

*1881

+ Washington,
1974 May 5,
93 yrs old

(Isaac
Heilprin's
grandson.)



William A. Heilprin is pictured in 1953 with a check that his grandfather had received from Abraham Lincoln for glasses when he was President.

William A. Heilprin, Franklin Optical Head

By Megan Rosenfeld

Washington Post Staff Writer

William A. Heilprin, member of an old Washington family and president of Franklin Optical Co. for 30 years, died Sunday at Sibley Hospital. He was 93.

Born in Washington, Mr. Heilprin was a lieutenant in the cadets at Washington High School, now Cardozo High School. He graduated cum laude from Harvard University in 1901, and was one of the oldest members of the Harvard Club of Washington at the time of his death.

As a child, Mr. Heilprin lived in a home facing the earliest building of the Smithsonian Institution, the building now known as The Castle. The area where the Heilprin house was is now L'Enfant Plaza.

Before relieving his father of the presidency of Franklin Optical Co., which was founded by Mr. Heilprin's grandfather in 1855, he was involved with several businesses.

In 1905, Mr. Heilprin moved to Philadelphia, where his Columbia Safety Air Gun Co. manufactured BB guns until World War I and the subsequent closing of the business.

During the war, Mr. Heilprin made military equipment, including tools and dies for the Frankford Arsenal in Philadelphia, and in the early 20s he ran the Arrow Machinery Co. in that city.

In 1937, Mr. Heilprin took over the Franklin Optical Co., which he sold on his retirement in 1966. The company was originally located on Pennsylvania Avenue near the Capitol; it is now at 1000 Connecticut Ave. NW.

The company once made a pair of glasses for Abraham

Lincoln while he was President, and Heilprin descendants still possess the check for \$2.50 that Mr. Lincoln wrote for the glasses. In 1953, Mr. Heilprin offered President Eisenhower the same service the firm gave the first Republican President, and Mr. Eisenhower's check for \$23.50 for a pair of special golf glasses was also framed by the family.

Mr. Heilprin was a member of the Washington Guild of Opticians and organized the Dispensing Opticians of Greater Washington. He was also a member of the District of Columbia Historical Society.

He is survived by his second wife, Lucille, of the home at 3003 Van Ness St. NW; two children, Lawrence L. of College Park, and Emily of Miami, Fla., and two grandchildren. Other survivors include four sisters, Ruth O'Neill of Santa Barbara, Minna Nagel and Marion Pollak of Larchmont, N.Y., and Gertrude Smoleff of Brooklyn, N.Y.

