

## Dieckmann Funeral Home

Founded: 1867

Location: 308 Upper Market Street, New Albany (1867–late 1920s); 74 Market Street; 221–223 East Market Street (the corner of Market and Third Streets); 615 Vincennes Street (late 1920s–1951); 1846 East Oak Street (1951– )

In 1867 William H. Merker and James M. Gwin entered into partnership as undertakers, establishing themselves at the corner of Market and Third Streets in New Albany. Merker was New Albany's fire chief, a position he held off and on for many years. Gwin was a partner with his father in Berry Gwin & Son, a livery stable already located at the same location. Berry Gwin had migrated to New Albany from Virginia. His son James was born in New Albany in 1837, and after serving as New Albany's assistant postmaster during the administration of President James Buchanan, he entered his father's livery business in 1862.

Late in the 1890s or early 1900s Newland Gwin assumed James's role in the partnership of Merker & Gwin. He was also manager of Gwin's Fashion Stable, a livery business operated on the same corner of Market and Third Streets. Sometime between 1903 and 1905, Newland became sole proprietor of the undertaking establishment. He jointly conducted the undertaking and livery businesses until the period immediately after World War I, when he seems to have established the Gwin Auto Company in place of the stable. In October 1921 the firm of Gwin & Dieckmann was established. The partnership with Elmer H. Dieckmann may have been a result of Gwin's ill-health or his death; by 1925 the New Albany city directories listed Newland Gwin's widow, Olive D. Gwin, as co-owner of the funeral home.

In the late 1920s Elmer Dieckmann assumed full control of the undertaking establishment and moved to 615 Vincennes Street. His son Elmer H. Dieckmann, Jr., eventually joined him, and the firm later became Elmer H. Dieckmann & Son. Elmer Sr. died by at least 1947, and his widow, Gertrude, retained his interest in the funeral home. In 1951 Gertrude and Elmer Jr. renamed the firm Dieckmann Funeral Home and moved to 1846 East Oak Street. In the early 1960s Lyle D. Houston, Elmer Jr.'s son-in-law, joined the firm as a trainee. By 1980 he was codirector of the funeral home and later succeeded Elmer Jr. as president.