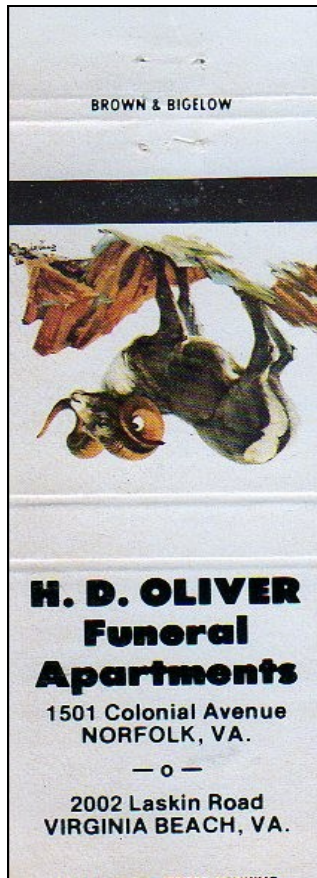


The Story Of H. D. Oliver Funeral Apartments

Why focus on a specific funeral home? It's just one of gazillions...Well, maybe not...



One day I was sorting through some Funeral covers and happened upon the one show here. The “Apartments” caught my eye. “What on earth are funeral apartments,” I wondered, having never heard the term before. So, I e-mailed the company in an effort to find out.

H.D. Oliver Funeral Apartments was established in 1865 by Sterling T. Oliver. A local furniture maker prior to the Civil War, his establishment was located on the corner of Church and Cove Streets in downtown Norfolk, presently St. Paul’s boulevard. The original location was directly across from the historic St. Paul’s Episcopal Church and was adjacent to the local Jewish Temple.

In 1898, the funeral home was moved to 610 Freemason Street in downtown, and later in 1938 to 1501 Colonial Ave. (our current location) in the Ghent section of Norfolk. These moves were orchestrated by Harry Diggs Oliver, nephew of our founder. The building on Colonial Avenue, one of the first in the state to be built exclusively as a funeral establishment, was nestled among apartment buildings lining Colonial Avenue and was constructed with apartments adjacent to family viewing rooms for families to stay overnight on the premises, thus the Apartments replaced the traditional funeral home or parlor terms of the day. [<http://www.hdoliver.com/about-us/history/>]

So, mystery solved. If you google “funeral apartments”, H.D. Oliver is the only one that comes up, so I assume such accommodations have now gone the way of the buggy whip and land lines (ha ha).