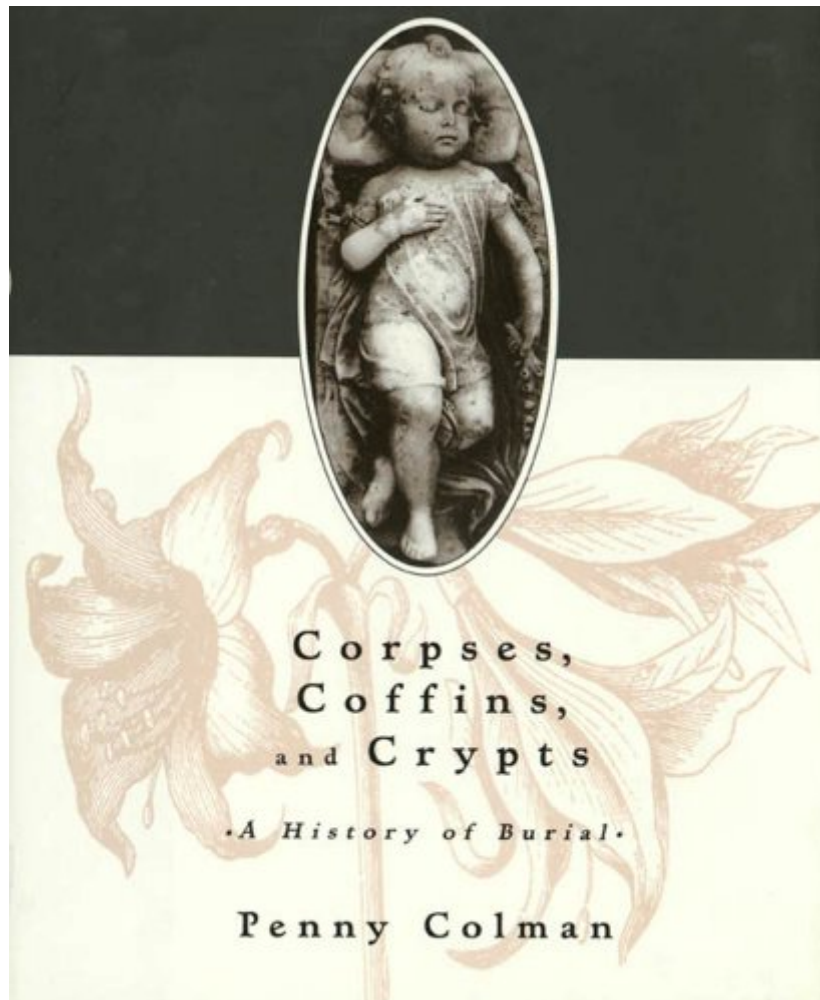




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Corpses, Coffins, And Crypts: A History Of Burial



Synopsis

Drawing on extensive historical and anthropological research, personal accounts, and interviews with people who work in the funeral industry, Penny Colman examines the compelling subjects of death and burial across cultures and societies. The text, enriched with stories both humorous and poignant, includes details about the decomposition and embalming processes (an adult corpse buried six feet deep without a coffin will usually take five to ten years to turn into a skeleton) and describes the various customs associated with containing remains (the Igala people in Nigeria have a custom of burying people in as many as twenty-seven layers of clothing). Intriguing facts are revealed at every turn; for example, in Madagascar winter was considered the corpse-turning season. This comprehensive book also includes a list of burial sites of famous people, images in the arts associated with death, fascinating epitaphs and gravestone carvings, a chronology and a glossary, and over a hundred black-and-white photographs, most of which were taken by the author. Penny Colman writes with compassion and intelligence and humanizes the difficult subjects of death and burial. The result is a powerful look at an inevitable part of life--death.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Interesting for young adults, but this is in no way a "history of burial" as indicated by the subtitle. If you're looking for a chronological progression of burial rites and practices developed for human remains through history, you won't find it in this book. I didn't think the personal anecdotes especially compelling or thoughtful.

I bought the Kindle edition. The photos were hard to see and I was hoping for less of a personal journey and more of an exploration of burial traditions. It was a good read, but not as good as I had hoped. I bought it hoping it would be another in-depth look at burial practices and what they mean but it felt very superficial. Most of the photos were of east coast cemeteries, which wouldn't necessarily have the same practices as those in the mid-west or west coast during the time periods covered. Overall it was well-written, but not what I thought I was getting.

This was a book that I ordered to use as a resource for a community Cemetery History project. It was very interesting and very readable. It contained information about ancient burial customs right up through modern times, gave examples of epitaphs and monument symbols and designs. The book included a glossary of terms, an extensive bibliography which I used for some more resource material, the chapters were well-titled and well-organized, and it was very helpful to me as background, and much of the information was very pertinent to our local pre-civil war cemetery. I scanned some of the photos to use in the Power Point presentation that I did for the community and the resolution was good. This is a great book for research, or just enjoyment and information for anyone interested in old cemeteries, history, genealogy, or local history.

I remember checking this book out from my public library when I was a teenager and it really changed how I thought. I began developing an appreciation for cemeteries and funerary customs after reading it, and I have never once glanced back! I was beyond excited when I saw the book for sale wanting it to add to my collection! Beautiful book with lots of information!

Very basic on the history. Seems the author is learning about the subject as she writes, so for someone who has read some on the subjects, there won't be a lot of new information.

Need for my work at our cemetery and found it helpful in understanding more about this subject.

I loved this book and all its explanations on different funeral and burial traditions . Plus the pictures in it were a treat for me , thank you for a great book

Very interesting book. A fine introduction to death and its decorations for young and old.

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