



# Tales from Kentucky Funeral Homes

*William Lynwood Montell*

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## **Tales from Kentucky Funeral Homes** William Lynwood Montell

In *Tales from Kentucky Funeral Homes*, William Lynwood Montell has collected stories and reminiscences from funeral home directors and embalmers across the state. These accounts provide a record of the business of death as it has been practiced in Kentucky over the past fifty years. The collection ranges from tales of old-time burial practices, to stories about funeral customs unique to the African American community, to tales of premonitions, mistakes, and even humorous occurrences. Other stories involve such unusual aspects of the business as snake-handling funerals, mistaken identities, and in-home embalming. Taken together, these firsthand narratives preserve an important aspect of Kentucky social life not likely to be collected elsewhere. Most of these funeral home stories involve the recent history of Kentucky funeral practices, but some descriptive accounts go back to the era when funeral directors used horse-drawn wagons to reach secluded areas. These accounts, including stories about fainting relatives, long-winded preachers, and pallbearers falling into graves, provide significant insights into the pivotal role morticians have played in local life and culture over the years.

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