FUNERAL RECORDS OF C.D. BARR, LEESVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA
JANUARY 1, 1938 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 1949

Chicora Research Contribution 558
Funeral Records of C.D. Barr, Leesville, South Carolina, January 1, 1938 through December 21, 1949

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ABSTRACT

The Batesburg-Leesville area of Lexington County, South Carolina during the first half of the twentieth century was a rural farming community. Leesburg's Charles Decania Barr (usually called C.D. Barr, Sr.) begun his undertaking business in 1890, combining it with his general store, lumber, and cotton businesses. The business was eventually taken over by Clyde Barr and beginning in January 1938 Barr created a set of ledgers designated his “Casket Accounts.” Using pre-printed funeral records, he kept track of client's funerals and payments.

This report provides a transcription of the first volume (or at least the first surviving volume), tracking funerals from January 1, 1938 through December 31, 1949. A total of 435 funerals are documented, providing much the same information as found on death certificates (which South Carolina began collecting in 1919), as well as considerable additional information regarding caskets, outer boxes, vaults, burial practices and locations, and costs.

The funeral record seems to support the idea that even as late as the 1940s, funerals were not a substantial part of Barr's business. Nevertheless, they reveal that in the late 1930s embalming was still not a common practice in rural South Carolina. While perhaps a feature of rural cultural conservatism, it may also have been simply a matter of economics, with embalming not readily affordable to many farm families. It wasn’t until the late 1940s that embalming became a generally routine practice adopted by 80% of Barr's clientele.

Families were far more likely to purchase clothing for the deceased and the record provides details on the items purchased. Barr also documented the use of grave arches and cement covers commonly used in rural Lexington County.

While there were a number of competing funeral homes in nearby Batesburg, Barr appears to have had little competition in Leesville. In the absence of African American funeral homes, Barr's accounts also reveal 38 black clients, most for the burial of children.
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Introduction

Historic Context

Cotton gradually became more important in Lexington's agricultural base, so that by 1900 the county's second largest crop (by acreage) was cotton, with the 32,904 acres planted in cotton producing 13,637 bales. The only crop on more land was corn, planted on 51,408 acres and yielding 401,390 bushels. Nevertheless, there was substantial acreage in wheat and oats. Truck farming was increasing, with 1,818 acres in vegetables.

The 3,518 farms in Lexington County had an average size of 134 acres, ranking Lexington third behind Georgetown and Horry counties in average farm size. Moreover only 38% of the county’s farms were operated by tenants (22% by cash tenants and 16% by share tenants).

In 1915 Lexington County was home to three cotton mills. In Lexington there were the Lexington Manufacturing Company with 6,784 spindles and 214 looms producing ticking, and Saxe Gotha Mills with 11,200 spindles and 274 looms producing sheetings and pajama checks. In Batesburg there was the Middleburg Mill with 10,624 spindles and 328 looms producing shirtings and tickings. All three were owned by I.R. Stewart and they used nearly 7,800 bales of cotton yearly. The mills employed 389 whites and 28 African Americans (Watson 1916).

There was a single cotton seed oil mill in Lexington, the Leesville Cotton Seed Oil Mill Co. in Leesville. Nearby Richland County had three, Aiken had one, and Edgefield had two.

There were six timber and saw mills in Lexington, including two in Batesburg (D.R. Rawl and J.M. Hook). There were three flour and grist mills in Lexington in 1915, including one in Leesville, C.D. Barr. The Brodie Light and Power Co. provided electricity to Leesville, while the Lexington Electric Light and Power Co. operated in the immediate Lexington area. Lexington also boasted a single bottling plant, the Batesburg Bottling Co. Richland County had five, including Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola, Chero-Cola, Gay-Ola, and Bloodwine.

The Leesville Coffin and Casket Co. was one of at least four casket manufacturers in South Carolina (the others were Branchville Casket and Novelty Works in Orangeburg, Witherspoon Brothers in Sumter, and Kingstree Manufacturing in Williamsburg County) (Watson 1916). Just a few years earlier the list also included J.M. Connelly & Co. in Charleston (Wolfe 1913:51).

The Leesville Coffin and Casket Co. was begun in 1903 by C.D. Barr, Sr. and C.D. Barr, Jr. (Anonymous 1984:184). This manufacturing process was apparently an outgrowth of Barr’s saw mill operations, as well as his undertaking business. In 1912 Barr’s businesses were rated as between $50,000 and $75,000 in “pecuniary strength” and was given a credit rating of “good” (R.G. Dun & Co. 1912:90). The 1924-1925 Thomas’ Register listed Leesville Casket & Coffin Co. as manufacturing cloth covered, metallic, and wooden caskets. They were identified as having about $25,000 capital (Thomas Publishing Co. 1924:1545). By February 1929 the company was incorporated as Imperial Casket Company. The company distributed throughout the Southeast, with warehouses in Raleigh, NC, Lynchburg, VA, Charleston, SC, and Daytona, FL. The company ceased its casket business in 1985 when the name was changed to Imperial Woodlands (South Carolina Secretary of State, Columbia).

The Barr family was also involved in the
Palmetto Casket Company which had begun at least by 1925 under the ownership and management of Robert E. Allen, who had married Alma Barr, the sister of Clyde Barr. With Robert Allen’s death in 1938, the firm was taken over by his wife and continued through at least the 1950s.

Travel through Lexington County in the early twentieth century was difficult. The county had 1,600 miles of roads; 1,100 miles of these were classified as “unimproved – ungraded earth, clay or sand” (Watson 1916). The main road from Columbia to Aiken was identified as fair-to-good with occasional stretches of sand. One clay stretch which is practically impassible after heavy rains; detour thru woods (Anonymous 1912:702).

By 1920 the average farm size in South Carolina had dropped to 78.6 acres and the rate of farm tenancy had climbed to 46.2%. The 1920s, as one historian has noted, did not roar very loudly in the Midlands (Edgar 1998:483). While cotton prices opened high in 1921 (around 40¢ a pound), they dropped steadily, so that in December the price was down to 13½¢. A crop that cost farmers $250 million to plant was worth only $140 million. County populations showed little growth, rural poverty was rampant, and the boll weevil sucked what little life was left out of cotton. Farmers who had been on a spending spree in the teens had no ability to weather the economic crisis and Edgar observes that, “by 1930, after nearly a decade of difficulties, South Carolina agriculture was about to go under” (Edgar 1998:485).

Things were marginally better in Lexington County. While a third of the state’s farms were mortgaged, only 29% were mortgaged in Lexington. And tenancy had actually dropped slightly — to about 42%. In spite of this, Lexington was still a poor county.

In 1927 nearly 74% of its occupants lived outside villages or towns – in what was called “open country” (Shealy 1927:326). The economic base of the county were its “sturdy small farm owners” and it was reported that “no county in the state is more self-sufficing, none produces a greater variety of crops” (Shealy 1927:327). Truck crops were becoming an important staple to Lexington farmers, who brought most of their produce to Columbia markets.

One of the disruptions in South Carolina agriculture was the arrival of the boll weevil. At the door to Savannah in 1917, the weevil had spread through much of South Carolina by 1919 (including Richland County) and by 1922 had covered most of North Carolina as well. Planters paid their tenants a penny per weevil in an effort to slow the spread and millions of pounds of arsenical dusts (primarily calcium arsenate) were
applied. In spite of these efforts, losses ranged between 30 and 60% of a crop (Haney et al. 1996). The most devastating year was 1922, when production statewide was only 30% of that it had been two years earlier (Anonymous 1927:130).

Edgar notes that in 1930 the situation among South Carolina farmers was dire. Having gone on a spending spree when money was flowing, they had no reserves, and the decade of the 1920s was so bad that:

South Carolina agriculture was about to go under. Farmland and buildings had lost more than one-half their value. One-third of the state's farms were mortgaged, and 70 percent of the state's farmers survived on borrowed money (Edgar 1998:485).

Moore adds to this that, "except for foodstuffs and bare necessities, hundreds of families living in Richland and surrounding counties seldom could buy what Columbia merchants were trying to sell" (Moore 1993:329). Schultz remarks that many remember the Depression years not for the "coming" of hard times, but instead "recall those days as a continuation of long-standing hardship" (Schultz 1992:3). By 1933 state government itself was on the verge of collapse – state employees were laid off and those that remained were paid with "state I.O.U.'s."

By 1930 the number of farms in Lexington had dropped from 4,816 in 1920 to 3,295 – a decline of 32%. Most of these (77%)}
were operated by whites. The average size had also declined, from 76.9 acres in 1920 to 78.6 acres in 1930.

Statewide the proportion of tenancy had increased from 64.5% in 1920 to 65.1% in 1930. In Lexington County, however, the proportion had actually declined, from 46.2% to 42.3% in 1930. In addition, although statewide 33.6% of the farms were mortgaged, only 28.9% in Lexington County were mortgaged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Farms by Major Operator Class and Race</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owners</td>
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<td>White</td>
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Statewide the average farm value per acre was $38.10 and the average mortgage debt per acre was $15.26. In other words, the mortgage debt was about 40% of the total value. In contrast, while Lexington farms were worth slightly less per acre – $36.30 – the mortgage debt per acre was only $10.26, or about 28%. Thus, Lexington farmers were in better overall economic condition than many throughout the state.

Lexington remained a rural area. Of the nearly 3,300 farms, only 167 (5.1%) had electricity and only 748 (22.7%) had telephones. Piped water was available in 141 (4.3%) of the farms. Over 1,755 (53.3%) were still located on unimproved dirt roads. The entire county had only 2,133 automobiles and the 3,295 farms continued to rely on mule and horse drawn plows – there were only 104 tractors in the county.

The population of Lexington in 1940 was 35,994, a decline of 1.4% from a decade earlier. The urban population was still very small – only 7.6%, although the proportion of those living in the rural areas of Lexington declined by 1.9%. Batesburg boasted a population of 2,933, a slight increase from 1930, while Leesville had only 1,217 residents, a decline of over 100 people from a decade earlier.

There were 2,914 farms according to the 1940 census and most of these (2,430 or 83%) had white operators. This represented a decline of 381 farms since 1930. The average farm size was just over 94 acres, an increase of over 17 acres since 1930. While size increased, both total and average values dropped. In 1940 the average farm value was $2,339, a decline of $567 since 1930.

Table 1 reveals that whites dominated farming in Lexington County – both as owners and also as tenants. Blacks dominated only in the classification of cropper, a sub-class of tenants. They were also known as share-tenants; owners provided croppers with all of the work animals or tractor power in lieu of work animals. It was a form of tenancy usually practiced by only the poorest farmers.

Figure 3. Lexington County farms by size, 1940.
INTRODUCTION

into the middle twentieth century. Nevertheless, there were still 12 farms of a thousand or more acres, suggesting that there were pockets of wealth in the county. While 32.6% of Lexington’s farms were mortgaged, this was still somewhat lower than the state average of 34.4%.

This wealth continued to be built largely on cotton, which was grown by 2,315 farms on 18,806 acres in 1940. The production that year was 15,470 bales. While gross yields in the early 1940s were often $100 per acre on cotton, after deducting expenses most of the profit went to the owner. The gross income per capita in South Carolina was only $121.

Farming remained an isolated task. Only 792 of the farms (27%) were lighted by electricity; only 420 (14%) had telephones; and nearly a third were still located on unimproved dirt roads. Over 92% of the Lexington County farms lacked running water and 95% lacked an indoor toilet.

Barr-Price Funeral Home

It was within this historic framework that Charles Decania Barr (usually called C.D. Barr, Sr.) is reported to have begun his undertaking business in 1890.

C.D. Barr’s father, James M. Barr, served in the 5th SC Cavalry, Company I and was wounded at Trevilians Station, Virginia on June 11, 1864, dying at a Charlottesville, Virginia hospital on August 29, 1864.

Although not listed in the 1890 census, Barr (37 years old and born March 13, 1863) and his wife, Eula L. (36 years old), are listed in the 1900 census, along with seven children (James M., 11; Decany D., 10; Alma, 8; John W., 7; Franklin A., 5; McKendre, 3; and Charles, 2). Charles and Eula had been married 13 years at the time and he was listed as a merchant who owned his house free of a mortgage.

The 1910 census lists Barr as a retail merchant specializing in general merchandise and equipment, probably catering to the farming community. The census indicates that he was farming by this time as well. Clyde Barr, a son that would eventually take over his business had been born on April 12, 1902 and was 8 years old. The 1920 census reveals that Barr was 56 years old, but still operating his general store. Two of his children, Frank and Elida, were clerking in the store and another, Charlie, was a laborer in a flour mill. Charlie D. Barr’s WWI registration card listed his occupation as a miller in Leesville.

By 1930 the Barr household included only Charles, now 67 years old; his wife, 66 years old; Clyde M. Barr, 27 years old and the manager of his father’s business; Ruth Barr, 20 years old; and a sister-in-law, Lidie Mitchell, who was 55 years old. They were still living on Main Street in Leesville and the census documents that their home was valued at $10,000. In addition, they owned a radio.

Eula Barr had died by 1940, but Charles Barr, now 77 years old, was still listed as the owner of a mercantile store. His sister-in-law, Lidie Mitchell, was listed as a saleswomen in the store. Also living with them was Monne Brabham, another sister-in-law. By this time his house had declined in value to $5,000.

C.D. Barr, Jr., living on College Street with his wife Frances and their two children, was listed as the president of a casket factory. Next door was his brother McKendre Barr, who was an attorney. Clyde Barr, now 37, listed four years of college and was living with wife Minnie Lee, and their two children, on Main Street. He listed his occupation as a salesman for a retail store, probably the family business.

The elder Barr died in 1951, while the business was continued by Clyde Barr, who died in 1989. The obituary for Clyde Barr notes that he was “the former general manager of Barr’s Store, a former cotton buyer for the Leesville Oil Mill and the former owner and operator of the Leesville Piggly Wiggly store”, as well as the former owner of the Barr Funeral Home and Ridge Crest Memorial Park (The State, April 25, 1989, pg. 4D). While it is certain that Clyde Barr and his father before him operated a thriving undertaking
In 1978 Landis Price, who had been working for Clyde Barr since 1972, became a licensed funeral director. Price purchased the business in 1985, changing the name to Barr-Price Funeral Home in 1988. The Barr-Price Funeral Home remains the oldest family owned funeral home in the Midlands of South Carolina.

**Barr Records**

We have been unable to identify any of the records associated with either the Leesville Coffin and Casket Co. or the later Imperial Casket Co. and we aren’t aware of any records associated with the Barrs’ mercantile activities. Recently, however, we learned through conversations with Mr. Landis Price that there are records associated with the Barr Funeral Home.

These records consist of multiple bound volumes measuring 14¾ by 10 inches. The spine is labeled “Funeral Records” and the book consists of 152 numbered pages of preprinted forms. The volume was published by F.J. Feinman of St. Louis, Missouri and was entitled, “The American Funeral Record: A Ready Reference Day Book for Undertakers” with a 1932 copyright. The publisher announces that, “This Record Book will be great assistance to your profession in entering up funerals and arrangements for same, correctly, intelligently, and completely.”

Attached to the front of the volume is a paper label printed with, “C.D. Barr General Merchandise.” Below is a line with “Undertaker and Embalmer” and “Cotton Buyer – Fertilizers” separated by a company seal. Below that is “Leesville, S.C.” Typed on the label at the top is “Casket Accounts, 1938” with a pen notation, “thru 1949.” At the bottom is a similar typed notation, “Casket Accounts, Jan. 1st, 1938” again with the pen addition of “~1949.”

Inside the front cover are notations regarding the size of caskets, the size of vaults, and the necessary size of the grave (Figure 5). Caskets were typically 86 to 87½ inches in length, vaults were 89 inches, and graves were dug 95 inches in length.

The forms themselves provided the typical personal information, including name, race, and address, who was paying, the date of death, and other pertinent information related to the funeral arrangements.
## INTRODUCTION

Figure 5. Inside front cover notations from the Barr Funeral Record.

Figure 6. Sample page from the Barr Funeral Records.
death, the date and location of the funeral, the religion of the deceased, the place and cause of death, as well as information on the deceased mother, father, and spouse. There was also information on the type of casket, a complete itemization of the funeral expense, and a record of payment (Figure 6).

According to Mr. Price this is the earliest volume of records that he has found associated with the funeral home. Whether there were earlier records, now lost, is unknown.

These records, beginning in 1938, well post-date the introduction of death certificates to South Carolina. This may suggest that the transcription of these records is of little consequence. We disagree. Take for example, Figure 6, the death record of Perry Wayne Barnes and compare it to Figure 7, the South Carolina death certificate for the same individual.

The death certificate does not indicate where Barnes was born, who paid for the funeral, the religion of the individual, where the funeral took place, and the location of the burial is only listed to a town – not church and plot as it is in the Barr records. In addition, the funeral home

Figure 7. SC Death Certificate for Perry Wayne Barnes.
records provide a wealth of social information regarding the services provided and the cost of these services, as discussed in the following section. Thus, while there is certainly considerable overlap, the Barr records often provide a fuller, more useful account that will be of special interest to individuals tracing their family history.

As much information as possible about each burial is included since we believe that it offers a unique opportunity to trace the development of different funeral services, better understand the costs associated with these services, evaluate social implications of different burial activities, and so forth.

This particular Barr volume also provides some interesting information on Barr’s business activities between 1927 and 1950. During that 24 year period 1,078 burials were handled by the firm, with an average of 43 per year or just less than one a week. The peak occurred in 1926 when 76 burials were recorded. Over the 24 years Barr recorded nearly $179,000 in funerals, with a yearly average of $7,454 and a per funeral average of $166.

Figure 8 shows that while the number of burials handled by the firm slowly declined from 1927 through 1950, the average burial cost increased, especially after 1942. Even taking into consideration inflation, the average burial cost doubled by 1950 – a seemingly dramatic increase.
Lexington Burials in the Second Quarter of the Twentieth Century

There are 435 burials itemized in this volume, spanning 12 years for an average of 36 burials a year. Most of the burials were of whites; only 38 African American burials are reported for an average of 3 per year. It is nevertheless notable that Barr served both blacks and whites.

African American Burials

Twenty-five of the 38 African American burials were infants or children. Fourteen were infants less than a year old and six were still births (representing 15.7% of the black burials). In contrast, there are only 18 white still births handled by Barr, representing only 4.5% of the total burials. The disparity is likely associated with differences in black and white healthcare.

The average African American burial cost $34.14, although burials ranged from as little as $4.50 for the burial of a still born to $225 for the burial of Anna Lark Andrews in 1948. This burial may be anomalous, however. The individual’s death certificate indicates here burial was handled by Bush Home in Saluda, with the burial taking place in Rock Hill, SC. Barr’s entry reveals payment, in code, being provided by two African American firms, Amos & Sons and Bush Funeral Home. The code likely represented some discounted wholesale price while Barr entered a retail price. Since the burial was being shipped, it may be that the black firms did not have the expertise, license, or caskets necessary and subcontracted the work out.

Regardless, if that burial is excluded, the most expensive was that of Drayton Langford in 1938, with the cost of $182. This would have been a very elaborate funeral for an individual identified as a farmer.

If only the 12 adults are considered (excluding the one anomalous sale discussed above), the average burial cost was $63.00. Two of these individuals were shipped back to South Carolina in caskets; two others were buried in caskets provided by the county. One was apparently buried either without a casket or, more likely, in one made at home. Of the remaining seven, three were burial in Imperial caskets and four in caskets made by the Piedmont Casket Company.

Seven were buried in outside boxes, including both individuals using county caskets. Only one of the individuals received an “arch” with five bags of cement. Usually the grave arch consisted of wood planks placed on ledges over the coffin in order to support the backfilled soil. The use of cement is still found occasionally today in rural Lexington County. Bags of dry mix concrete (e.g., Quikcrete®) are cut open and spread over the grave arch prior to backfilling the grave when no vault is used. Funeral directors explain that the practice will help locate the grave with a probe in the future; thus, it is thought of as a means of better marking a burial that has only a casket (Trinkley et al. 2011:115).

Only four individuals (including, we presume the two shipped from out of state) were embalmed. Thus, it appears that many African Americans could either not afford embalming or found the practice culturally unacceptable. This is clearly an issue needing additional investigation through the study of larger samples, perhaps from the records of an African American funeral home.
In contrast, six of the remains were dressed and six used funeral cars provided by Barr.

**White Burials**

Most of Barr’s business was with the white community around Lexington and 397 of the burials in this volume are of whites (91%). Of these burials, 162 (44.5%) are females and 202 (55.5%) are males (the remaining 33 are stillborn or infants for whom no sex was given). The disparity between males and females is far less in the 1940 census and is weighted toward males (50.1% males, 49.9% females). The difference found in these records likely represents societal factors (for example, a higher death rate among males as a result of occupation).

**Age at Death**

Figure 9 is a mortality graph, showing the age at death for the combined male and female populations buried by Barr. It shows the percent dying by age classes and it reveals that if an individual was able to survive the few 11 months after birth, the likelihood of dying dropped dramatically. The likelihood of death peaks between 71 and 80. This graph stands in stark contrast to those developed from the McCormick records (Trinkley and Hacker 2004a:3, 2004b:5), although the difference is likely the result of the McCormick records reflecting the period between 1903 and 1915. It is likely that health care improved significantly by the 1940s. This data certainly suggests such an improvement.

While the records provide considerable information, Barr virtually never indicated the cause of death, although the attending physician was almost always noted.

When the month of death is examined, deaths appear to have peaked in January, April, and June – the middle of winter, the middle of spring, and the early summer. There is a less pronounced peak in October or middle of the fall. Thus, it appears that no particular season was particularly unhealthy; rather it seems that it was the change of season that brought on health issues leading to death. The fewest deaths occurred in August.

**Burial Practices**

The records offer the most information about burial practices in Lexington County during the late 1930s and 1940s.

Of the 368 burials which listed a casket manufacturer, nearly three-quarters (275 or 74.7%) chose a model manufactured by Imperial – the firm owned by the Barr family. The remaining clients chose a Palmetto Casket Company model. Not a single family went outside the immediate area, requesting a casket manufactured by one of
the national firms, such as Boyertown or National. This stands in contrast to the much more eclectic tastes exhibited by McCormick's clients in nearby Columbia. While this may simply be a case of supporting the local economy, it certainly helped to maximize Barr's profits, keeping wholesale costs down.

We have no catalogs for either Imperial or Palmetto, so there is little that we can say about the specific models selected. Most of the Imperial casket designations include a size, such as 6/0, followed by a model number, such as “S55 gray” or “E28 H/C”. Some references can be guessed. For example, H/C may reference a half-couch model. Others, such as “½ Shr,” are today ambiguous. Some notes provide bits of information, such as the single reference to a casket “w/ end handles,” suggesting that the use of end handles was not popular in the Leesville area. There are also occasional references to metal caskets, although most appear to be wood or cloth covered. These are both less expensive and may have been considered more traditional designs.

Rarely is the price of the casket itself noted. It appears that Barr was careful to “fold” in costs without providing – even in his presumably private journals – specific prices. It is therefore possible only to compare the total cost of funerals using Imperial with Palmetto caskets. This assumes that the casket was likely the most costly item and allows at least a vague comparison of the two manufacturers.

The average cost of a funeral using an Imperial casket was $294.65, while the average cost for a funeral using the Palmetto caskets was $155.07. Thus, the funerals using the Imperial caskets were about twice as expensive.

Less than a quarter of the burials (23%) used an outer box. This is in contrast to the finding 20-30 years earlier, when McCormick’s clients seemed to routinely use an outer box (Trinkley and Hacker 2004b:11). There is a difference in box use by brand of casket. Only 17.8% of those using an Imperial casket also used a box, while 39.8% of those using Palmetto caskets also used an outer box.

When pine boxes were purchased during the late 1930s and early 1940s, their costs averaged between $7.00 and $8.00 (for example, Miller Casket Company 1931:6 and Boyertown Burial Casket Company 1938:100). It is likely that Barr and his family, with access to a saw mill and casket factory, were able to produce these boxes for only $1.00 or $2.00, further increasing their profit over typical wholesale costs.

In contrast, over half (54.6%) of the burials received some vault or vault-like protection. At first glance this seems to be a noticeable increase from 20 years earlier, when only 7% of McCormick's clients chose this additional expense (Trinkley and Hacker 2004b:11). This is not, however, the case.

The 225 vaults or vault-like coverings include 95 combinations of grave arches and concrete. If these are removed from the calculations, then only 130 true vaults remain – reflecting a use rate of only 3.5%. This is half the use seen two decades earlier in Columbia, suggesting that the use of vaults was more quickly adopted in urban populations.

The use of grave arches and concrete has already been briefly mentioned in the burial of African Americans, where it was found in only one case. It appears far more prevalent among whites, where a quarter of burials were protected and/or identified in this fashion. The data available reveals that between one and seven bags of concrete might be used, with an average of 4.5 and a median of 5. While the number of bags is related to the size of the grave, there appear to be other factors since there are numerous adult graves where only two bags were used. The quantity used is probably related to cost, with each bag being billed at $1.95.

The use of an arch and concrete may well be a conservative practice, although this is difficult to demonstrate since the average age of those receiving an arch and concrete was 62, while the average age of those receiving a vault was 66
years.

While the use of concrete may have made relocating the grave easier, it causes considerable problems for the bioanthropologist. As the grave arch collapses, the overlying concrete falls on the well decayed casket, causing extensive damage to the skeletal remains.

It seems more likely that the grave arch and concrete was simple more affordable for many rural Lexington residents. The average cost of burials using an arch and concrete was just over $203. In comparison, the average cost of burials where a conventional vault of some type was used more than double - $427.

There were three graves (representing less than 1% of the total burials) where a brick vault was constructed, with the bricks used being itemized by Barr and ranging from 125 to 815. The disparity in bricks suggests that some may have been laid as only one course, while others may have been more substantial. In an additional two cases a metal vault was enclosed by the brickwork.

The average cost of the three burials with brick vaults was $263.26 – more than a simple arch and some bags of concrete, but substantially less than a metal vault.

Where a metal vault was enclosed by brickwork, the average burial cost was $571.64.

Thirty-four of the 130 vaults were identified simply as “vaults” and only two entries provide information on the retail price – one for $100 and another for $150. These are associated with burials having a wide range of costs and it seems likely these entries simply neglected to provide the manufacturer.

The most common named vault (n=45) was manufactured by Clark Grave Vault Company in Columbus, Ohio. This firm began in 1898 and is still in business. Most are identified only as Clark vaults, although one is distinguished specifically as the “Clark Custodian.” The standard vault was an “air sealed” model that was “welded inside and out” using 12 gauge Armco Ingot Iron (Boyertown Burial Casket Company 1936:158). The air sealed model was explained by companies as constructed like a “diving bell” so that air was trapped in the vault. However, water (a euphemism for body fluids) was allowed to drain between the bottom (which was separate) and a side that was not sealed. The Armco Ingot Iron was first developed in 1909 and was the purest steel mill iron produced.

In contrast, the Custodian vault was a higher end model with its body formed from one piece of metal (the same Armco steel) using hydraulic presses.

Wholesale prices for the standard Clark vault, depending on the size, ranged from about $51 to $72 in the early 1930s (Milwaukee Casket Company 1932:10; National Casket Company 1931:40).

Wilbert Vaults were the next most common, being used with 17 burials. Begun in 1880 as the L.G. Haase Manufacturing Company, initially simple two-piece concrete vaults were produced. By 1919 the name was changed to American Vault Works. In 1930 the company began lining the vaults with asphalt to make them waterproof and in 1938 the company became the world’s largest manufacturer of asphalt and concrete burial vaults with 76 franchises in 22 states. We have not identified a wholesale price list for the general period.

The third most common vault was produced by a company we have yet to identify, U.S. Vault. These account for an additional 15 burials.

The remaining models include 10 Perfection vaults, four Protection vaults, one Springfield vault, one Wyandot vault, and one vault made by the U.S. Granite Vault Company.

The Perfection Burial Vault Company of Galion, Ohio was apparently part of the Perfection Steel Body Company that made truck bodies
Figure 11. Examples of vaults used by Barr. First row left is the Clark Standard, first row right is the Clark Custodian, second row left is the asphalt-lined concrete Wilbert Vault, second row right is Perfection Rex, third row left is the Perfection President, third row right is the Springfield vault, and bottom row is a patent drawing for a Wyandot vault.
during the same period. Those used by Barr include unnamed models, six Rex models, and one President model. The unnamed model may have the basic Rex Air Seal Vault, made of 12 gauge metal (New York and Brooklyn Casket Company n.d.:265). The Rex Vault was also 12 gauge metal, but was produced from copper-bearing steel which combines a small amount of copper with the steel to provide increased resistance to corrosion. The President vault was also produced by Perfection using 12 gauge copper-bearing steel, but also had a “beautiful Marbleized finish” (Boyertown Burial Casket Company 1936:160).

The basic-line Perfection vaults seem to be among the least expensive available. One catalog lists the price as $35.00. In fact, they even offered discounts if three Perfection vaults were purchased at a time. In contrast, this same company sold the Clark vault for $50.00 (Miller Casket Company 1931:10).

Four were listed as Protection vaults, probably a reference to the Protection Burial Vault Company, also of Galion, Ohio. We have not identified additional information concerning this particular company.

**Embalming**

While embalming was introduced during the American Civil War, its acceptance has been an issue of uncertainty. Laderman has suggested that while there are no statistical data, anecdotal evidence suggested that “embalming rapidly became a standard feature of the undertaking work” (Laderman 2003:6). Our work suggests that at least in the south, this may not have been the case. For example, in urban Columbia in the first two decades of the twentieth century, more than 40% of McCormick’s clients were not embalmed (Trinkley and Hacker 2004b:10). Figure 12 shows a graph of its use among rural Lexington County families from 1938 through 1949. The practice began with very limited popularity and it wasn’t until 1941 that half of Barr’s clients were embalmed. By 1946 the number appears to have stabilized at two-thirds of the clientele, with 80% or more of the bodies being embalmed by the late 1940s.

Thus, it seems to us that the acceptance of embalming was far slower in the south than perhaps elsewhere in the country and practices were even more conservative in the rural south than in urban areas.

While the average burial cost was about $250, the average cost for those burials which did not include embalming was $107.31 – significantly lower in overall cost. As a practical matter, children under a year in age, including still births, were generally not embalmed – and these account for 59 of 159 burials that lacked embalming. If these are removed, the average age of those foregoing embalming was 60 years – not appreciably older (or we assume conservative) than those receiving embalming.

The length of time between death and burial for those remains lacking embalming averaged under a day, with a median of 1 day. The range, however, might extend to four days in a few unusual cases. There was no appreciable
difference in the period between death and burial for embalmed bodies – the average was about a day and a half, while the mean was one day. In one case, however, the burial occurred six days after death.

Religion may have played a role, but this is difficult to determine from the evidence in the Barr records. Lutherans were the most common religion and over a third of these individuals did not embalm. Among the Baptists, 29% were not embalmed, and 24% of the Methodists were not embalmed. Thus, it seems that a nearly equal proportion of all major Protestant religions were buried without embalming.

Thus, it appears that it was not religion, length of time to burial, or age that dictated an individual be embalmed – rather it seems the most likely factor was cost. Barr, however, indicates this cost, $25, for only one burial.

**Other Services**

Figure 13 shows the breakdown of services provided by Barr, including embalming only; dressing the body only; dressing and embalming; dressing, embalming, and hair dressing; and hair dressing only.

The majority of Barr’s clients who selected additional services, opted for both embalming and dressing the body. While there is very little difference by sex in the categories of dressing or embalming only, when both were performed, three-fifths were males. This may suggest that in rural Lexington males had a more limited wardrobe and it was felt that the purchase of clothing was more necessary for them than for females. Alternatively, it may be that males were considered patriarchal and the additional cost for new clothing was necessary.

Regardless, while the cost of funerals for males and females was essentially the same when only embalming was performed (an average of $389.56 for females and $389.74 for males), in the categories of dressing only and dressing an embalming, male funerals were noticeably more expensive.

The average funeral cost for females when dressing only was specified was $115.08. The average cost for males was $165.46 – 44% higher.

When both embalming and dressing was specified, male funerals were still more expensive, but less so -- $359.08 compared to $321.02. This is a difference of only 12%.

Clothing purchased for females included dresses, hose, underwear, slippers, a slip, and bloomers. Most of these items have obvious meanings today. The term “underwear” is ambiguous. In contrast, the two pair of “bloomers” were likely baggy underpants common earlier in the century, but still worn by older women into the 1950s.

The most common purchase was a dress, followed by hose and underwear. The Miller Casket Company (1931:11) offered a variety of women’s dresses in prices ranging from $14.30 (messaline in white, silver, or orange) to $5.85 (a silk crepe in white, silver, or black). “Robes” were far less expensive (as little as $2.75), suggesting that the “dresses” sold by Barr priced at $5.00 might
actually have been robes – or open back items that could be easily slipped on bodies.

A National catalog reminded funeral directors that,

When selling burial garments to a family do not overlook hosiery. Correct hosiery is as important at such a time as the correct dress, negligee, suit, or shoes. Hosiery should be included with every garment sale. It is not only logical but profitable for the funeral director. The family will receive the suggestion as added proof of the thoughtfulness and understanding of the man in whom they have placed their trust.

It is not fair to clients to assume that hosiery and other apparel will be supplied by them. Few people there are who, in time of bereavement, have any desire to go “shopping” in the local stores for clothing to be used in burial. They will welcome the opportunity of letting their funeral director care for such things (National Casket Company 1930:109).

The term slipper was used in the burial industry for both soft devices with “quilted satin innersoles” that were elastic, allowing them “to fit any foot perfectly, regardless of shape or condition” (National Casket Company 1930:105) which sold for about $2.00 a pair and for more natural appearing shoes that were laced at the back to allow easy adjustments. They, too, were wholesaled at $2.00.

The only items priced in the Barr records were a dress at $5.00 and hose at .25¢. These seem to be low prices, but we have identified very few funeral clothing catalogs for this period.

The most common items purchased for men were suits, followed by underwear and hose (which is far more common than socks). Suits in the Miller Casket Company catalog ranged from $7.85 to as high as $12.75 and were offered in a range of fabrics and colors. Also offered were men’s robes, ranging from as little as $2.50 to $7.00 (Miller Casket Company 1931:10).

Underwear – probably for both women and men – might have designated what National called their “Burial Undergarments.” They were advertised as “clean, white, and absorbent,” noting that they afford the funeral director’s equipment “great protection from leakage, etc., due to the remarkable absorbent qualities of the garment (National Casket Company 1930:109).
The only items priced by Barr were a man's shirt at $1.00 and socks at .15¢.

The purchase of clothing for burial is an area where little data has been collected by anthropologists and it is not well understood who purchased what clothing and for what ultimate purpose. Additional investigations such as this may help gradually resolve some of those questions.
The transcription follows as faithfully as possible the original material. Misspellings are retained (except where they were so egregious that they would result in ambiguity or uncertainty). The information is entered in the Excel appendix to this report in roughly the same order as found in the original volume. Where there were multiple payments, we have simply indicated the span in months that was required for payment, rather than the specific payment schedule. Barr, like McCormick in Columbia (see, for example, Trinkley and Hacker 2004a:3), seems to have been fairly successful in obtaining complete payment and only about 6% of his clients failed to make full and complete payment (although Barr did accept not only payments as small as 50¢ as well as a cow in trade).

For ease of identifying specific individuals, the following list has been alphabetized, although the original page number is also listed.
Ridge Spring, stillborn 0-0-0 W. A. Hart 10/14/1946 10/15/1946 Grave Family Cemetery Walter Banks 2 #13 1/2 Imperial Casket Co. Yes $20.00 10/25/1946 $20.00

Samuel David M W 72-10-22 W. W. King 5/17/1946 5/19/1946 St. Marks Lutheran Church St. Marks Cemetery stillborn 0-0-0 K. L. Able 3/7/1947 3/7/1947 Union Church Cemetery E. W. Bedenbough 1/9 Imperial Casket Co. $13.00 3/7/1947 $13.00 parents = Leon & Margaret (Koon) Bedenbough


Annie Lou Burkett, b. 9-22-1949; parents = Nathan & Mary (Marshall)

SC State

b. 8-15-1874; parents = James L. & Martha (Lomanich)

Fannie Etta Shealy F W b. 8-20-1893; husband = James Barfield; parents = L. & Carrie (Cato) Asbell

b. 10-28-1938; parents = John G. & Sarah (Howard) Able

PS; bringing remains from Cedar Grove Cemetery J. A. Caughman 6/6 King H/C Imperial Casket Co. Clark Vault EB, DB dress, hose LD, LG PS; death notice, door spray $359.00 7/21/1938 $359.00

Anna Lurk F C 6/3 #33 H/C Imperial Casket Co. dress $225.00 10/18/1948 $225.00

Mrs. R. N. Derrickson, b. 3-16-1864; parents = John Wiley & R. C. (Frick) Amick

James Barfield & Lewis b. 12-27-1866; wife = Sallie O. Adams Atwell; parents = " & "

b. 12-1-1870; parents = John C. & Sarah (Howard) Able

b. 3-27-1860; parents = Reube & Sarah (Leppeord)


Carroll Eugene M W 50-6-5 Lutheran 9/10/1943 9/15/1943 Cedar Grove Cedar Grove Cemetery Mrs. Addy 6/3 #28 H/C Imperial Casket Co.

Ralph McKenly M W Gilbert, SC 0-2-23 W. T. Gibson 12/25/1948 12/26/1948 Pleasant Hill Baptist Church

Clarence Jacob M W 56-1-18 Methodist 4/27/1948 4/28/1948 Wittenburg Lutheran Church Leesville Cemetery 6/6 M49 H/C Imperial Casket Co. U. S. Vault EB, DB Yes PS; pressing suit $480.00 5/19/1948 $480.00

John P., Mrs. F W Leesville, SC 83-8-0 Methodist W. T. Gibson 9/3/1940 9/5/1940 House Leesville Cemetery Clark Vault EB, DB dress Yes PS, ambulance, DS $450.00 9/27/1940 $450.00

Mary Christine, Mrs. W. L. Addy, SC 79-1-0 Lutheran J. H. Mathias 12/13/1947 12/14/1947 Grace Lutheran Church Grace Lutheran Church Cemetery J. I. Adam 6/6 M49 H/C Imperial Casket Co.

William Lloyd M W 79-1-0 Lutheran J. H. Mathias 12/13/1947 12/14/1947 Grace Lutheran Church Grace Lutheran Church Cemetery J. I. Adam 6/6 M49 H/C Imperial Casket Co..

Jesse Jonas M W 29-10-17 Weston Cook 9/20/1947 9/22/1947 Union Lutheran Church Union Lutheran Church 6/6 King Imperial Casket Co. wood EB, DB suit PS $750.00 12/16/1947 $750.00


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<td>No.</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>M/F</td>
<td>C/W</td>
<td>Late Residence</td>
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<td>Age (ymd)</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>Death Date</td>
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<td>Methodist</td>
<td>K.L. Able</td>
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<td>William Roland</td>
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<td>Providence</td>
<td>F.H. Hendrix</td>
<td>1/9 #319</td>
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**Notes:**
- **Funeral Burial** refers to the place of burial.
- **Funeral Car/Limos** indicates the use of a funeral car or limousine.
- **Funeral Open Grave** indicates the type of grave used for burial.
- **Lowering Device/Matting** refers to equipment used for lowering the body into the grave.
- **Clothing** lists any special clothing provided or used.
- **Embalm/Dress Body/Hair** refers to the procedures performed before burial.
- **Casket Dressing** indicates the type of casket used.
- **Casket Manuf.** refers to the manufacturer of the casket.
- **Outside Box/Vault/Cement/Arch** indicates the type of burial vault or crypt used.
- **Total Cost** includes all funeral expenses.
- **Date Paid** indicates when payment was made.
- **Amount** refers to the amount paid for each service.
- **Misc** includes any additional miscellaneous costs or notes.
Sources Cited

Anonymous

Boyertown Burial Casket Company

Edgar, Walter

Haney, P.B., W.J. Lewis, and W.R. Lambert

Lademan, Gary

Miller Casket Company

Milwaukee Casket Company

Moore, John Hammond

National Casket Company

New York and Brooklyn Casket Company

R.G. Dun & Co.

Schultz, Constance B.

Shealy, J.W.
Thomas Publishing Co.

Trinkley, Michael and Debi Hacker


Trinkley, Michael, Debi Hacker, and Nicole Southerland

Watson, E.J.

Wolfe, Stanley L.
Cemetery Preservation Plans

Historical Research

Identification of Grave Locations and Mapping

Condition Assessments

Treatment of Stone and Ironwork