

The gift of business records covering twenty-five years may seem modest to all but the most intrepid of statisticians. The Harden Funeral home records of 1932 to 1957 present a different perspective to both scholars and local citizens in the incredible records of more than several thousand lives completed in Fairfield County in those years. The Fairfield Friends of the Museum welcome this gift as a legacy to the future and wish to thank the late Mr. Joe C. Harden, his widow Mrs. Betty M. Harden, and his brother Mr. John M. Harden, III for their respect for such archives and the importance of preserving them. The Friends must thank the efforts of Ms. Randy Sears of Myrtle Beach, SC for the many hours in transcribing these records and making their preservation a reality. Editing Ms. Sears' work presented a pleasurable few weeks for Mr. John M. Harden, III and myself to both remember some of the details of our two adjacent generations and our respective points of seeing the history of Fairfield through these records. Only some spelling considerations of proper names were found needing minor corrections. The simple index card method of recording the original details of these deaths and burials by the funeral home provided quite a provocative thought process for both of us who by profession are not statisticians. If any words could describe us, perhaps it would be "history lovers," and that is the intent and driving force behind this labor. By way of introduction some brief observations must be shared. Sharing the history of Harden Funeral Home requires knowing its history. John M. Harden, Jr. returned to Fairfield County in 1918 at the end of his service in the First World War. In planning for his future in his native Winnsboro, he purchased the former Phillips Furniture Company on the northeast corner of Congress and Liberty Streets. This business included the retail operations of furniture and casket sales. Custom was a bit different in funeral arrangements at this time. A family purchased a casket, took it to their home, prepared the body without embalming, and arranged the burial in either family plots or church cemeteries. This meant that caskets were sold on demand and the timing of the burial was usually within a few days of the death for health reasons. Home burial usually included the display of the open casket with family and friends' visitations. Some sort of wake was traditional at these funerals. Customs began to change and John Harden found himself facing new laws enforcing embalming for health reason and new ideas about using funeral homes as parlors for visitation and display. In the course of the thirty-eight years he operated the business, he saw quite an evolution in funeral practices and by 1938 the location of the business was moved to a new location at 124 South Vanderhorst Street where it remained until it was sold in 1957 to Mr. and Mrs. John Pope. The Popes operated at the Vanderhorst location for about one year before moving to the current location of Pope Funeral Home at the corner of Buchanan and Congress Streets. Mrs. Bette Pope continues to operate the business today in this location. Those these records only record some twenty-five of those years, the time period covered reveals much statistical material as to cause of death, funeral customs and costs, and the sociological makeup of Fairfield County in the interval. Perhaps these statistics alone make this project one of such significance.

2As amateurs, John and I found the reading and editing provocative of our history searches in our beloved Fairfield County. A few personal observations indicative of that process include the lack of a modern hospital until 1954 in the county, the use of Richland County Hospital and others in Columbia for final care and birthing facilities beginning in the 1930's, and deaths from accidents without the emergency services to which we are accustomed to today. Another interesting observation is the number of stillborn infants due to the lack of neonatal facilities. Also, the number of deaths in childbirth, the infant death rate in the first few years, and the death of children due to diseases now controlled pointed to wonderful changes in health care over the period. Just as interesting are the sociological aspects of the records. As the Great Depression and the end of cotton farming due to the boll weevil plagued the economics of the county in the time of the records, it is difficult not to draw some conclusions as to cause of death due to those circumstances. Cases in the records show a large number of deaths to young adults in their twenties and thirties who worked in the textile industry. Many of these young adults died at the former SC State Park Hospital which specialized in lung disease, many perhaps caused by work environments. Large numbers of these workers had migrated into the cotton mill for work after losing their farms in rural South Carolina and Georgia. Many of these funerals required shipping the remains by motor hearse or railway to next-of-kin in those places. Other observations can be made including the location or home of many of the deceased. Many families in the area took in boarders and often the informant is listed on the cards as the person operating the boarding home. This often meant scant family details and perhaps inaccurate next-of-kin details. Expanding on this observation reminded us that there was no Social Security until 1935, so many families took in their aging kindred and cared for them in extended family situations. With great interest John and I found the death and burial patterns during the Second World War quite different than we imagined. Rarely did the remains of fallen servicemen get back to the county until the years after the war. There was no way to ship all the fallen during wartime. Funeral services did not bring closure until these remains were returned in those years. Equally interesting were the deaths due to simple old age. Those deaths listed causes usually as heart disease or consumption, a family physician stating these causes. A final observation in these statistics is the rural burial cemeteries for the funeral services. Many county citizens were members of large rural churches which today are no longer active or merged with other churches. The flight from

the farms for urban jobs was a real cause of this phenomenon. Thanks must be given to all who have assisted in this project. History must be studied if we are to appreciate our present lives. John M. Lyles, III August 2, 2006

William Marthers Male, white, married Husband of Virginia Wilson Marthers Date of Birth: March 15, 1864, Longtown Date of Death: Dec. 2, 1939, Fairfield Co., Winnsboro, SC time 8 p.m. age 75+ Occupation: Retired Farmer Name of Father: Wesley Marthers Birthplace of Father: Longtown Maiden Name of Mother: Eliza Bass Birthplace of Mother: Longtown Place of Burial: Longtown Date of Burial: Dec. 3, 1939 Informant: Cloyd Marthers (first name spelled as written) Physician: Dr. Dobson No Information or Names listed on back of card.

Henry K. Bass Veteran: nothing listed SSN: nothing listed Male, white, marital status not listed No spouse listed Date of Birth: April 17, 1871, Fairfield Co. Date of Death: Nov. 10, 1950, Winnsboro, Fairfield Co, SC, 8 am, age 79+ Occupation: Retired Farmer Name of Father: Henry Bass Birthplace of Fa: Kershaw Co. Maiden Name of Mother: Arabella Dove Birthplace of Mo: Kershaw Co. Informant: Gary Bass, Winnsboro, SC Place of Burial: Richland Co, Blythewood Date of Burial: Nov. 12, 1950 Physician: Dr. J.C. Buchanan Note written on bottom front of card: Being struck by auto on Hiway 321 at Mill Village; No Information or Names listed on back of card.

Baby Boy Bass male, white, single (child) Date of Birth: Aug. 24, 1951, Winnsboro, SC Date of Death: not listed, (appears to be Aug. 24, 1951), 289 Winnsboro, Fairfield Co, SC, time 9:30, age not listed (appears to be still born) Occupation: none (child) Name of Father: James E. Bass Birthplace of Fa: Ridgeway, SC Maiden Name of Mother: Verna Lee Rutland Birthplace of Mo: Winnsboro, SC Informant: James E. Bass, Ridgeway, SC Place of Burial: Winnsboro Mills Cem. Date of Burial: Aug. 25, 1951 Physician: Dr. C.S. McCants No Information or Names listed on back of card.

Cleveland E. Watts No card; Information from DISPOSITION OF REMAINS by U.S. Army Name: Watts, Cleveland E. Grade: PFC Service # 14314805 Branch of Armed Service: Army Race: white; Religion: No record; Sex: male Next of Kin: Mr. I.H. Watts, father, Rt. 4, Box 41-A, Winnsboro, SC Funeral Director: John M. Harden, Jr., Funeral Director, Winnsboro, SC Arrival of Remains: nothing listed in this section. Request for Honor Party will be made to: Name: Capt. William H. Bass, ORC Instructor Group, 3215 ½ Devine St., Columbia, SC Duty phone: 28704 Home phone: none After Action Report – Honor Party Furnished: nothing listed in this section; (hand written note on top of this report: Capt. Parker – Bass 28704 Attached is a small hand written note as follows: “9:50 324 Carl Watts – apt.135 – Bldg 3 – Tishawanka Manor, OpaLacka, Fla Remains of Cleveland E. Watts will arrive 6th Dec. 6:02 a.m.; advise time you expect arrive. Hardens Funeral Home.....” Small piece of paper, appears to be return address from an envelope as follows: “Dorothy Watts, Apt. 135 – Bldg. 3, Lishawauka Manor, OpaLacka, Fla - then notes of marine Base 4th Air Wing, Carl Watts”.....

William M. Bass Veteran: no SSN: nothing listed Male, white, married Name of wife: not listed Date of Birth: April 25, 1893, Kershaw Co. Date of Death: Oct. 9, 1953, Columbia, Richland Co, SC, 3:15 pm, age 60+ Occupation: Textile - Spinning Name of Father: Elie Bass Birthplace of Fa: Kershaw Co. Maiden Name of Mother: Mary Taylor Birthplace of Mo: Kershaw Co. Informant: Mrs. Annie B. Gardner, 229 S. Congress St, Winnsboro, SC Place of Burial: Kershaw Co., Hard Shell Bapt. Cem. Date of Burial: Oct. 11, 1953 Physician: Dr. Burnside and Dr. Seastrunk, Baptist Hospital, Columbia, SC No Information or Names listed on back of card.