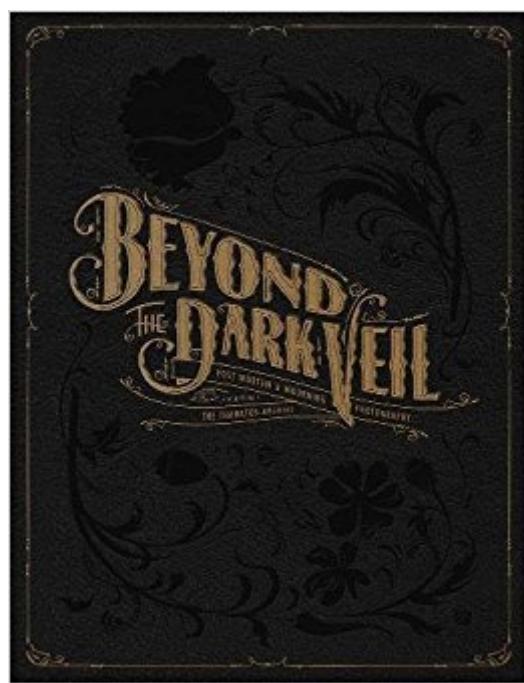


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# Beyond The Dark Veil: Post Mortem & Mourning Photography From The Thanatos Archive



## Synopsis

Beyond the Dark Veil: Post Mortem and Mourning Photography from The Thanatos Archive is a compilation of more than 120 extraordinary and haunting photographs and related ephemera documenting the practice of death and mourning photography in the Victorian Era and early twentieth century. Supplemented with original newspaper articles, clippings, funeral notices, memorial ephemera and more, the collection will take us on a journey through a fascinating, moving, and melancholically beautiful part of our past. The images in Beyond the Dark Veil speak to us: they speak of love, loss, lives cut short, brave final hours, shattered families, and the depths of the human spirit. Contains 194 images of hand-colored photographs, albumen prints, ambrotypes, cabinet cards, carte de viste, daguerreotypes, gelatin silver prints, opalotypes, real photo postcards, stereoviews, tintypes, and supplementary articles and related ephemera. Contributors include: Adam Arenson I, Jacqueline Ann Bunge Barger, Alex Jackson, Bess Lovejoy, Marion Peck, Joanna Roche, and Joe Smoke.

**ABOUT THE ARCHIVE:** Located in Woodinville, Washington, The Thanatos Archive houses an extensive collection of early post-mortem, memorial, and mourning photographs dating as far back as the 1840s. The online version of the archive, hosted at [Thanatos.net](http://Thanatos.net) since 2002, offers a searchable database of over 2,300 scanned images, with scans of new acquisitions being added on a regular basis. In addition to the main online archive, hundreds of additional images and material can be found in the community discussion forum, including hi-resolution enlargements, genealogical information, and more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jack Mord is a collector of rare vintage photography and the owner and operator of The Thanatos Archive. He lives in the Pacific Northwest.

Although the wait was exruciatingly long (if just for the WANT OF THIS BOOK!), I've rarely been as pleased with finding a package on my porch! Incredible craftsmanship, and the book itself with its gold leafing on the cover, binding, interior pages, makes it seem very old fashioned and Victorian and major kudos there! I conduct most of the major tours in Savannah's Bonaventure Cemetery and this will be such an asset for visual reference and can't wait to tell ALL of my clients about it! Nifty little page details throughout and very user friendly. I can already tell that I will never get rid of this book and is already a permanent piece of my growing collection of such morbidity! Thanks Jack Mord!

I was so excited to finally get this book! I was tired of squinting at the computer screen and looked forward to looking at all the interesting details of the pictures. The pictures are still detailed and interesting- but they are actually smaller then on the screen. MUCH smaller. It would have been SO much better if the pics were bigger- tho there are a very few page size. Also better if there were more contrast- they had lightened the pics and not made the background black so they kind of fade into them. The font size is somewhere around -6. So muchly disappointment size wise but not content wise. The cover is lovely- the embossing and gold title are very nice. It is about 1/2 the size I expected all the way around- but it is still a neat book. Be warned- while you will enjoy the feel of it and the pics and info- you may well need a magnifier of some kind to truly see the details. I am not sure if I would have purchased it knowing how small everything is- but I will still enjoy it :)

An absolutely beautifully done book, inside and out. A must for people like myself who love the macabre, death portraits, or just eccentric things in general. Well-bound, lots of thought-provoking photographs. All I can think to write is Bravo! Well done! Word to the wise....books of this nature are always done in limited printings and releases, so this is probably going to go out of print soon. It will either be impossible to find or the price of the existing copies will skyrocket. As a mortician I wish it wasn't this way but it is. Death is not taboo, it should not be shunned or hidden, nor is it something to be frightened of.

I just received this book and was immediately disappointed. Unfortunately, the font used is

extremely small and difficult to read. The choice of gray print on dark pages only makes the readability worse. So while the pictures are a good resource for those with an interest in thanatology, it will take a lot of effort to decipher the printed material that accompanies them. I understand the author was probably going for a particular feel, or motif, with the color combination invoking a vintage nuance, but in making the text very difficult to read, one would think they would opt for a different combination. Perhaps they were going for the reader having the impression death was settling in upon them and their eyesight was growing dim. :-) I believe the same could have certainly been accomplished with a larger font and different color.

this book is stunning. it arrived yesterday afternoon and i spent most of my evening with it and part of today as well. true that it is somewhat grotesque but some of the photos...the ones of the children are so pathetically loving that it is almost palpable. the pet section is also affecting. the book is informative and intelligently written by mr mord and his associates. it is respectful of the pictured dead and does not demean them in the least. if you had a higher than five star rating i would assign it. i am chastened and amazed by this book.

The pictures are wonderful and the added commentary really helps to understand why certain practices came about. The only issue I had, and at this point it's more just nitpicking than anything, was that one of the pictures, the one about the entire family being murdered except for the baby girl, was too big for the page. The commentary noted that the killer was in the photograph (before they knew he was the killer) and he was marked with an "x" above his head. Because of the size of the picture, he was located almost in the crease of the book. If i hadn't properly opened and stretch the books' binding, I'm pretty sure it could have broken trying to find this guy in the crease. Also, it wasn't mentioned but the baby girl that survived had an "x" on her gown. Like I said, this is just nitpicking and only occurs on one picture. I would definitely buy it again.

The Burns collection is huge, many thousands of photos from the 19th century. From that collection, this book offers many post mortem and some of individuals just before death. Lovely volume, nicely bound. Creepy subject matter, but this gives a window into the very difficult world of the Victorians, where mortality was very much a part of life. In the 19th century, any woman could reasonably expect to loose at least one child, as there was something like a one in five mortality rate for children. No vaccines, little to no understanding about the process of disease and how they spread...people dies young. This volume provides a really important historical context for the way the

Victorians perceived their world. Death was a huge part of life in the 1800's, and this provides that context using pictures in a way that words might never do.

I absolutely love this book. I'm buying it as a gift for someone, which makes me sad. I might have to buy myself a copy to keep. If you aren't familiar, *memento mori* is (I think) Latin and means "remember that you have to die". The Victorians were using the fairly new medium of photography to do something that no one in history had done before: Keep their loved ones with them for eternity. Thankfully, the book is divided into sections. *Memento mori* was most popularly used with dead children, so you can skip that chapter if it makes you uncomfortable. There's also a chapter on adults and pets. This book is beautifully compiled, excellently written, and delves into the Victorian fascination with death. Absolutely love it.

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