

Grand Rapids History and Special Collections

Archives

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Finding Aid for the  
Spring Funeral Home Records  
Collection # 055

October 2007 version

Abstract

The Spring Funeral Home Records Collection contains 19 (nineteen) record books, recording burials handled by the Spring Funeral Home of Grand Rapids, Michigan from 1906-1953. Data includes the name of the deceased, address, occupation, death date, age at death, cause of death, parents' names and birthplaces, funeral costs, and place of interment. Additional information, such as race, and accompanying newspaper clippings, are included in some volumes. The volumes are arranged in chronological order, with some confusion at volumes [6], [6a] & [7]. An index, "Index to Spring Funeral Home Records, 1906-1941" was created by Russell & Betty Moore in 1984, and provides alphabetical access to the fifteen volumes originally received. No alphabetical indexing is yet available for four additional volumes received in 2001. Each volume has a handwritten index for that volume at the front. No digitally accessible index is currently available.

Berton Spring purchased Ira Birdsall's original funeral home, at 43 Pearl N.W. (later 91 Pearl, N.W.) in 1910. Birdsall himself had purchased the home in 1907, from the McCallum Undertaking Co. It is unknown at this time whether the records in this collection also document deaths for the first Birdsall records from 1907 to 1910.

Collection #: 055

Accession #: 1985.005; 2001.056

Donors: Roger F. Spring for the Berton A. Spring estate & members of the Spring family

Additions given by Jeff Johnson & Isla Spring, June 2001.

Span dates: 1906-1953, 1984 index to 1906-1941

Processor: Richard H. Harms, Original processor, January 1988.

Box Summary, Marcella Beck, August 31, 2000.

Finding aid revision & new volume addition, R. Mayne, June 12, 2001-2002.

Size: 5 cu. ft.; 19 vols. + prepared index

Subject term: Spring, Berton, ca. 1875-1953.

Related Materials

- 1986.130 (unprocessed) includes correspondence related to Berton Spring and the Grand Rapids Casket Co. [6/2001]
- Coll. 097 Birdsall Funeral Home Collection, 1912-

Box Summary

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Description of Contents</u>	<u>Box Description</u>
1	Vol 1&2	clam 3x10.5x15.5
2	vol 3&4	same
3	vol 5&6	same
4	vol 7&8	same
5	vol 9&10	same
6	vol 11	same
7	vol 12	clam 3x12x17.5
8	vol 13	same
9	vol 14	same
10	vol 15	same
11	vols. 6a & 13a	clam
12	vol. 14a	clam
13	vol. 16	clam

Processing note

Volume numbering on some of the later volumes, suggests that there was an earlier numbering scheme, perhaps original to the Funeral Home, may have been lost before receipt or during the initial processing. Additional volumes may have originally existed, though it is difficult to tell, at this point, due to the loss of the earlier numbering scheme. The volume numbers assigned to the volumes are those of the Library or WMGS, not those of the Funeral Home.

Scope and Content

The volumes provide data on the funerals handled by the home. Data such as: name, address, occupation, age at death, cause of death, parents' names and birthplaces, place of interment and details of burial arrangement are included. An index volume, prepared under the auspice of the Western Michigan Genealogical Society, is kept in Local History Reference, and provides an alphabetical access to the first fifteen volumes.

## History

Berton A. Spring was born ca. 1875 in Canon Township, Kent County, Michigan. He attended Ferris Institute, now Ferris State University, in Big Rapids, Michigan, majoring in Mortuary Science. He came to Grand Rapids following graduation in 1896. In 1903 he organized both the Grand Rapids Casket Company and the Spring Funeral Home. He sold his interest in the casket company in 1940.

The funeral home was located on the corner of Sheldon and Oakes. In 1911 he sold that site and purchased the Brown Funeral home located at 814 Jefferson Avenue, near the intersection of Jefferson and State Street. In 1950 Spring sold the Funeral Home to the Gulf Refining Company and moved his office into the Zaagman Funeral Home. The Spring Funeral Home remained in business at the site, however, until 1969 being operated by a succession of owners.

Spring died 3 December 1953 in St. Mary's Hospital.

Note: According to the historical information compiled by Richard Harms or Evelyn Sawyer for Coll. 097, the Birdsall Funeral Home Collection, Berton Spring purchased Ira Birdsall's original funeral home, at 43 Pearl N.W. (later 91 Pearl, N.W.) in 1910. Birdsall had purchased that first home from the McCallum Undertaking Co. in 1907. It is unknown at this time whether the records in this collection document only the Spring Funeral Home records, or also include the early Birdsall records from 1907 to 1910.

## Series Description

Volumes 1-6, 6a, 7-13, 13a, 14, 14a, 15, arranged chronologically  
Alphabetical index

The index was prepared in 1984 by Russell B. Moore of the Western Michigan Genealogical Society and was typed by Betty Moore.

Spring Funeral Home Records  
Collection # 055

Contents

Box	Vol.	Dates
1	1	14 Jan. 1906 - 14 Apr. 1908.
1	2	14 Apr. 1908 - 29 Aug. 1909.
2	3	31 Aug. 1909 - 8 Oct. 1910.
2	4	6 Oct. 1910 - 23 Nov. 1911.
3	5	24 Nov. 1911 - 27 Feb. 1912 [sic, 1913]
3	6	16 Jan. 1911 - 8 Jan. 1912. Entries 1 to 152 are Michigan Soldiers Home related deaths, including burials at the Soldier's Home, Civil War soldiers.
		27 Feb. 1913 – 2 Nov. 1913. Entries 154 to 300, continue from [vol. 5]
11	6a	3 Nov. 1913 – 15 Jan. 1915 [2001.056 Added 6/2001] [Has earlier label "9" on spine & flyleaf note, "Where is volume 8?"]
4	7	7 July 1912 - 16 Dec. 1915.
4	8	20 Dec. 1915 - 10 Jan. 1917.
5	9	9 Jan. 1917 - 5 Feb. 1918.
5	10	8 Feb. 1918 - 24 Jan. 1919.
6	11	9 Jan. 1919 - 9 Feb. 1921.
7	12	9 Feb. 1921 - 17 Mar. 1923.
8	13	17 Mar. 1923 - 29 Mar. 1925.
11	13a	28 Mar. 1925 – 15 July 1927 [2001.056 Added 6/2001]
9	14	14 July 1927 - 12 Aug. 1930.
12	14a	12 Aug. 1930 – 10 Apr. 1935.[2001.056 Added 6/2001]
10	15	12 Apr. 1935 - 18 Aug. 1941.
13	16	2 Jan. 1948 – 7 Feb. 1953 [2001.056 Added 6/2001]

LH Ref. Index to Spring Funeral Home Records, 1906-1941 / indexed by Russell B. Moore.  
Typed by Mrs. Betty Moore, 1984