Spokane Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Third Floor 808 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA 99201

A. NAME OF MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING

FUNERARY PROPERTIES IN SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, 1888-1978

B. ASSOCIATED HISTORIC CONTEXTS

FORM PREPARED RV

The Development of Funerary Properties in Spokane, Washington, 1888 to 1978

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Date Final MPD Heard 20 October 2004

D. CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the Spokane Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the Spokane Register categories.

Date Received	Date Heard	
Spokane Historic Landmarks	Commission, Chair	
Spokane City/County Office of	of Historic Preservation, Director	

E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

This multiple property documentation submission, *Funerary Properties in Spokane*, *Washington*, *1888-1978*, identifies one historic context, "The Development of Funerary Properties in Spokane, Washington from 1888 to 1978." Property types include cemeteries and memorial parks, casket factories, and funeral homes.

Introduction

Funerary practices reflect the desires, wants, and needs of American cultural groups. In some cases local customs are tied to religious practices and are augmented by regulations imposed by states, cities, or individual cemetery associations that regard the use of cemetery land. Honoring the deceased is regarded by many as of the utmost importance and has rendered the funerary industry a lucrative enterprise. This phenomenon is seen in the evolution and development of funerary properties in Spokane, Washington.

Background

The Rural Cemetery Movement

In the 1600s, the Puritans brought their burial beliefs to the eastern shores of America. These customs included in-ground burials in land set aside as common community burial grounds which was in rebellion to the popular and accepted European practice of burying the dead in churchyards. This "rural" cemetery movement was further inspired in the 1800s by "romantic perceptions of nature, art, national identity, and the melancholy theme of death." In America, rural cemeteries were usually established around elevated viewsites at the city outskirts.

As in-ground burials increased, so did health and land use issues. "After the Civil War, reformers concerned about land conservation and public health agitated for revival of the practice of incineration and urn burial. The cremation movement gathered momentum rapidly around the turn of the century, particularly on the west coast, and resulted in construction of crematories in many major cities. Columbariums and community mausoleums were erected in cemeteries to expand the number of burials which could be accommodated with the least sacrifice of ground space."

Manifested in cemeteries in 20th-century America, the romantically inspired rural cemetery movement was transformed to a new level that included "perpetual-care lawn cemeteries" and "memorial parks." These designs de-emphasized monuments and headstones in favor of unbroken lawn scenery and common open green space. Designs for memorial parks and perpetual-care lawn cemeteries capitalized on the natural beauty of an area and included rolling hills, rocky outcrops, and available wood and water features. In order to save space and preserve the bucolic appearance of the natural and

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¹ National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin #41*: "Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places." Washington DC: NPS, 1992.

² Ibid.

manicured landscape, headstones were reduced to horizontally flat grave markers that were mounted flush with the level of the ground for easy maintenance by lawn care machinery. Lawn care machinery needed to be kept in close proximity to the cemetery, so barns, garages, roads, and caretakers' cottages were built in addition to the cemetery's mausoleums, columbariums, and chapels. As the rural cemetery movement gained momentum, so did the way cemeteries were organized and operated. "Whereas 19th century community cemeteries typically were organized and operated by voluntary associations which sold individual plots to be marked and maintained by private owners according to individual taste, the memorial park was comprehensively designed and managed by full-time professionals. Whether the sponsoring institution was a business venture or non-profit corporation, the ideal was to extend perpetual care to every lot and grave." As a result, the cost of individual plots and burial or entombment was expanded to cover the cost of perpetual cemetery care.

Funeral Homes

As cemeteries evolved, so did the adjunct business which involved funeral homes and casket factories. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the word undertaker was used synonymously with the phrases "funeral parlors," "funeral homes," and "mortuaries." The undertaker was typically a funeral director or a mortician who prepared corpses for burial or cremation. This service took place in a funeral parlor, funeral home, or mortuary, which all have the same meaning. In early America, custom dictated that the deceased were readied for burial by the family or by a professional undertaker, and were necessarily buried or cremated within a few days after death before decay commenced. Other corpses were embalmed, which is an artificial means of preserving the body. This may have been done to help solve criminal cases, or for transporting bodies killed in war, or to honor the deceased of a wealthy family. Over the years, American embalming practices and mortician services have become highly technical, expensive, and elaborate. The main objective is to prepare a life-like representation of the deceased. One aim of the mortician is to smooth away the marks of sickness, giving the corpse a younger and healthier appearance than at the time of death. A popular cultural custom in America involves funeral and memorial services where the body is viewed in an open casket ceremony. Consequently the art of embalming and burial preparation has gained increased importance.

Caskets

A corpse could be buried in a casket or coffin, a container made of wood, metal, or plastic that was placed below the surface of the ground. The casket was placed directly in the ground or in a concrete vault, which was then placed in the ground. The preference for vault or no vault was usually decided by regulations governing the cemetery. Some cemeteries were held to municipal or state regulations, and other cemeteries required concrete vaults, which when buried below ground, do not rust or decay thus helping to

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³ National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin #41*: "Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places." Washington DC: NPS, 1992.

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prevent the formation of low spots and sink holes in the lawn. This is significant in large memorial gardens and park-like cemeteries where level ground results in more efficient mechanized maintenance by large lawn-grooming machinery.⁴

Burial customs have dictated the design and manufacturing of caskets for the last 400 years in America. The simple "pine box" depicted in so many Western movies has given way to elaborate wood, metal, plastic, or fiberglass caskets that are dressed in a multitude of frills, fabrics, and fashion. Caskets are made in a variety of sizes and shapes in order to accommodate the body and the wishes dictated before death by the deceased and/or by the family of the deceased.

The Development of Funerary Properties in Spokane, Washington from 1888 to 1978 Historic Significance: Category A

Funerary property development in Spokane, Washington has gained historical significance as a demonstration of country-wide trends and local patterns associated with burial and entombment practices. These trends and patterns are expressed as tangible reminders of funerary property development in Spokane from 1888 to 1978. They include cemeteries, funeral homes, and casket factories.

Cemeteries

Popular in the United States in the 1800s and 1900s, the "rural" cemetery movement was a strong influence that led to the planning and construction of perpetual-care lawn cemeteries and memorial parks in Spokane, Washington. Five major cemeteries were built in the city and reflect this idiom:

•	Greenwood Memorial Terrace	211 N. Government Way	built 1888
•	Fairmount Memorial Park	5200 W. Wellesley Avenue	built 1888
•	Riverside Memorial Park	508 N. Government Way	built 1914
•	Holy Cross Cemetery	7200 N. Wall Street	built 1933
•	Spokane Memorial Gardens	5909 S.Cheney-Spokane Rd.	built 1954

Major stages of growth for funerary properties began in 1888 when Greenwood Cemetery (original name) and Fairmount Cemetery (original name) were planned and constructed. Greenwood Cemetery was planned and funded by Anthony Cannon, one of Spokane's most celebrated early pioneers, and other influential businessmen of Spokane. At first, some of the businessmen owned shares in the cemetery. Later the incorporation papers were changed so that cemetery lots could be sold to individuals seeking burial ground. The idea worked and hundreds of plots were sold. Greenwood also allocated a portion of its cemetery for Jewish burials, and became the first and only cemetery in Spokane to do so.

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⁴ CasketsForLess.com

⁵ Powers, Dorothy Rochon. *Heritage From Heroes*. Spokane: Lawton Press, Inc., 1993.

Fairmount Cemetery was founded in 1888, the same year as Greenwood. Its founder, however, was not a Spokane businessman but was a priest, Rev. J. M. Cataldo, S. J. He spent \$10,000 to develop Fairmount Cemetery, which was built specifically as a Roman Catholic cemetery.

In 1907, Spokane mining millionaire, John A. Finch, and other affluent businessmen in Spokane organized stock shares in order to develop another cemetery, the Riverside Park Cemetery. It was located just across the road from Greenwood Cemetery, but wasn't built until 1914. In 1933 Holy Cross Cemetery was established for use as another Roman Catholic cemetery, and in 1954 Spokane Memorial Gardens was developed in Spokane County.

Cultural influences which were inspired by romantic perceptions of nature, art, identity, and the melancholy theme of death led to the 20th-century "rural" cemetery movement in Spokane and the United States. The designs for the above-referenced five major cemeteries in Spokane were all influenced by this movement, and included sites and viewsites which were located on the outskirts of town at the time they were developed; groomed grounds with natural indigenous features such as evergreen trees, rocky outcroppings, and water features; and artistic headstones and tombstones that identified the deceased. Eventually land conservation issues favored cremation and prompted the construction of mausoleums and columbariums, which were built to house urns that held the ashes of the deceased.

Pivotal events occurred in the first half of the 20th century when the rural cemetery movement evolved to include new cemetery designs that encouraged sweeping lawns and undulating hills with no upright headstones or tombstones. Instead, plaque-type grave markers were mounted flush with the surface of the ground. Cemeteries were now referred to as "perpetual-care" cemeteries or "memorial parks." This national trend was embraced by all five cemeteries in Spokane. Three changed their names to include in their the words "memorial park" or "memorial terrace," which replaced the word "cemetery." All five cemeteries adopted flush-mounted grave marker designs which promoted sweeping park-like grounds and vistas instead of headstone-dotted hillsides reminiscent of 18th and 19th-century graveyards or churchyards.

Funeral Homes

The history of funeral homes in Spokane mirrors the history of the city's five major, planned cemeteries. The first indication of professionals readying bodies for burial was indicated in an *1888 City Directory* which listed two undertakers. Their business was located on Sprague Avenue in downtown Spokane. In 1889, "funeral directors" Bicksler & Webster Co. were located at 309 West Riverside Avenue and advertised their services with the following promise:

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"Everything requisite for first-class funerals at the shortest notice. All calls attended immediately, day or night. Embalming a specialty."

The very next year, three "undertakers" were listed in city directories. These included Morrison Brothers (223 E. Riverside Avenue), Smith & Luce (22 E. Sprague Avenue), and Spokane Undertakers (317 W. Riverside Avenue). By 1892, Smith & Luce were known as Smith & Company, had relocated to 507 Sprague, and were advertised as "undertakers, embalmers, and florists." Ten years later in 1902, Spokane city directories listed seven funerary establishments in the classified section under "cemeteries," "funeral directors," "undertakers," and "coffin manufacturers." The funerary business was booming.

By 1912, Spokane's population had burgeoned to over 100,000, a three-fold increase from 1900.⁶ It was the first year buildings in Spokane were specifically designed and constructed for use as funeral homes. They included a building located at 28-30 W. Third Avenue and a building located at 1122-24 West Riverside Avenue. The structure on Third Avenue was built for Mr. & Mrs. J. D. Buchanan, who were advertised in city directories as embalmers, funeral directors, and undertakers. The building on West Riverside Avenue was built for Smith & Company funeral home. Both buildings reflected distinctive architectural styles and influences that romanticized the structure in which the deceased was honored in preparation for burial. Built for a significant purpose, the funeral home was an important building and was quite often the last place the family and friends of the deceased were able to view the body before burial or cremation. Consequently, great care was taken in the design and construction of the interior and exterior of the building. Following this trend, Hazen & Jaeger Funeral Home (1306 N. Monroe), Hennessey-Smith Funeral Home (2203 N. Division), Ball & Dodd Funeral Home (421 S. Division), and the Riplinger Funeral Home (4305 N. Division) were all erected in Spokane with designs that reflect a combination of high aesthetic values and several architectural styles and influences.

Casket Factories

The manufacture of caskets followed the national trend set by the rural cemetery movement in America. By the end of the 20th century, the concept of honoring the dead had been romanticized to the point where caskets were no longer functional burial cases but were rather like extravagant shrines that shrouded and encased the deceased when they were buried underground. Today, hundreds and thousands of dollars are spent annually on wrapping the deceased in the height of respectful reverence delivered in the form of exquisitely finished, upholstered caskets made of natural hardwoods, tropical woods such as mahogany and rosewood, or solid steel.

⁶ Holstein, Craig. *Multiple Property Documentation*, "Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District of Spokane, Washington, 1900 to 1910."

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The first advertisement for a casket-making enterprise in Spokane was in 1896. The Spokane Coffin Factory was listed in the city directory in a building at 119-121 Post, which was occupied by Smith & Co. funeral home. Financed by the Smith family, the casket company name was changed in 1903 to the Spokane Casket Company, and a three-story wood frame building was constructed at 1620 W. Water Avenue in Peaceful Valley. The 1903 Spokane Directory listed the company as a manufacturer of "coffins, caskets, robes, linings, etc."

The Spokane Casket Company had no competitors until 1905 when the Inland Casket Company factory building was built at 21 West Sharp. At that time the two casket companies served four funeral homes in Spokane. In 1913 the Inland Casket Company moved into their new three-story brick factory building, located at 2320 N. Atlantic Avenue, which replaced the West Sharp building (destroyed by fire). According to Inland Casket Company records, the two casket companies operated as friendly competitors. Smith & Co. funeral home purchased Spokane-manufactured caskets almost solely from the Spokane Casket Company, and Hennessey-Calloway Funeral Home (2203 N. Division, now called Hennessey-Smith Funeral Home) bought their Spokane-manufactured caskets from the Inland Casket Company. The other funeral homes in Spokane equally purchased caskets from both casket companies. Located a block apart from each other, Hennessey and the Inland Casket Company enjoyed an excellent business relationship based on friendship, trust, service, and convenient geography.

The two casket companies dominated the Spokane market for more than 65 years until the late 1970s. The 1980s witnessed a change in the casket business from manufacturing-based to service-based enterprises. Due to ever-increasing material and transportation costs and the burgeoning power of mega-national casket manufacturers from the Eastern United States and other countries, Spokane casket manufacturers closed their businesses. The Spokane Casket Company factory building was vacated and then demolished in 2001. The Inland Casket Company factory building stopped production by 1978, and the building was later used as a warehouse for restaurant storage. Currently only wholesale casket distributors are located in Spokane. They sell products wholesale to funeral homes, which in turn sell at the retail level to the general public. In 2004, an internet site advertised caskets for sale on a retail basis, overriding the middleman at the funeral home.

⁷ Greenwood, Richard. Family records for the Inland Casket Company, 1906-1968.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ CasketsForLess.com

F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

1) Name of Property Type: CEMETERY

2) Description

Rural cemeteries, perpetual-care cemeteries, and memorial parks are large, multi-acred tracts of land that are usually sited on hillsides, viewsites, or mounds on the outskirts of town. The cemeteries may include monuments, headstones, flush-mounted grave markers, chapels, mausoleums, columbariums, offices, caretaker's cottages, garages, roads, entrance gates, and fences. Cemetery grounds include groomed lawns, undulating hillsides, vista points, trees and other plantings, and the use of indigenous features such as rocky outcroppings and water features.

3) Significance

Under Category A, Spokane cemeteries are historically significant for their associative values. They represent the growth of Spokane, which naturally resulted in increased deaths, and the influence and contributions of pioneers and people who founded them. They reflect national trends in cemetery development and design and were influenced by the "rural" cemetery movement. All five major Spokane cemeteries were developed as planned perpetual-care facilities with endowment funds that were realized from wise investments and from retail sales of burial plots and services, caskets, cremation urns, and mausoleum and columbarium niches.¹⁰ Except for Spokane Memorial Gardens, four of the cemeteries are tangible reflections of the transformation that took place in the rural cemetery movement which de-emphasized upright headstones and instead, emphasized ground-level flush-mounted grave markers. In addition, the rural cemetery movement embraced cremation facilities, including the erection of mausoleums and columbariums. Notable examples in Spokane include the entry gates and mausoleum at Riverside Memorial Park (originally called Riverside Park Cemetery). The entry gates were designed by the Cutter & Malmgren architectural firm, and the mausoleum was designed by the Rigg & Vantyne architectural firm, both prominent and prolific design professionals working in early Spokane.

4) Registration Requirements

To be eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places, a cemetery/memorial garden must convey its historic character in both physical and associative ways, and must have documented historical significance when evaluated within the context of funerary properties in Spokane, Washington.

Given the distinctive form and design of cemeteries and memorial gardens, eligible properties must retain most of their integrity of original location, design, materials,

¹⁰ Hoover, Robert, Holy Cross Cemetery Director. Personal interview with Linda Yeomans, Aug. 2004.

workmanship, and association as a historic cemetery constructed in Spokane, Washington. Character-defining elements include the site, groomed park-like grounds, outbuildings (office, chapel, caretaker's cottage, garage, mausoleum, columbarium), ornamental entrance gates, fences and rock walls, roads, and upright headstones and flush-mounted grave markers. Not all of the character-defining elements must be present, but a significant quantity must convey the property's design and function as a cemetery influenced by the "rural" cemetery movement and its transformation to large-scale memorial parks and gardens.

Documented historical research illustrates the significant impact the rural cemetery movement had on the development of Spokane cemeteries and memorial parks/gardens from 1888 to 1978. All five major cemeteries in Spokane depict the styles and designs preferred for memorial gardens and perpetual care cemeteries as described in the abovementioned registration requirements.

1) Name of Property: FUNERAL HOMES

2) Description

A funeral home is a building type associated with the development of funerary properties in Spokane. Funeral homes in Spokane were meant to be seen by the public and were sited on prominent streets or busy thoroughfares. Influenced by the "rural" cemetery movement of the 19th and 20th centuries in America, funeral homes in Spokane were built and embellished with decorative features, usually depicting architectural elements derived from romantic revival styles or other high styles. Funeral homes in Spokane reveal one, two, or three-story structures made out of wood frame, brick masonry, or reinforced concrete with brick, stone, or stucco veneer.

3) Significance

Funeral homes convey associative characteristics that reflect cultural patterns and trends that were prevalent in Spokane during the 19th and 20th centuries. Funeral homes were built as places where the deceased could be prepared for burial or cremation and reflect the Spokane community's preference for professional services. Besides their function, funeral homes in Spokane have one significant design feature in common: they were all designed with eye-catching exteriors that reflect aesthetic values and influences derived from traditional architectural styles. The Smith Funeral Home (now called the North Coast Life Plaza), is particularly notable as an example of the work of the Jones & Levesque architectural firm. It was designed with influences derived from the French Chateauesque style and retains a mansard roof and elaborate terra cotta façade embellishment—designs that are highly decorative and relatively uncommon in Spokane. The Buchanan Funeral Home also boasts elaborate terra cotta embellishment characterized in a uniquely shaped center facade parapet. Both buildings are listed on the Spokane and National Registers of Historic Places. The Hennessey-Smith Funeral Home and the Hazen & Jaeger Funeral Home also reveal designs and architectural elements that

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were influenced by high styles and stylistic traditions in architecture. Both buildings are individually eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places, and may also be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

4) Registration Requirements

To be eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places, a funeral home must convey its historic character in both physical and associative ways, and must have documented historical significance when evaluated within the context of funerary properties in Spokane, Washington.

Given the distinctive facades and stylistic embellishment of a funeral home, the property must retain most of its original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association as a funeral home built in Spokane. Character-defining features of funeral homes include some but not all of the following: a prominent, decorative façade; highly visible site; one to three story building; and a construction date from 1888 to 1978 as listed in the MPD (non-historic buildings as of this writing may be included later when they have met the historic 50-year requirement).

1) Name of Property Type: CASKET FACTORY

2) Description

The casket factory is a building type associated with the development of funerary properties in Spokane, Washington from 1888 to 1978. Documentation reveals that only two casket factories were built in Spokane: the Spokane Casket Company and the Inland Casket Company. They were both three-story, rectangular-shaped industrial buildings designed with little or no embellishment. They were designed and built purely for function and low visibility, and were located on building sites within fringe areas of Spokane or in transition zones between residential and commercial/industrial neighborhoods. The Spokane Casket Company factory building was made of wood frame while the Inland Casket Company factory building was made of brick masonry, which was a more fire-retardant material. They were both sited inconspicuously on the outskirts of non-prominent residential neighborhoods.

3) Significance

The Inland Casket Company factory building is historically significant as the one remaining casket factory in Spokane. The building type embodies cultural trends and patterns in Spokane which reflected the people's preference for the manufacture of stock and custom-designed caskets.

Influenced by country-wide trends in the United States for burying the deceased in something that protected and honored the body, casket factories became products of American cultural beliefs that were popular during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. Viewed in a different light than funeral homes, which were designed with overt

embellishment and were meant to be seen by the public, the typical casket factory in Spokane was viewed as a necessary but functional building. It was sited as an inconspicuous part of the built environment, and was constructed as an industrial factory and a commercial warehouse with little or no architectural embellishment. For example, the Spokane Casket Company factory building was sited in Peaceful Valley, "a neighborhood located near downtown but often neglected and forgotten. It was a good location for a casket factory, inauspicious and seldom visited." The Inland Casket Company factory building was sited one block west of a commercial strip, and was sandwiched between the rear elevations of commercial properties and the edge of a non-prominent residential neighborhood in north central Spokane.

Without frills or much decorative detail, the Spokane Casket Company factory building and the Inland Casket Company factory building were built as plain rectangular, three-The Spokane Casket Company factory building was story commercial blocks. demolished in 2001, but the Inland Casket Company factory building remains in excellent condition at 2320 N. Atlantic Street, one block north of the Hennessey-Smith Funeral Home. The Inland Casket Company factory building is a good example of the no-nonsense approach adapted to the exterior design for Spokane casket factory buildings. Defining features of the building include its rectangular, three-story brick masonry form, brick exterior wall cladding, and symmetrical fenestration patterns. A c. 1950s photograph of the building pictures it as an inconspicuous structure almost entirely hidden by mature deciduous trees that were purposely planted in front of the building's two primary facades along North Atlantic Street and West Carlisle Avenue. 12 The Inland Casket Company factory building is historically significant as the one remaining casket factory building in Spokane. It retains its original location and association as an early industrial and commercial factory building in Spokane, and retains most of its exterior design, materials, and workmanship.

4) Registration Requirements

To be eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places, a casket factory must convey its historic character in both physical and associative ways, and must have documented historical significance when evaluated within the context of funerary properties in Spokane, Washington.

Eligible properties must retain most of their integrity of original location, design, materials, workmanship, and association as a historic casket factory constructed in Spokane, Washington. The building site for a casket factory should be located in a non-prominent area of the city, perhaps on the fringe of residential development, or in a transition zone between residential and commercial/industrial development, or in an

¹¹ Emerson, Stephen. *Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Documentation of the Spokane Casket Company Factory Buildings, Spokane, Washington.* Spokane: Archisto Enterprises, Inc., 2001.

¹² Greenwood, Richard. Collection of historic photographs and family records for the Inland Casket Company.

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industrial area. Defining features of the building include a simple rectangular one to three-story industrial building form (usually with a flat roof); brick masonry or wood frame construction; very little or no exterior embellishment; symmetrical fenestration patterns; evidence of warehouse or service entrances; and evidence of a surrounding industrial yard/parking area. While not all of these features need be present for historic registration eligibility, the building must be a clear example of an historic industrial/warehouse/factory structure built in Spokane.

G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The funerary properties are located in Spokane, Washington.

H. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CasketsForLess.com (telephone interview with Linda Yeomans, August 2004).

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