

Funeral Homes

by
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An odd category, you have to admit, but it's fairly popular with collectors. I'm not sure why. Of course, I can't explain why I collect them, either!

The history of funerals goes all the way back into Prehistory. But actual Funeral homes is a different story. I suppose you could say funeral homes goes back to the embalmers of Ancient Egypt, but that



would be stretching it, but, according to *thefuneralsource.org*, the first actual funeral home began in 1759 in Williamsburg, VA, when Anthony Hay, a cabinet maker, started making coffins as a sideline. [I think they mean first in the U.S.] By 1890, there were 9,891 funeral directors in the U.S.

While most funeral homes are still family-owned and operated, a growing number are owned by corporations (the same thing that's already happened in farming). The funeral conglomerates buy family-owned businesses, keep the name, and hire the owner back as manager. This gives the appearance that it's still family-owned. Together, the four largest funeral service operators are estimated to own 15%-20% of the approximately 23,000 funeral homes in the United States.

There are lots of Fancies in this category (Matchoramas, Foilites, etc.). Although, 20-strikes are the most common, the more modern issues lean toward the 30-strikes.

Numerically, this is a fairly large category. Donna Longenecker, PA, had 5,470 as of November, 2010.

