



# purified **BY FIRE**

**A HISTORY OF CREMATION IN AMERICA**

*"An engrossing look at a largely ignored subject."*  
JULIE FINNIN DAY, *Christian Science Monitor*

STEPHEN PROTHERO

# Purified By Fire A History Of Cremation In America

**Glenn B. Stracher, Anupma  
Prakash, Ellina V. Sokol**



## **Purified By Fire A History Of Cremation In America:**

Purified by Fire Stephen Prothero, 2001-02-15 Just one hundred years ago Americans almost universally condemned cremation Today nearly one quarter of Americans choose to be cremated The practice has gained wide acceptance as a funeral rite in both our private and public lives as the cremations of icons such as John Lennon and John F Kennedy Jr show *Purified by Fire* tells the fascinating story of cremation s rise from notoriety to legitimacy and takes a provocative new look at important transformations in the American cultural landscape over the last 150 years Stephen Prothero synthesizes a wide array of previously untapped source material including newspapers consumer guides mortician trade journals and popular magazines such as *Reader s Digest* to provide this first historical study of cremation in the United States He vividly describes many noteworthy events from the much criticized first American cremation in 1876 to the death and cremation of Jerry Garcia in the late twentieth century From the Gilded Age to the Progressive Era to the baby boomers of today this book takes us on a tour through American culture and traces our changing attitudes toward death religion public health the body and the environment *Purified by Fire* Stephen R. Prothero, 2005-04 This is the first book length history of cremation in the United States Purified by Fire Stephen Prothero, 2001-02-15 Publisher Fact Sheet A history of cremation in America

**Cremation in America** Fred Rosen, 2010-10-05 In this captivating review of the history the practice and the industry of cremation in America award winning former New York Times columnist Fred Rosen provides an authoritative source of information and many revealing facts about an increasingly common yet still controversial alternative to burial Rosen gives an entertaining first person account of his inquiry into the practice of cremation and its roots He describes the early ancient custom of cremation by funeral pyre and then explores why the rising Church banned the practice as a sacrilege He then traces the underpinnings of the modern cremation movement in the late 19th century among a colorful group of intellectuals and physicians This 19th century group endorsed this then illegal practice as a means to improve public health as a way to prevent seepage of burial grounds from polluting ground water and spreading disease Rosen goes on to examine in today s world people s feelings about death and religion as well as their sensitivities to cremation Given certain abuses he believes that this industry needs to be regulated However he finds much in favor of cremation when firsthand comparing its costs vs the excesses and extravagances of the burial funeral industry In an age when over 25 percent of the population is turning to cremation as a preferred funeral arrangement this book offers much timely useful and engrossing information *American Afterlives* Shannon Lee Dawdy, 2023-12-12 What do you think happens to you when you die And what do you want done with your body For three years Shannon Lee Dawdy travelled the U S from Vermont to California Illinois to Alabama posing such questions to a wide range of people from all walks of life Many of her interlocutors recently lost loved ones She also spoke to people who have made death their business funeral directors death care entrepreneurs designers cemetery owners and death doulas about the changes they were seeing and in many cases promoting in how the bodies of recently deceased persons are

being treated and how the memory of the deceased are being memorialized in the U S Her ethnographic research resulted in this book a wide ranging investigation into rapidly changing death practices in the twenty first century United States The author is also working on a documentary film project on this topic with cinematographer Daniel Zox Still photos from the film work will appear in this book

**The Matter of Air** Steven Connor,2010-10-15 Take a deep breath Air without it life on Earth would cease to exist Though not usually seen its presence is relied upon At once both ethereal and physical air has been associated with flight and spirit and yet it has progressively become a territory that can be claimed through communications warfare travel and scientific exploration At the same time air is no longer a completely reliable part of our daily life like water it has become an environmental element that must be watched closely for quality and purity A Matter of Air investigates the meanings of air over the last three centuries including our modern concern over emissions and climate change Steven Connor looks at the human relationship with air both positive and negative His explorations include the dangers posed by radio atmospherics poison gas and haze as well as our continued fascination with effervescence and explosives Drawing ideas from religion science art literature and philosophy A Matter of Air creates a comprehensive history of the human perception of air Thoroughly researched and written with wit and quirky enthusiasm the book will appeal to a wide range of general readers interested in the environment human history and our most essential aspects of life

**Parting Ways** Denise Carson,2011-04-10 Parting Ways explores the emergence of new end of life rituals in America that celebrate the dying and reinvent the roles of family and community at the deathbed Denise Carson contrasts her father s passing in the 1980s governed by the structures of institutionalized death with her mother s death some two decades later Carson s moving account of her mother s dying at home vividly portrays a ceremonial farewell known as a living wake showing how it closed the gap between social and biological death while opening the door for family and friends to reminisce with her mother Carson also investigates a variety of solutions living funerals oral ethical wills and home funerals that revise the impending death scenario Integrating the profoundly personal with the objectively historical Parting Ways calls for an end of life revolution to change the way of death in America

**History of Modern Cremation in Romania** Marius Rotar,2013-01-11 Cremation as a means of managing the post mortem body was reintroduced to Europe at the end of the eighteenth century but would not become common practice until the second half of the nineteenth century This was a major development with multifaceted implications which generated heated debate Initially armed with a variety of arguments hygienic economic aesthetic and philosophical arguments citing freedom of conscience and will the advocates of modern cremation who tended to come from the social and cultural elite sought to impose their new model This brought them into conflict with the traditional structures and patterns of burial and thus with the Church which had of course originally ended the practice of cremation The present study is a history of cremation in Romania beginning with the emergence of cremationist ideas in 1867 and taking the reader up to the present day It analyses the following key periods the second half of the nineteenth

century and early twentieth century the Interwar period Romania then being the first Orthodox country in the world to possess a crematorium which provoked a vehement reaction against cremation on part of the Orthodox Church the Communist period when no new crematoria were built even though the Communist regime proclaimed itself to be atheist and the post Communist period

Corpse Encounters Jacqueline Elam, Chase Pielak, 2018-06-13 This book takes a critical glance at the ways in which we attend to the corpse tracing a trajectory from encounter toward considering options for disposal veneered mortuary internment green burial and its attendant rot cremation and alkaline hydrolysis donation and display and ecological burial Through tracing the possible futures of the dead that haunt the living through both the stories that we tell and physical manifestations following the end of life we expose the workings of aesthetics that shape corpses as well as the ways in which corpses spill over resisting aestheticization This book creates a space for ritualized practices surrounding death corpse disposal corpse aesthetics that shape both practices attendant upon and representations of the corpse and literary figural and cultural representations that deploy these practices to tell a story about dead bodies about their separation from the living about their disposability and ultimately about the living who survive the dead if only for a while There is an aesthetics of erasure persistently at work on the dead body It must be quickly hidden from sight to shield us from the certain trauma of our own demise or so the unspoken argument goes Experts scientists forensic specialists death care professionals and law enforcement are the only ones qualified to view the dead for any extended period of time The rest of us with only brief doses inoculate ourselves from the materiality of death in complex and highly ritualized ceremonies Beyond participating in the project of restoring our sense of finitude we try to make sense of the untouchable unviewable haunting and taboo presence of the corpse itself

**Death in East Germany, 1945-1990** Felix Robin Schulz, 2013-09-01 As the first historical study of East Germany's sepulchral culture this book explores the complex cultural responses to death since the Second World War Topics include the interrelated areas of the organization and municipalization of the undertaking industry the steps taken towards a socialist cemetery culture such as issues of design spatial layout and commemorative practices the propagation of cremation as a means of disposal the wide spread introduction of anonymous communal areas for the internment of urns and the emergence of socialist and secular funeral rituals The author analyses the manifold changes to the system of the disposal of the dead in East Germany a society that not only had to negotiate the upheaval of military defeat but also urbanization secularization a communist regime and a planned economy Stressing a comparative approach the book reveals surprising similarities to the development of Western countries but also highlights the intricate local variations within the GDR and sheds more light on the East German state and its society

*Trouble with Death* Finn Bowring, 2025-04-25 Are we accepting of death or in denial of it What insights can we gain from the ways death has been imagined theorized and organized throughout Western social and intellectual history that might help us respond meaningfully to the climate emergency This interdisciplinary study begins with the role of tragedy in Greek antiquity and examines European attitudes

toward death especially their entanglement with colonial atrocities and politically organized killings Drawing on the work of philosophers sociologists historians and psychoanalysts this is a resounding call to confront our responsibility for the lives of others and the future of life itself amid the existential threats of the Anthropocene *So You're Cremated ... Now What?* Jesse Kalfel,2009 Over 40 million Americans choose to be cremated every year And they are in good company Paul Newman Ethel Merman Groucho Marx Marlon Brando and George Harrison to name a few But just because you want to be cremated doesn't make it so You need to make preparations before you actually check out And you may have a lot of questions you want answered to create the trouble free send off you really would like Kalfel writes a book for our times a highly readable guidebook that sheds light and brings great wit to the topic of cremation Part history part philosophy and part comedy Kalfel gives you legal tips urn advice and numerous location suggestions before delving into over 100 ways your ashes can be scattered or turned into memorable objects Kalfel includes a list of celebrities that opted for cremation along with commercially available scattering services What you can do as a final statement is what this book is all about If cremation is a considered choice for you or a loved one this book provides a way to start thinking and discussing this subject By knowing your options you can be in the director's chair for your life's grand finale **Coal and Peat Fires: A Global Perspective** Glenn B. Stracher,Anupma Prakash,Ellina V. Sokol,2010-09-30 Coal and Peat Fires A Global Perspective is a compelling collection of research conducted by scientists and engineers around the world The first of four volumes in the collection Coal Geology and Combustion features chapters that discuss the origin of coal and coal fires mining and use of coal combustion and coal petrology environmental and health impacts of coal fires combustion by products geochemical geophysical and engineering methodologies for studying coal fires the control extinguishment and political implications of coal fires and much more Integrates pioneering coal fires research with topical coverage of remote sensing policymaking and more Serves as an essential guide to the socio economic and geo environmental impacts of coal fires **Entangled Histories** Dan Ben-Canaan, Frank Grüner, Ines Prodöhl,2013-10-29 The authors of this book focus on transcultural entanglements in Manchuria during the first half of the twentieth century Manchuria as Western historiography commonly designates the three northeastern provinces of China was a politically culturally and economically contested region In the late nineteenth century the region became the centre of competing Russian Chinese and Japanese interests thereby also attracting global attention The coexistence of people with different nationalities ethnicities and cultures in Manchuria was rarely if ever harmoniously balanced or static On the contrary interactions were both dynamic and complex Semi colonial experiences affected the people's living conditions status and power relations The transcultural negotiations between all population groups across borders of all kinds are the subject of this book The chapters of this volume shed light on various entangled histories in areas such as administration the economy ideas ideologies culture media and daily life **Creating Meaning in Funerals** William G. Hoy,2024-08-01 Creating Meaning in Funerals is a book about the ways in which bereaved families and

communities create meaningful ceremonies against a backdrop of what is culturally appropriate even when their choices might make little economic sense to those outside the culture The culmination of these customs and practices this book maintains is how bereaved individuals families and communities are drawn into significant meaning making in early bereavement Readers will be repeatedly challenged to suspend their own biases observe the customs and beliefs of others thoughtfully and provide counseling support and encouragement to bereaved individuals for whom funerals were or were not effective means of coping with their loss Discussion questions at the end of each chapter make the book useful for educational settings such as funeral service classroom instruction thanatology classes and grief counseling courses Each chapter is also accompanied by its own reference list to make chapters more useful individually

Encyclopedia of Death and the Human Experience Clifton D. Bryant, Dennis L. Peck, 2009-07-15 Death and dying and death related behavior involve the causes of death and the nature of the actions and emotions surrounding death among the living Interest in the varied dimensions of death and dying has led to the development of death studies that move beyond medical research to include behavioral science disciplines and practitioner oriented fields As a result of this interdisciplinary interest the literature in the field has proliferated This two volume resource addresses the traditional death and dying related topics but also presents a unique focus on the human experience to create a new dimension to the study of death and dying With more than 300 entries the Encyclopedia of Death and the Human Experience includes the complex cultural beliefs and traditions and the institutionalized social rituals that surround dying and death as well as the array of emotional responses relating to bereavement grieving and mourning The Encyclopedia is enriched through important multidisciplinary contributions and perspectives as it arranges organizes defines and clarifies a comprehensive list of death related perspectives concepts and theories Key Features Imparts significant insight into the process of dying and the phenomenon of death Includes contributors from Asia Africa Australia Canada China eastern southern and western Europe Iceland Scandinavia South America and the United States who offer important interdisciplinary and cross cultural perspectives Provides a special focus on the cultural artifacts and social institutions and practices that constitute the human experience Addresses death related terms and concepts such as angel makers equivocal death end of life decision making near death experiences cemeteries ghost photography halo nurses caregiver stress cyberfunerals global religious beliefs and traditions and death denial Presents a selective use of figures tables and images Key Themes Arts Media and Popular Culture Perspectives Causes of Death Conceptualization of Death Dying and the Human Experience Coping With Loss and Grief The Human Experience Cross Cultural Perspectives Cultural Determined Social Oriented and Violent Forms of Death Developmental and Demographic Perspectives Funerals and Death Related Activities Legal Matters Process of Dying Symbolic Rituals Ceremonies and Celebrations of Life Theories and Concepts Unworldly Entities and Events With an array of topics that include traditional subjects and important emerging ideas the Encyclopedia of Death and the Human Experience is the

ultimate resource for students researchers academics and others interested in this intriguing area of study      *Celluloid Saviours* Emily Caston,2020-05-22 In *Celluloid Saviours* the author analyses a corpus of US films dating from the silent era that she calls film blanc In these fantasy films a guardian spirit with extraordinary powers suspends the ordinary known laws of time and space and a main character reforms himself or herself in life changing ways The author argues that the historical pattern of film blanc relates to the rise and fall of liberal and reform thought in US politics specifically to conceptions of human nature as a tabula rasa This conception is evident both in the early feature films featuring angels such as Chaplin's *The Kid* and much later examples such as the 1980s box office hit *Trading Places* She argues that this narrative tradition runs from Hollywood's beginnings to the present day and is foreshadowed in the English ghost stories of Charles Dickens The classic era of film blanc is epitomised in the enduringly popular film *It's a Wonderful Life* More recent examples of narrative form analysed by Caston include *The Truman Show* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*      *Christianity* Diarmaid MacCulloch,2010-03-18 The New York Times bestseller and definitive history of Christianity for our time from the award winning author of *The Reformation and Silence* A product of electrifying scholarship conveyed with commanding skill Diarmaid MacCulloch's *Christianity* goes back to the origins of the Hebrew Bible and encompasses the globe It captures the major turning points in Catholic Protestant and Orthodox history and fills in often neglected accounts of conversion and confrontation in Africa Latin America and Asia MacCulloch introduces us to monks and crusaders heretics and reformers popes and abolitionists and discover Christianity's essential role in shaping human history and the intimate lives of men and women And he uncovers the roots of the faith that galvanized America charting the surprising beliefs of the founding fathers the rise of the Evangelical movement and of Pentecostalism and the recent crises within the Catholic Church Bursting with original insights and a great pleasure to read this monumental religious history will not soon be surpassed      *Encyclopedia of Cremation* Lewis H. Mates,2016-04-29 The *Encyclopedia of Cremation* is the first major reference resource focused on cremation Spanning many world cultures it documents regional histories ideological movements and leading individuals that fostered cremation whilst also presenting cremation as a universal practice Tracing ancient and classical cremation sites historical and contemporary cremation processes and procedures of both scientific and legal kind the encyclopedia also includes sections on specific cremation rituals architecture art and text Features in the volume include a general introduction and editorial introductions to sub sections by Douglas Davies an international specialist in death studies appendices of world cremation statistics and a chronology of cremation cross referencing pathways through the entries via the index individual entry bibliographies and illustrations This major international reference work is also an essential source book for students on the growing number of death studies courses and wider studies in religion anthropology or sociology      **Teaching Death and Dying** Christopher M Moreman,2008-10-03 The academic study of death rose to prominence during the 1960s Courses on some aspect of death and dying can now be found at most institutions of higher learning These courses tend to stress the



psycho social aspects of grief and bereavement however ignoring the religious elements inherent to the subject This collection is the first to address the teaching of courses on death and dying from a religious studies perspective

The Top Books of the Year Purified By Fire A History Of Cremation In America The year 2023 has witnessed a remarkable surge in literary brilliance, with numerous engrossing novels captivating the hearts of readers worldwide. Lets delve into the realm of bestselling books, exploring the captivating narratives that have enthralled audiences this year. Purified By Fire A History Of Cremation In America : Colleen Hoover "It Ends with Us" This poignant tale of love, loss, and resilience has captivated readers with its raw and emotional exploration of domestic abuse. Hoover masterfully weaves a story of hope and healing, reminding us that even in the darkest of times, the human spirit can triumph. Uncover the Best : Taylor Jenkins Reids "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" This captivating historical fiction novel unravels the life of Evelyn Hugo, a Hollywood icon who defies expectations and societal norms to pursue her dreams. Reids absorbing storytelling and compelling characters transport readers to a bygone era, immersing them in a world of glamour, ambition, and self-discovery. Purified By Fire A History Of Cremation In America : Delia Owens "Where the Crawdads Sing" This captivating coming-of-age story follows Kya Clark, a young woman who grows up alone in the marshes of North Carolina. Owens spins a tale of resilience, survival, and the transformative power of nature, entrancing readers with its evocative prose and mesmerizing setting. These top-selling novels represent just a fraction of the literary treasures that have emerged in 2023. Whether you seek tales of romance, adventure, or personal growth, the world of literature offers an abundance of captivating stories waiting to be discovered. The novel begins with Richard Papen, a bright but troubled young man, arriving at Hampden College. Richard is immediately drawn to the group of students who call themselves the Classics Club. The club is led by Henry Winter, a brilliant and charismatic young man. Henry is obsessed with Greek mythology and philosophy, and he quickly draws Richard into his world. The other members of the Classics Club are equally as fascinating. Bunny Corcoran is a wealthy and spoiled young man who is always looking for a good time. Charles Tavis is a quiet and reserved young man who is deeply in love with Henry. Camilla Macaulay is a beautiful and intelligent young woman who is drawn to the power and danger of the Classics Club. The students are all deeply in love with Morrow, and they are willing to do anything to please him. Morrow is a complex and mysterious figure, and he seems to be manipulating the students for his own purposes. As the students become more involved with Morrow, they begin to commit increasingly dangerous acts. The Secret History is a masterful and thrilling novel that will keep you wondering until the very end. The novel is a cautionary tale about the dangers of obsession and the power of evil.

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