. The new understanding of heaven held great appeal in a society where life expectancy fell eight years between 1790 and 1860.⁴² Knowing loved ones were just beyond, within the Heavenly Gates, provided solace to those grieving over those lost. It also minimized the chance of eternal damnation by granting eternal salvation to all those living a good and Christian life. Death had less terror for the living and more rewards for those who passed on.

This new conceptualization of heaven both stripped death of its terror and placed additional emphasis on the importance of familial relationships. The ideal

⁴¹ McDannell and Lang, 183.

⁴² Nicholas Marshal, "In the Midst of Life we are in Death,' in *Mortal Remains, Death in Early America*, ed. Nancy Isenberg and Andrew Burstein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 177.

deathbed scene no longer provided moral instruction but instead gave friends and loved ones an opportunity to indulge in sentimental outpourings. Communion with family and friends in heaven was now possible in a space initially devoted only to God and His silent, eternal worshippers. This gradual shift provided Americans with a heaven in which salvation was means to reunite with lost loved ones as well as God.⁴³

Changes in the structure of the Northeastern American middle class family underlay this shifting concept of heaven. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the definition of “family” increasingly excluded the servants, apprentices, and extended kin that had inhabited the same household in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁴⁴ The new middle class families were largely self-contained entities consisting of a husband, a wife, and several children who lived with their parents into their early twenties.⁴⁵ This model does not neatly fit with the slave society of the South, but this shift helps explain a phenomenon that transformed funerals all over the country.

Within this family structure individual members had prescribed, compartmentalized roles. Husbands, serving as the heads of this familial construction, negotiated the outside world and provided the economic stability that made this structure possible.⁴⁶ Women, who formerly assisted their husbands on the farm or in his industry,⁴⁷ were expected to educate their sons and train their daughters to be

⁴³ Marshal, 185.

⁴⁴ Steven Mintz, *A Prison of Expectations* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), 14.

⁴⁵ Mintz, 15.

⁴⁶ Mintz, 18.

⁴⁷ Mintz, 17.

good wives, competent housekeepers, and adept servant managers.⁴⁸ The expectation that mothers were the primary authority over children was a reflection of a late eighteenth, early nineteenth century shift from paternal responsibility to maternal instruction.⁴⁹ There were fewer children in each household largely due to a gradually decreasing birthrate,⁵⁰ and these children were expected to internalize the lessons learned at their mother's knee and were the first generation to enjoy "the cult of childhood."⁵¹

With a mid-century infant mortality rate of 43.3 per 1,000 white births, an increase from the late eighteenth century⁵² and a falling birthrate, parents with the financial means often purchased their cemetery lots as a place to bury their children lost in infancy, accidents, and illness. They also mourned them in elaborate funerals, spending money on child-specific funeral accoutrements, a specialty that the undertakers were now beginning to provide. *Agnes and the Little Key*, an instructional book on mourning for children published in the 1850's, examines in detail a fictional couple's deep mourning for their little daughter.⁵³

Funerals of the period reflected this growing cult of sentimentality. Victorian convention encouraged maudlin mourning while simultaneously distancing the middle class from the unpleasant realities of a decomposing corpse.⁵⁴ While the

⁴⁸ Arthur W. Calhoun, *A Social History of The American Family* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1945), 81.

⁴⁹ Marilyn Yalom, *A History of the Wife* (New York: Harper Collins Press, 2001), 199.

⁵⁰ Mintz, 16.

⁵¹ Calhoun, 54.

⁵² U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975).

⁵³ Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of middle-class culture in America, 1830-1870*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982) 128.

⁵⁴ Farrell, 148.

family had grown more attached to its individual members, it was content to assign additional responsibilities to the undertaker. During this period, the undertaker began to orchestrate the funeral and provided a wide variety of services and products including flowers, badges for pall bearers, and white hearses for children's funerals.⁵⁵

Mid-nineteenth century expressions of bereavement and sympathy were signs of "Christian piety social benevolence and sincere sensibility" and a means by which to outwardly express grief.⁵⁶ Bereaved family members were expected to follow strict rules as to what they were to wear and how they were supposed to behave in public. The growing sentimentality around death can be explained in part by the changing role of funerals in the community. The death of an individual lost its communal significance⁵⁷ and funerals like that of Lord Botetourt were no longer held publicly. Funerals were now a means to deal with the private shock of a cherished member of the family.

Rural cemeteries of the 1830's and '40's and their meandering avenues, beautiful plant life, and attractive and individualized family plots announced the arrival of a place for the living and the dead. These bucolic cemeteries became the burial space of choice for the American middle class, replacing the crowded and poorly maintained Protestant churchyards. In Williamsburg, the Bruton Parish Churchyard, now close to two hundred and fifty years old, was almost full and closed to non-Episcopalian Williamsburg families. The City of Williamsburg founded a non-denominational rural cemetery in 1860. The establishment of Cedar Grove came

⁵⁵ Habenstein and Lamers, 365-267.

⁵⁶ Halttunen, 124.

⁵⁷ Halttunen, 147.

twenty-two years after the first city-operated cemetery in Rochester, New York⁵⁸ but well before many others in the South and West.⁵⁹ Williamsburg set the prices of burial plots and designated the layout of the site as well as set the rates that undertakers could charge for opening graves.⁶⁰

Like his brother and father before him, R. M. Bucktrout, in addition to opening graves at the new Cedar Grove Cemetery, built furniture,⁶¹ made windows,⁶² produced and fixed locks,⁶³ and oversaw major renovations for the Eastern Lunatic Asylum.⁶⁴ He had a slave, William, who performed or assisted him in many of these activities. Bucktrout charged less for William's labor (one dollar per day)⁶⁵ than he did for his own (one dollar and twenty five cents per day).⁶⁶ When there was more work than the two of them could handle, he would hire out slaves from other local owners to help.⁶⁷

R. M. Bucktrout recorded all of his business transactions in his daybook. This means of cataloguing business activities was common in the eighteenth century but it had already fallen out of favor with other death industry professionals in the North.⁶⁸ Even his handwriting was a relic of the past. R. M. Bucktrout still used the "long s"

⁵⁸ Mount Hope Cemetery, <http://www.cityofrochester.gov>

⁵⁹ The best example of the slow migration of the municipally-run cemetery can be seen in Sybil F. Crawford's *Jubilee The First 150 Years of Mount Holly Cemetery Little Rock, Arkansas*, (Little Rock: The Mount Holly Cemetery Foundation, 1993.)

⁶⁰ Daybook, 24 June 1861.

⁶¹ Daybook, 3 April 1850.

⁶² Daybook, 9 October 1856.

⁶³ Daybook, 21 March 1861.

⁶⁴ Daybook, 1850-1853.

⁶⁵ Daybook, ? November 1850.

⁶⁶ Daybook, 7 December, 1850.

⁶⁷ Daybook, 18 November 1854.

⁶⁸ Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge Massachusetts and Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York during the same period favored more sophisticated ledgers by this time.

that was common in the eighteenth century. The entries in this ledger are not always dated or are missing some element of the date (the exact day, for example). Records of payment are scribbled in the margins and the services are rarely itemized. Some entries look as if they were copied from a bill R. M. Bucktrout submitted to the customer. These entries include pronouns like “you” and “yourself.”⁶⁹ Other entries were probably written later, possibly from memory, and employ pronouns like “him.”⁷⁰ Bucktrout’s system of recording business transactions was casual, indicating that he did not view it as an important part of his work. Even so, he performed a wide variety of funerary products and services.

The most basic of these funerary products and services was the coffin. The octagonal wooden design of the coffin gave way to rectangular caskets in the late nineteenth century.⁷¹ The first reference to a “casket” as specifically as corpse receptacle appeared in the United States in 1848.⁷² While all burial spaces founded after 1831 included “cemetery” in their name, the switch to “casket” was more gradual. Between 1850 and the end of the Civil War “coffin,” “casket,” and “burial casket” were used interchangeably and only in the 1890’s did casket emerge as the clear term of choice.⁷³ R. M. Bucktrout refers to the burial receptacles he built as “coffins” throughout the ledger but does not give a detailed of their description of

⁶⁹ Daybook, 3 April 1862.

⁷⁰ Daybook 13 March 1861.

⁷¹ Habenstein and Lamers, 243.

⁷² Oxford English Dictionary, “Casket”

http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50034091?query_type=word&queryword=casket&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&result_place=1&search_id=OFmG-FlcgKS-3779&hilite=50034091 1 December 2005.

⁷³ Habenstein and Lamers, 274.

their shape, making it difficult to ascertain if he was still building octagonal shaped coffins or rectangular caskets.

What the ledger lacks in entries on coffin shapes it makes up for with entries on coffin materials. R. M. Bucktrout offered his customers a wide variety of options in coffin materials. Cheap pine would have been the wood of choice for coffins for slaves, free blacks with little money, and the poor under the city's care. High quality, or, as R. M. Bucktrout would have called them, "first rate," coffin materials were subject to fashion. Black walnut was the most popular material in the 1850's, succeeded by cherry wood in the 1860's. This shift might have resulted from a scarcity of black walnut plank in the area but whatever the reason, R. M. Bucktrout stopped producing black walnut coffins in 1859.⁷⁴

Bucktrout provided metallic "burying cases" for his customers beginning in 1855.⁷⁵ He usually purchased these cases from Richmond and Norfolk and they were shipped by boat to Kings Mill wharf or he drove to the city to get them.⁷⁶ The arrival of these products demonstrates the ever-widening network of goods and services undertakers of the mid-nineteenth century could provide their clients. These metallic cases, and the "imitation rose wood metallic cases"⁷⁷ that R. M. Bucktrout also sold, demonstrated that Williamsburg consumers both knew of and desired these types of products.

But coffin envy could also take place close to home. On December 11, 1860, R. M. Bucktrout charged the estate of Miss Barbary Page a total of \$67.00 for a

⁷⁴ Daybook, 9 December 1859.

⁷⁵ Daybook, 15 January 1855.

⁷⁶ Daybook, 2 April 1857, 21 February 1862.

⁷⁷ Daybook, 3 April 1856.

mahogany coffin with moldings on the bottom, a white flannel shroud, and funeral expenses.⁷⁸ Four months later, Bucktrout charged Mr. Robert Saunders for a coffin for his cousin, Miss M Saunders, and wrote that his instructions “were to make just such a one as Miss Barbary Page had.”⁷⁹ Even if death had become a sentimental, private occasion, mourners increasingly had an eye on fashion.

Made-to-order coffins like those of your friends were only one of the many ways the Bucktrout establishment could customize a coffin. These ranged from lining and staining, or painting, a plain pine coffin,⁸⁰ to sets of silver handles and engraved plates on first-rate coffins.⁸¹ Almost all Bucktrout’s coffins included some kind of interior lining, indicating that an interest in the corpse looking good in the coffin was already beginning to emerge as an issue for all customers. All such finery indicated that while death may have been less feared, the living provided more materials to domesticate the final repository of a loved one with materials suitable to the home.

The Bucktrout establishment also conveyed the corpse to the grave. Since he did not charge for bringing the corpse to his establishment before taking it to the grave, it is most likely that Bucktrout and his slaves dressed and prepared the corpse in the family’s home before bringing it to the burial space. The Bucktrout house (located on the current site of Shield’s Tavern) has only been described as having a coffin shop in the basement.⁸²

⁷⁸ Daybook, 11 December 1860.

⁷⁹ Daybook, 2 April 1861.

⁸⁰ Daybook, 1 December 1851.

⁸¹ Daybook, 10 April 1857.

⁸² Carol K. Dubbs, *Defend This Old Town: Williamsburg During the Civil War*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2002), 74.

Depending on the customer's budget and the distance needed to convey the corpse, Bucktrout provided different means of transportation. For local burials requiring cheap transportation, R. M. Bucktrout would rent out his horse and gig.⁸³ For longer distances he would employ his wagon,⁸⁴ and in a few instances he procured a hearse.⁸⁵ Since the Bucktrout establishment still participated in business ventures outside of funeral arranging, it owned a variety of vehicles and R. M. Bucktrout found a way to make them lucrative when they were not performing other duties.

In addition to supplying coffins R. M. Bucktrout regularly included "funeral expenses" as one of the services for which he was compensated. He rarely itemized this charge but some entries imply what might have been included in this list. "Tending funeral" when either Bucktrout or one of his men attended the funeral is listed in instances where funeral expenses were not and the "tolling of the church bell" also falls into this category.⁸⁶ There are also instances in which making or providing a shroud is listed separately.⁸⁷

Bucktrout would also perform some of the more unpleasant services of an undertaker. On a number of occasions, he exhumed buried corpses, built them new coffins, and shipped to other parts of the country. He first performed this service in 1854 when Mr. Joshua Walker had his father and mother exhumed to be shipped to

⁸³Daybook, 8 Jan 1855.

⁸⁴Daybook, 7 July 1859.

⁸⁵Daybook, 1 September 1857.

⁸⁶Daybook, 19 January 1859.

⁸⁷Daybook, 11 December, 1861.

Baltimore.⁸⁸ This was not a lucrative practice; Bucktrout did not charge Mr. Walker much more than he would have for a cheap coffin.

Exhumation became a common service during the Civil War. Soldiers in the area dying of injuries and illness were often buried and later disinterred and shipped home.⁸⁹ In some cases, Bucktrout shipped them home right after death. He would open up the chest cavity and “pack” it with sawdust⁹⁰ in an effort to preserve the body. While chemical embalming was available during the Civil War, it was usually performed by Northern surgeons who had been experimenting with the new technology.⁹¹ There are no documents indicating that Bucktrout had any training (or interest) in the newly emerging science of embalming.

In 1861 and 1862 most of the Bucktrout establishment’s business was in service to Confederate soldiers. While Bucktrout charged more for soldiers’ coffins than he did for paupers’ coffins (\$10.00 and \$3.50, respectively) much of this money was never to be recovered, which R. M. Bucktrout likely knew at the time. Soldiers’ bodies that were not shipped home were buried in the new Cedar Grove cemetery in the soldiers’ section.⁹² Bucktrout also provided storage on his own property for soldiers’ corpses “safe keeping” until they could be shipped home.⁹³

Bucktrout also provided services to fallen soldiers that he had not been required to perform for the local citizenry. He provided headboards and footboards at

⁸⁸ Daybook, 15 December 1854.

⁸⁹ Daybook, 24 November 1861.

⁹⁰ Daybook, 11 August 1861.

⁹¹ Robert G. Mayer, *Embalming: History, Theory, and Practice*, (Norwalk, CT: Appleton & Lange, 1990), 41.

⁹² Daybook, first noted in September 1861.

⁹³ Daybook, 20 November 1861.

the cost of \$1.50 in place of then-unavailable headstones and footstones.⁹⁴ He also made splints for wounded (and in one case, dead) soldiers. John J Murphy was mortally wounded and almost completely lost his leg in April of 1862. Bucktrout, in addition to providing a coffin and burial services, made “a very large and elegant splint for leg severed together” and did not list a price for this item.⁹⁵ After the funeral, no one would ever see the “large and elegant” splint Bucktrout provided for Lt. Murphy.

The most impressive example of Bucktrout’s commitment to providing decent burials for soldiers took place after the Battle of Williamsburg on 5 May 1862. The following day, Bucktrout records that he packed six New Jersey officers with sawdust and sent them back over the Mason-Dixon line.⁹⁶ He did not charge their families any more than he charged Southern families for the same service.⁹⁷ He also took it upon himself to perform these services. The New Jersey families would have not yet known of their sons’ or husbands’ deaths to request their disinterment or asked they be shipped home. R. M. Bucktrout, a staunch Confederate, believed that care for the dead was more important than sectional differences.

The costs for these products and services and the people who purchased them were as varied as the services themselves. The Allen family’s use of oysters as payment indicates that the payment process was equally diverse. The Bucktrout establishment charged according to the quality of the coffin produced. “Neat” coffins made of pine cost considerably less than a “first rate” or “first class” coffins of black

⁹⁴ Daybook, 5 August 1861.

⁹⁵ Daybook, ?? April 1862.

⁹⁶ Daybook, 6 May 1862.

⁹⁷ Daybook, 28 November 1861.

walnut, mahogany, or cherry wood. Children's coffins, regardless of their quality, always cost less than their adult counterparts. Coffin sizes were a major factor in their costs and William, "a free colored man" whose son had died in 1862, was charged \$8.00 for a "full size" coffin.⁹⁸

The Bucktrout establishment also provided for all levels of the community. Like his brother before him, R. M. Bucktrout provided simple coffins for the poor of Williamsburg⁹⁹ and York County at \$3.50 a coffin.¹⁰⁰ Bucktrout also built coffins for local slaves at the expense of their masters.¹⁰¹ As early as 1850, there are accounts of free blacks buying coffins for their loved ones (free blacks also participated in ordering custom made coffins, but of less expensive materials).¹⁰² Coffins for the very wealthy could cost up to \$85.00.¹⁰³ The Bucktrout establishment also buried those who died while patients at the Eastern Lunatic Asylum. Many, but not all, were "pay patients" who he often described as "borders" [sic] and were buried in high-end coffins.¹⁰⁴

The Bucktrout establishment developed different methods of payment for different customers. Families ordering the most ornate coffins usually paid promptly. There are occasional instances in which Bucktrout notes that debts were settled by individuals outside the family,¹⁰⁵ or that the balance was not paid until years later.¹⁰⁶ Less financially reliable customers worked out a different kind of payment plan. If the

⁹⁸ Daybook, exact date unknown, 1862?.

⁹⁹ Daybook, 29 October 1859.

¹⁰⁰ Daybook, 9 August 1854.

¹⁰¹ Daybook, 14 September 1850.

¹⁰² Daybook, 22 July 1850.

¹⁰³ Daybook, 27 March.

¹⁰⁴ Daybook, 3 April 1856.

¹⁰⁵ Daybook, 5 August 1855.

¹⁰⁶ Daybook, 3 July 1859.

individual could pay off the debt within a month, Bucktrout offered the option of a lower cost. If the debt was not met within the month, Bucktrout would charge 50 cents more.¹⁰⁷

Bucktrout also had customers who, like the Allens, paid off the funeral debt gradually with non-cash items. An example with a less positive outcome can be seen through the \$5.00 coffin Bucktrout made for Pleasant Baker's daughter, Mary.¹⁰⁸ Baker did a number of odd jobs for Bucktrout, including slaughtering hogs for Bucktrout to sell the meat.¹⁰⁹ Baker had not paid off the debt when, for reasons unlisted in Bucktrout's daybook, he slit his own throat with a razor on 25 February 1859 in the woods behind Bucktrout's house.¹¹⁰ Bucktrout buried Baker and an unknown person paid the debt for both coffins in January of 1860.¹¹¹ This grim tale, meticulously recorded in Bucktrout's daybook, indicates a keen interest in fellow townsmen that might be interpreted as a fascination with sordid gossip. But Bucktrout had included similar suicide accounts in his daybook. His decisions to include these occurrences were more likely motivated by his role as an active member of the community than out of some morbid curiosity.

Bucktrout's willingness to provide burial services to all members of the community was laudable. Importantly, his generosity did not disrupt the social order. Poor residents of Williamsburg spent months and sometimes years trying to pay off debts. After the Civil War, elite families were left as destitute as their humbler

¹⁰⁷ Daybook, 28 July 1858.

¹⁰⁸ Daybook, 5 July 1854.

¹⁰⁹ Daybook, 12 March 1856.

¹¹⁰ Daybook, 26 February 1859.

¹¹¹ Daybook, 1 January 1860.

neighbors but Bucktrout did not try to collect on the debts incurred by this socially prominent Williamsburg group.¹¹² He simply wrote “insolvent” next to their entries and did not pursue the matter further.¹¹³ He was a bit more aggressive with the Confederate States of America, asking his agent in Richmond, Talbot Sweeny, “let me know what you think about my account the Confederate States for Coffins.”¹¹⁴

Acquiescence to class privilege and the hopes that he could recover some compensation for his work did not detract from R. M. Bucktrout’s commitment to the local and Confederate community. Like his brother and father before him R. M. Bucktrout was committed to public service in many facets of his private and professional life. He served as a member of the vestry at the Bruton Parish Church from 1827 to 1853,¹¹⁵ he repaired roads in Williamsburg,¹¹⁶ and he renovated Eastern Lunatic Asylum.¹¹⁷ His daughter, Delia, was an active member of the resistance to the Union Army in 1862 and would organize the outgoing mail, smuggled to Richmond in her petticoats, in his house.¹¹⁸

The simplest and most pervasive example of R. M. Bucktrout taking an interest in his community was the care he took in recording personal information about his deceased customers. Bucktrout carefully recorded the name of the dead, the relationship of the dead to the paying customer, and in some instances, a description of how they died. He attempted to perform this task with all the corpses he processed

¹¹² Dubbs, 372.

¹¹³ Daybook, 24 June 1861, 17 Aug 1866.

¹¹⁴ Richard Manning Bucktrout to Talbot Sweeny, 23 November 1864, Bucktrout-Braithwaite Papers.

¹¹⁵ W.A.R. Goodwin, *Historical Sketch of Bruton Church, Williamsburg VA* (Petersburg, VA: Franklin Press Co, 1903), 159.

¹¹⁶ Daybook, 8 March 1850, 29 October 1859.

¹¹⁷ Daybook, 1850-1854.

¹¹⁸ Dubbs, 284.

and his occasional lack of success is evidenced by gaps in entries where he would have written a name, had he discovered it. Even during the Civil War, when he was processing over ninety soldiers bodies a year,¹¹⁹ he carefully recorded the name, commanding officer, regiment, and state of each fallen soldier.

Bucktrout also included death information of those who died in unusual ways or under tragic circumstance. He carefully recorded the details of death of all of the suicide¹²⁰ and murder¹²¹ victims he buried. He also wrote a detailed account of his wife's passing 1857: "My dear wife died on Friday morning about ½ past 3 O clock in the morning perfectly in her senses and perfectly resigned to died and died without a struggle she was in her 40 year 8 month her birthday was on the 8 of April 1817."¹²²

R. M. Bucktrout's commitment to his community was evidenced through many facets of his professional life. The specific examples listed above, in tandem with the products, services, and payment options he provided, demonstrate a business establishment that provided more than just perfunctory professional services. The Bucktrout establishment's clients crossed all race, class, and sectional conflict lines, producing an impressive (but not perfect) relationship with the community.

It is important to note that the R. M. Bucktrout Daybook demonstrates that Williamsburg death attitudes and burial practices were a mix of the old and the new. The Bucktrout establishment provided the latest in funeral accoutrements (silver coffin furniture, metallic coffins) for local citizens enthusiastic for these products. The Daybook also contains examples of increasingly ornate coffins for children. But

¹¹⁹ Daybook, 1861-1862.

¹²⁰ Daybook, 28 December 1850.

¹²¹ Daybook, 12 November 1862.

¹²² Daybook, 4 December 1857.

R. M. Bucktrout also held fast to older ideas, ranging from the simple (his continued use of the long “s”) to his continued use of the Daybook to consider the circumstances of his clients’ deaths.

His record of his wife’s death contains language that was more common at the end of the eighteenth century. He states that she was “perfectly resigned to die” and “died without a struggle.” These phrases were commonly inscribed on eighteenth century grave markers¹²³ and are more associated with the sentiments of his father’s day. By the middle of the nineteenth century, other parts of the country, particularly the North and the Midwest, employed more poetic language to describe the passing of a loved one.

R.M. Bucktrout’s “old fashioned” sentiment may be the result of his age (he was 52 at the time of Delia’s passing) but it is just as likely that his attitudes toward death reflected those of the larger Williamsburg community. If this is in fact the case, the Daybook demonstrates that the citizens of Williamsburg kept up with changes in the nation-wide fashions of death without completely relinquishing older attitudes.

¹²³ Bruton Parish Churchyard contains many examples.

CHAPTER III

UNDERTAKERS BECOME FUNERAL DIRECTORS: NATIONAL CHANGES IN THE DEATH INDUSTRY

The post Civil War era initiated a series of significant changes of the ways in which Americans conceptualized death. The Victorian sentimental ideology of death intensified following a war in which over 600,000 Americans lost their lives. Consolation manuals, a popular genre of books including obituary poems, mourner's manuals, and books about heaven,¹²⁴ all cultivated American sensibilities regarding the dead and provided uniform instruction on the proper way to pay respect to the dead.

Prescriptive literature on mourning and funeral arrangements proliferated in the developing national market in the years after the war. Standards of taste and appropriate behavior were no longer dictated by religion or the local community alone. Popular literature, a specializing textile industry, and professionalization among cemetery managers and funeral directors all helped to set new standards that encouraged and even compelled bereaved families and friends throughout the nation to participate in the newly emerging death industry.

Elizabeth Stewart Phelps Ward (1844-1911) published a series of best-selling novels that demonstrated the extent to which Americans had internalized sentimental remembrance. *The Gates Ajar* (1868), *Beyond the Gates* (1883), and *The Gates Between* (1887) all focused on the loss of loved ones and the details of the family's

¹²⁴ Anne Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, (New York: The Noonday Press, 1977), 201.

heavenly reunion. The heaven in which these genteel nineteenth century families reunited was a gracious suburban landscape of tasteful homes inhabited by family members long separated.¹²⁵ The heavenly reunion that Ward promised was a fictionalized and widely available account of Swedenborg's concept of heaven. This heaven was both domesticated and easily recognizable to the middle class.

Mourning dress was one of the physical manifestations of this heightened sentimentality in the nineteenth century. While part of Western commemoration of the dead for centuries,¹²⁶ by 1860 mourning dress was available in larger quantities to all social classes and took off as an important sector of the textile industry through the widespread commercial use of sewing machines.¹²⁷ The mourning sector of the textile industry carefully labored to guide contemporary tastes and sensibilities regarding proper grieving etiquette by issuing consolation manuals of their own.¹²⁸ These manuals provided instruction on mourning length and appropriate attire for all members of the bereaved family.

This industry shaped proper grieving etiquette by carefully controlling its public image. Most of the textile companies with a separate, established mourning garb sector were European, a detail that instantly provided credibility to self-conscious wealthy Americans. Moreover, as these companies were so physically far away from their American customer, it was easier for them present a partial image to their overseas customers. Most Americans would never see the gritty factories in which these fabrics were produced and would only see the finished product in fashion

¹²⁵ Douglass, 255.

¹²⁶ See Lou Taylor, *Mourning Dress* (London: George Allen and Urwin, 1983).

¹²⁷ Taylor, 188-223.

¹²⁸ Taylor, 189.

plates in their ladies magazines. The commodities of death would not be contradicted by the troublesome images of life.

European customers, in contrast, were aware of these conditions and the textile industry had to use other methods to convince customers of their moral authority. Through building large, tastefully decorated mourning warehouses, they were careful never to appear “trade like” and provided the customer with the individualized attention necessary to avoid negative associations with commercial interests.¹²⁹ The ability of these textile manufacturers present themselves as providing a service both at home and abroad was a central component to commercial success. Without it, they would have lost the moral authority that gave them the commercial freedom that shaped tastes and sensibilities.

The American cemetery industry likewise cultivated a public image emphasizing the claim that they existed only to provide a service to the community. Cemetery managers and superintendents, operating institutions separate from the Protestant churches, were also required to carefully present themselves as protectors of dignified burial and remembrance.¹³⁰

Like the European textile manufacturers and American cemetery superintendents, undertakers were also fighting to create an air of respectability. Between 1850 and 1920 funeral costs increased 250%, an increase that can be partly attributed to casket manufacturers, greenhouses, and the other support industries

¹²⁹ Taylor, 191.

¹³⁰ This is a recurring theme in the trade publication “Park and Cemetery” published by the National Cemetery Superintendents Association beginning in 1882.

serving undertakers.¹³¹ This rapid increase in cost did not go unnoticed by the American public. Quincy Dowd, the author of the 1921 *Funeral Management and Costs* stated

. . . undertaking is not excusable, as other trades may deem themselves to be, in respect to charging all that the trade will bear; for funeral and burial charges are in a class by themselves, i.e., are dire, forced necessities, are involved in ‘class’ sentiments and ecclesiastical ceremonies which make the utmost demands of the family purse already emptied by medical, nursing, and drug bills.¹³²

The rising cost of what was viewed as a basic human necessity was considered appalling to the general public all over the country, and a concerted effort was made to justify their trade. In 1882 the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) was founded in an effort to take the poorly educated local undertaker and transform him into a professionally trained funeral director.¹³³ One of the first orders of business was to encourage a change in language, to drop the trade-associated moniker of “undertaker” for the more dignified, and more professional sounding “funeral director.”¹³⁴

Beyond this superficial change, the NAFD sought to truly professionalize its members. Business Historian Geoffrey Millerson outlined six requirements for a trade to be elevated to a profession; a Profession involves a skill based on theoretical knowledge; the skill requires training and education; the professional must

¹³¹ Farrell, 181.

¹³² Laderman, *Rest in Peace*, 55-56

¹³³ Farrell, 156.

¹³⁴ Farrell, 154-155.

demonstrate competence by passing a test; integrity is maintained by adherence to a code of conduct; the service is for the public good; the profession is regulated.¹³⁵

The NAFD met these criteria and the association's expertise rested on the new practice of embalming. Prior to the Civil War, embalming was only used in the United States as a means to preserve cadavers¹³⁶ but during the war embalming became a widely used means to preserve corpses shipped home for burial.¹³⁷ American battlefield morticians developed a system in which the corpse's blood was drained and a chemical compound made of "alcohol, glycerin, borax, phenol, potassium and coloring agents" was injected into an artery.¹³⁸ It was not until Lincoln's corpse was embalmed for its train trip through the North that the average American was aware of the procedure.¹³⁹

Embalming's growing popularity through the nineteenth century¹⁴⁰ has been attributed to an American emphasis on hygiene and a desire to display the dead.¹⁴¹ These compounds delayed the onset of putrefaction, making it possible to delay burial until those traveling to pay their last respects could arrive. Additionally, this preservation tactic, in conjunction with leaden caskets that slowed the decomposition process once interred,¹⁴² indicated that Americans of the late nineteenth century

¹³⁵ Geoffrey Millerson, *The Qualifying Associations*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 4.

¹³⁶ Laderman, 113-114.

¹³⁷ See Figure 3.2

¹³⁸ Andrew T. Chamberlain and Michael Parker Pearson, *Earthly Remains, the History and Science of Preserved Human Bodies* (London: Oxford University Press, 2001), 172.

¹³⁹ Laderman, *Sacred Remains*, 116.

¹⁴⁰ A search of the New York Times database of the word "embalm" yielded 11 articles between 1857 and 1861, 16 articles between 1861 and 1865, and 23 articles between 1865 and 1869. Search conducted on 12 March 2005.

¹⁴¹ Chamberlain and Pearson, 172-173.

¹⁴² Douglass, 209.

preferred a stylized, sentimental representation of death to the natural but unattractive reality of the decomposing corpse.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, embalming had become a required part of any funeral.¹⁴³ The expectation of a life-like corpse became the standard of measurement for the talent of any funeral director. A 1929 issue of *Southern Funeral Director* included this statement: “‘The body looked well’ Is the highest praise a laymen can bestow on the mortician . . .”¹⁴⁴ Embalming did more than preserve the corpse long enough to gather friends and family; by the early twentieth century it was also thought to help assuage grief by giving loved ones an opportunity to see the remains as they had appeared in life.¹⁴⁵

While the NFDA had a code of conduct for its members, not all funeral directors initially joined the organization. Non-NFDA members had a *de facto* code of conduct, ranging from their interactions with their local community to the “Funeral Ethics” published on the first page of the ledger books in which they recorded their transactions.¹⁴⁶ As for the industry serving the public good, care for the dead had been, and always would be a social necessity. It is for this reason it was so important that the funeral directors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were well-educated, upstanding members of the community. It is unknown if any of the owners or employees of the Bucktrout establishment were members of the NFDA, but the standards and expectations set by this group had a long-term impact on the professional standards to which the Bucktrout establishment would have adhered.

¹⁴³ Laderman, *Rest in Peace*, 7.

¹⁴⁴ Laderman, *Rest in Peace*, 8.

¹⁴⁵ Laderman, *Rest in Peace*, 104.

¹⁴⁶ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.1-8.

It is important to note that the Bucktrout establishment had subscribed to basic standards of dignity for the dead and community service for two generations before the NFDA was founded. Benjamin and Richard Bucktrout provided quality funerary services irrespective of the deceased's family's ability to pay. Both men were trusted by the public to assist the community in life (whether it was surveying the roads or repairing the Eastern State Lunatic Asylum) as well as death.

Whether the NFDA or any other professional group was able to effectively serve the public good was an issue of debate beyond the narrow study of Jessica Mitford's study. Twentieth century economists R. H. Tawney and Randall Collins, writing a generation apart, disagreed as to the nature of professional groups. Collins, writing towards the end of the century, indicated that there was nothing noble about professionalization. Tawney, writing in the 1920's, would have recognized and applauded the NFDA for creating a disinterested professional organization committed to the public good.¹⁴⁷ Collins argued that disinterest was not possible and service was completely embedded in market relations. The problem of professionalism is that it commodified human mortality, creating an inherent conflict for those tied to the market while trying to serve the community outside of it.

Funeral directors, previously educated through an apprenticeship system, were now expected to attend one of the many embalming schools that opened between 1900 and 1910.¹⁴⁸ These schools offered six-week courses in anatomy, chemistry, and

¹⁴⁷ Thomas L. Haskell, "Professionalism *versus* Capitalism: R.H. Tawney, Emile Durkheim, and C. S. Peirce on the Disinterestedness of Professional Communities," in *The Authority of Experts* ed. Thomas L. Haskell, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984) p.180-183.

¹⁴⁸ Habenstein and Lamers, 512.

physics and by 1927 the duration of the program was extended to six months.¹⁴⁹ State government also recognized the importance of this education and by 1930 Virginia required a high school education, one year of mortuary school, and two years as an apprentice, and passing a state licensing exam to ensure proper care of the dead as well as guaranteeing public health.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Habenstein and Lamers, 517.

¹⁵⁰ Kim Hannon and Kathy Lawrence, "The Generation Occupation, or the History of Several Family-Run Funeral Homes in Fairfax County, VA," *Yearbook* 20 (1984-1985): 35.

CHAPTER IV

FUNERAL HOMES: TWENTIETH CENTURY ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEATH AND THE BUCKTROUT FUNERAL HOME

The early twentieth century witnessed an even greater separation from death. There was little talk of eternal reunions and the distaste for mortal remains bordered on pathological estrangement. The Victorian conventions disappeared and were replaced by a medicalized understanding of death. Gary Laderman attributes this continued and intensifying disconnection with death to demographic patterns, hospitals as the most common place of death, and the growth of modern funeral homes.¹⁵¹

Americans enjoyed a decreasing mortality rate and an increased life expectancy at the beginning of the twentieth century¹⁵² making their interaction with death more infrequent. Additionally, more and more Americans were dying in hospitals, causing death to be a distant activity absent from everyday life. Funeral homes arranged to pick up the body from the hospital and prepared the body for burial far from the home. The funeral was also held in the funeral home instead of the family parlor; after its final trip to the hospital, the corpse never went home again.¹⁵³ The absence of the corpse created a greater disconnect from death for most early twentieth century Americans. Early twentieth century Americans were less concerned than their nineteenth century counterparts with the way in which they were immortalized in stone and many were content to be interred in a well-run, park-like

¹⁵¹ Laderman, *Rest in Peace*, 1.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Laderman, *Rest in Peace*, 3-6.

cemetery in which the needs of the living were as important as the needs of the dead. Burial space adopted the modified role as serving as a space for the living. The best example from this period for this type of land use was personified in the Forest Lawn Cemetery of Glendale, California.

Founded in 1913, the Forest Lawn Cemetery was run as a for-profit, vertically integrated corporation that provided, in addition to burial space, funeral services and monument dealers.¹⁵⁴ Forest Lawn embraced the suburban atmosphere of southern California and delighted visitors in its contrast to traditional, East coast burial spaces:

Few but have felt the chill that strikes the heart when standing in the office of some cemetery . . . and seeing the gleaming monuments, silent reminders of the shortness of life. [In the central memorial park] there is no note of sadness. The flowers fling their fragrance far and wide, the fountains tinkle merrily and it is a beautiful park and the onlooker enjoys it."¹⁵⁵

This Californian commitment to the sunnier side of death was infectious. By 1950, park lawn cemeteries just like it were founded all over the country and it has remained the most common type of burial site for most Americans into the twenty first century.

Just as there were many elements of Forest Lawn that would be recognizable to a twenty first century American, the Bucktrout establishment of the early twentieth century also contained elements that would be equally recognizable. In 1916 the Bucktrout Funeral Home met many of the national expectations for a well-run funeral home. Horatio Bucktrout (1860-1933) had inherited a long legacy beginning with his

¹⁵⁴ David Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 159.

¹⁵⁵ Sloane, 160-161.

grandfather, Benjamin Bucktrout. H. Bucktrout sold the funeral home to Douglas Whitacre, his son-in-law, in 1928.¹⁵⁶

There are no records of who managed the establishment in between R. Bucktrout's death and H. Bucktrout's age of majority. It is likely that H. Bucktrout worked along side of the interim proprietor and learned some elements of the trade from him. In 1893-1894 Virginia became the first state to require licensure of embalmers¹⁵⁷ and H. Bucktrout would have done the necessary coursework to obtain a license. By 1916 he was a well-established funeral director and embalmer.

Between 1916 and 1945 the Bucktrout Funeral Home used "The American Funeral Record, A Ready Reference Day-Book for Undertakers" published by F.J. Feinman of Saint Louis, Missouri.¹⁵⁸ The use of the antiquated 'undertaker' instead of the more current 'funeral director' in the name of the ledger demonstrates the uneven modernization of the industry. These printed ledgers were a vast improvement over the earlier method of collecting letters of request for services and recording services rendered on slips of paper¹⁵⁹ or the simple daybook H. Bucktrout's father kept. This organized, professional manner of bookkeeping provided Horatio Bucktrout and his successor a means by which to easily keep track of money owed and work already completed.

Other tools were employed along with these ledgers to track accounts systematically. In June of 1920, a rubber stamp reading "H.N. BUCKTROUT, PAID"

¹⁵⁶ *American Funeral Director*, 39.

¹⁵⁷ Mayer, 53.

¹⁵⁸ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.1-8.

¹⁵⁹ Bucktrout-Braithwaite Papers. 1780-1902.

first appears in the “Funeral Charges” section of the entry.¹⁶⁰ While employing this simple device does not seem terribly significant, it is an excellent example of funeral homes adopting tools and methods associated with more ‘conventional’ businesses of the period as well as speaking volumes to their growing commitment to organization.

Between 1920 and 1945 the Bucktrout Funeral Home further systematized its entries into the ledgers. Prior to 1922, references to coffins and caskets included a description of their materials. Beginning that year, they began to record the catalogue number for the casket,¹⁶¹ thus streamlining their record keeping system without losing any important information. Initially, funeral records were created the day of the event. It is easy to imagine Horatio or his successor D. M. Whitacre sitting down the evening of the funeral and entering the information into the ledger book. By the late 1930’s the entries were being made as the body arrived at the funeral home,¹⁶² as if the creation of this record was part of “processing” the body.

Beyond the daily transactions of the Bucktrout Funeral Home, these pre-printed ledgers provide a point of comparison between the Bucktrout establishment and services offered around the country. Items in the ledger include everything from embalming and transportation to the cost of the minister and rental of candelabrum. In examining this collection in the aggregate, it becomes apparent to the modern reader what the Bucktrout’s customers expected and purchased from this establishment and what this establishment was willing and able to provide.

¹⁶⁰ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.1, 1 June 1920.

¹⁶¹ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.1, 6 September 1922.

¹⁶² Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.7.

That which the Bucktrout establishment was willing to provide expanded greatly in 1918 when Horatio Bucktrout set up a cemetery on a part of his farmland as a place of burial for strangers dying in the influenza epidemic.¹⁶³ The “Spanish Flu” killed 675,000 Americans in a one-year period¹⁶⁴ and in October of 1918 the epidemic killed 5,999 Virginians in the span of 31 days.¹⁶⁵ The Bucktrout Funeral Home records of the period reflect the chaos created by the spike in mortality rates. Records indicate that in the month of October the Bucktrout Funeral Home tended to seventy bodies; they buried more bodies in a month than they would in an average year.¹⁶⁶ It was reported in the October 12, 1918 edition of *The Daily Press* that

. . . a local [Williamsburg] undertaker had to requisition a truck to haul bodies from Penniman this morning, and some eight or ten were brought up this morning for shipment by train to their former homes for burial. There is a scarcity of coffins here, the dealers having had in hand only a small stock prior to the grip epidemic.¹⁶⁷

Meyers speculates that the Williamsburg undertaker was Horatio Bucktrout.

While creating one’s own cemetery could be potentially lucrative, the nature of the site and the individuals buried within it indicate that this was not the case. Many of these burials were of those who immigrated to the area in search of the high wages building the DuPont plant at Penninman.¹⁶⁸ These individuals were interred with minimal cost, most commonly \$100 total for casket and embalming and an additional \$5.00 to open the grave, and it often took months for the debt to be repaid

¹⁶³ Terry L. Meyers, “The Silence of the Graves,” *Virginia Gazette*, 3 June 1998.

¹⁶⁴ Jo Ann Carrigan, “Book Reviews: *Epidemic and Peace* by Alfred Crosby,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 65, No. 1. (Jun., 1978), pp. 206

¹⁶⁵ Meyers.

¹⁶⁶ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.1.

¹⁶⁷ Meyers.

¹⁶⁸ Meyers.

in full.¹⁶⁹ Williamsburg families who lost members to the epidemic were interred in the municipal cemetery, Cedar Grove, indicating that the Bucktrout cemetery was serving as a potter's field, or a burial yard set aside for the interment of the poor or unclaimed.

The nature of this endeavor implies that Horatio Bucktrout was not looking to expand his business through forward vertical integration but to help the community in a period of crisis. This community-minded act exemplified the traits a modern funeral director was supposed to exhibit: competence and compassion.

After 1916, the most common items and services acquired were caskets, transportation, embalming, and, increasingly through the period, flowers.¹⁷⁰ Caskets were rectangular corpse receptacles could be made out of almost any material and were mass-produced by the 1910's. In examining the Bucktrout Funeral Home records, it becomes clear that they either kept a variety of caskets in stock or were able to have them shipped to Williamsburg quickly. Most customers purchased the # 100 7 D, described in passing having "black varnish" and available with a choice of lining.¹⁷¹ An expensive accoutrement that became more common in the late 1920's was the "burial vault" an outside container for the casket, usually made of concrete.¹⁷² The vaults were placed inside the grave and the casket inside the vault. The growing popularity of this item can likely be attributed to cemeteries' requirements that all

¹⁶⁹ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.1, October 1916.

¹⁷⁰ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.1-8.

¹⁷¹ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.4. 9 November 1927.

¹⁷² Habenstein and Lamers, 568.

caskets must be placed within a vault to alleviate maintenance costs from the ground shifting.¹⁷³

A body handled by the Bucktrout Funeral Home had to be transported twice, once from the place of death to the funeral home and again from the funeral home to the burial place. The initial “transport” charge depended on where the individual made the transition from person to corpse. Records indicate that they transported corpses from as far away as Petersburg and as close as down the street. The trip from hospital to funeral home was, in addition to being unglamorous, cheaper than the trip to the burial place because the means of transport was a simple wagon into the 1920’s.¹⁷⁴ In 1920 the Bucktrout Funeral Home acquired an “auto hearse” and charged \$15 to \$20 for its use through 1945.¹⁷⁵

Embalming, one of the most important elements of the funeral director’s professional status had become almost ubiquitous at the Bucktrout Funeral Home as early as 1916. The cost of embalming rose steadily over time, but the largest factor in cost was the size and condition of the corpse.

The last service the Bucktrout Funeral Home provided seems unusual to modern readers but was a common practice nation wide through the mid twentieth century.¹⁷⁶ Ambulance service made up a large portion of the Home’s records in the 1930’s. Using either a modified auto hearse or a separate vehicle, the Bucktrout Funeral Home provided twenty-four-hour ambulance service to and from local

¹⁷³ Richard Veit, Interview, 24 June 2003, Notes in the possession of Kelly Brennan, Williamsburg, VA

¹⁷⁴ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.3

¹⁷⁵ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.1. 14 February 1920.

¹⁷⁶ Habenstein and Lamers, 583.

hospitals. Often these were simple trips couriering the ill and the injured back and forth from home and hospital but would occasionally travel from home to hospital and hospital to funeral home.¹⁷⁷ While this was likely a lucrative endeavor with little overhead, the charge of \$3 to \$15 was sometimes never recovered.¹⁷⁸ In a relatively small community like Williamsburg it was probably very apparent who could afford ambulance services and who could not. Bucktrout's willingness to provide ambulatory services regardless of one's ability to pay indicates that profit was not a motive in providing this service.

Payment for services rendered reflected the changing, dynamic relationship between people, goods, and costs during the period. Between 1916 and 1945 credit, insurance, and debt played increasingly important roles in the ways in which the Bucktrout Funeral Home received payment. In the early 1920's people began paying on installment plans at somewhat regular intervals. This system provided individuals with an additional year to pay of their debt, with interest.¹⁷⁹ Bucktrout did not discourage this practice, but those of meager means who were able to pay off the debt in thirty days or less received a discount of up to twenty five percent.¹⁸⁰ This arrangement was similar to the arrangement R. M. Bucktrout made with his less wealthy customers.

There is only one example of an entire funeral being charged to 'credit' and the specifics of the repayment were never recorded. The introduction of this method of payment mirrored the nation-wide trend of making major purchases on credit. By

¹⁷⁷ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.6, 10 September 1936.

¹⁷⁸ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.6-7.

¹⁷⁹ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.1.

¹⁸⁰ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.5, 20 July 1933.

the end of the 1920's a family could buy a car, a refrigerator, and pay for a funeral all on credit. Insurance also became a major method of payment in the late 1920's¹⁸¹ and began to figure so prominently in the payment of funeral services nation wide that the 1933 edition of "The American Funeral Record" devoted a whole section of the ledger page to it.¹⁸² The corporate world and its ever-developing financial structure had become another mediator between the living and the dead.

There were those who were unable to pay in a traditional and timely fashion were still granted services, but aggressively solicited for payment. There are multiple references to their lawyer stepping in and taking legal action on behalf of the Home. When small sums of money were concerned, Bucktrout Funeral Home was content to simply mark 'bad debt' or 'no good' on the ledger page. Not everyone with financial troubles was as committed to paying off their debts as Mr. Haskins.

Leroy Haskins, 25, died of pneumonia on February 10 1930 in Williamsburg, Virginia. His father did not have the means necessary to pay one hundred and fifty five dollars in cash for the transportation of the remains, embalming, and a simple casket. Over the course of the next six years, Mr. Haskins repaid his debt by doing odd jobs for the funeral home as well as providing tomatoes, potatoes, and corn from his annual crop. The Bucktrout Funeral Home accepted this form of payment, recording all of the fruits of the bereaved father's labor and their cash value as they were received.¹⁸³ Mr. Haskins' willingness to assume such a massive debt demonstrates the importance of a decent burial for early twentieth-century

¹⁸¹ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.4, 12 October 1929.

¹⁸² Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol.5-8.

¹⁸³ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol. 4, 11 February, 1930.

Americans. The while the Bucktrout Funeral Home's willingness to accept non-cash payment demonstrates the flexibility of a community oriented, family run institution place within a newly emerging service economy that discouraged this type of payment plan. This story is reminiscent of the Allen's who, two generations earlier, paid Horatio's father in oysters.

For every "bad debt" entry in the ledger books there are stories like Mr. Haskins and the correspondence of Frank D. Bell. Florence Bell was interred in the summer of 1928 leaving the \$215.00 debt to her brother, Frank Bell. In November of the same year Bell wrote the Bucktrout Funeral Home thanking them from for their patience with the slow rate at which he was paying back the debt. He thanked them for the kindness they had shown Florence when there was no family in the immediate area to tend to her remains. Bell slowly paid the debt and in 1932 the Bucktrout Funeral Home considered the debt paid in full.¹⁸⁴

Mr. Haskins' and Mr. Bell's plights are reminiscent of that of the Allen family. These debts, incurred seventy years apart, were all paid off in a similar manner. The owners of the Bucktrout establishment demonstrate that they were willing to provide services to those who were not capable of paying the debt in a timely or conventional way. It does not surprise the modern reader that the Bucktrout establishment of the 1850's would be willing to barter goods for services and the generosity the establishment displays in the 1930's may be attributed to the effects of the Great Depression. But more significantly, this continuity indicates a neighborly

¹⁸⁴ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol. 4, 7 November 1928.

disposition untouched by technological and managerial development that changed the funeral industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

CONCLUSION

The history of the Bucktrout establishment demonstrates a continuity of commitment to public service despite changes in technology, managerial techniques, and even attitudes towards death. While the list of items and services offered by the Bucktrout establishment is not exhaustive, the products and services listed in R. M. Bucktrout's as well as in H. Bucktrout's and D. Whitacre's records indicate they followed the same trends as contemporary funerary institutions. R. M. Bucktrout provided the citizens of Williamsburg with similar items found in funeral establishments in other parts of the country.

In using modern, up-to-date book keeping methods, providing technologically advanced services (arterial embalming, auto hearses), and multiple, sophisticated methods of payment there is little to imply that the Bucktrout Funeral Home of Bucktrout and Whitacre's era was run any differently than any other funeral home in the country. While some of the individual products may have seem outmoded (for example, a family bought a door crepe, which had fallen out of fashion in the North at the turn of the century as late as 1924),¹⁸⁵ they were desired by the Bucktrout Funeral Home's clientele. The axiom "the customer is always right" trumped concerns over outmoded fashion when it came to business practice.

The Bucktrout Funeral Home was a 'modern' business establishment for a variety of factors beyond good business sense. Williamsburg was a well populated

¹⁸⁵ Funeral Records, Bucktrout Funeral Home, Vol. 1, 10 April 1924.

area and the Bucktrout Funeral Home benefited from an almost two hundred year trial and error period with its practices and its customers. This long standing commitment to the community demonstrates the uniqueness of the Bucktrout Funeral Home. In a period during which professional organizations and trade magazines were emphasizing the importance of distanced, professional services, the Bucktrout Funeral Home was providing more than simple burial services.

Horatio Bucktrout, his staff, and his successors provided services to the community well beyond those expected by any contemporary professional organization. Bucktrout used part of his own property in an effort to provide suitable burial for the poor and unclaimed in a time of crisis and permitted families to pay off debts any way they could as slowly as needed. This type of behavior may point to another trend in early twentieth century funeral homes – compassion and devotion to the community.

Further research must be done to establish just how unusual the Bucktrout Funeral Home was in its commitment to the people of Williamsburg. At this point, it is impossible to tell if the Bucktrout Funeral Home was part of a greater humanitarian trend or a holdover from another era. Examinations of funeral homes in different regions of the country as well an exploration of institutions serving specific ethnic or religious groups may provide more information as to whether the Bucktrout Funeral Home was an anomaly or part of a young industry committed to providing services to the recently deceased irrespective of their loved ones ability to pay.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- American Funeral Director. "Bucktrout of Williamsburg, America's Oldest Funeral Service Firm?. *American Funeral Director*. No. 4, Vol. XCII.
- Brown, Mills. "Cabinet Making in the Eighteenth Century." Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library Research Report Series, 1959.
- Bucktrout Funeral Home, Funeral Records. Vols.1-8. In the possession of Swem Library, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.
- Bucktrout, Richard Manning. Richard Manning Bucktrout Daybook, 1850-1866. In the possession of Swem Library, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.
- Bucktrout, Richard Manning to Talbot Sweeny, 23 November 1864, Bucktrout-Braithwaite Papers. In the possession of Swem Library, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.
- Butler, Elizabeth F. "Williamsburg and urbanization in antebellum Virginia : 'a place-- a process-- a parade of change that continues forward.'" MA Thesis. The College of William and Mary. 2005.
- Byrd, Dr. Samuel Powell. Papers: 1823-1859. In the Possession of Rockefeller Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA.
- Byrd, William. *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712*. ed. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling. New York : Arno Press, 1972.
- Calhoun, Arthur W.. *A Social History of The American Family*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1945.
- Carrigan, Jo Ann. "Book Reviews: *Epidemic and Peace* by Alfred Crosby." *The Journal of American History*. Vol. 65, No. 1. (Jun., 1978), pp. 206-207
- Corporation of Williamsburg, State of Assessed Levy of Williamsburg, 23 June 1832.
- Douglas, Anne. *The Feminization of American Culture*. New York: The Noonday Press, 1977.
- Dubbs, Carol K. *Defend This Old Town: Williamsburg During the Civil War*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2002.

- Godson, Susan H. *A Guide to the Memorials of Bruton Parish Church*. Williamsburg, VA: Bruton Parish Church, 2006.
- Goodwin, W.A.R. *Historical Sketch of Bruton Church, Williamsburg VA*. Petersburg, VA: Franklin Press Co, 1903.
- Gusler, Wallace B. *Furniture of Williamsburg and East Virginia: 1710-1790*. Richmond, VA: Virginia Museum, 1979.
- Habenstein, Robert W. and William M. Lamers. *The History of American Funeral Directing*. Milwaukee, WI: Bulfin Printers, 1956.
- Halttunen, Karen. *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of middle-class culture in America, 1830-1870*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.
- Haskell, Thomas L. "Professionalism versus Capitalism: R.H. Tawney, Emile Durkheim, and C. S. Peirce on the Disinterestedness of Professional Communities." *The Authority of Experts*. ed. Thomas L. Haskell. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- Laderman, Gary. *The Sacred Remains*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996.
- Laderman, Gary. *Rest in Peace: a cultural history of death and the funeral home in twentieth-century America*. Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Lounsbury, Carl. Interview. 12 September 2005. Notes in the possession of Kelly Brennan, Williamsburg, VA.
- Marshal, Nicholas. "In the Midst of Life we are in Death." *Mortal Remains, Death in Early America*. ed. Nancy Isenberg and Andrew Burstein. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.
- Mayer, Robert G. *Embalming: History, Theory, and Practice*. Norwalk, CT: Appleton & Lange, 1990.
- Meyers, Terry J. "The Silence of the Graves." *Virginia Gazette*, 3 June 1998.
- Millerson Geoffrey. *The Qualifying Associations*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964.
- Mintz, Steven. *A Prison of Expectations*. New York: New York University Press, 1983.

Sarapin, Janice. *Old Burial Grounds in New Jersey*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press: 1994.

Sloane, David. *The Last Great Necessity*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Taylor, Lou. *Mourning Dress*. London: George Allen and Urwin, 1983.

Yalom, Marilyn. *A History of the Wife*. New York: Harper Collins Press, 2001.

York County Order Book, No. 4, 1774-1784.

Veit, Richard. Interview. 24 June 2003. Notes in the possession of Kelly Brennan, Williamsburg, VA

VITA

Kelly Marie Brennan

Kelly Marie Brennan was born on 31 December 1982 in New York City, New York. She graduated from Mountain Lakes High School in Mountain Lakes, New Jersey in 2001. Kelly Brennan received her Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science from Rutgers University in May 2005. She is currently pursuing PhD in American history at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.