

# **Mortuaries/Undertakers**

Buffalo County Embalmer's Book – 1899-1918

All who practiced in the county had to be licensed – renewed annually

Not all who had licenses had their own mortuaries

Several were working for one of the main mortuaries

## **Time line**

Switz – 1874-1902

Bower – 1899 -

Miller – 1908 – 1920

Anderson – 1920 -

1874 – F. J. Switz started furniture & undertaking business in Kearney

1899, January – A. G. Bower set up furniture & undertaking business in Kearney

1902, June – Switz sold undertaking stock to Bower

Switz furniture only; Bower undertaking only

Bower completed embalming training

1906 – Verne Bower completed embalming training

1915, June - A body was brought to Bower's Mortuary

Nov – body of found on the tracks at Buda taken to Miller Mortuary

1916, June – body of unidentified man deposited by Miller at cemetery mortuary, buried in Potter's Field

1920, April 1 – Miller estate sold to Ira Anderson & O. W. Arthurs

## **Strand I –**

### **Switz –**

1874 – Came to Kearney and set up business of furniture and undertaking.

Sold undertaking stock to Bower in 1902 – Focused on furniture & carpet business

### **Bower –**

1899 – Came to Kearney and set up business of furniture and undertaking

1902 – Purchased Switz' undertaking stock, closed furniture side of his business

1945 –died at age 94, not sure when/if he retired

### **Bower & Son –**

1908 – Son, Verne, completed embalming school and joined father in business.

Took over the business when his father retired

Business moved from 2005 Central Ave to 112 W 22<sup>nd</sup> in late 1920's to a large house on the corner of 22<sup>nd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Deterding's location)

### **Bower Funeral Home**

Name changed after 1931

Vance Nielsen came to work for Bower in the 1940s

1952 – Nielsen was a funeral director in the Bower Funeral Home

### **Bower- Nielsen**

1955 – Name was changed to Bower-Nielsen Funeral Home

### **Nielson Mortuary**

1960 – Vance Nielsen had bought out Bower and built a new place of business next to the house at 2115 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave.

House was moved south of the old Kenwood School

Interstate constructed in 1960's making 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave a main entrance into Kearney

Dirt, residential street was paved and onstreet parking eliminated.

Moved the house on the south side of the mortuary and a parking lot put in.

Also took over the mortuary in Elm Creek

## **Nielsen-Godberson**

By 1980 – Miller Godberson had combined his mortuary business in Gibbon with Nielsen to form the Nielsen-Godberson Mortuary

## **Godberson Mortuaries Inc. and Central Nebraska Cremation Service,**

1990 – the name of the business

## **Godberson - Straatman**

1994 – Gary Straatman joined the company

Miller died, business ownership shifted again

## **O'Brien-Straatmann**

Steve O'Brien joined Gary

## **O'Brien-Straatmann- Apfel**

Apfel joined

When he retired his son, in Grand Island took the Wood River and east area.

## **O'Brien-Straatmann-Redinger**

New partner, Redinger, joined about 4 years ago

Steve retired a couple of years ago but is still a partner

[includes information from Gary Straatman interview 8-27-2012]

## **Strand II**

### **E. A. Miller**

**1915 & 1917**

Miller – 2123 A

### **Anderson/Arthurs**

Hub, April 1, 1920 – E. A. Miller Undertaking sold to Ira Anderson and G. W. Arthurs. Arthurs was a businessman known in Kearney. Anderson was coming from Omaha and had 15 years in undertaking business. He was a licensed embalmer. The sale was made by Phoebe A. Miller, Executrix for the estate of W. A. Miller

April 14, 1920 – took over the business yesterday

May 7, 1920 – advertisement

Anderson-Arthurs, Undertakers and Embalmers, Successors to E. A. Miller. Phone 412

[Located in Odd Fellows Hall]

1924 – Moved to current location on corner of 25<sup>th</sup> & A in the former Nye house

May 1928 – A Kearney resident who died was taken to Anderson Mortuary pending word from relatives

### **Anderson/Johnson**

1928 – Robert L Johnson joined Anderson

Mortuary was remodeled

1940 – Major renovation

1946 – Ira Anderson died; Johnson became sole owner

1960 advertisement in City Directory – Robert L. Johnson owner and operator, since 1920

1951 – Jack Horner became associated with the mortuary

### **Anderson/Johnson/Horner**

1968 – Horner became co-owner with Johnson; business renamed

Ron Lieske joined the firm

### **Horner/Lieske**

1971 – Name changed to Horner-Lieske

### **Horner/Lieske/Horner**

1979 – Jack Horner II joined and name changed

1995 – Mark McBride joined

2006 – Spencer Kuhl joined

### **Horner/Lieske/McBride & Kuhl**

2009 – Name changed to include all four

**[See Biographies]**

## History of Anderson, etc. Mortuary

<http://hlmkfuneral.com/AboutUs/History.aspx>

### History

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In 1920, Ira C. Anderson established the Anderson Funeral Home at 22nd Street and Avenue A, in what was later to be the Odd Fellows Hall. He moved to the present location on 25th and Avenue A in 1924. Robert L. Johnson joined Mr. Anderson in 1928, and the mortuary was remodeled at that time.

In 1940, a major renovation was completed. After the death of Ira C. Anderson in 1946, Mr. Johnson became the sole owner of the Anderson-Johnson Mortuary. Jack M. Horner became an associate in 1951 and in 1968 became a co-owner with Mr. Johnson, and the business was renamed Anderson-Johnson-Horner Mortuary. Ron Lieske joined the firm, and in 1971 the name was later changed to Horner-Lieske Mortuary. Jack Horner II joined the firm in 1979 and the name was adjusted to the Horner-Lieske-Horner Mortuary. Mark McBride joined the firm in 1995, and Spencer Kuhl joined in 2006, and in 2009, the name was adjusted to reflect all four funeral directors.

Today, Horner, Lieske, McBride & Kuhl Funeral and Cremation Services has over 115 years of combined experience in the funeral business.

## Undertakers in the County

June 1930 – Grammar Brothers Mortuary at Pleasanton

December 1931 – Formal opening of the new Nichol Hotel & Mortuary in Minden

April 1934 – Ravenna's newest business, Love Mortuary, opened

June 1935 – Smith Funeral Home of Minden sold out its equipment to Layton Mortuary

December 29, 1938 – last digitalized Hub – Both Bower & Anderson funeral homes had advertisements.

## Kearney City Directories

1889

### Undertakers

Switz, F. J., 2301 Central Ave

## **1892**

### Embalmers

Costello J M, 2003 Central ave

Switz F J, 2301 Central ave

## **1904**

### Undertakers

Bower A. G. 2003 Central

## **1908**

**Switz Frederick J** (Phoebe), Pres and Treas Switz Furniture Co, r 100 E 23d

**Switz Furniture Co**, F J Switz, Pres and Treas; Peter Lindgren, Vice Pres;

O H Carlson, Sec; Furniture, Carpets, Wall Paper and Paints 2301-2305 Central av

### Undertakers

Bower A G, 2003 Central av

Bower Almon G (Mabel), undertaker 2003 Central av, r 504 E 23d

Bower Vern R, clk A G Bower, b 504 E 23d

## **1910**

### Undertakers

Bower

Miller

## **1915 & 1917**

### Undertakers

Bower – 2005 Central

Miller – 2123 A

## **1922**

### Undertakers

Anderson, I. C. 2125 Ave A

Bower, A. G. & Son 2005 Central

## **1931**

### Undertakers

Anderson – 2421 Ave A

Bower & Son – 114 W 22

Crawford Funeral Home 123 E 25<sup>th</sup>

## **1952**

### Funeral Directors

Anderson Funeral Home, 2421 Ave A  
Bower Funeral Home, 112 W 22nd  
Crawford Funeral Home, 705 W 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Nielsen Vance A 112 W 22<sup>nd</sup>

### Funeral Homes

Anderson  
Bower

### Undertakers

Anderson  
Bower

## **1955**

Bower-Nielsen Funeral Home

## **1960**

### Undertakers

Anderson-Johnson Mortuary, 2421 Avenue A  
Nielsen Mortuary, 2115 2nd Avenue

## **1970**

### Undertakers

Anderson-Johnson-Horner Mortuary Inc., 2421 Avenue A  
Nielsen Mortuary, 2115 2nd Avenue

## **1980**

### Mortuaries

Horner Lieske Mortuary Inc., 2421 Avenue A  
Nielsen-Godberson Mortuary Inc., 2115 2<sup>nd</sup> Av

## **1990**

### Mortuaries

Godberson Mortuaries Inc. and Central Nebraska Cremation Service, 2115 2<sup>nd</sup> Av (Kearney),  
305 N Tyler St. (Elm Creek), 719 Front St (Gibbon and Shelton)

M. Brandt Godberson, Funeral Director

Horner-Lieske-Horner, 2421 Avenue A

## **Crawford Funeral Home**

Mar 12, 1928 – H. L. Crawford Funeral Home, 123 East Lincoln Way

Aug 21, 1928 – Boy Scouts were putting 15” Lincoln Highway signs up along the route through the city. One was to be placed a lamp post in front of the Crawford Funeral Home

Sept 28, 1928 – T. Harold Goodard of Kearney received his diploma from the embalming school in Kansas City and would be connected with the Crawford Funeral Home.

Apr 29, 1929 - --The fire department was called to the Crawford Funeral Home on Thursday to extinguish a roof blaze there. The damage was slight.

Dec 5, 1935 - Crawford Funeral Home took body of man who died in a local hospital to his home in Pine Bluff.

Jan 3, 1936 – A doctor and dentist were opening offices in the building at 123 East Lincoln Way, former residence of the Crawford Funeral Home

Sept 9, 1937 – The body of a man killed in an auto accident at Edison was returned to Kearney to the Crawford Funeral Home.

## **Embalmer’s Register – Buffalo County 1899-1923**

### Kearney Embalmers

Page 1 – A. G. Bower – 9 Oct 1899; Again Jan 4, 1901; renewed annually 1903-7; 1908, 1908, 1911, 1912, 1913; P, 34 – registered 3 June 1919, issued by state 1 Jan 1919; renewed 1923

Page 10 – John Thulin – 21 Jan 1906, 1907, 1908, 1910, 1911; Page 27, registered 9 Jan 1918, issued by state 1 January 1918;

Page 12 – Vern Bower – 22 June 1906; 1908, 1909; p. 33 – registered 30 June 1919, issued by state 20 June 1919; renewed 1923

Page 16 – H. L Crawford – 3 Mar 1910; renewed 1911-1915

Page 17 – E. A. Miller – 25 June 1910; renewed 1911-15

Page 21 – Paul A. Garber – issued by state 1 Jan 1912, registered in Buffalo C. 26 June 1912;

Page 26 – Ira Anderson of Wood River, Hall County, issued by state 1 Jan 1917; registered 29 Dec 1916; renewed in Buffalo Co. 1920-1924

Page 28 – E R Parks – Registered 19 Jan 1918, issued by state 1 Jan 1918; renewed 1919

Page 28 – A E Atkins – Registered 6 Feb 1918, issued by state 1 Jan 1918

Page 35 – C L Maddox – Registered 30 June 1919, issued by state 20 June 1919



Page 36 – William Dyke McLachlin – Registered 20 July 1922, issued 9 June 1922

Page 38 – Frank George Egerblade – Registered 16 Dec 1922, issued by state 1 Feb 1922; renewed 1923

[See Biographies for biography of each]

## **Thoughts –**

We may see a lot of violence and gory scenes on television and in movies today. But that is no different than reading the graphic descriptions of injuries suffered in train and car accidents a hundred years ago. Bums and hobos fell off of trains and had head & limbs severed. A man cranked his Reno which was in gear and it crushed him against a tree. Depressing.

## **Oddities –**

A York, NE truck driver called a mortuary ambulance to come to his home. He then committed suicide using his pistol and was found by the ambulance drive. His wife had died three years previously and he had three children 16 & under. [This may have been his way of being sure the kids would not find him.]

Another man in Provo, Utah drove his car into the driveway of a mortuary before committing suicide by shooting himself in June 1933.

Dec. 28, 1935 – a Kearney girl, graduate of Kearney High and Kearney State Teachers College married a young Minden man, graduate of Minden High School, attended KSTC in pre-med for 2 years and then 2 ½ years employed by Ira C. Funeral Home. After honeymoon in Cal. & Mexico, they will live in San Francisco where groom will attend San Francisco University where he would study mortuary surgery. The bride and her attendant both wore black.