

Mediated Minds Conference, University of Cincinnati, Blue Ash April 19, 2019

The Rise of the Queen City Embalmer: The Development of the Funeral Industry in Cincinnati

Christopher, Lydia

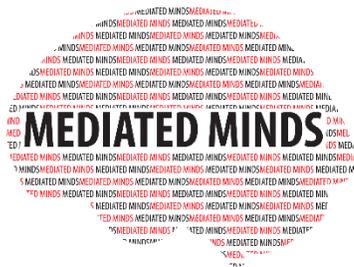
Abstract — *In this presentation, I will explore the pioneering developments and growth of the late 19th century American funeral industry caused by a combination of scientific advances and a rising middle class with a particular focus on Cincinnati.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the latter half of the 19th century, the United States was in a period of change. Few industries better exemplify this period of change than the development and expansion of the funeral industry. From carpenters and merchants to undertakers and embalmers, the development of the culture surrounding death was quickly evolving as technologies arose and needs increased. By examining the influences of scientific innovations and the rise of the middle-class in Cincinnati during the latter half of the nineteenth century, a perspective that has never been taken shows how the growth of the funeral industry in Cincinnati mirrors that of the rest of the country. However, it also shows how many innovations to the industry such as education, professionalization, and legitimization were directly impacted and inspired by the contributions to the field of Cincinnati.

II. FINDINGS

1. The development of the modern funeral industry in America was intrinsically linked to the scientific innovations, a high death toll/the impact of a high death toll as a result of the Civil War, and the rise of the middle class.
2. The city of Cincinnati was an incredible microcosm of this development, leading the way in producing trained and qualified embalmers in the early stages of certification and regulation of the field.



Mediated Minds Conference, University of Cincinnati, Blue Ash April 19, 2019

REFERENCES

“Clarke College of Embalming,” Photograph, <https://www.ccms.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/9-LOCATIONS-Clark-College-of-Embalming-2.pdf>

"Embalming." The Lancet 148, no. 3807 (1896).

"Embalming Fluid." The Western and Southern Medical Recorder, Vol. 29. Issue 20 (Cincinnati, Ohio) November 12, 1892.

Embalming surgeon at work, photograph, 1863-1865 printed later, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016646727/>.

"Funeral Customs." Harper's Bazaar, Vol. 2, Issue 35 (New York: Hearst Magazines), August 12, 1869.

"Gus W. Menninger undertaker and embalmer." Advertisement, via "Greater Cincinnati Memory Project." The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, <http://digital.cincinnati.library.org/digital/collection/p16998coll6/id/6112/rec/1>.

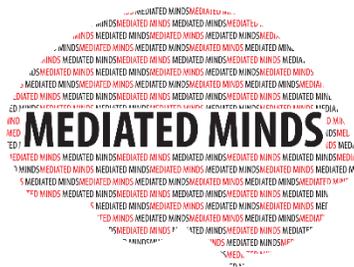
Hay, George. Notes and Queries: On Modern "Embalming." Vol. 6. Philadelphia: American Periodicals Series II, 1876.

"John F. Wiltsee Undertaker and Embalmer." The Western and Southern Medical Recorder, Vol. 24. Issue 14 (Cincinnati, Ohio) April 5, 1890.

Morris, B. F. Memorial Record of the Nation's Tribute to Abraham Lincoln. United States: 1865.

"Second Street, Covington, Kentucky," Photograph, via "Greater Cincinnati Memory Project." The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, <http://digital.cincinnati.library.org/digital/collection/p16998coll6/id/6619/rec/3>

Shotwell, Ambrose Milton. Annals of Our Colonial Ancestors and Their Descendants, Or, Our Quaker Forefathers and Their Posterity. Lansing, Michigan: Robert Smith & CO., Printers and Binders, December 31, 1895. <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=QLpRAAAAMAAJ&hl=en&pg=GBS.P5>.



Mediated Minds Conference, University of Cincinnati, Blue Ash April 19, 2019

Shotwell, John Brough. A History of the Schools of Cincinnati. Cincinnati: The School life company, 1902.

"The Murder of Colonel Ellsworth," Frank Leslie's Weekly, June 1, 1861.

Tools for the up-to-date embalmer, 1898. Advertisement. 1898. <https://firstsearch-oclc-org.proxy.libraries.uc.edu/WebZ/FSFETCH?fetchtype=holdings:entityholdingsortpage=normal:holdinglimittype=default:next=html/holdings.html:bad=error/badfetch.html:format=FH:numrecs=1:resultset=3:recno=1:entitylibrarycount=1:sessionid=fsapp5-43423-jow29z2c-74g1ay:enttypagenum=7:0>

Secondary:

Arehart, Kelly Brennan. "Men of Sorrow, Markets of Grief: A History of the American Funeral Industry, 1780-1930." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2014.

Beard, Virginia R. and William C. Burger. "Change and Innovation in the Funeral Industry: A Typology of Motivations." Journal of Death and Dying, vol. 75 (2017): 47-68.

"Cincinnati, Ohio." Ohio History Connection. Accessed October 23, 2018. http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Cincinnati,_Ohio.

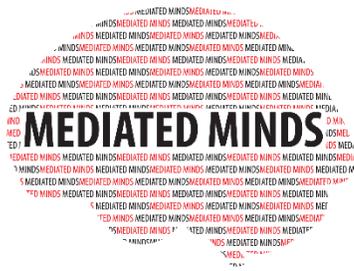
"Embalming." Encyclopaedia Britannica, inc. Published August 29, 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/embalming#ref151551>.

Haberstein, Robert and William Lamers. The History of American Funeral Directing. Milwaukee: Bulfin, National Funeral Directors Association, 2001.

Handbook to Death and Dying, Volume Two: The Response to Death. California: Sage Publications, Inc, 2003.

"History." Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science. Accessed September 17, 2018. <https://www.ccms.edu/history/>.

Troyer, John. "Embalmed Vision." Mortality 12, no. 1 (2007): 22-47.



Mediated Minds Conference, University of Cincinnati, Blue Ash April 19, 2019

Weller, Toni. "The Puffery and Practicality of Etiquette Books: A New Take on Victorian Information Culture." *Library Trends* 62, no. 3 (2014): 663-680.

Wueschner, Silvano A. "One man's Demise is another man's Gain: The Growth of the Funeral Industry on the Iowa Frontier." *Essays in Economic and Business History* 19, no. 1 (2001).

The Rise of the Queen City Embalmer: The Development of the Funeral Industry in Cincinnati

Lydia Christopher

Undertakers



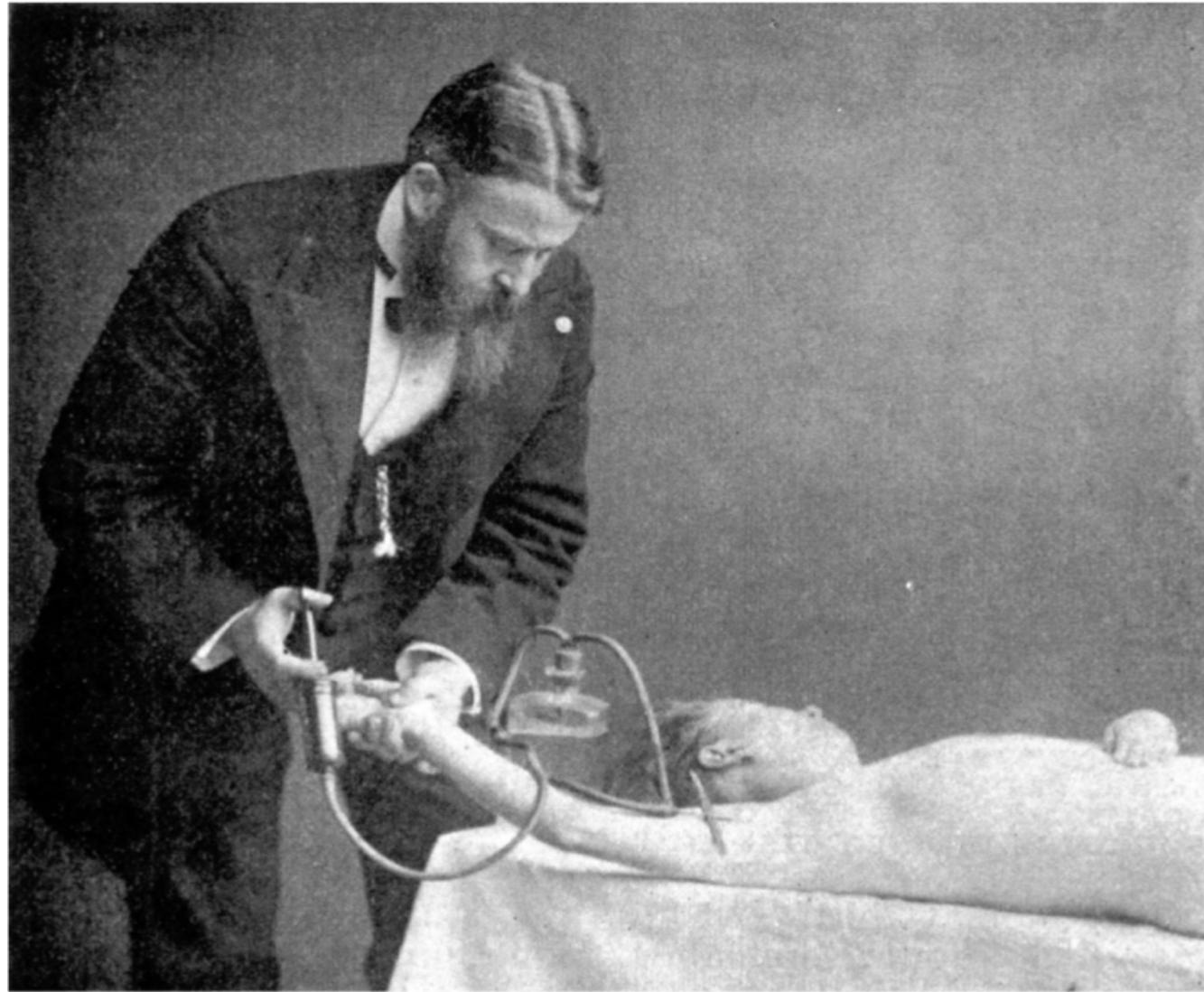


**THE EVOLUTION OF
THE UNDERTAKER**

The Rise of the American funeral industry

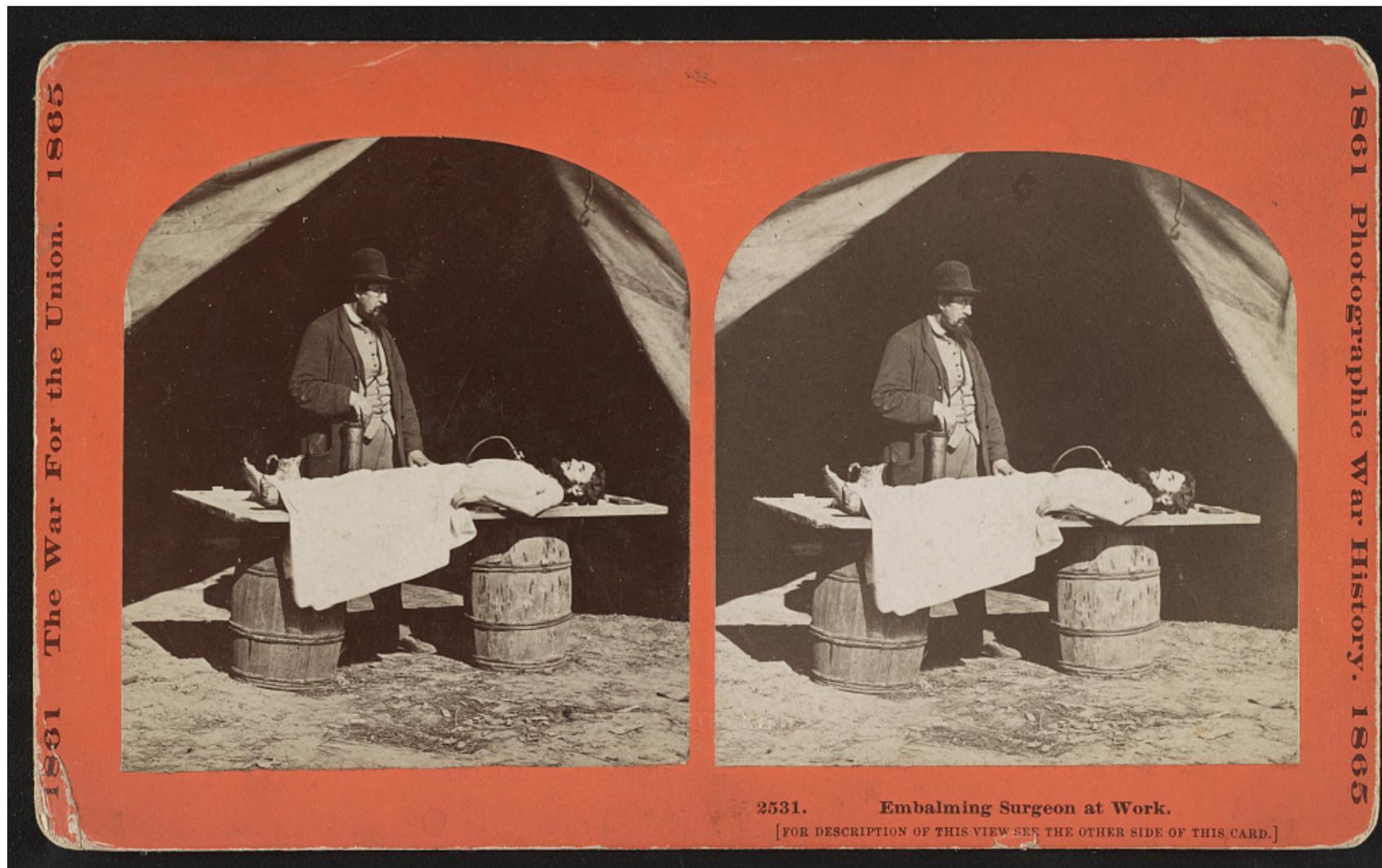
Scientific Innovations

Needle/dead body Trigger
warning



Operator Injecting Arterial System with Vacuum Pump.

Embalming Surgeon





FUNERAL SERVICE AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

The Cincinnati
School of
Embalming
and The
Clarke Fluid Co



The Middle Class

GUS. W. MENNINGER,

(SUCCESSOR TO SWETNAM & SCOTT,)



UNDERTAKER

— AND —

EMBALMER,

LIVERY & BOARDING
STABLE,

No. 66 & 68 Pike Street,
COVINGTON, KY.

Independent of the Under-
takers' Union.

Is prepared to furnish Wood and
Metallic Burial Cases, Hearses
and Carriages, Shrouds and
Shrouding Material of
Every Kind.

Also, Burial Cases prepared for
transportation to any part of the
Union, on immediate notice. Ev-
ery department of the Under-
taking business promptly attend-
ed to at very Moderate Charges.

Open Day and Night.

Telephone 4027.

The nineteenth century was a time of change, evolution, and growth across society, all facets of which were visible in the dawn of the funeral industry in Cincinnati.