

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION  
AUGUST 26, 2013  
DEMOLITION AND RELOCATION PERMITS  
HDP-2013-0554  
1193½ SAN BERNARD STREET**

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**PROPOSAL**

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Demolish a ca. 1884 house.

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**ARCHITECTURE**

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One-story, rectangular-plan, hipped-roof, frame house with a partial-width independent porch on the right side of the front façade; 1:1 and 6:6 fenestration; gingerbread brackets at the top of the porch posts.

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**RESEARCH**

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The house dates at least as far back as 1884, as the home of John M. and Mollie Holland. John M. Holland operated a grocery store at 1007 Olive Street from the mid- to the late 1880s, he then went into real estate through the 1890s, and then became the superintendent and sexton of Bethany Cemetery, an African-American cemetery on what is now Springdale Road, approximately 2 miles east of downtown Austin out 12<sup>th</sup> Street. According to the history of Bethany Cemetery, Holland, along with other prominent local African-American men such as William M. Tears, the African-American undertaker, all had a share in the cemetery. Holland served as sexton of the cemetery until his death in 1923. Mollie Holland continued to live in the house until around 1936. She never had an occupation listed in the city directories, and does not appear in U.S. Census reports. From around 1936 to around 1946, the house was occupied by Lewis M. Mitchell, an African-American dentist, who also had his office here. The house became a rental unit in the late 1940s, and was purchased by Frances Shaw, a laundry worker who then opened a beauty shop in the house in the late 1950s. Ms. Shaw lived here until around 1970. The house has been a rental unit since that time.

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**STAFF COMMENTS**

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The house was determined to have a high priority for preservation in the Historic Resources of East Austin Survey (2000), and would be contributing to a potential National Register or Locally-Designated Historic District along San Bernard Street.

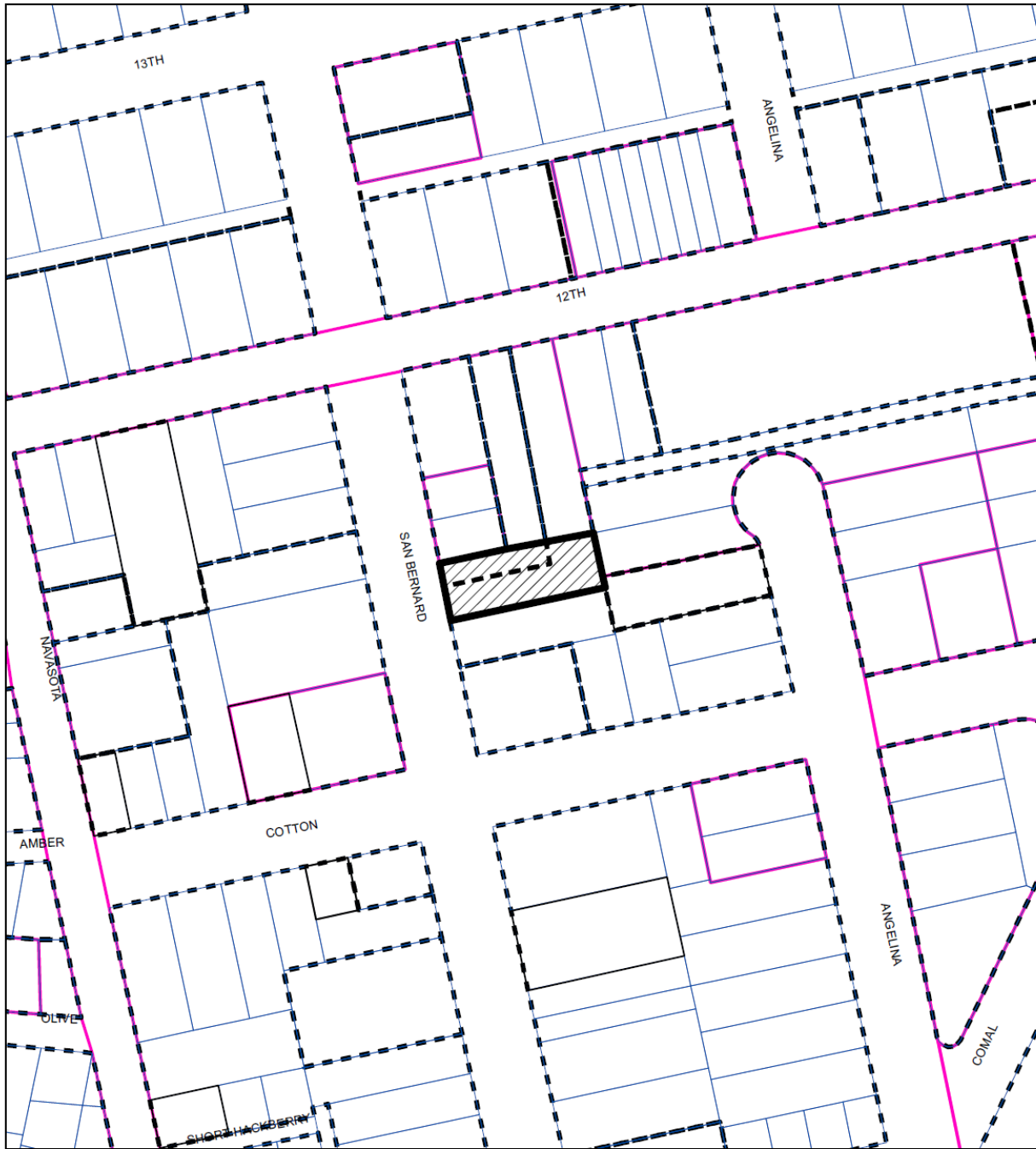
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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Postpone to September 23, 2013 to determine and evaluate alternatives to demolition. Staff believes that the house is not only contributing to a potential San Bernard Historic District, but may also be worthy of consideration as a City Historic Landmark due to its age, representation of a now-rare vernacular architectural form, and associations with Austin's African-American history, particularly with Bethany Cemetery and with the establishment of African-American professions in Austin, such as Dr. Mitchell's dentistry office located here in the segregated 1940s.

## LOCATION MAP



SUBJECT TRACT



ZONING BOUNDARY

CASE#: HDP-2013-0554  
 LOCATION: 1193 1/2 San Bernard Street



This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by the Planning and Development Review Department for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

1193½ San Bernard Street  
ca. 1884







## OCCUPANCY HISTORY 1193½ San Bernard Street

City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
By City Historic Preservation Office  
August, 2013

1992	Debra Anne Overton, renter Phone operator, Austin Community College
1985-86	Vacant
1981	Emma J. Cooks, renter No occupation listed
1977	Emma J. Cooks, renter No occupation listed
1973	Edwin and Willie M. Manning, renters Cook, Maryland Fried Chicken, 1422 Town Creek Drive and 1810 W. Ben White Boulevard.
1968	Frances Shaw, renter Retired
1962	Frances A. Shaw, owner No occupation listed

1959	Frances A. Shaw, owner Proprietor, Varsity Beauty Shop (at the house)
1954	Frances A. Shaw, owner No occupation listed
1952	Frances A. Shaw, owner Laundry worker
1949	John L. and Beatrice James, renters Porter, Lamme's Candy, 919 Congress Avenue and 2516 Guadalupe Street. NOTE: Frances A. Shaw was a laundress living at 1012 E. 11 <sup>th</sup> Street.
1947	John and Beatrice James, renters Production department, Lamme's Confectionary, 919 Congress Avenue.
1944-45	Lewis M. and Carolyn Mitchell, owners Dentist, 1208-B E. 12 <sup>th</sup> Street.
1941	Lewis M. and Carolyn Mitchell, renters Dentist (office at the house)
1939	Lewis M. Mitchell's Dentist Office NOTE: Lewis M. Mitchell (no wife listed), lived at 1193 San Bernard Street.
1937	Lewis M. and Zerita Mitchell, renters Dentist
1935	Mollie Holland, owner No occupation listed NOTE: Annie E. Mitchell lived at 1193 San Bernard Street; there was no listing for Lewis M. Mitchell.
1932-33	Mollie Holland, owner No occupation listed NOTE: The house is listed as 1189 San Bernard Street.
1930-31	Mollie Holland, owner No occupation listed NOTE: The house is listed as 1189 San Bernard Street.
1929	Mollie Holland (colored), owner No occupation listed NOTE: The house is listed as 1189 San Bernard Street.
1927	Mollie Holland (colored), owner No occupation listed NOTE: The house is listed as 1189 San Bernard Street.
1924	Mollie Holland (colored), owner No occupation listed NOTE: The house is listed as 1189 San Bernard Street.

- 1922 John M. and Mollie Holland (colored), owners  
No occupation listed  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1189 San Bernard Street.
- 1920 John M. and Mollie Holland (colored), owners  
Sexton  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1189 San Bernard Street.
- 1918 John M. and Mollie Holland (colored), owners  
Sexton  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1189 San Bernard Street.
- 1916 John M. Holland (colored)  
Sexton, Bethany Cemetery, E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, 2 miles east of Austin.  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1189 San Bernard Street.
- 1914 John M. Holland (colored)  
Sexton, Bethany Cemetery  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1189 San Bernard Street.
- 1912-13 John M. Holland, (colored)  
Sexton, Bethany Cemetery (William M. Tears, secretary/treasurer), 2 miles east of Austin on E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street.  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1189 San Bernard Street.
- 1910-11 John M. Holland (colored)  
Sexton, Bethany Cemetery, William M. Tears, secretary-treasurer, 2 miles east of Austin on E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street.  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1189 San Bernard Street.
- 1909-10 John M. Holland (colored)  
Sexton, Bethany Cemetery  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1409 San Bernard Street.
- 1906-07 John M. Holland (colored)  
Sexton, Methodist (colored) Cemetery (not listed in the directory).  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1409 San Bernard Street.
- 1905 John M. Holland (colored)  
Sexton, Bethel Cemetery (not listed in the directory).  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1409 San Bernard Street.
- 1903-04 John M. Holland (colored)  
Sexton  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1409 San Bernard Street.
- 1900-01 John M. Holland  
Superintendent, Bethany Cemetery (not listed in the directory)  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1409 San Bernard Street.
- 1898-99 John M. Holland (colored)  
Superintendent, Bethany Cemetery (not listed in the directory)  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1409 San Bernard Street.

- 1897-98      John M. Holland (colored)  
Real estate agent  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1409 San Bernard Street.
- 1895-96      John M. Holland (colored)  
Farmer  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1409 San Bernard Street.
- 1893-94      John M. Holland (colored)  
Real estate manager  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1409 San Bernard Street.
- 1891-92      John M. Holland  
Real estate agent  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1409 San Bernard Street.
- 1889-90      John M. Holland  
Proprietor of a grocery at 1007 Olive Street.  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1409 San Bernard Street.
- 1887-88      John M. Holland  
Proprietor of a grocery at 1107 Olive Street.  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1307 San Bernard Street.
- 1885-86      John M. Holland  
No occupation listed  
NOTE: The house is listed as 1307 San Bernard Street, between Cotton and College Streets.
- 1883-84      John M. Holland is not listed in the directory.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:****John M. and Mollie Holland (ca. 1884 – ca. 1936)**

John M. and Mollie Holland appear in the 1920 U.S. Census as the owners of this house. John M. Holland was then a 68-year old Texas-born mulatto, who was a cemetery sexton. Mollie Holland was then a 63-year old Texas-born mulatto. She had no occupation listed. The 1930 U.S. Census shows Mollie Holland as the owner of this house; she was 78, and had been born in Tennessee. With her lived a cook, Lula Willis, 24, who had been born in Texas. John M. Holland died January 2, 1923 in Travis County. There was no obituary in the Austin newspapers. Mollie Holland is believed to have died in Bexar County, Texas, on November 21, 1944.

# Bethany Cemetery

## Travis County, Texas

Submitted by: Phil and Sarah Edwards, Northamptonshire, England  
Cemeteries of Texas Coordinator: Dolores I. Bishop

On his 47th birthday, December 18, 1850, John Hemphill, Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court, purchased a City of Austin Government Tract - Lot 18 1/2 - Division B, (31.5 acres) from the State of Texas (1) One year passed before Hemphill paid the last installment on the property. On Jun 2, 1852, the State of Texas, represented by Governor P. Hansborough Bell, patented 1 Outlot 18 1/2 to John Hemphill. (2) In the next 41 years between 1852 and 1893, title to the property known as Bethany Cemetery would pass through the hands of 36 people, either as owners or agents for absentee owners. (See attached title search.) Bethany Cemetery is located in east Austin on the 1300 block of Springdale Road across from Sims Elementary School. Large white oaks, winged elms, and eastern Cedars, an evergreen that symbolizes everlasting life, are clustered along the Tannehill Branch of Boggy Creek. Other than the headstones that bear witness to the people who lived in the Austin community, the land has remained unchanged since the time in 1892; C.W. Jones paid \$432.60 for the property that would become Bethany Cemetery. (3) Whether Mr. Jones had the intent to begin a cemetery for African Americans is unclear. However, during the time of his purchase, two graves of young children were already present on the property. Hellen Moore, an infant, was buried in 1879. Alice Maud Miller, 9 months old, was buried in 1886. Little is known about these two children. (4) Other sources indicate that more burials may be present. A brief history of the property was presented during an Historical Landmark Commission meeting on September 19, 1977. In the Landmark's minutes, it states that the property was known as Hungry Hill and that the earliest burial date was 1875. (5) In 1893, Mr. Jones and his wife, Emma, sold a 4/5ths undivided interest to John M. Holland, William M. Tears, Henderson Rollins and Allen Bradley. (6) These five men formed the Bethany Cemetery Company. Jones was Superintendent; Holland was President; Tears was Secretary; Rollins was Treasurer; and Bradley was Assistant Secretary. (7) These five men responded to a community need. Ada Simond in her publication, Looking Back, A Focus on Austin's Black Heritage, wrote, "When the Austin cemetery named Oakwood was laid out in 1856, a small section in the northeast corner was designated "for colored." When the space was filled, as was the section for whites, the cemetery was expanded across Comal Street to the east, but did not include a section for blacks." Like many of the people who would find eternal rest in Bethany Cemetery, Henderson Rollins, C.W. Jones, Allen Bradley, and John Holland were ordinary folks who did extraordinary things. Mr. Rollins was listed in the City Directory as a laborer. (8) C.W. Jones was a plumber. (9) Allen Bradley was proprietor of a meat market on 1108 East



11th Street.(10) John M. Holland was a real estate agent.(11) Only two men, William H. Holland and William M. Tears reached prominence in Texas history.

In 1849, William H. Holland was born in bondage. As a slave, he received a college education in Oberlin College. After freedom, William Holland returned to Texas. He worked in Austin's post office, taught school and was elected as a Wharton County representative in the Texas House.(12) There, he wrote and presented the bill for the establishment of Prairie View University. Through his efforts, the bill was eventually passed and today, William M. Holland is recognized as "the Father of Prairie View."(13)

Throughout his life, he supported education. During the time he served as president of the Bethany Cemetery Company, William H. Holland helped found the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Institute for Colored Youth in Austin. For thirteen years, he served as its president. Later, he began the Friends in Need, an organization that supported African Americans.(14)

Two years after founding the Bethany Cemetery Company, William M. Tears became one of Austin's first African American policemen. He served for six years. Then in 1901, he founded the Tears Mortuary, known as the oldest established business in Central Texas.(15) In 1893, Bethany Cemetery was subdivided into burial plots. The Bethany Cemetery officers granted William Tears power of attorney to conduct all sales of burial plots.(16)

The cemetery records depict the graves in a long, narrow arrangement. Individual burial plots border the cemetery on the north and south sides. Ten family-sized plots are separated by wide grassy pathways, referred to as alleys in the Bethany Cemetery Plat.(17) All the graves are oriented on an east-west axis, a Southern Christian tradition. This common practice was founded on the belief that during the Second Coming, all souls will rise out of their graves and face Christ on Judgment Day.(18) Community members believe that the charred wood and a cement slab are the remains of the Bethany Cemetery office, which housed its records. This cement structure is located just south of the main pathway on the west side of the cemetery. However, during an oral history interview with Willene Ross Wilson, daughter of Mrs. W.M. Ross, who was the last surviving member of the Bethany Cemetery Association, indicated otherwise. Willene said that the Bethany Cemetery records were housed in a separate building at Oakwood Cemetery. It was at that location that the Bethany records were destroyed.

(19) Today, the only Bethany Cemetery records that survive are in the Travis County Court House, The Austin History Center, and the homes, hearts and minds of the East Austin community.

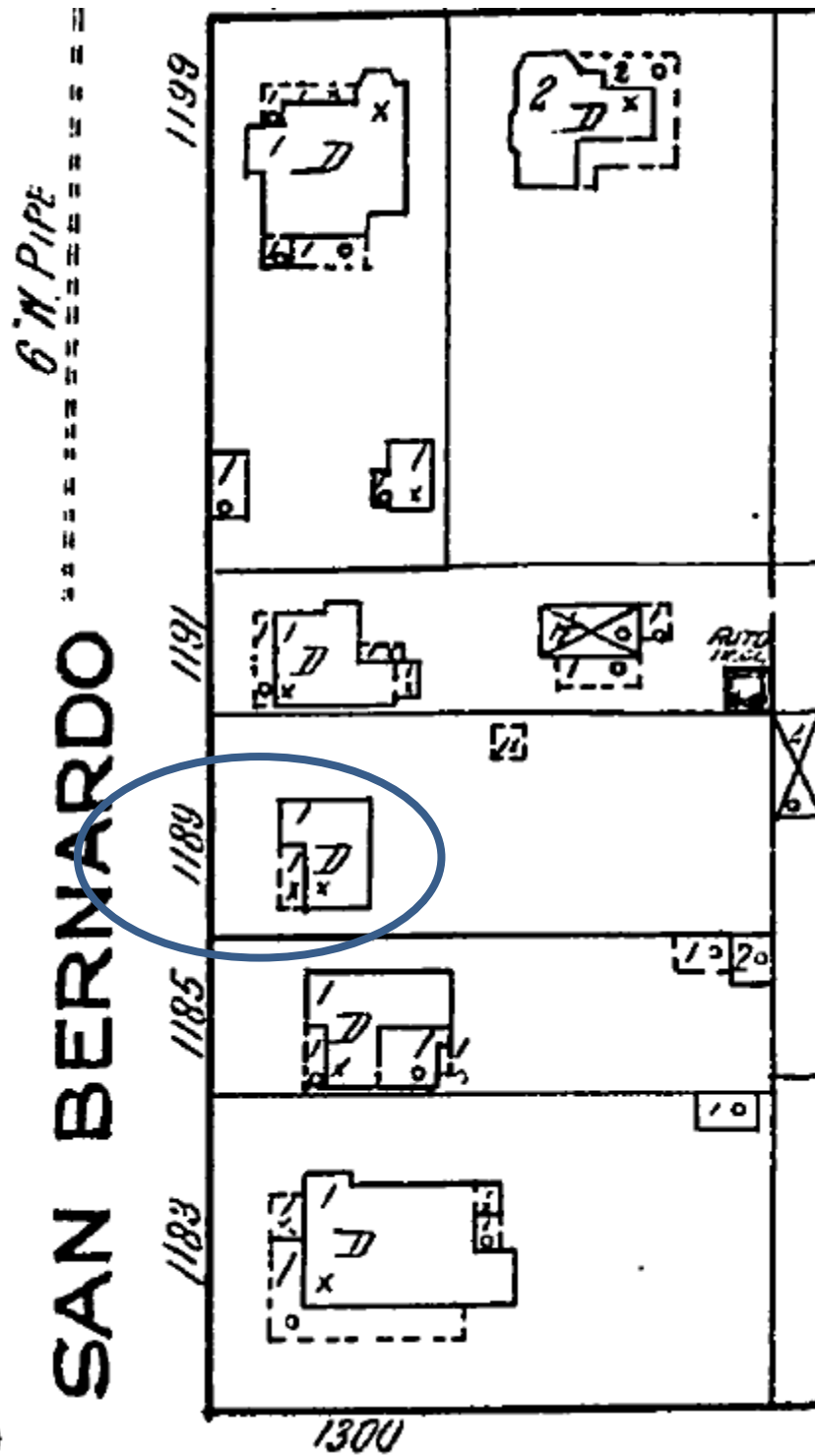
**In 1914, Bethany Cemetery Company hired a caretaker who worked there until 1930.(20)**

**In 1928, the City of Austin opened Evergreen Cemetery. With knowledge of family members receiving perpetual care, African Americans choose to buy burial plots at Evergreen. Others had their departed loved ones removed from Bethany and interred in the newly opened cemetery.(21) Throughout Bethany, there are many deep holes that stand as evidence of this silent migration.**

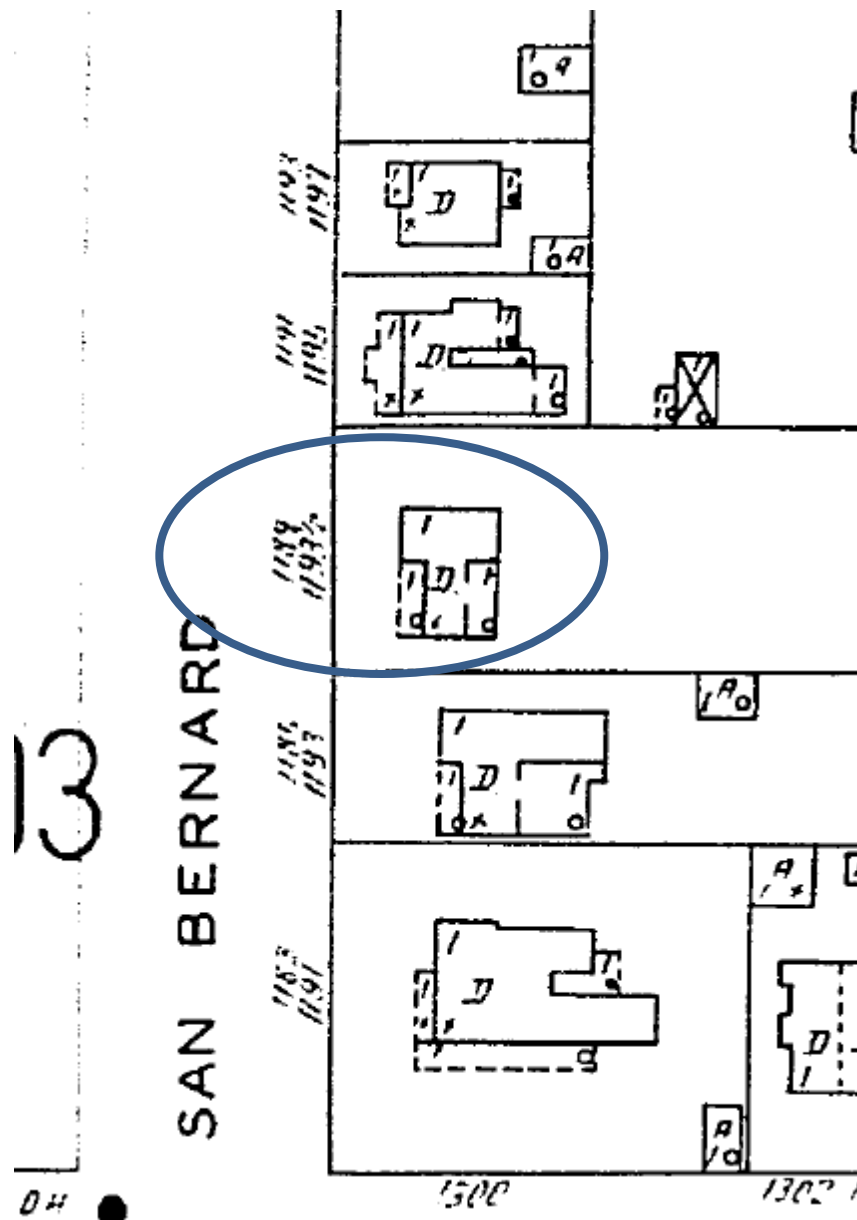
**Of the original six men who started the Bethany Cemetery Company, only two death notices are present in Travis County. William H. Holland died in 1907.(22) William M. Tears, Sr. died in Austin in 1930.(23) Travis County probate does not record the remaining gentlemen: Charles W. Jones, Henderson Rollins, Allen Bradley, and John M. Holland.**

**Lewis Mitchell (ca. 36 – ca. 1946)**

Lewis Mitchell appears in the 1900 U.S. Census as the 5-year-old son of Lewis and Annie E. Mitchell, who lived at 1613 Hackberry Street. Lewis Mitchell, Sr. was a mail carrier. Lewis Mitchell, Jr. had been born in Texas. The 1910 U.S. Census shows Lewis and Annie Mitchell at 1185 San Bernard Street, the house now known as 1193 San Bernard. The elder Lewis Mitchell was a mail carrier for the Post Office; Annie E. Mitchell was a manicurist, and the younger Lewis Mitchell, 15, had no occupation listed.

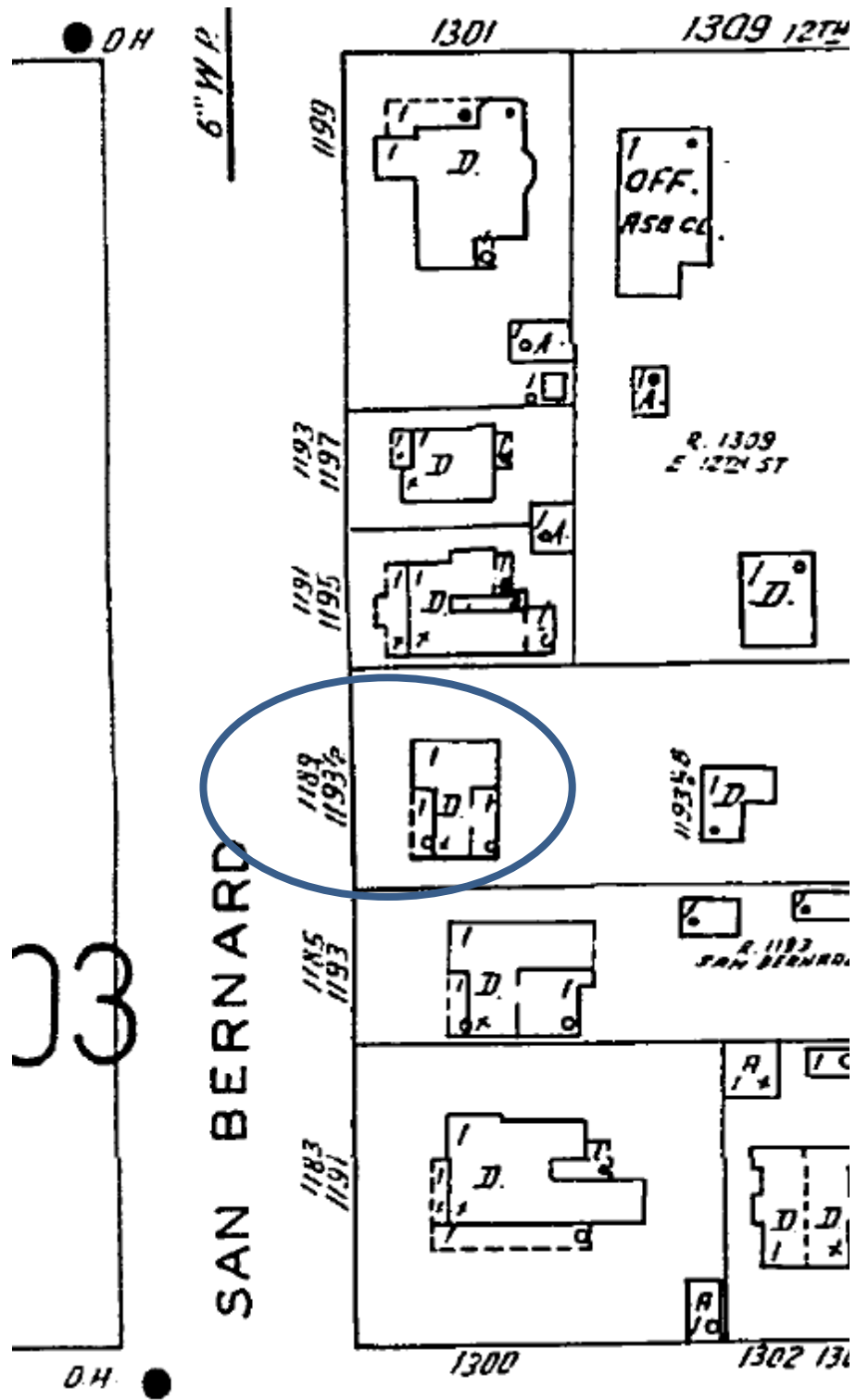


The 1922 Sanborn map shows the house with an address of 1189 San Bernard Street.



The 1935 Sanborn map shows the house with its old address of 1189 San Bernard and its new address of 1193½ San Bernard. A rear porch has been added to the house since the time of the 1922 map above.





The 1962 Sanborn map shows the house with its old and current address