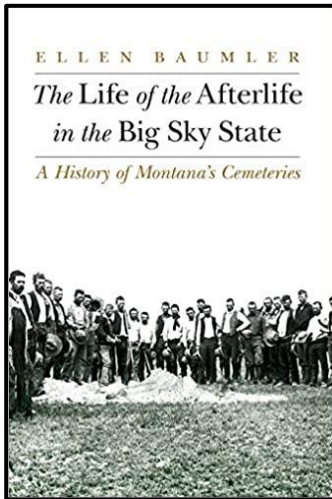


The Life of the Afterlife in the Big Sky State: A History of Montana's Cemeteries



Noted historian Dr. Ellen Baumlér will discuss her newest book, *The Life of the Afterlife in the Big Sky State*, a groundbreaking history of death in Montana. It offers a unique, reflective, and sensitive perspective on the evolution of customs and burial grounds. Beginning with Montana's first known burial site, Ellen Baumlér considers the archaeological records of early interments in rock ledges, under cairns, in trees, and on open-air scaffolds.

Contact with Europeans at trading posts and missions brought new burial practices. Later, crude "boot hills" and pioneer graveyards evolved into orderly cemeteries. Planned cemeteries became the hallmark of civilization and the measure of an educated community. Baumlér explores this history, yet untold about Montana. She traces the pathway from primitive beginnings to park-like, architecturally planned burial grounds where people could recreate, educate their children, and honor the dead.

The Life of the Afterlife in the Big Sky State is not a comprehensive listing of the many hundreds of cemeteries across Montana. Rather it discusses cultural identity evidenced through burial practices, changing methods of interments and why those came about, and the evolution of cemeteries as the "last great necessity" in organized communities. Through examples and anecdotes, the book examines how we remember those who have passed on.

Following the discussion Baumlér will be available to answer questions and sign books. This, and other publications by Baumlér, are available for purchase in the MHS Museum Store.

