

Southern New Hampshire University

Sensational Spiritualism:

The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement

A Capstone Project Submitted to the College of Online and Continuing Education in Partial
Fulfillment of the Master of Arts in History

By

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Abstract

The project "Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement" will explore sensationalism's effect on the Spiritualist movement in the United States from the mid-19th century through the 20th century. The project explores how sensationalism contributed to the movement's progression, which peaked during the 19th century due to the population's rising numbers and literacy rates. Newspapers are the bulk of the primary sources captured for the project, which depict the unique language and imagery that sensationalism brought forth, intriguing and influencing the interest of society, which directly impacted society's intrigue and interest in Spiritualism. Many scholarly interpretations of why the movement caught on so quickly and dissipated are discussed further in the project.

The newspapers are in tandem with Spiritualism's historiography – its rise, fall, and resurgence in the 19th and 20th centuries. Scholarly secondary sources have been chosen to support the vast historiography of the movement. The newspapers will concur with the argument that the preferred choice of language and imagery that sensationalism became known for directly impacted the timeline and historiography of the movement. News agencies had a grasp and influence on society's attention and fascination – Crompton Burton calls it "sophisticated manipulation" - and this project strives to prove that these entities and tactics directly impacted their acceptance and eventual disinterest.¹

¹ 6. Crompton Burton, "'Despicable Journalism': Sensationalism and the American Presidency in the 19th Century," in *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th century Reporting*, ed. David B. Sachsman and David W. Bulla (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 106.

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Introduction

In 1888, Reuben Briggs Davenport wrote, “From such slight and trivial beginning came the great movement – great because of the number when it comprised and of the sensation which attended its progress – that for more than forty years has alternately surprised, puzzled, disgusted and amused the world.”¹ The great movement referenced is Spiritualism, a religion founded on believing that the living could contact the dead in the afterlife. The movement made its way to the United States in the mid-1800s, with active scholarly debate on the exact year it started. The movement quickly gained traction and dissipated through the second half of the 19th century, sharing its fair number of skeptics. It then saw a resurgence during the 20th century, with a more scientific and philosophical approach, while trying to debunk its once-popular phenomenal practices.

Scholars accredit Spiritualism’s rise, fall, and resurgence to times of mass casualties, such as the Civil War, the first World War, and the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic. They theorize that Spiritualism was a coping mechanism to deal with the loss of human life during these significant historical events. Emma Hardinge Britten, a leading figure of the Spiritualist movement, wrote: “that the [Civil] war added two million new believers to Spiritualism.”² Other historians posit that Spiritualism’s reformist nature was attractive to a particular subset of the populous that no longer felt compelled to adhere to stringent religious belief systems. In the journal article “Chief of a Nation of Ghosts: Images of Abraham Lincoln’s Spirit in the Immediate Post-Civil War Period,” Kimberly Kutz writes, “Many scholars have attributed the

¹ Reuben Briggs Davenport, *The Death Blow to Spiritualism*, (New York: C.W. Dillingham Co., 1888), 16.

² Barbara Weisberg, *Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism* (New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, Inc., 2009), 211.

movement's appeal among nineteenth-century Americans to a desire to resist Calvinist doctrine that consigned the souls of loved ones to eternal damnation."³ The movement saw a spectrum of believers, practitioners, onlookers, and skeptics, with newspaper agencies there to capture it all. Sensationalism – a well-known journalistic tactic considered “the stock and trade of the popular mass media” and characterized by the dramatization of stories, a pointed use of colorful language and specific words and phrases, and detailed imagery – also became popular during the same timeframe as Spiritualism. The juxtaposition of the two creates an exciting dynamic; this project, discussed herein and showcased through an Omeka exhibit ([link here](#)), will show how the Spiritualist movement was portrayed and perceived by the public through sensationalism.⁴

In exploring the effect of sensationalism on the Spiritualist movement, the project will answer the following questions:

- What impact did the media have on the Spiritualist movement?
- Was the media's sensational coverage of the movement the catalyst for the rise of spiritualist practices in the United States in the years preceding and during the Civil War?
- Did the media's negative coverage impact and lead to the decline of the Spiritualist movement in the United States?

³ Kimberly N. Kutz, “Chief of a Nation of Ghosts: Images of Abraham Lincoln’s Spirit in the Immediate Post-Civil War Period,” *The Journal of American Culture* 36 (2): 113.

⁴ John McLaren, “Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on The Spiritualist Movement,” Omeka.net, accessed on January 4, 2023, [Browse Exhibits · Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement \(omeka.net\)](#).

- To what extent did media coverage of Spiritualism during and after World War I and during the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic play in its resurgence within the culture of the United States?⁵

Based on the outlined research questions, the proposed research contends that: Media coverage of the 19th century was the catalyst for the rise and fall of the Spiritualist movement in the United States and was also a contributing factor to its resurgence in the early 20th century. The media's distinct reporting style resonated with much of the population in the United States and was a facilitating agent of the movement during these historically significant moments in American history.⁶ The project will defend the outlined thesis through the enclosed chapters: Chapter 1, "Historiography," will discuss the major trends and gaps within Spiritualism's historiography and the literature that exists within it. This essay will make clear how the topic will add to this historiography. Chapter 2, "Methodology," will dive a little deeper into the topic itself - specifically the lens(es) used, the research plan, the sources utilized, and the archive(s) accessed. Chapter 3, "Specialized Audience," will focus on who the project is intended for and will be presented to. Chapter 4, "Project Planning and Historical Topic Research," will explore how the project came together, including an overview of the topic and a detailed description of the project's planning workflow. Chapter 5, "Recommendations and Ethical Considerations," will ruminate on potential future research while also discussing the possibility of ethical concerns that could be borne out of the project (whether from the topic itself, unintended obstacles, the intended audience, or other aspects). Chapter 6, "Budgeting and Staffing Requirements," will explore the costs associated with the public history project, including getting

⁵ John McLaren, "9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal," (essay, Southern New Hampshire University, 2022), 3-4.

⁶ McLaren, "9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal," 4.

it started and maintaining it. The chapter will also discuss any need to examine grant proposals for the present or future. The conclusion will tie everything together in a comprehensive summary, recapping how the project contributed to the proposed thesis.

Chapter 1: Historiography

To understand Spiritualism is to understand the lives of a sizable portion of American society, which makes this doctrine a significant and relevant cultural phenomenon. Spiritualism was one of the fastest-growing movements in the United States, arising from the Third Great Awakening, which included several religions still practiced today, such as Christian Science and Jehovah's Witnesses. While Spiritualism is still practiced today, its practitioners have dwindled dramatically. Scholars attribute the rise of Spiritualism to the overwhelming death toll of the Civil War and depict how its practices were used as a coping mechanism to deal with the loss of loved ones. Scholars touch on a renewed interest in spiritualist practices during and after World War I, after a brief subdued period at the end of the 19th century. Newspapers played a pivotal role in perpetuating Spiritualism's success and subsequent decline. Some mediums became high-profile names across the country with the help of print media. While there have been assorted studies on sensationalism during its heyday, its application to the Spiritualist movement has not been reviewed and is a worthwhile topic.¹

The beginning of Spiritualism's historiography focused primarily on its phenomenal aspects – “disintegrations of personality, genius, sleep, hypnotism, sensory automatism, phantasms of the dead, motor automatism, transpossession, and ecstasy.”² This study would also include society's fascination with those who engaged in these practices, such as the Fox sisters and their contributions to the movement whom some scholars have focused exclusively. As the movement's popularity increased, so did the number of believers and followers. Mark A. Lause,

¹ McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 7.

² Review of *Modern Spiritualism, A History and a Criticism*, by Frank Podmore, *The American Journal of Psychology*, 14 no. 1 (1903): 116.

in his book *Free Spirits: Spiritualism, Republicanism, and Radicalism in the Civil War Era*, says, “By 1855 some spiritualists claimed 2 million believers, and the estimates continued up to 5 or 6 million by 1860. Simultaneously, Spiritualist publications made more modest estimates by states, totaling 780,000 in 1857 and 1,537,000 by 1860. Either set of numbers would have made Spiritualism a significant force.”³ As the historiography progressed, scholars expanded the lenses through which they studied the movement. Multiple discussions and interpretations came out of these expansions. One interpretation focuses on the movement’s impact on society – emotional and cultural changes - during and after the Civil War. Another interpretation explored Spiritualism’s influence on sociopolitical subjects, notably Abraham Lincoln’s belief in Spiritualism, his family’s and administration, and the movement’s connection to reform. Reform movements such as abolitionism, secularism, and suffragism were supported by notable Spiritualists and emulated the same beliefs as the burgeoning Republican party. Sally Morita states, “In the middle of the nineteenth century, it became a subject of great interest in the United States. [...] During the past few decades, historians have increasingly acknowledged this interest, partly because of the discovery that Spiritualism was linked with the impetus for reform.”⁴ As the study between reform and Spiritualism grew, so did studies of Andrew Jackson Davis and the philosophies of Spiritualism.⁵

When the movement experienced its resurgence at the beginning of the 20th century, there was a renewed interest in its phenomenal practices. There was also increased skepticism towards the movement as it resurged, focusing on discrediting and debunking it. Harry Houdini was a

³ Mark A. Lause, *Free Spirits: Spiritualism, Republicanism, and Radicalism in the Civil War Era*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2016), Prologue.

⁴ Sally Morita, “Unseen (and Unappreciated) Matters: Understanding the Reformatory Nature of 19th-Century Spiritualism,” *American Studies* 40, no. 3 (1999): 99-100.

⁵ McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 8-9.

notable individual during this period of skepticism, “one of the best-known scoffers [...] who spent a good part of his career medium-bashing.”⁶ Numerous articles and studies detail “the death blow to Spiritualism,” which was Margaret Fox’s “confession” on what happened during the spirit-rapping episodes that made the sisters famous.⁷

The historiography of Spiritualism has been explored from numerous lenses and by several scholars; the study through the lens of sensationalism has yet to be uncovered. The topic does not alter the historiography of Spiritualism, but a new viewpoint is offered on how impactful the movement was on American society and culture. The union of Spiritualism and sensationalism allows scholars to explore the influence of newspapers and how they swayed public opinion. With “readers delighted in human interest and crime stories,” news agencies had a pulse on the time's social, cultural, and political events. As a result, sensationalism shaped the movement’s historiography and society’s changes in its belief and practice.⁸

Spiritualism’s connection to reform is well-known. Lause concisely summarizes this when he states that politicians “always placed spiritualism alongside socialism, secularism, woman suffrage, diet reform, and other ‘isms,’ including abolitionism.”⁹ Studies concerning Andrew Jackson Davis, Modern Spiritualism, and the connection to reform are heavily spread throughout the historiography. There are multiple studies on the Fox sisters and other spiritualist mediums, their societal and cultural impacts on society, and how Spiritualism changed society’s views on grief, death, and religion. Kimberly Kutz goes into more detail on the societal changes on grief, death, and religion, as she explains: “Hopes for reunion with family members in the

⁶ 4. Kenneth D. Pimple, “Ghosts, Spirits, and Scholars: The Origins of Modern Spiritualism,” in *Out Of The Ordinary: Folklore and the Supernatural*, ed. Barbara Walker (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1995), 81.

⁷ Morning News, “Spiritualism’s Downfall,” *The Morning News* (Savannah, GA), October 24, 1888; McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 9.

⁸ McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 9.

⁹ Lause, *Free Spirits: Spiritualism, Republicanism, and Radicalism in the Civil War Era*, Prologue.

afterlife frequently brought the bereaved into Spiritualism's fold. Many scholars have attributed the movement's appeal among nineteenth-century Americans to a desire to resist Calvinist doctrine that consigned the souls of loved ones to eternal damnation."¹⁰

Sensationalism was on a parallel trajectory to Spiritualism during the 19th century. According to David W. Bulla and David B. Sachsman, "The 1830s saw the rise of the penny press when American journalism underwent a radical change. [...] the freakish came to dominate local news coverage in the middle of the nineteenth century."¹¹ Sensationalism was used to sell more newspapers as the population and literacy rate increased. This created an increase in the number of persons indulging in newspapers and, thus, an increase in profits. As Bulla and Sachsman state, "Literacy in the United States was extraordinarily high throughout the nineteenth century, thus providing increasing audiences for American newspapers."¹² Newspapers used a variety of topics, including the "unusual," to generate revenue and influence public opinion. The Spiritualist movement became one of these sensational topics; with the movement's strong connection to reform, sensationalism utilized the movement to "raise public consciousness and influence public opinion."¹³ The incorporation of Spiritualism within sensational news stories significantly influenced the movement's popularity almost as much as the individuals who firmly stood behind or vehemently opposed it.¹⁴

¹⁰ Kutz, "Chief of a Nation of Ghosts: Images of Abraham Lincoln's Spirit in the Immediate Post-Civil War Period," 113; McLaren, "9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal," 10.

¹¹ David W. Bulla and David B. Sachsman, "Introduction," in *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th century Reporting*, ed. David B. Sachsman and David W. Bulla (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), XIX-XX.

¹² Bulla and Sachsman, "Introduction," in *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th century Reporting*, XVIII.

¹³ 7. Jack Breslin, "Naughty Seeds of Sensationalism: Gossip and Celebrity in 19th century Reporting," in *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th century Reporting*, ed. David B. Sachsman and David W. Bulla (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 117.

¹⁴ McLaren, "9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal," 10-11.

The topic would further emphasize the movement's links to political, social, cultural, and economic issues during the 19th and 20th centuries. Lause reaffirms this with the statement, "The impact of spiritualism as a movement on the social and political course of the nation in a particularly critical period of American history merits reconjuring."¹⁵ Sensationalism "insinuated itself into health issues, extreme weather, race, politics, and even the coverage of the natural world" for profit and growth as literacy continued to rise. This expanded to Spiritualism and the events and movements associated with it. More coverage of these events and movements meant an expansion of public opinion and discourse.¹⁶ Lause says, "Trial by committee reflected the civic mechanisms by which Americans then established a collective opinion. Any public meeting with such a purpose would appoint a committee to formulate resolutions or declare sentiments and return to the group with the results of their deliberations."¹⁷ These discussions and committees would influence political decisions, candidacies, and various movements' progress, manipulating Spiritualism and sensationalism. The coverage and influence of newspapers on social, political, and cultural issues and the sway of public opinion and discourse still happens today.¹⁸

There are a variety of debates surrounding Spiritualism. One such discussion centers on who started the movement in the United States. Most scholars believe that the Fox sisters and the "Rochester Knockings" in 1848 were the start of the movement. Some works within the historiography, such as R. Laurence Moore's *In Search of White Crows* and Howard Kerr's and Charles Crow's *The Occult in America: New Historical Perspectives*, are on the Fox sisters' side

¹⁵ Lause, *Free Spirits*, Prologue.

¹⁶ Bulla and Sachsman, "Introduction," XX.

¹⁷ Lause, *Free Spirits*, Prologue.

¹⁸ McLaren, "9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal," 11.

of the debate. Other scholars, like Robert W. Delp, argue that Andrew Jackson Davis, “The Father of Modern Spiritualism,” was a more considerable influence and was the start of the movement due to his self-proclaimed healing abilities.¹⁹

David Chapin’s *Exploring Other Worlds: Margaret Fox, Elisha Kent Kane, and the Antebellum Culture of Curiosity* explores the Fox sisters and the “culture of curiosity” their spirit rappings created during the 19th century.²⁰ Scholars investigating the Fox sisters and their contributions to Spiritualism may find these works fascinating but limited. Chapin’s study, especially the movement’s decline in 1888, is a thrilling social view of Spiritualism. The lens from the lives of Margaret Fox and Elisha Kent Kane is narrow and may exclude other influences that could have contributed to the movement’s downfall. The same may be said for Nancy Rubin Stuart’s *The Reluctant Spiritualist: The Life of Maggie Fox* and Barbara Weisberg’s *Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism*. Stuart’s work explores the life of Margaret Fox in detail utilizing primary sources, while Weisberg’s is a broader story about the Fox sisters. Unlike Stuart, Weisberg attempts to tie back to the more extensive historiography. To revisit the movement’s decline in 1888, Reuben Briggs Davenport reported on the Fox sisters’ confession in 1888 in his work *The Death Blow to Spiritualism*, deemed an essential work within the historiography.²¹

Another historiographical debate is Spiritualism’s influence on how society dealt with grief, death, and religion. Elizabeth Lowry explains, “Many Americans had become disillusioned

¹⁹ Robert W. Delp, “Andrew Jackson Davis: Prophet of American Spiritualism,” *The Journal of American History* 54, no. 1 (1967): 55; McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 18.

²⁰ Jonathan Dore, “*Exploring Other Worlds: Margaret Fox, Elisha Kent Kane, and the Antebellum Culture of Curiosity*, by David Chapin,” review of *Exploring Other Worlds: Margaret Fox, Elisha Kent Kane, and the Antebellum Culture of Curiosity*, by David Chapin, Rhode Island College, accessed on December 7, 2022, [Exploring Other Worlds \(ric.edu\)](https://ric.edu/exploring-other-worlds).

²¹ McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 18-19.

with Puritanical values and with strict Calvinist doctrine that denied emotion, espoused an excess of self-control and self-denial, and seemed to condemn pleasure. They wanted an outlet for their feelings,” which Spiritualism provided.²² As the death toll increased and the Civil War commenced, the need to express grief and emotion was found in spirit communication. Individuals “dabbled in these activities in hopes of finding something to validate their hopes for a loved one who had passed over or was in an afterlife.”²³ Drew Gilpin Faust’s work *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* focused on “the impact of the Civil War’s enormous death toll on the lives of nineteenth century-Americans.”²⁴ Faust’s exploration of how Spiritualism changed America’s view of grief and death during the bloodiest conflict in the nation’s history is a praiseworthy work and paved the way for others to create similar interpretations surrounding death, reform, and politics. Examples include Molly McGarry’s *Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America* and Mark A. Lause’s *Free Spirits: Spiritualism, Republicanism, and Radicalism in the Civil War Era*.²⁵

Spiritualism was revisited as an organized religion. Bret Carroll’s work *Spiritualism in Antebellum America* studies the movement as a “religious ideology,” creating a comparative study with other religious movements of the mid-nineteenth century.²⁶ Other works attempt to mirror Carroll’s comparative work, utilizing other religious movements such as Mesmerism, Theosophy, and the occult. These include Shane McCorristine’s *Spiritualism, Mesmerism and*

²² Elizabeth Lowry, “Spiritual (R)evolution and the Turning of Tables: Abolition, Feminism, and the Rhetoric of Social Reform in the Antebellum Public Sphere,” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 9, no. 2 (2015): 8.

²³ Lause, *Free Spirits*, Prologue.

²⁴ “Drew Faust,” Department of History, Harvard University, accessed on September 22, 2022, [Drew Faust | Harvard University | History Department](#).

²⁵ McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 19.

²⁶ Bret E. Carroll, *Spiritualism in Antebellum America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), IX.

the Occult, 1800-1920, and Tatiana Kontou's *The Ashgate Research Companion to Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism and the Occult*. Cathy Gutierrez's *Plato's Ghost: Spiritualism in the American Renaissance* takes a philosophical approach to how Spiritualism became the ideal for social, cultural, and religious practices in the 19th century. These works use a religious lens to understand Spiritualism's importance to American society and culture and connect to the studies that Faust, Lause, Lowry, and McGarry were conducting on the impact on grief, death, and politics. The study of Spiritualism as a religion created historiographical interpretations of general comparisons to other faiths and further psychical research, especially during its resurgence in the 20th century. Catherine L. Albanese's book *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* focuses on "exploring new models for narrating the story of religion in the United States."²⁷ Albanese's overall conclusion is that Spiritualism, along with other metaphysical religions, was part of the foundation that shaped faith belief in the United States. In their work *Religious Movements in Contemporary America*, Irving I. Zaretsky and Mark P. Leone "[considers] three categories of religious movements: native American churches, recently founded religious groups, and syncretistic groups based on imported cults," which includes Spiritualism, and how they influenced American culture, emotion, and behavior.²⁸ James Obelkevich's *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics, and Patriarchy* is an "engagement with religion" and investigates the relationships between religion, radicalism, politics, and culture.²⁹ Zaretsky and Leone's work is an early attempt within the historiography to situate Spiritualism within the sphere of religion in America. Obelkevich's

²⁷ "Catherine L. Albanese," Department of Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara, accessed on September 22, 2022, [Catherine L. Albanese – Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara \(ucsb.edu\)](https://www.ucsb.edu/people/faculty/catherine-l-albanese).

²⁸ "Religious Movements in Contemporary America," Princeton University Press, accessed on October 9, 2022, [Religious Movements in Contemporary America | Princeton University Press](https://www.princeton.edu/libraries/subject/religious-movements-in-contemporary-america).

²⁹ Jim Obelkevich, *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics and Patriarchy*, (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Inc., 1987), 2.

work is reminiscent of Ann Braude as it discusses Spiritualism, feminism, and women's rights. However, it can get lost due to its particularity in the broader discussion of Spiritualism and American religion.³⁰

Spiritualism's influence on and involvement in reform and politics is a constantly evolving subject in the 19th century and is deeply discussed. Sensationalism focused on these two issues to set opponents against one another and sway public opinion. Many scholars examined Spiritualism during the antebellum period, including Drew Gilpin Faust, Molly McGarry, and Mark A. Lause. While Faust explored the emotional impact of the war and the response from Spiritualism, McGarry and Lause pivot and look into how Spiritualism was tied into the 19th-century American political environment. Lause discusses how Spiritualism influenced 19th-century politics and the movement's penetration into the Lincoln family and administration. McGarry does touch on politics but mainly discusses reform, specifically secularism. This nods to Alex Owen's *The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England* and Ann Braude's *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America*. These works looked at the connection between Spiritualism and women's rights through mediumship. They were the first to explore Spiritualism's relationship to reform and the cultural impact of its phenomenal practices. These works help scholars move forward to understand Spiritualism's complexity as opposed to continuing to focus on the singular lens of its phenomenal practices.³¹

When the movement resurged in the 20th century, scholars investigated, debated, and picked apart the movement's tenets. Initially, the base audience was attracted by Spiritualism's

³⁰ McLaren, "9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal," 20-21.

³¹ McLaren, "9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal," 21-22.

phenomenal aspects, examined in William Crookes's *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* and Ruth Brandon's *The Spiritualists: The Passion for the Occult in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. In R. Laurence Moore's *In Search of White Crows*, he "chronicles Americans' fascination with the paranormal" and how these practices transitioned into "religious and scientific mainstreams."³² Skepticism still exists within the scholarly debate of Spiritualism. This is evident in E.J. Dingwall's criticism of Spiritualism entitled *The Critics' Dilemma*. Erik R. Seeman's *Speaking with the Dead in Early America* channels Moore with his discussion of Spiritualism's phenomenal practices, focusing on the progression of spirit communication from the Protestant Reformation through the 19th century to its integration into Spiritualism.³³ Barbara Walker's work *Out Of The Ordinary: Folklore and the Supernatural* discusses the validity of supernatural occurrences, including Spiritualism. As the historiography expands, scholars look to re-investigate Spiritualism's phenomenal aspects, comparing the movement with other psychical practices. Gillian Bennett's work *Traditions of Belief: Women, Folklore and the Supernatural Today* discusses the assumptions of and relationships between women and supernatural folk belief, which include ESP, fortune telling, and spiritualism.³⁴ Arthur Wrobel's work, *Pseudo-Science and Society in 19th-Century America*, is an investigative piece looking at Spiritualism and other movements (such as Mesmerism and phrenology) as a "science," discussing how 19th-

³² "In Search of White Crows. By R. Laurence Moore." Cambridge University Press, accessed on October 9, 2022, [In Search of White Crows. By R. Laurence Moore. New York: Oxford Press, 1977. xvii + 310 pp. \\$12.95. | Church History | Cambridge Core.](#)

³³ "Erik R. Seeman. Speaking with the Dead in Early America," Oxford University Press, accessed on October 9, 2022, [Erik R. Seeman. Speaking with the Dead in Early America. | The American Historical Review | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\).](#)

³⁴ Barbara Truesdell, "Bennett, Gillian. *Traditions of Belief: Women, Folklore and the Supernatural Today*," review of *Traditions of Belief: Women, Folklore and the Supernatural Today*, by Gillian Bennett, *Folklore Forum* 21, no. 1 (1988): 89, accessed on December 6, 2022, [untitled \(iu.edu\).](#)

century Americans felt “human perfection could be achieved with the aid of modern science” through the practice of these “pseudo-sciences.”³⁵

A critical perspective on the topic is examining the Spiritualist movement through sensationalism. David W. Bulla and Heather R. Haley’s contribution to *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th-century Reporting* discuss the progression and intensity of sensationalism from the mid-to-late 1800s. This timeline aligns with the passage of the Spiritualist movement. Amanda Frisken’s *Graphic News: How Sensational Images Transformed Nineteenth-Century Journalism* is an appropriate addition to the discussion of sensationalism. Her argument surrounds the impact of illustrations on sensational news production. Frisken’s essential work argues that this critical juncture in news publication and sensationalism increased news circulation, revenue, and audience engagement and contributed to the news’ influence on politics and society.³⁶

³⁵ “History of Science, Technology, and Medicine,” University of Kentucky, accessed on October 9, 2022, ["Pseudo-Science and Society in 19th-Century America" by Arthur Wrobel \(uky.edu\)](#); McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 22-23.

³⁶ McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 23-24.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Spiritualism has been explored through various lenses throughout the historiography – cultural, social, political, economic, scientific, gender, and religious. The topic of Spiritualism and sensationalism will be examined through a social lens. The social lens explores sensationalism’s impact on the Spiritualist movement and how it influenced society’s perception of and engagement with the practices. This is supported by numerous primary source material; the social lens explores “society at large” through various themes, including “social status,” “standard of living,” “modernization,” and “gender.”¹ This lens and these accompanying themes will confirm how sensationalism was a significant contributor to the progression of Spiritualism and its evolving cultural context. Looking at the movement through the lens of sensationalism adds another layer to this understanding of Spiritualism. Scholars have not previously explored this gap within the more extensive historiography.

Multiple online databases were used to collect primary and secondary source material: Newspapers.com, JSTOR, Internet Archive, and HathiTrust were the primary ones. Newspapers.com is the “largest online newspaper archive consisting of 797 million+ pages of historical newspapers from 25,200+ newspapers from around the United States and beyond.”² The database is crucial in identifying primary source material that will connect sensationalism and Spiritualism during the 19th and 20th centuries, with articles included as items within the Omeka project.³

¹ Christoph Conrad, (2009), Social History, *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 307-312), DOI: 10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.62127-X.

² “About Newspapers.com,” Newspapers.com, accessed on October 8, 2022, [About Newspapers.com](#).

³ McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 12.

JSTOR is a digital library that “provides access to more than 12 million journal articles, books, images, and primary sources [...]”⁴ Numerous sources were found through this database, including a critical source that is part of Spiritualism’s early historiography - an article written by John Townsend Trowbridge in 1908 for *The North American Review* entitled “Early Investigations in Spiritualism” where Trowbridge details his fifty-year experience with the movement. Secondary source material – supporting journal articles discussing various interpretations of Spiritualism’s historiography – was also obtained through this database. The historiographical information from the secondary source material will build the factual text to craft the exhibits within the Omeka project.⁵

Internet Archive is a massive digital archive containing web history that goes back over twenty-five years. It is a non-profit that provides public access to its content and is “building a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form.”⁶ Their archives contain “38 million books and texts.”⁷ HathiTrust is another digital archive that is limited to digitized books and texts. Rare or out-of-print books that are digitized can be found on these sites. These two sites were vital in finding other necessary primary sources, outside of newspaper format, crucial to the beginning historiography of Spiritualism. This includes works by Emma Hardinge Britten, Eliab Wilkinson Capron, and the first complete investigation of the Fox sisters’ spirit rappings entitled the “Rochester Knockings” from 1851. These two sites were also crucial in finding digitized copies of older secondary sources from scholars exploring the historiography of Spiritualism, such as R. Laurence Moore’s *In Search of White Crows*, where they were not

⁴ “About JSTOR,” JSTOR.org, accessed on October 8, 2022, [Home - About JSTOR \(snhu.edu\)](https://www.jstor.org/home/about).

⁵ McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 12.

⁶ “About the Internet Archive,” Internet Archive, accessed on October 8, 2022. [Internet Archive: About IA.](https://www.archive.org/about)

⁷ “About the Internet Archive,” Internet Archive, accessed on October 8, 2022. [Internet Archive: About IA.](https://www.archive.org/about)

available through the Amazon Kindle app. Secondary source material published within the past ten years was easily obtainable through Amazon (either physical copies or Kindle). The historiographical information from the primary and secondary source material will build the factual text to craft the exhibits within the Omeka project.⁸

Images were obtained through various scholarly websites, including Newspapers.com (images directly from selected articles), the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian, and LAMs (libraries, archives, and museums). The images are of various subjects: individuals (Spiritualists and skeptics), physical objects associated with Spiritualism, objects related to debunking Spiritualism, and clips of articles that display sensationalism. These images will be included as items within the Omeka exhibits to support the historiographical information displayed.

The research plan was a methodical process. Secondary sources were already in possession due to prior research. The bibliographies and references were reviewed and compared to see which sources were repeatedly used by the authors. Notes were also taken on primary sources and put aside for a later study. Once a lengthy list of secondary sources was compiled, they were examined to ensure they were scholarly and peer-reviewed, with the list being pared down as necessary. Once the secondary sources were established, the primary sources jotted down were similarly examined for applicability. Then a search for newspaper articles – the majority primary source – commenced. Specific keywords were used, such as “spiritualism,” “spiritism,” “medium,” and “Houdini,” to match articles that would contain those words within the headlines or body. There were no exclusions to geographic regions, and the search targeted the years 1850 – 1920. Once a comprehensive list of articles was compiled, they were examined for sensational language, including “frequent use of multicolumn headlines that sometimes

⁸ McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 12-13.

stretched across the front page,” “generous and imaginative use of illustrations,” and “flamboyant and aggressive” language.⁹ As the newspapers were examined, some patterns emerged, and the articles were categorized into four groups. The categorizations/patterns were compared to the historiography to ensure they aligned with the proposed topic.

The image search was handled similarly to the newspaper articles. Specific keywords were used in Google, such as “fox sisters,” “oscillator,” “seance,” and “Houdini,” to find images that would match significant themes or ideas throughout the historiography. Websites were checked for credibility, including their domains and usage. Once the website was thoroughly evaluated, the websites were bookmarked, and the images were saved.

⁹ 1. W. Joseph Campbell, “Yellow Journalism: Why So Maligned and Misunderstood?” in *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th century Reporting*, ed. David B. Sachsman and David W. Bulla (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 4.

Chapter 3: Specialized Audience

The target audiences for the project are varied, given the union of Spiritualism and sensationalism. The first target audience, and the largest, would be academics interested in the social, cultural, political, and economic changes during the timeline of Spiritualism. This audience would include graduate students, professors, and historians. This audience is not easily quantifiable as the topic of Spiritualism can be blended into other subjects, as previously established. However, results from searches on academic databases reveal extensive and varied interest. For example, a search using the keyword “spiritualism” on JSTOR generated 55,974 results across 83 subjects (the top three subjects being History, Sociology, and American Studies).¹ A similar search on Project Muse yielded 6,585 results across 100+ research areas (the top three being Literature, History, and Religion).²

Another target audience would be those interested in Spiritualism as a religion and other metaphysical religions. This would be a much smaller niche audience. According to Pew Research Center’s “Religious Landscape Study” conducted in 2007 and 2014, 0.4% of survey participants (35,000 Americans) identify as “Other Christian” – a subset of that identification is “Spiritualist” which is <0.3% of the participants (or less than 10,000 individuals).³ A similar target audience would be those interested in new-age religions, given the comparative studies between Spiritualism and these religions. In Pew Research Center’s study, 0.4% of the participants identify as part of a new-age religion – another niche audience.⁴ However, according

¹ “Search Results for: spiritualism,” JSTOR, accessed on December 1, 2022, [JSTOR: Search Results \(snhu.edu\)](#).

² “Search Results for: spiritualism,” Project Muse, accessed on December 1, 2022, [Project MUSE \(jhu.edu\)](#).

³ Pew Research Center, “Religious Landscape Center,” Pew Research Center, last modified May 12, 2015, accessed on December 2, 2022, [Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics | Pew Research Center](#); See Figure 1.

⁴ See Figure 1.

to another survey by Pew Research Center, there is an upward trajectory of individuals switching from organized religion to being “religiously unaffiliated” or “religious ‘nones,’” which this topic may spark intrigue.⁵

Another target audience is those who believe in the occult and paranormal, given Spiritualism’s popular phenomenal practices. A Gallup poll in 2005 surveyed several Americans, giving ten “paranormal belief[s]” to review. The survey concludes that “about three in four Americans profess at least one paranormal belief,” including ghosts, spirit communication, and ESP.⁶ Pew Research Center conducted a similar survey in 2017, where “roughly six-in-ten American adults accept at least one [...] New Age beliefs,” including mediums and reincarnation.⁷ These survey results reveal that Spiritualism's phenomenal practices align with the American population's general belief and curiosity, making this target audience the broadest and most varied.

⁵ Pew Research Center, “Modeling the Future of Religion in America,” Pew Research Center, last modified September 13, 2022, accessed on December 2, 2022, [How the U.S. Religious Landscape Could Change Over the Next 50 Years | Pew Research Center](#); See Figure 2.

⁶ David W. Moore, “Three in Four Americans Believe in Paranormal,” Gallup, last modified June 16, 2005, accessed on December 2, 2022, [Three in Four Americans Believe in Paranormal \(gallup.com\)](#).

⁷ Claire Gecewicz, “‘New Age’ beliefs common among both religious and nonreligious Americans,” Pew Research Center, last modified October 1, 2018, accessed on December 2, 2022, [‘New Age’ beliefs common among religious, nonreligious Americans | Pew Research Center](#); See Figure 3.

Christians Decline as Share of U.S. Population; Other Faiths and the Unaffiliated Are Growing

| | 2007 | 2014 | Change* |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| | % | % | % |
| Christian | 78.4 | 70.6 | -7.8 |
| Protestant | 51.3 | 46.5 | -4.8 |
| <i>Evangelical</i> | 26.3 | 25.4 | -0.9 |
| <i>Mainline</i> | 18.1 | 14.7 | -3.4 |
| <i>Historically black</i> | 6.9 | 6.5 | - |
| Catholic | 23.9 | 20.8 | -3.1 |
| Orthodox Christian | 0.6 | 0.5 | - |
| Mormon | 1.7 | 1.6 | - |
| Jehovah's Witness | 0.7 | 0.8 | - |
| Other Christian | 0.3 | 0.4 | - |
| Non-Christian faiths | 4.7 | 5.9 | +1.2 |
| Jewish | 1.7 | 1.9 | - |
| Muslim | 0.4 | 0.9 | +0.5 |
| Buddhist | 0.7 | 0.7 | - |
| Hindu | 0.4 | 0.7 | +0.3 |
| Other world religions** | <0.3 | 0.3 | - |
| Other faiths** | 1.2 | 1.5 | +0.3 |
| Unaffiliated | 16.1 | 22.8 | +6.7 |
| Atheist | 1.6 | 3.1 | +1.5 |
| Agnostic | 2.4 | 4.0 | +1.6 |
| Nothing in particular | 12.1 | 15.8 | +3.7 |
| Don't know/refused | 0.8 | 0.6 | -0.2 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*The "change" column displays only statistically significant changes; blank cells indicate that the difference between 2007 and 2014 is within the margin of error.

**The "other world religions" category includes Sikhs, Baha'is, Taoists, Jains and a variety of other world religions. The "other faiths" category includes Unitarians, New Age religions, Native American religions and a number of other non-Christian faiths.

Source: 2014 Religious Landscape Study, conducted June 4-Sept. 30, 2014. Figures may not add to 100% and nested figures may not add to subtotals indicated due to rounding.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 1: 2014 Pew Research Center Study "Religious Landscape Study" (Courtesy of Pew Research Center).

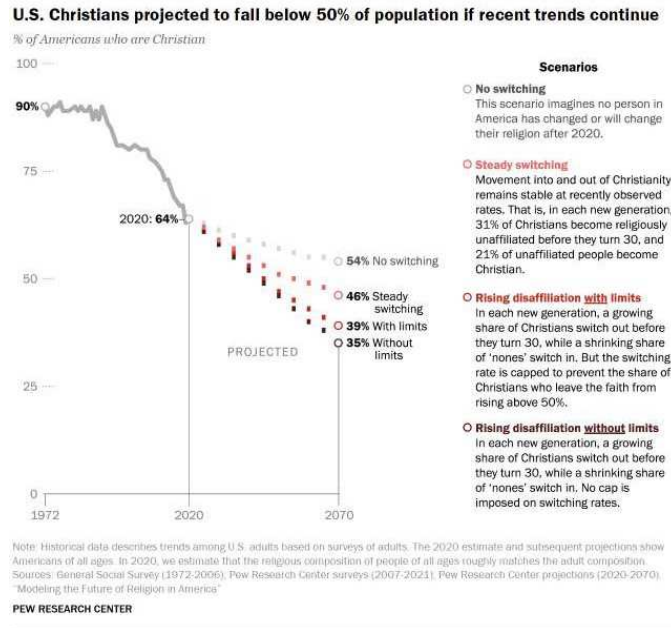


Figure 2: 2020 Pew Research Center Survey “Modeling the Future of Religion in America” (Courtesy of Pew Research Center).

Six-in-ten Christians, ‘nones’ hold at least one New Age belief

| | Believe spiritual energy can be located in physical things | Believe in psychics | Believe in reincarnation | Believe in astrology | NET Believe in at least one |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| All U.S. adults | 42% | 41% | 33% | 29% | 62% |
| Christian | 37 | 40 | 29 | 26 | 61 |
| Protestant | 32 | 38 | 26 | 24 | 57 |
| Evangelical | 24 | 33 | 19 | 18 | 47 |
| Mainline | 43 | 44 | 33 | 30 | 67 |
| Historically black | 41 | 43 | 38 | 34 | 72 |
| Catholic | 47 | 46 | 36 | 33 | 70 |
| Unaffiliated | 47 | 40 | 38 | 32 | 62 |
| Atheist | 13 | 10 | 7 | 3 | 22 |
| Agnostic | 40 | 31 | 28 | 18 | 56 |
| Nothing in particular | 61 | 52 | 51 | 47 | 78 |

Source: Survey conducted Dec. 4-18, 2017, among U.S. adults.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 3: 2017 Pew Research Center Survey on American adults and New Age beliefs (Courtesy of Pew Research Center).

Chapter 4: Project Planning and Historical Topic Research

The project is entitled “Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement.” It will be exhibited through the platform Omeka to easily narrate the timelines and key facts of Spiritualism and sensationalism and also incorporate a variety of documents, artifacts, and points in a visually appealing format to engage and educate a broad audience (see Chapter 4 “Specialized Audience” for further details). The topic and selected source material do not change the historiographies of Spiritualism or sensationalism. Instead, how the sources are applied and how the topic is presented creates an alternative perspective from the lens of sensationalism. The topic and project examine sensationalism’s impact on Spiritualism and its outcome within society, which makes a unique interpretation within the historiography (see Chapter 2, “Historiography,” to review details on how the topic adds to the historiography). With Omeka’s ability to “[share] digital collections” and create “media-rich online exhibits,” the platform was the perfect selection for this topic and project.¹

The Omeka project will be divided into three main exhibits, with pages to showcase a part of the exhibit: The first exhibit is the “Introduction,” which will present the audience with the topics of Spiritualism and sensationalism and prepare them for the main exhibit and the intended goal/questions it seeks to answer. The “Introduction” exhibit will have five pages/sub-sections:

1. “What is Spiritualism?” will provide audiences with key facts on what the movement is;

¹ “Omeka.net,” Omeka.net, accessed on December 1, 2022, [Omeka.net](https://omeka.net).

2. “Spiritualism – A Brief Timeline” will provide audiences with a high-level timeline of the significant events of the movement;
3. “What is Sensationalism?” will provide audiences with key facts on what the journalism tactic is;
4. “Sensationalism – A Brief Timeline” will provide audiences with a high-level timeline of the significant events of the movement;
5. “Goal of Exhibit” will sum up what the exhibit hopes to achieve and provide a transition to the body of the exhibit.

The next exhibit, entitled “Sensational Spiritualism,” is the body of the project, which will cover the historiography of Spiritualism through the lens of sensationalism. This will consist of three pages/sub-sections:

1. “Rise of Spiritualism” will discuss the movement’s beginning during the mid-to-late 1800s and how sensationalism contributed to its popularity and progression during this timeframe. Exhibit items to support this discussion will include photographs and newspaper articles, which will be discussed further regarding historical topic research;
2. “Fall of Spiritualism AKA the ‘Death Blow’” will discuss the movement’s decline, starting with Margaret Fox’s confession in 1888, how society’s perception changed towards the end of the 19th century, and sensationalism’s contribution to this. Exhibit items to support this discussion will include photographs and newspaper articles, which will be discussed further below regarding historical topic research;
3. “Spiritualism’s Resurgence” will discuss the movement’s slow return in the 20th century, society’s reluctance and skepticism towards Spiritualism, and the

investigative and scientific approaches to debunk or validate it. The exhibit will evaluate sensationalism's contributions to these perceptions and events. Exhibit items to support this discussion will include photographs, objects, and newspaper articles, which will be discussed further below regarding historical topic research.

The last exhibit will be the "Conclusion," which will summarize all the information provided in the prior exhibit sections. Two pages/sub-sections will be found here:

1. "Suggested Reading List" will contain a select bibliography, providing audiences with a choice list of primary and secondary sources to explore the topic further at their discretion;
2. "We'd Love To Hear From You!" will contain a link to a feedback survey so the audience can provide comments, and responses can be collected.

Chapter 3, "Methodology," details the research plan and the sources obtained. It is stated in this chapter that four patterns emerged during the examination of the newspaper sources and were categorized accordingly. Articles supporting these categorizations are included as exhibit items throughout the Omeka project and are detailed in the "Sensational Spiritualism" exhibit section and sub-section to narrate the historical topic. The articles outline the rise and fall of the Spiritualist movement and highlight the repeated use of sensationalism, which is the outline of the project.

The first category covers articles that reveal a society that accepts and is curious about Spiritualism. These articles were in the staunch belief of the movement and "[had] the most implicit faith in the mysterious manifestations as exhibited by the Fox sisters" and others.² The

² St. Louis Post Dispatch, "Last Of Famous Fox Sisters Dies," *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (St. Louis, MO), November 9, 1902.

Fox sisters became famous once their spirit rappings were discovered, with the help and perpetuation of newspapers. For example, from May 9, 1848, the *Buffalo Weekly Republic* claimed to “await further revelations with a good deal of interest.”³ The extensive, exploitative coverage of the Fox sisters drove the early progression of the Spiritualist movement. This promulgated one of the historiographical debates where scholars pinpoint the beginning of the U.S. movement to the Fox sisters and their knockings; R. Laurence Moore, Howard Kerr, and Charles Crow wrote their respective works based on this starting point. These are essential in establishing the movement’s start and “were published to entertain readers,” a staple of sensationalism.⁴ These examples will be discussed and showcased in the “Rise of Spiritualism” sub-section of the “Sensational Spiritualism” exhibit.⁵

Another group of primary sources reflects a transition to disinterest or opposition to the movement. As the movement continued to transition and the Fox sisters became less popular, some newspapers began to question and discuss Spiritualism openly and whether those beliefs were “from the point of view of one governed solely by reason.”⁶ The articles align with the historiography, where society’s interest waned in tandem with the Fox sisters’ popularity. Articles reflecting this transition will be added as items throughout the Omeka project and detailed in the “Sensational Spiritualism” exhibit section, specifically in the “Fall of Spiritualism” sub-section. We can see some scholars within the historiography, such as Nancy Rubin Stuart and Barbara Weisberg, who were still interested in the Fox sisters, but on a more generalized basis, with no unique argument to tie back to the historiography. A review in the

³ Buffalo Weekly Republic, “The Ghost of Ganargwa,” *Buffalo Weekly Republic* (Buffalo, NY), May 9, 1848; See Figure 4.

⁴ Bulla and Sachsman, “Introduction,” XX.

⁵ McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 13.

⁶ Brooklyn Daily Eagle, “Spread of Spiritualism,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Brooklyn, NY), April 4, 1899.

Journal of the Early Republic states that both works “cumulatively present by far the most accurate chronology and account of the Fox sisters to date.”⁷ Some newspapers, like the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* from March 26, 1893, wrote lengthy exposés that supposedly “exposed” frauds concealed as mediums and called out their deceitful practices.⁸ These articles and exposé pieces are classic examples of sensationalism, where colorful language evoked specific emotions toward the Spiritualist movement. The *San Francisco Examiner* from August 5, 1928, has a headline sprawled across the top entitled “Astonishing Confessions of Bogus ‘Spirit Medium’” and used keywords such as “fraud” and “trick” and enclosed some choice words in quotation marks like “evidence” to downplay belief in the movement’s phenomenal practices.⁹ *The Vermont Farmer* in 1876 viewed Spiritualism in the same light, with the use of choice keywords (“deception,” “dramatic,” “deceive,” and “credulous”).¹⁰ This would align with skeptical scholars later within the historiography, such as E.J. Dingwall, who openly criticized and supported criticisms of William Crookes, Florence Cook, Eusapia Palladino, and other mediums. Discussions of these, and supporting images, will be included in the “Fall of Spiritualism” and “Spiritualism’s Resurgence” sub-sections of the “Sensational Spiritualism” exhibit.¹¹

At the end of the 19th century and the start of the 20th century, newspapers started including images to strengthen their stories - the third group of articles. This directly relates to Amanda Frisken’s argument about how graphic illustrations were used to “increase circulation,

⁷ Mark Metzler Sawin, “Reviewed Work(s): Exploring Other Worlds: Margaret Fox, Elisha Kent Kane, and the Antebellum Culture of Curiosity by David Chapin; The Reluctant Spiritualist: The Life of Maggie Fox by Nancy Rubin Stuart; Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism by Barbara Weisberg,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 25, no. 4 (2005): 670.

⁸ *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, “Exposures of Mediums,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (St. Louis, MO), March 26, 1893.

⁹ *San Francisco Examiner*, “Astonishing Confessions of Bogus ‘Spirit Medium’,” *San Francisco Examiner* (San Francisco, CA), August 5, 1928; See Figures 5 and 6.

¹⁰ *Vermont Farmer*, “Spiritualism is America,” *Vermont Farmer* (Newport, VT), November 10, 1876.

¹¹ McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 13-14.

expand revenues, attract constituencies, and influence political culture.”¹² Some were for Spiritualism; an example is an article from the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* in 1893, which called out Spiritualism’s skeptics by highlighting the movement’s phenomenal practices as legitimate and added images of spirit writing to the article to entice the reader.¹³ Another example is a 1923 article from the *Times Record News* in Kansas, a simple advertisement for a “Gigantic Exhibition of Spiritism” with images of an angel and death.¹⁴ Other reports, like the *San Francisco Examiner* from March 3, 1907, utilize a large headline (“‘Our Seances Were Simply Frauds,’ Is Confession of Medium”) with a sizable image of an idol that was used to “dupe” individuals.¹⁵ The full-page article also includes smaller sensational headlines, such as “Confess Fraud” and “Fake Medium Collapses When Accused.”¹⁶ The reports uncover further connections to sensationalism and the degrees of rhetoric, tone, and saturation an article may have on readers. This is validated by Bulla and Sachsman, who state in their journalism series that “The *degree* of the rhetoric exaggerates the sensational effect. The greater the degree of grotesque detail (that is, the repetition of such detail) used, the stronger the sensationalism. The assumption is that this saturation will make more of an impact on the reader. Large and all-caps headlines also heightened the effect, as did the use of exclamation points.”¹⁷ Frisken adds to this, stating that “such images built on now familiar visual strategies of transforming evidence-based images for emotional effect, with greater deniability and less vulnerability to protests than interpretive

¹² Amanda Frisken, *Graphic News: How Sensational Images Transformed Nineteenth-Century Journalism* (Urbana, Chicago; Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2020), 1.

¹³ *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, “Exposures of Mediums,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (St. Louis, MO), March 26, 1893.

¹⁴ *Times Record News*, “Free to All At the Big Health Revival,” *Times Record News* (Wichita, KS), February 4, 1923.

¹⁵ *San Francisco Examiner*, “‘Our Seances Were Simply Frauds,’ Is Confession of Medium,” *San Francisco Examiner* (San Francisco, CA), March 3, 1907; See Figure 7.

¹⁶ *San Francisco Examiner*, “‘Our Seances Were Simply Frauds,’ Is Confession of Medium,” *San Francisco Examiner* (San Francisco, CA), March 3, 1907; See Figure 7.

¹⁷ Bulla and Sachsman, “Introduction,” XXI.

illustration.”¹⁸ As the movement’s progression enters the end of the 19th century and into the 20th century, the images become sharper and more precise; no longer are they pencil or ink drawings, but now photographic images (also a new medium at this point) that can no longer be left to interpretation as they are deemed more “authentic.”¹⁹ This transition of language and image use throughout Spiritualism’s historiography, as exemplified by the cited articles and images, will be included in the “Sensational Spiritualism” exhibit, specifically the “Fall of Spiritualism” and “Spiritualism’s Resurgence” sub-sections.²⁰

Harry Houdini was no stranger to the news, as he was a prominent skeptic of Spiritualism. He was outspoken about the Fox sisters and other mediums and authored numerous articles to debunk them. Houdini wrote a widely circulated article in 1924 entitled “Spiritualism Exposed” for *The Pantagraph* outlining Margaret Fox’s confession where she ‘exposed’ Spiritualism. He also “charged” other mediums with being a “thief” and “faker” and “other epithets” to reveal their deceit.²¹ Houdini’s skepticism aligned with Spiritualism’s 20th-century resurgence, where the phenomenal practices fell under scientific scrutiny to validate or debunk its credibility. An article from the *San Francisco Examiner* in April 1922 examined “How Science Traps ‘Ghosts’” with “elaborate scientific instruments” and “exact scientific methods.”²² We can see the use of “authentic” photographic images as “evidence” to back up the skepticism, per Frisken’s argument, to sway the public’s opinion.²³ These articles reveal a blueprint of the slow reintroduction of Spiritualism into society but with a progressive maturity as religion and

¹⁸ Frisken, *Graphic News: How Sensational Images Transformed Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, 201.

¹⁹ Frisken, *Graphic News*, 201.

²⁰ McLaren, “9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal,” 14-15.

²¹ San Bernardino County Sun, “Physical Combat Near When Houdini Says Mediums Are All ‘Fakers,’” *San Bernardino County Sun* (San Bernardino, CA), February 27, 1926.

²² San Francisco Examiner, “How Science Traps ‘Ghosts’,” *San Francisco Examiner* (San Francisco, CA), April 16, 1922; See Figure 8.

²³ Frisken, *Graphic News*, 201.

science begin to co-exist. This is evident within Spiritualism's historiography, where skepticism continues to this day, such as E.J. Dingwall, who was critical of mediums like Florence Cook, William Crookes, and Eusapia Palladino. Spiritualism's skepticism and scientific scrutiny will be discussed in the "Spiritualism's Resurgence" exhibit, with cited articles and images added as support. The articles also show another side of this reintroduction, where scholars think of Spiritualism beyond its phenomenal practices. This is where scholars' interpretations within the historiography exploded. Spiritualism was revisited as a religion, a philosophy, an influence on politics and culture, and a catalyst for reform. The focus on Spiritualism's phenomenal practices expanded, and while interest remained there, other interests emerged on its philosophical tenets. While the project does not delve into these various interpretations, nods to these arguments will be included in the "Conclusion" exhibit as they are essential to the overall historiography.²⁴

Other necessary primary sources obtained, not newspaper format, were influential in establishing the historiography of Spiritualism and creating the exhibit sections' text. These 19th-century sources were either published by known Spiritualists or those integrally involved with the movement and shared their experiences. Emma Hardinge Britten wrote *Modern American Spiritualism* in 1870. It comprises individuals and events involved with the Spiritualist movement between 1870 and 1890. Britten is herself a Spiritualist and discusses her mediumship and colleagues. It serves as an excellent reference for the early start of Spiritualism but contains biases, with Britten directly involved with some people and events. John Townsend Trowbridge wrote about his fifty-year experience with Spiritualism. It is an excellent example of how a skeptic turned into a believer and was vital in establishing Spiritualism's credibility during its 20th-century resurgence as it came under scrutiny. Trowbridge's experience forms part of

²⁴ McLaren, "9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal," 15.

Spiritualism's historiography and will be included in the "Spiritualism's Resurgence" sub-section of the "Sensational Spiritualism" exhibit.²⁵

Eliab Wilkinson Capron was heavily involved with the Fox sisters and the Fox family. He "became a public defender of Maggie and Kate," and "his involvement with the Fox family soon extended into managing the sisters' business affairs, organizing lectures, and generating press coverage."²⁶ Like Trowbridge, Capron kept track of the Spiritualist movement for years and "became a fairly successful writer" after the Fox sisters' popularity died out, creating *Modern Spiritualism: Its Fact and Fanaticisms, Its Consistencies and Contradictions* in 1855.²⁷ It supported the movement and was a general work discussing its start, purpose, and how successful it was to that point. Another important work was *Rochester Knockings!*, which originally appeared in the March 1851 volume of the *Buffalo Medical Journal*. It was the "report of the full-scale investigation undertaken by the physicians [Austin Flint, Charles A. Lee, and C. B. Coventry]" who attended spirit rapping demonstrations in Buffalo to confirm or discredit the sisters' validity.²⁸ The work was essential in establishing scholars' assumptions that the Fox sisters signified the start of the movement in the United States. It also found early in the historiography that "the Buffalo expose was deliberately ignored or suppressed by the growing band of spiritualists" and was simultaneously accurately captured by news media.²⁹ This is discussed and captured in the "Rise of Spiritualism" sub-section of the "Sensational Spiritualism" exhibit.³⁰

²⁵ McLaren, "9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal," 15-16.

²⁶ Daniel Gorman, Jr., "The Man Behind the Curtain: E.W. Capron and the Early Days of Spiritualism," (part of the Post Family Papers Project, University of Rochester libraries, 2012), 2.

²⁷ Gorman, Jr., "The Man Behind the Curtain: E.W. Capron and the Early Days of Spiritualism," 2.

²⁸ Vern L. Bullough, "Spirit Rapping Unmasked: An 1851 Investigation and Its Aftermath," *The Skeptical Inquirer* 10 (Fall 1985): 61.

²⁹ Bullough, "Spirit Rapping Unmasked: An 1851 Investigation and Its Aftermath," 66.

³⁰ McLaren, "9-1 Final Project Part I Submission: Research Proposal," 16-17.

The primary source material selected has been utilized by other scholars within the historiography of Spiritualism, as the project's topic does not alter or change its timeline. The exhibit creates an alternate viewpoint that spans two centuries, so primary sources that address Spiritualism across an 80-year timeframe are being incorporated to examine the topic. How the primary source material was selected and applied differs from other scholars as it creates a new and unique interpretation. The topic's examination through the lens of sensationalism confirms that the selection of images and newspaper articles are atypical of other scholars, given the sensational language and imagery related to the Spiritualist movement. This is an essential aspect and intended goal of the project.

The numerous secondary sources selected are varied but essential in understanding Spiritualism's substantial impact on American culture and society. Each source addresses a particular aspect or branch of the complex historiography, which will be used to build the "Introduction" and "Sensational Spiritualism" exhibits of the public history project. To understand the topic, one must understand the Spiritualist movement itself, the various perspectives of the religion, its timeline through the 19th and 20th centuries, and how society and scholars viewed it. Once established, the sources addressing sensationalism are utilized to build out the topic, the journalistic theories applied to the chosen primary source bases to highlight the specific use of language and images toward Spiritualism, which would have contributed to society's and scholars' understanding and belief in the movement.

In the celler will permit. We await further revelations with a good deal of interest. In the meantime we trust that the neighborhood will keep "cool," and that the ghost of the murdered pedlar may continue to make all needful and proper suggestions in reference to the matter.—*Roch. Adv.*

Figure 4: Snippet from May 9, 1848 *Buffalo Weekly Republic* article (Courtesy of *Buffalo Weekly Republic*).

Astonishing Confessions of a Bogus "Spirit Medium"

Frederick Munnings, Famous British "Psychic," Who Admits He Never Saw a Ghost in His Life, Explains How He Befooled Conan Doyle and Other Prominent Spiritualists, Produced "Spirit Messages" from Anybody, Faked Ghost Photographs and Even "Materialized" a Dead Dog

Figure 5: Snippet from August 5, 1928 *San Francisco Examiner* article (headline) (Courtesy of *San Francisco Examiner*).

IN previous chapters I explained the almost ridiculous ease with which I produced such impressive "supernatural manifestations" as "spirit lights," "psychic winds," "levitation," "spirit perfumes," "ectoplasm," "spirit photographs" showing ghostly faces and forms, hovering about me, "materialization of ghosts" who would hand the sitter a real glass of water or cup of hot tea and were democratic enough to let mere mortals clasp their clammy hands.

These things were all **frauds**. I never had a "psychic" moment in my entire nine years career as an internationally famous spiritualistic medium, never saw the slightest evidence of spirits at any of my more than 5,000 successful seances nor at those of other mediums which I often attended.

However, many of those **tricks** which I have mentioned required that I conceal about my person a few bits of paraphernalia. These tools of **deception** were easily "spirited" into the seance room in my socks or underwear, unless I was subjected to a rigid search. Fortunately the deep students of spiritualistic matters, such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge are no longer interested in these "physical manifestations," which are an old story to them, but only ask for **"evidential"** messages from the voices. This is quite fortunate—in fact most everything about spiritualism is so **rigged** as to be fortunate from the point of view of the **fraudulent** medium.

Figure 6: Snippet from August 5, 1928 *San Francisco Examiner* article (body) (Courtesy of *San Francisco Examiner*).



Figure 7: Snippet from March 3, 1907 *San Francisco Examiner* article (Courtesy of *San Francisco Examiner*).

How Science Traps "Ghosts"

Interesting Instruments and Curious Appliances Devised to Reveal the Approach of a Spook in a House Reported to Be "Haunted"



A Split Message Received by Automatic Writing.

FRANK M. WATSON, who has been for many years a prominent figure in the scientific world, is the author of the book "The Ghosts of the Past," which is now being published by the University of Chicago Press. The book is a collection of stories and accounts of ghostly apparitions, and is one of the most interesting and up-to-date works on the subject that has been published in many years.

The "Ghosts of the Past" is a collection of stories and accounts of ghostly apparitions, and is one of the most interesting and up-to-date works on the subject that has been published in many years. The book is written in a clear and concise style, and is well illustrated with photographs and drawings.

The book is written in a clear and concise style, and is well illustrated with photographs and drawings. It is a valuable contribution to the study of the history of ghostly apparitions, and is one of the best books on the subject that has been published in many years.

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One of Dr. Carrington's interesting instruments which he balanced so finely that it will record the presence of a human will or the passing of a disembodied force.

The book is written in a clear and concise style, and is well illustrated with photographs and drawings. It is a valuable contribution to the study of the history of ghostly apparitions, and is one of the best books on the subject that has been published in many years.

Dr. Franklin Price, the Scientific "Spook Hunter."

The book is written in a clear and concise style, and is well illustrated with photographs and drawings. It is a valuable contribution to the study of the history of ghostly apparitions, and is one of the best books on the subject that has been published in many years.

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Figure 8: April 16, 1922 San Francisco Examiner article (Courtesy of San Francisco Examiner).

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Ethical Considerations

The examination of Spiritualism through the lens of sensationalism has brought forth some recommendations for further research. One research topic is the Canadian Spiritualist movement during the same timeframe covered in the project – the late 19th century and early 20th century. According to authors Walter J. Meyer Zu Erpen and Joy Lowe, “Although Spiritualist activities date from the 1850s in Eastern Canada and apparently from at least 1870 in British Columbia, academic study of the history of Spiritualism in Canada is virtually non-existent.”³¹ The American and British movements are heavily studied, so this research would open the door for new interpretations and the creation of secondary sources which would further add to the historiography of Spiritualism. An excellent first step in implementing this research would be to delve into existing scholarly secondary sources to understand the historiography of the Canadian movement to understand any potential gaps and arguments. Browsing through existing sources used to create the “Sensational Spiritualism” project to gain insight into the Canadian movement would be a good starting point. Then, exploring databases for other sources (such as the “Education Books & Recommended Reading” section of the Spiritualist Church of Canada website) would be the next step to help continue building sources and expanding knowledge on the historiography.³²

The intended audience for this uncovered research topic of the Canadian Spiritualist movement would be like the “Sensational Spiritualism” project - academics interested in the social, cultural, political, and economic changes during the timeline of the Canadian Spiritualist

³¹ Walter J. Meyer Zu Erpen and Joy Lowe, “The Canadian Spiritualist Movement and Sources for its Study,” *Archivaria* 30 (1990): 72.

³² “Education Books & Recommended Reading,” Spiritualist Church of Canada, accessed on November 30, 2022, [Education Books & Recommended Reading | Mysite \(spiritualistchurchofcanada.com\)](https://spiritualistchurchofcanada.com/education-books-recommended-reading/).

movement, as well as those interested in Canadian Spiritualism as a religion and in new-age faiths in general. Chapter 4, “Specialized Audience,” will revisit the academic audience in detail (graduate students, professors, historians), which would span across various geographic regions as scholarly search databases can be utilized by all educational institutions. For those interested in Canadian Spiritualism as a religion and new-age religions, this audience is, again, a niche audience. According to a survey in 2019 by Statistique Canada, 1.2% of the Canadian population identify as “Other religions and spiritual traditions” – no breakdown was provided. Still, it could be assumed that this would incorporate metaphysical religions such as Spiritualism.³³ An Omeka exhibition like the “Sensational Spiritualism” project would be an appropriate implementation, as the sources and data to be presented are similar and could be showcased in a visually pleasing format for this new topic.

Another recommendation for further research based on the project is examining local historical events or individuals through the lens of sensationalism. Sensationalism has been used to highlight important national historical events, especially the “chaotic, violent nature of wartime events” such as the Civil War and the Spanish-American War.³⁴ The way the news portrayed these national events “[illustrated] man’s inhumanity to man.”³⁵ The communication and documentation of local events are just as important as national ones, as they can offer insight into a particular region's social, cultural, and economic aspects. The Library of Congress goes further to say, “Local events show how nationwide events, such as wars or economic downturns,

³³ See Figure 9.

³⁴ 4. Gregory A. Borchard, Stephen Bates, and Lawrence J. Mullen, “Publishing Violence as Art and News: Sensational Prints and Pictures in the 19th-Century Press,” in *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th century Reporting*, ed. David B. Sachsman and David W. Bulla (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 61.

³⁵ 4. Borchard, Bates, and Mullen, “Publishing Violence as Art and News: Sensational Prints and Pictures in the 19th-Century Press,” in *Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th century Reporting*, 61.

were experienced differently in different places.”³⁶ Peering at these aspects through sensationalism provides unique perspectives on how various regions coped with differing external factors. It can provide unlimited interpretations and discussions on how society reacted to these events by exploring these real-time snapshots, with the added benefit of the 19th-century language and imagery used in local and regional newspapers.

The intended audience for this uncovered research topic of local historical events and individuals through the lens of sensationalism includes the local community where the event occurred/individual resided, local historians and journalists, and local historical institutions. The lens of sensationalism provides a unique “sense of meaning and identity” to the region where the local event happened/individual resided.³⁷ An excellent first step in implementing this research is to decide on a region/individual and period to investigate and then delve into existing primary sources (newspapers, diaries, oral histories, and other archival material) to learn more about what was happening. Browsing through existing newspaper sources used to create the “Sensational Spiritualism” project to gain insight into the selected topic would be a good starting point. Exploring local archives, museums, libraries, and online databases for different primary sources to expand knowledge would be an appropriate next step. Once a sufficient number of primary sources are gathered, further investigation into the language and imagery to understand the sensational flair that was portrayed to these events is an excellent next step to understand the influence that was imbued on society and the ‘spin’ that was beginning to take hold on the chosen event/individual. Finally, rounding out the research by exploring scholarly secondary

³⁶ “U.S. Local History: A Resource Guide,” Library of Congress, accessed on November 30, 2022, [Introduction - U.S. Local History: A Resource Guide - Research Guides at Library of Congress.](#)

³⁷ Thomas A. Woods, “Museums and the Public: Doing History Together,” *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 3 (1995): 1111.

sources to understand the historiography would make sense on the next action item. Submitting a grant proposal to a local historical society or museum to create an exhibition based on the conducted research – utilizing a grant such as the Inspire! Grants for Small Museums - would be the most appropriate implementation for this potential topic.

A potential ethical consideration associated with the “Sensational Spiritualism” project is approaching sensitive situations – classism, racism, sexism – that were prevalent in a different period. Researchers may have problems with including some sources due to their sensitive nature. Francesca P. L. Moore says that “the personal nature of the information in these records raises questions about whether they are suitable inclusions in the public record.”³⁸ While scouring newspaper sources for this project, there were multiple examples of out-of-date language use that could be found offensive nowadays, as well as crude drawings representing individuals to make jest or offend. Most articles dealt with individuals who held out hope to communicate with loved ones who had passed on, which can be a sensitive topic for some. There is also the matter of consent and privacy with local history. Moore also discusses this, bluntly stating that “the dead don’t answer questionnaires” and sharing information on individuals who are no longer here.³⁹ Historians must practice sound, methodical research practices and treat all information ethically and respectfully when considering what to share with the public.

Another potential ethical consideration to this topic is maintaining professionalism and avoiding prejudice when presenting historiographical interpretations. Religion and faith can be challenging topics, and historians must be aware of the potential conflicts these may present. They must also “be mindful of any conflicts of interest that may arise in their professional

³⁸ Francesca P. L. Moore, “Tales from the archive: methodological and ethical issues in historical geography research,” *Area* 42, no. 3 (2010): 265.

³⁹ Moore, “Tales from the archive: methodological and ethical issues in historical geography research,” 263.

duties” when presenting a historiographical interpretation from a religious lens.⁴⁰ This aligns with other organizations’ treatment of ethical research, such as the American Academy of Religion, which states that “when scholarship has an impact on the status or self-understanding of contemporary religious groups, the responsible researcher strives to judiciously balance the commitment to free and rigorous inquiry that is essential to the discipline with the responsibility to treat those s/he studies honestly and fairly.”⁴¹ Spiritualism is viewed in a variety of ways throughout its historiography – religion, philosophy, Halloween party games, new age beliefs – and must be recognized and respected as such to ensure equitable treatment.

An obstacle that may be encountered in the current “Sensational Spiritualism” project, as well as researching and implementing the outlined potential topics, is, in part, the size of the specialized and intended audiences (see Chapter 4, “Specialized Audience,” for details). There would be no issues with the academic audience, given the extent of who is included in this group. The other audience groups may present potential obstacles. With these groups being niche audiences, there is the potential for the scope of further research, audience reach, and interest to be too focused. It would be a challenge to convince historical societies and museums to potentially accept exhibitions if the topic is too small or too niche. Being cognizant of how Spiritualism, sensationalism, and local history branch out into other social and cultural entities – literature, journalism, philosophy, and sociopolitical issues, to name a few – and creating interpretations that creatively integrate these would combine and broaden audiences and build interest.

⁴⁰ “Reputation and Trust,” Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct, *American Historical Association*, last modified 2019, accessed on November 30, 2022, [Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct \(updated 2019\) | AHA \(historians.org\)](#).

⁴¹ “Responsible Research Practices,” A Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct for AAR Members, *American Academy of Religion*, last modified February 2016, accessed on November 30, 2022, [Responsible Research Practices \(aarweb.org\)](#).

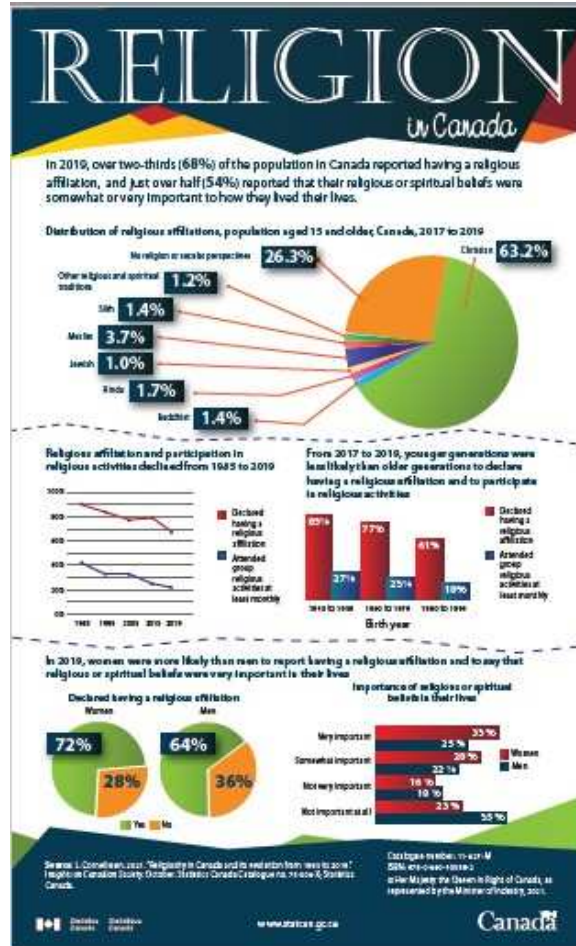


Figure 9: 2021 Statistique Canada Study “Religiosity in Canada and its evolution from 1985 to 2019” (Courtesy of Statistique Canada).

Chapter 6: Budgeting and Staffing Requirements

The start-up and maintenance costs required for the “Sensational Spiritualism” project include supplies, equipment, labor, and indirect costs. The project and any further research have been considered for an eventual transition to a physical exhibition with a local historical society or museum. However, examining the average costs of a physical exhibition, the benefits would not outweigh the costs. According to a 2011 museum exhibition survey, “the average 6000 square foot History Museum [...] exhibitions are \$204 per square foot with 17% spent on research, design and exhibition development.”⁴² Per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, that \$204 average cost in July 2011 (when the survey was conducted) has inflated to \$269.09 as of October 2022, which is a 24.19% increase.⁴³ Libraries, archives, and museums rely heavily on attendance records and various grants to maintain operations, so every dollar is scrutinized. In addition, numerous historical institutions have digitized, or have workflow projects in flight, to digitize their collections for public access. According to Alexandra Chassanoff, “Many institutions are digitizing portions of their archival materials and providing online access through search interfaces. [...] Some of the major advantages of digital collections include the ease of using digital formats, fast access, and better searching techniques.”⁴⁴ Digitization is well on its way to being the ‘future state’ for preservation and conservation purposes in terms of cost-effectiveness and adaptation to evolving technology. With this, along with the project’s and any further research implementation’s specialized and intended audiences having niche tendencies

⁴² Mark Walhimer, “2011 Museum Exhibition Cost Survey Results,” *Museum Planner*, last modified July 18 2011, accessed on December 3, 2022, [2011 Museum Exhibition Cost Survey Results - Museum Planner](#).

⁴³ See Figure 10.

⁴⁴ Alexandra Chassanoff, “Historians and the Use of Primary Source Materials in the Digital Age,” *The American Archivist* 76, no. 2 (2013): 459, 463.

(see Chapter 4, “Specialized Audience,” and Chapter 6, “Recommendations and Ethical Considerations”), the project will remain virtual. Exploration and utilization of a grant, such as the Inspire! Grants for Small Museums, would be fitting to support this project and further research recommendations and implementations. This grant supports “efforts to serve the public through exhibitions [and] digital learning resources,” among other initiatives, and can offer anywhere between \$5,000 to \$50,000 in funds.⁴⁵ Given the total estimation of this project, this grant would be a perfect fit as it would incorporate any unexpected or inflated costs.

A budget of \$2,250 for a laptop computer, external hard drive, printer, and flatbed scanner would be necessary to set aside to conduct research, store source material, and archival files, and back up any files as required.⁴⁶ If files are not digitized, a printer and flatbed scanner will manually digitize any primary sources pertinent for further research recommendations. As technology evolves, there may be a need to refresh or migrate files or upgrade software; budgeting for this equipment and upgrades is necessary to “avoid the physical decay or the obsolescence of that medium” and to bring “all former formats into a limited number of contemporary formats.”⁴⁷ These supplies and equipment would be deemed necessary once the researcher has reviewed their hardware and software capabilities during the project planning process. A detailed breakdown of the supplies and equipment costs for this project are reflected in Table 1.⁴⁸

Staffing and labor are one of the essential items of the project and the smallest budget allocation. As discussed in Chapter 6, “Recommendations and Ethical Considerations,” the

⁴⁵ “Inspire! Grants for Small Museums,” Institute of Museum and Library Services, accessed on December 8, 2022, [Inspire! Grants for Small Museums | Institute of Museum and Library Services \(imls.gov\)](https://www.imls.gov/inspire-grants-for-small-museums).

⁴⁶ See Table 1.

⁴⁷ Northeast Document Conservation Center. *Handbook for Digital Projects: A Management Tool for Preservation and Access*, by Maxine K. Sitts, Andover: Northeast Document Conservation Center, 2000: 169.

⁴⁸ See Table 1.

various subscription costs – the two most important being Omeka and Newspapers.com. The “Sensational Spiritualism” project is housed in Omeka and is currently utilizing a free trial that offers “a single site, with limited themes and plugins.”⁵² Further research would require additional sites; Omeka’s paid plans range from five to unlimited sites with various themes and plugins. To stay on the Omeka platform, transitioning from a single site to a host of unlimited sites would be ideal, costing \$1,000 annually.⁵³ This does not consider any partnerships with institutions where research could be transitioned to a preferable cataloging system.

Newspapers.com is another essential subscription, given the nature of the research recommendations and implementations (see Chapter 6, “Recommendations and Ethical Considerations”). The site’s “Publisher Extra” subscription provides access to all the newspapers they partner with – over 25,000 – archived through the prior month. The subscription is biannual, costing about \$75.⁵⁴ It would be remiss not to include membership costs for professional organizations, such as the National Council for Public History, which can enrich a historian in their research endeavors by expanding networks and providing access to exclusive scholarly sources that can progress their study. The average cost for a standard membership is \$50.⁵⁵ The total indirect costs for this project are reflected in Table 1.

⁵² “Upgrade Plan,” Omeka.net, accessed on December 5, 2022, [Omeka.net | Pricing](#).

⁵³ See Table 1.

⁵⁴ See Table 1.

⁵⁵ See Table 1.

The image shows the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website's CPI Inflation Calculator. The page title is "CPI Inflation Calculator". On the left, there is a sidebar with links: TOP PICKS, SERIES REPORT, PUBLIC DATA API, DISCONTINUED DATABASES, FAQs, SPECIAL NOTICES, and MORE SOURCES OF DATA. The main content area features a calculator interface with the following fields and values:

- Input field: \$ 204.00
- Dropdowns: in July 2011
- Text: has the same buying power as
- Output field: \$269.09
- Dropdowns: in October 2022
- Button: Calculate

The calculator interface is titled "CPI Inflation Calculator" and includes a "Calculate" button.

Figure 10: CPI Inflation Calculator showing inflation rate of \$204 between July 2011 and October 2022 (Courtesy of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Conclusion

Spiritualism is a multidimensional topic due to its influence on several external factors throughout the 19th century, including societal norms, culture, and politics. The phenomenal practices of Spiritualism – seances and spirit communication, to name a few – are still highly romanticized in many cultures and impacted 19th-century social and political movements. Once those layers are peeled back, researchers find that digging deeper into the Spiritualist movement provides a glimpse into its impact on several other vital movements, such as abolitionism and suffragism, through various historical lenses. David Walker says, “Such diversity has provided much analytical opportunity, and different writers have found in spiritualism a unique container of various interests and methods [...]”¹ Through this historiographical examination of Spiritualism came the uncovering of how newspapers treated the movement through language and imagery. Sensationalism also became a popular journalistic tactic during this time, with the growing population and literacy rate. The project, highlighted on the Omeka platform, examines how sensationalism was a catalyst for Spiritualism’s rise in the 19th century, then its gradual downfall and resurgence at the end of the 19th century and turn of the 20th century.

The project utilizes newspapers as its main primary source material, exhibiting how language use and imagery influenced society’s perception of the movement during its historiography (see Chapter 2, “Historiography,” and Chapter 5, “Project Planning and Historical Topic Research” for details). The Omeka project outlines Spiritualism’s historiography in an easy-to-read, visually pleasing format for a public audience. It incorporates samples of primary

¹ David Walker, “The Humbug in American Religion Ritual Theories of Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism,” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 23, no 1. (2013): 32.

sources to prove the topic thesis and written blurbs that walk the audience through the historiography of Spiritualism and the influence of sensationalism, as explained throughout the previous chapters.

The project is outlined to simulate Spiritualism's timeline during the 19th and 20th centuries, proven by the timestamps of collected newspaper samples. It shows how Spiritualism was readily accepted in the mid-19th century, with that acceptance lessening as the years went on, then completely changing around the time Margaret Fox made her 'confession' in 1888. That perception switched to skepticism with a few notable characters, such as Harry Houdini, and the introduction of scientific tools in a movement to debunk, as it resurged in the 20th century. Sensationalism was used to amplify the events by choosing specific words and incorporating certain imagery, which aligned perfectly with the historiography supported by scholarly secondary sources. As stated throughout this project, the topic does not alter or change the historiography of Spiritualism. However, this project adds a new perspective and lens to the historiography, hopefully aiding future historians and the public who look to explore this topic further.

Appendix 1: Online Exhibition

[Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement \(omeka.net\)](#)

SENSATIONAL SPIRITUALISM: THE STUDY OF 19TH- CENTURY REPORTING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT

Browse Collections
Browse Exhibits

BROWSE EXHIBITS (3 TOTAL)

Browse All
Browse by Tag


Introduction

Sensationalism had a major impact on the U.S. Spiritualist movement from its beginning in the mid-19th century through the 20th century. The extensive historiography has amassed numerous interpretations of why Spiritualism gained traction so quickly in the United States and then fizzled out.

This exhibit will highlight how sensationalism – also at its peak during the 19th century – contributed to the movement's progression in society.

Based on extensive research, the exhibit will explore how media coverage of the 19th century was the catalyst for the rise and fall of the Spiritualist movement in the United States and was also a contributing factor to its resurgence in the early 20th century. The media's distinct reporting style resonated with much of the population in the United States and was a facilitating agent of the movement during these historically significant moments in American history.

Visit the links on the right to learn more on what Spiritualism and sensationalism are, so you are equipped with the proper knowledge and tools before diving into the main exhibit (by clicking "Browse Exhibits"). Enjoy!




Sensational Spiritualism

This exhibit will discuss the historiography of Spiritualism through the lens of sensationalism. It has been broken down into three categories:

1. The rise of Spiritualism, which will discuss the movement's beginning during the mid-to-late 1800s, and how sensationalism contributed to its popularity and progression during its start.
2. Spiritualism's downfall, which started around 1888. This will investigate how society's perception changed toward the end of the 19th century with the contribution of sensationalism;
3. The resurgence of Spiritualism, which will discuss the movement's reintegration into society in the 20th century. It will also look at how Spiritualism tried to amp up its practices through various methods, the increased skepticism and campaign to debunk the movement, and the sensational spotlight that perpetuated these events.

In addition to checking out the three portions of this exhibit, feel free to take a look at the various [collections](#) that will help highlight the points discussed throughout this exhibit.



Conclusion

So, what was the result of sensationalism's impact on Spiritualism? A variety of things occurred:

The Fox sisters and their celebrity status faded away into obscurity, and they left the public eye. Maggie Fox attempted to recall her confession a year later, but the sisters were never able to reclaim their popularity. The sisters eventually settled down and passed away, with the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (St. Louis, MO) reporting on the last sister, Leah's, passing in 1902. Newspapers continued to utilize the Fox sisters' story for sensationalism, [writing on a headless station](#) in the *Hydrville basement* in 1904. A medium who was present allegedly verified the Fox sisters' spirit rapping claims.

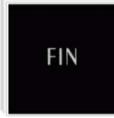
Harry Houdini passed away in 1926, but his connection to Spiritualism would continue. Houdini and his wife Bess made a pact that, after one's passing, the other would try to contact the other for ten years as proof that the living and dead could communicate. Many mediums claimed to have contacted Houdini, which Bess has repeatedly refuted. You can listen to the last séance on Houdini's tenth anniversary [here](#).

Despite Spiritualism's spiraling downfall, mediums continued. Mediums tried to connect with society by communicating with important figures of the movement, such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. You can hear a medium allegedly channeling Doyle's spirit [here](#) and a video recording of a supposed possession of a medium by Doyle (with Doyle's widow and son in attendance) [here](#). However, the damage had been done. Once the spotlight that sensationalism, Houdini, and others had cast on Spiritualism had faded, the movement transitioned into unorganized circles. Spiritualist practices became prominent again in the 1970s, with practitioners adapting them into other religious practices during the New Age movement, and still maintain interest and appeal today.

Sensationalism continued to evolve and is very much integrated into today's media, print and digital.

Spiritualism is a multidimensional topic due to its influence on several external factors throughout the 19th century, including societal norms, culture, and politics. The phenomenal practices of Spiritualism are still highly romanticized in many cultures and impacted 19th-century social and political movements. Once those layers are peeled back, researchers find that digging deeper into the Spiritualist movement provides a glimpse into its impact on several other vital movements, such as abolitionism and suffragism, through various historical lenses. Through this historiographical examination of Spiritualism came the uncovering of how newspapers treated the movement through language and imagery. Sensationalism also became a popular journalistic tactic during this time, with the growing population and literacy rate. This exhibit examines how sensationalism was a catalyst for Spiritualism's rise in the 19th century and its gradual downfall and resurgence at the end of the 19th century and the turn of the 20th century.

For your enjoyment, please browse the Suggested Reading List to learn more on this topic. You may also leave feedback on this exhibit by clicking on the Feedback Survey.



SENSATIONAL SPIRITUALISM: THE STUDY OF 19TH- CENTURY REPORTING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT

| | |
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INTRODUCTION

Sensationalism had a major impact on the U.S. Spiritualist movement from its beginning in the mid-19th century through the 20th century. The extensive historiography has amassed numerous interpretations of why Spiritualism gained traction so quickly in the United States and then fizzled out.

This exhibit will highlight how sensationalism—also at its peak during the 19th century—contributed to the movement's progression in society.

Based on extensive research, the exhibit will explore how media coverage of the 19th century was the catalyst for the rise and fall of the Spiritualist movement in the United States and was also a contributing factor to its resurgence in the early 20th century. The media's distinct reporting style resonated with much of the population in the United States and was a facilitating agent of the movement during these historically significant moments in American history.

Visit the links on the right to learn more on what Spiritualism and sensationalism are, so you are equipped with the proper knowledge and tools before diving into the main exhibit (by clicking "Browse Exhibits"). Enjoy!

What is Spiritualism?

Spiritualism - a brief timeline

What is Sensationalism?

Sensationalism - a brief timeline

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SENSATIONAL SPIRITUALISM: THE STUDY OF 19TH- CENTURY REPORTING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT

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WHAT IS SPIRITUALISM?

Spiritualism in the United States came out of the Third Great Awakening, a period highlighted by religious activism and in which multiple religious movements were created.

Spiritualism began as the belief that the living could communicate with the dead. This has expanded over the years to various interpretations, including as a religion, philosophy, and as a science.

The movement became widely popular in the mid-19th century, and experienced a decline in practitioners with a rise in skepticism at the end of the 19th century and the turn of the 20th century.

Common practices associated with 19th century Spiritualism include:


Spirit Communication: The basis of Spiritualism; the open line of communication between the living and the dead, usually through a medium. This could be done through seance, hearing, or clairvoyance.

Seances: A meeting of people who are gathered to receive messages from spirits, or to receive them through a medium through spirit communication.


Spirit Photography: Method through which ghosts/spirits are captured through photographs, usually an individual's loved one.

Levitation: When humans or objects rise into the air by mystical means. This can occur through spirits or psychic phenomena.


Ectoplasm: A physical substance that exuded from mediums during seances to denote the presence of spirits.




A seance in a 19th century home.




An example of spirit photography.



An example of a medium "tableting" during a seance.



An example of a table seance during a seance.



An example of a medium producing ectoplasm during a seance.

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SPIRITUALISM - A BRIEF TIMELINE

1847 - Andrew Jackson Davis, a self-proclaimed healer, combined aspects of Swedenborgianism and Mesmerism to what is known as "harmonical philosophy" and is the basis for Philosophical Spiritualism.

1848 - Two of the Fox Sisters - Kate and Margaret - claim that they are able to communicate with a spirit in their home through a series of knockings.

1848 - The Seneca Falls Convention, the first women's rights convention in the United States, took place in Seneca Falls, NY; it was attended by numerous Spiritualists, and thrust the movement into the conventional mainstream.

1882 - The Society for Psychical Research was founded, which investigated the claims of whether spirits were real by Spiritualists and others.


1888 - The Fox sisters claim that their spirit rappings were a hoax; this is deemed the "death blow" to the Spiritualist movement.

1890 - The Ouija board was marketed as a toy/party game, originally unrelated to Spiritualism.

1898 - The Catholic Church officially condemned Spiritualist practices.

1912 - Medium Pearl Curran allegedly contacted the spirit of Palanec Worth through the use of a Ouija board, which popularized it as a use for divination and spirit communication during World War I.

1920s - Harry Houdini campaigned against mediums in an effort to debunk their practices and methods.



An early advertisement for the Ouija board (1891)

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WHAT IS SENSATIONALISM?

Sensationalism is an editorial tactic that is categorized by:


- Dramatized stories
- Pointed use of colorful language, words, and phrases
- Distorted and exaggerated imagery
- Bolded words and headlines
- Fear-mongering

Some famous examples of sensationalism include:

- U.S.S. *Albatross* sinking in Havana harbor in 1898 - false claims made by newspapers that the sinking was caused by "the enemy" which perpetuated the start of the Spanish-American War
- R.M.S. *Titanic* sinking in the Atlantic Ocean in April 1912 - false claims made by newspapers that, through the help of wireless telegraphy, that all of the passengers and ship were saved and avoided from being added to "the long list of ocean disasters"



Clipping from *The Chronicle*
Albany, Oregon (NY) February 24, 1898



Clipping from *Albion's Daily Herald*
Albion, N.Y. April 15, 1912

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SENSATIONALISM - A BRIEF TIMELINE

The population of the United States increased due to immigration waves, as well as territorial and manufacturing expansions. The literacy rate across the United States also increased during this timeframe, which had a direct correlation to the rise in newspaper circulation and readership.

1800 - The literacy rate in the Northern states was 75%, while it was 60% in the Southern states.

1801 - Approximately 200 newspapers existed in the United States (weekly prints, targeted towards politics).

1833 - Approximately 1,200 newspapers existed in the United States; *The New York Sun*, one of the first penny papers, issued its first edition, which included murders, suicides, and court reporting.

1835 - The *New York Sun* published a hoax in August 1835 about the discovery of flora and fauna on the moon, which was supposed to have been from a Scottish scientific journal (an early example of sensationalism).

1840 - The literacy rate in the Northern states increased to 90%, while it increased to 81% in the Southern states.

1860 - Approximately 3,000 newspapers existed in the United States; 90% were weekly prints.

1860s & 1870s - The *New York Herald* published various sensational stories to draw interest from readers to their paper and increase sales, including:

- Wild animals escaping from Central Park
- A house being haunted by a ghost in a New York City neighborhood
- Gory details of the murder crime scene of prostitute Helen Jewett

1865 - After the Civil War ended, the number of newspapers and their readers rose dramatically.

1870-1890 - The U.S. population rose 63% with the influx of working-class immigrants, with the country's average literacy rates rising from 80% to 89%. Daily newspaper circulation during this time increased 222%, with the number of newspapers increasing from 4,500 to 12,000, and their readers increasing from 2.6 million to 15 million.


1878 - Joseph Pulitzer bought the *St. Louis Dispatch*, merged it with the *St. Louis Post*, and formed the *St. Louis Post and Dispatch*. This publication was a leader in sensational journalism.

1883 - Pulitzer purchased *New York World* and, like with *St. Louis Post and Dispatch*, emphasized sensationalism in its stories.


1898 - The U.S.S. *Maine* exploded and sank in Havana Harbor, which became sensational fodder in U.S. newspapers and a false target against Spain. This ultimately was a huge catalyst for the start of the Spanish-American War.

"120 Years of Literacy"

This page presents historical data on population growth, school enrollment rates and attendance, and literacy statistics between 1868-70 (the date when the first Office of Education report was published) through 1970. This will correlate with the literacy rates outlined in the above timeline.



Front page of *The New York Sun's* first edition, New York, NY, September 3, 1833



Clipping from *The Greenville Journal* on the sinking of the U.S.S. *Maine*, Greenville, OK, February 24, 1898

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SENSATIONAL SPIRITUALISM

This exhibit will discuss the historiography of Spiritualism through the lens of sensationalism. It has been broken down into three categories:

1. The rise of Spiritualism, which will discuss the movement's beginning during the mid-to late 1800s, and how sensationalism contributed to its popularity and progression during its start.
2. Spiritualism's downfall, which started around 1888. This will investigate how society's perception changed toward the end of the 19th century with the contribution of sensationalism.
3. The resurgence of Spiritualism, which will discuss the movement's reintegration into society in the 20th century. It will also look at how Spiritualism tried to amp up its practices through various methods, the increased skepticism and campaign to debunk the movement, and the sensational spotlight that perpetuated these events.

In addition to checking out the three portions of this exhibit, feel free to take a look at the various [collections](#) that will help highlight the points discussed throughout this exhibit.

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RISE OF SPIRITUALISM

Spiritualism's start is a hotly debated topic. Most claim that it began in Hydesville, New York, in March 1848 with the [Fox Sisters](#) in an event called the "Rochester Knockings." The [sisters](#) – Maggie and Kate – claimed that they could hear knockings (or what they said were "rappings") from underneath their floorboards and other strange noises during the night. After a series of investigations (and some skepticism), including physicians who printed their findings in the [Buffalo Medical Journal](#), the claims were deemed valid, and Spiritualism became a sensation. [This article](#) from the *Buffalo Weekly Republic* on May 9, 1848, details the events, made no uncertainties of the incidents, and claims all parties "made a certificate" of the happenings.[1]

Others believe that, a few years earlier, Spiritualism became embedded in the Tri-State area through [Andrew Jackson Davis](#), monikered the "Father of Modern Spiritualism" and the "Poughkeepsie Seer." [2] [Davis](#) was a believer in earlier movements ([Mesmerism](#) and [Sydenhamism](#)), and created his amalgamation of Spiritualism based on these movements and his own prophecies. He claimed he could hear voices, diagnose medical issues, and see the future.

Regardless of the start, the popularity of Spiritualism created a stir, first in New York. It had a powerful influence on activism and reform, with suffragettes such as Emily Pitt Stevens, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton pushing for women's rights at the Seneca Falls Convention in July 1848. Many Quakers and women in attendance found unity, encouragement, power, and voice through Spiritualism. With the success of the Seneca Falls Convention, activists traveled the country, giving lectures on various reform movements, such as women's rights and abolitionism. However, this was also met with skepticism, as seen in [this broadsheet from 1865](#). This exhibit will not focus too much on the connection between Spiritualism and reform but is an interesting topic with further information found through the suggested reading section [here](#).

Spiritualism's phenomenal practices – namely spirit communication introduced by the [Fox Sisters](#) and quickly popularized by countless mediums across the country – became an integral part of 19th-century American society. With the [rising death toll of the Civil War](#), individuals clung to spirit communication to try and "hold communion with the spirit," as the author of [one article](#) put it in the *Spirit of the Age* based in Woodstock, VT, in 1884.[3] Even President Lincoln and his family held some belief in Spiritualism. Mary Todd Lincoln engaged the services of well-known spirit photographer William H. Mumler, who created the iconic photograph of Lincoln's ghost [here](#). In his career, Mumler took advantage of numerous individuals grieving from the loss of loved ones after the Civil War, including Mrs. Lincoln. [Emma Harlowe Botten](#), an English spiritualist, gave a [eulogy](#) for Lincoln a few days after his assassination in which she praised "the noble purposes of his great life." [4]

Spiritualism continued to gain traction as the country reeled from the [aftermath of the Civil War](#). One scholar claims, "By 1855, some spiritualists claimed 2 million believers, and the estimates continued up to 5 or 6 million by 1860. Simultaneously, Spiritualist publications made more modest estimates by state, totaling 780,000 in 1857 and 1,537,000 by 1860. Either set of numbers would have made Spiritualism a significant force." [5] Sensationalism was rising during this time (see sensationalism's timeline [here](#)), mainly focusing on politics, murder, court reporting, and other high-profile stories, including the Civil War, to draw attention and readership. Spiritualism became a popular news story, primarily negative, as it focused on the "fraudulent" and "fake." Some articles that call out fraudulent mediums and their deceptive practices include:

- [A November 1876 article](#) from the *Vermont Farmer*, Newport, VT
- [An April 1883 article](#) from *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA
- [A December 1883 article](#) from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, San Francisco, CA
- [A December 1883 article](#) from *The Record Union*, Sacramento, CA
- [A May 1885 article](#) from *The New York Times*, New York, NY
- [A May 1885 article](#) from the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, St. Louis, MO
- [An October 1888 article](#) from *The Boston Globe*, Boston, MA

Other articles, such as an [August 1881 article](#) from *The Evening Mail* (New York, NY) and an [April 1883 article](#) from the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (St. Louis, MO), discuss the morality of Spiritualism in 19th-century society. In all of these articles, sensationalism can be seen through the use of language. First, the large (most times, bolded) headline is evident in all articles. Second, choice words to capture the audience and sway their opinion toward a particular conclusion are used, which is to think of Spiritualism in a negative light. Such examples in these articles include: "fraudulent," "duped," "deceived," "more tricky," and "fooled and blinded."

The slow upward trajectory in skepticism toward Spiritualism, perpetuated by sensationalism, culminated in its most major event on October 21, 1888, when [Maggie Fox](#) confessed that the spirit-rapping episodes that she and her sisters experienced back in 1848 at their childhood home were pranks. Learn what happens next by visiting the next exhibit entitled "Decline of Spiritualism aka 'The Death Blow'."

SENSATIONAL SPIRITUALISM

- [Rise of Spiritualism](#)
- [Decline of Spiritualism aka "The Death Blow"](#)
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Rise of Spiritualism
[Decline of Spiritualism aka "The Death Blow" <>](#)

[1] Buffalo Weekly Republic. "The Ghost of Ganargus." *Buffalo Weekly Republic* (Buffalo, NY), May 9, 1848.

[2] Robert W. Degg, "Andrew Jackson Davis: Prophet of American Spiritualism," *The Journal of American History* 34, no. 1 (1987): 44, 65.

[3] Spirit of the Age. "Spiritualism." *Spirit of the Age* (Woodstock, VT), April 5, 1884.

[4] Emma Harlowe Botten, "The Great Funeral Oration on Abraham Lincoln" (transcription, Cooper Institute, New York, NY, April 14, 1865).

[5] Mark A. Liska, *From Spirits: Spiritualism, Republicanism, and Abolition in the Civil War Era* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015), Prologue.

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| <h2>DECLINE OF SPIRITUALISM AKA "THE DEATH BLOW"</h2> | |
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| <p>Spiritualism's Resurgence</p> | |
| <p>DECLINE OF SPIRITUALISM AKA "THE DEATH BLOW"</p> <p>Magpie Fox stepped onto the New York Academy of Music stage on October 21, 1888. She confessed there that the spirit rapping episodes that made her and her sisters famous were nothing more than childish pranks. As she claimed in her speech (as provided by <i>The Evening Star</i> from Washington D.C. from the next day):</p> <p><i>"My sister Katie and myself were very young children when this horrible deception began. I was eight, and just a year and a half older than she. We were very mischievous children and we wanted to terrify our dear mother, who was a very good woman and very easily frightened. At night, when we went to bed, we used to tie an apple to a string and move the string up and down, causing the apple to bump on the floor, or we would drop the apple on the floor, making a strange noise every time it would rebound."</i>^[1]</p> <p>Magpie also demonstrated how her toe joints produced the sounds of the spirit rappings in large crowds during daylight. According to some newspapers, such as <i>The Morning News</i> based in Savannah, GA, and <i>The Inter Ocean</i> from Chicago, IL, once the demonstration had concluded, doctors took to the stage to examine Magpie's appendages to confirm her confession. <i>The Inter Ocean</i> published an article aptly named <i>"Mrs. Fox-Kane's Riv-Toe."</i></p> <p>Following this event, the quick, spiraling downfall of Spiritualism occurred. The confession of Magpie Fox was the final nail in the movement's coffin, as skepticism was slowly mounting up against it during the latter half of the 19th century. In fact, on the same night of Magpie Fox's confession, an individual named Dr. C. M. Richmond, a local dentist, put on a demonstration to debunk spirit communication, which was met with a variety of responses from the audience. See report by The Boston Globe on October 22, 1888. After Magpie's confession, a flurry of newspapers reported on the event from a variety of perspectives, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Evening Star</i> (Washington D.C.), October 22, 1888 <i>The Inter Ocean</i> (Chicago, IL), October 22, 1888 <i>The Boston Globe</i> (Boston, MA), October 22, 1888 <i>The Morning News</i> (Savannah, GA), October 24, 1888 <i>The Montreal Star</i> (Montreal, Quebec, CAN), October 25, 1888 <p>The same tactics of sensationalism are evident in these articles, including large headlines in capital letters to capture readers' attention and choice words to influence a certain feeling or emotion: "monstrous imposition," "cheat," "expose," "fraud." There is also exaggeration in some of the articles, with <i>The Morning News</i> exclaiming that, once she made her confession, Magpie "became excited" and "clapped her hands, danced about, and cried" about how Spiritualism was a fraud and a trick with no truth to it; however, no other articles report on this particular episode ^[2] Using quotes from those engaged and at the event, paraling the "interview" technique as perfected by British journalists, became more prevalent. These tactics continued to push and evoke a preconceived opinion of Spiritualism, its practices, and its followers, which started to become the majority throughout society.</p> <p>Dedicated followers of Spiritualism tried to remain true to its roots, despite the confessions of the Fox Sisters. One article from the <i>Boston Evening Transcript</i>, dated March 25, 1893, exclaims that "the great truths and principles of modern spiritualism stand as firmly and shine as brightly as ever."^[3] Prominent members of society, such as doctors, continued to hold spiritualist views, as seen in this article from <i>The Brooklyn Daily Eagle</i> from April 4, 1899. Although the movement continued to have a firm following, Spiritualism would face its most formidable challenge yet as it entered the 20th century. To learn more, visit the next exhibit, "Spiritualism's Resurgence."</p> <p>Citation:</p> <p>[1] <i>Evening Star</i>. "How The Spirits Knocked." <i>Evening Star</i> (Washington D.C.), October 22, 1888.</p> <p>[2] <i>The Morning News</i>. "Spiritualism's Downfall." <i>The Morning News</i> (Savannah, GA), October 24, 1888.</p> <p>[3] <i>Boston Evening Transcript</i>. "The Advent of Spiritism." <i>Boston Evening Transcript</i> (Boston, MA), March 25, 1893.</p> | |
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SPIRITUALISM'S RESURGENCE

The 20th century was challenging for Spiritualism. The movement came off the last century with the fraud confessions of the [Fox sisters](#), increasing skepticism and its followers dwindling. It was only going to get more challenging, with the movement's most prolific foe being [Harry Houdini](#). [Harry Houdini](#) was a well-known magician and President of the Society of American Magicians between 1917 and 1926. During this time, [Houdini](#) strove to upkeep the organization's purpose of "[preserving] magic as a performing art" and "to maintain and improve ethical standards in the field of magic." [1] In this pursuit, [Houdini](#) went on a campaign to debunk Spiritualist mediums who, in his opinion, were using fraudulent practices and giving the magician's craft a bad name. In 1924, [Houdini](#) set out for a lecture tour to discuss fraudulent mediums; a transcription of one of Houdini's lectures entitled "Can the Dead Speak to the Living?" is [here](#). Also, in 1924, Houdini wrote a multi-part expose in *The Pantagraph* (Bloomington, IL) in which he attempted to uncover Spiritualism. One example is [Part 1: "Story of the Fox Sisters"](#), a retelling of Maggie Fox's confession, published on November 22, 1924.

[Houdini's](#) fraud campaign fractured his friendship with [Sir Arthur Conan Doyle](#), an ardent Spiritualist, and an outspoken believer. [Doyle's](#) belief in Spiritualism became public after the death of his son from battle-related injuries sustained at the Battle of the Somme. You can listen to a recording of one of [Doyle's](#) speeches on Spiritualism [here](#), conducted two months before his death. A similar phenomenon was occurring in the United States. According to sources, the [1918 Spanish flu pandemic](#) and the [death of Woodrow Wilson](#) spurred individuals to seek comfort in the afterlife, similar to what happened [during and after the Civil War](#). The [front page](#) of the *New York Sun's* February 15, 1920 edition, entitled "Riddle of the Life Hereafter Draws World's Attention," discusses "the impalpable veil which hangs between the Now and the Then" and society's renewed desire to speak to their loved ones in the afterlife. [2]

The increasing skepticism toward Spiritualism led to more wild practices by mediums to showcase their prowess and try to circumvent the debunking. This included new methods such as [levitation](#), [ecstasism](#), psychic winds, [spirit humbugs](#), and manifestations. One [article](#) published in *The Independent Record Sun* (Helena, MT) from September 27, 1891, has a full-page ad for Charles Slade, "a human being isolated from surrounding objects floating in mid-air," "not in darkness but in open light." [3] Another [article](#) from December 1906 from *The Bangor Daily News* (Bangor, ME) talks about a medium named Houdin performing a séance "on a brilliantly lighted platform in full view of the audience" and "works entirely without apparatus or paraphernalia of any kind." [4] These articles use targeted words and phrases to convince the audience that no tricks are being pulled and that the practitioners are honest. They even use quotes from audience members to add credibility, with one stating, "We do not believe in spiritualism, but when hands made things move in full pastlight it set us to thinking." [5]

The more elaborate the methods were, the more intense the skepticism became. Newspaper articles honed in on this dichotomy by publishing sensational articles, continually on the side of the skeptics, calling out mediums and their deceptive practices. Some articles include:

- [A March 3, 1907 article](#) from the *San Francisco Examiner*, San Francisco, CA
- [A March 4, 1907 article](#) from the *San Francisco Examiner*, San Francisco, CA
- [An April 1922 article](#) from the *San Francisco Examiner*, San Francisco, CA
- [A February 1925 article](#) from *The Des Moines Register*, Des Moines, IA
- [An August 1928 article](#) from the *San Francisco Examiner*, San Francisco, CA

Not only are the typical sensational tactics used (large headlines, specific words negatively targeting Spiritualism), a new method emerges – images. A quick evolution of images – from pencil and ink drawings to photographs – was added to newspaper articles to entice the reader further and, depending on the subject, add so-called "evidence" to the claims of skeptics against Spiritualism. The *San Francisco Examiner* from March 4, 1907, has a full-page [article](#) on "secret panels" in a séance room, where "fake" mediums "duped the credulous victims." [6] The first top half of the article is a diagram of these secret panels to warn others as a way to make the piece more credible. Another [article](#) from the *San Francisco Examiner*, dated a day earlier (March 3rd) had another full-page article discussing duping mediums, with their quarter-sized image of an idol that supposedly materialized at a séance and which convinced participants to invest money.

The introduction of images in sensational articles gave scientists, many of whom were part of the Society for Psychical Research, a chance to showcase their latest inventions. The Society investigated psychic or phenomenal claims, usually exposing fraud. Multiple scientific instruments were created during the beginning of the 20th century to examine psychical or phenomenal events, including:

- The [oscillograph](#)
- The [volurometer](#)
- The [psychic dictaphone](#)
- The [ulufometer](#) (also called the "psychic howler")
- The [lastrimeter](#)

Spiritualists who once partnered with the Society soon became critical of it (including [Sir Arthur Conan Doyle](#)). They felt that the Society was biased and negative of the movement given their fraud accusations of prominent mediums and practitioners and their strict standards of what would be considered proof of Spiritualist practices. Spiritualism's renewed appeal during [World War I](#) and the [1918 Spanish flu pandemic](#), and its perpetuation by [Houdini](#) and the Society for Psychical Research, was short-lived. Interest in the movement, specifically its phenomenal practices, dwindled and faded into obscurity.

Does Spiritualism still exist today? Head on over to the "Conclusion" to learn more.

Citebox:

[1] "Mission Statement." *The Society of American Magicians*. Accessed December 16, 2023. [@societyofmagicians.com/sam/mission-statement](#)

[2] *The New York Sun*. "Riddle of the Life Hereafter Draws World's Attention." *The New York Sun* (New York, NY), February 15, 1920.

[3] *The Independent Record Sun*. "Spirit Power in Full Gaiety." *The Independent Record Sun* (Helena, MT), September 27, 1891.

[4] *The Bangor Daily News*. "An Evening With Spirits." *The Bangor Daily News* (Bangor, ME), December 1, 1906.

[5] *The Independent Record Sun*. "Spirit Power in Full Gaiety." *The Independent Record Sun* (Helena, MT), September 27, 1891.

[6] *The San Francisco Examiner*. "Secret Panels Give Access to One Lady 'Spirits'." *The San Francisco Examiner* (San Francisco, CA), March 4, 1907.

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CONCLUSION

So, what was the result of sensationalism's impact on Spiritualism? A variety of things occurred.

The Fox sisters and their celebrity status faded away into obscurity, and they left the public eye. Maggie Fox attempted to recall her confession a year later, but the sisters were never able to reclaim their popularity. The sisters eventually settled down and passed away, with the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (St. Louis, MO) reporting on the last sister, Leah's, passing in 1902. Newspapers continued to utilize the Fox sisters' story for sensationalism, [writing on a headstone dedication](#) in the *Hydesville, New York* in 1904. A medium who was present allegedly verified the Fox sisters' spirit rappings claims.

Harry Houdini passed away in 1926, but his connection to Spiritualism would continue. Houdini and his wife Bess made a pact that, after one's passing, the other would try to contact the other for ten years as proof that the living and dead could communicate. Many mediums claimed to have contacted Houdini, which Bess has repeatedly refuted. You can listen to the last séance on Houdini's tenth anniversary [here](#).

Despite Spiritualism's spiraling downfall, mediums continued. Mediums tried to connect with society by communicating with important figures of the movement, such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. You can hear a medium allegedly channeling Doyle's spirit [here](#) and a video recording of a supposed possession of a medium by Doyle (with Doyle's widow and son in attendance) [here](#). However, the damage had been done. Once the spotlight that sensationalism, Houdini, and others had cast on Spiritualism had faded, the movement transitioned into unorganized circles. Spiritualist practices became prominent again in the 1970s, with practitioners adopting them into other religious practices during the New Age movement, and still maintain interest and appeal today.

Sensationalism continued to evolve and is very much integrated into today's media, print and digital.

Spiritualism is a multidimensional topic due to its influence on several external factors throughout the 19th century, including societal norms, culture, and politics. The phenomenal practices of Spiritualism are still highly romanticized in many cultures and impacted 19th-century social and political movements. Once those layers are peeled back, researchers find that digging deeper into the Spiritualist movement provides a glimpse into its impact on several other vital movements, such as abolitionism and suffragism, through various historical lenses. Through this historiographical examination of Spiritualism came the uncovering of how newspapers treated the movement through language and imagery. Sensationalism also became a popular journalistic tactic during this time, with the growing population and literacy rate. This exhibit examines how sensationalism was a catalyst for Spiritualism's rise in the 19th century and its gradual downfall and resurgence at the end of the 19th century and the turn of the 20th century.

For your enjoyment, please browse the Suggested Reading List to learn more on this topic. You may also leave feedback on this exhibit by clicking on the Feedback Survey.

Suggested Reading List

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SENSATIONAL SPIRITUALISM: THE STUDY OF 19TH- CENTURY REPORTING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT

| Browse Collections | Browse Exhibits |
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| <h2>SUGGESTED READING LIST</h2> | |
| <p>If you are interested in learning more on the subjects of Spiritualism and sensationalism, here are some source materials that may be helpful to explore further:</p> | |
| <p>Albanese, Catherine L. <i>A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.</p> | |
| <p>Bennett, Gillian. <i>Tradition of Belief: Women, Folklore, and the Supernatural</i>. New York: Penguin Books, 1987.</p> | |
| <p>Brandon, Ruth. <i>The Spiritualists: The Passion for the Occult in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries</i>. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.</p> | |
| <p>Braude, Ann. <i>Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America</i>. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.</p> | |
| <p>Britten, Emma Hardinge. <i>Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Year's Record of the Communion Between Earth and the World of Spirits</i>. New York: Published by the author, 1870.</p> | |
| <p>Bulla, David W. and David B. Sachsman. <i>Sensationalism: Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th century Reporting</i>. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013.</p> | |
| <p>Capron, Eliah Wilkinson. <i>Modern Spiritualism: Its Fact and Fanaticisms, Its Consistencies and Contradictions</i>. Boston: B. Marsh, 1855.</p> | |
| <p>Carroll, Bret E. <i>Spiritualism in Antebellum America</i>. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.</p> | |
| <p>Chapin, David. <i>Exploring Other Worlds: Margaret Fox, Elisha Kent Kane, and the Antebellum Culture of Curiosity</i>. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005.</p> | |
| <p>Crookes, William. <i>Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism</i>. London: J. Burns, 1874.</p> | |
| <p>Crow, Charles L., and Kerr, Howard H. <i>The Occult in America: New Historical Perspectives</i>. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983.</p> | |
| <p>Davenport, Reuben Briggs. <i>The Death Blow to Spiritualism</i>. New York: C.W. Dillingham Co., 1888.</p> | |
| <p>Dele, Robert W. "Andrew Jackson Davis: Prophet of American Spiritualism." <i>The Journal of American History</i> 54, no. 1 (1967): 43-56.</p> | |
| <p>Dingwall, E. J. <i>The Critics' Dilemma: Further Comments on Some Nineteenth Century Investigations</i>. Dewsbury: The Stanley Press Ltd., 1966.</p> | |
| <p>Faust, Drew Gilpin. <i>The Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War</i>. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.</p> | |
| <p>Friskien, Amanda. <i>Graphic News: How Sensational Images Transformed Nineteenth-Century Journalism</i>. Urbana, Chicago, Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2020.</p> | |
| <p>Outlerrez, Cathy. <i>Plato's Ghost: Spiritualism in the American Renaissance</i>. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.</p> | |
| <p>Kontou, Tatiana. <i>The Ashgate Research Companion to Nineteenth Century Spiritualism and the Occult</i>. London: Routledge, 2012.</p> | |
| <p>Kutz, Kimberly N. "Chief of a Nation of Ghosts: Images of Abraham Lincoln's Spirit in the Immediate Post-Civil War Period." <i>The Journal of American Culture</i> 36, no. 2 (2013): 111-123.</p> | |
| <p>Lauze, Mark A. <i>Free Spirits: Spiritualism, Republicanism, and Radicalism in the Civil War Era</i>. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2016.</p> | |
| <p>Lowry, Elizabeth. "Spiritual (R)evolution and the Turning of Tables: Abolition, Feminism, and the Rhetoric of Social Reform in the Antebellum Public Sphere." <i>Journal for the Study of Radicalism</i> 9, no. 2 (2015): 1-16.</p> | |
| <p>McCormick, Shane. <i>Spiritualism, Mesmerism and the Occult, 1600-1920</i>. London: Routledge, 2013.</p> | |
| <p>McGarry, Molly. <i>Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America</i>. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.</p> | |
| <p>Moore, R. Laurence. <i>In Search of White Crows: Spiritualism, Parapsychology, and American Culture</i>. New York: Oxford Press, 1977.</p> | |
| <p>Monta, Sally. "Unseen (and Unappreciated) Matters: Understanding the Reformative Nature of 19th-Century Spiritualism." <i>American Studies</i> 40, no. 3 (1999): 99-125.</p> | |
| <p>Obelkevich, Jim. Et al. <i>Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics and Patriarchy</i>. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Inc., 1987.</p> | |
| <p>Owen, Alex. <i>The Darkened Room: Women, Power, and Spiritualism in Late Victorian England</i>. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1990.</p> | |
| <p>Seeman, Erik. <i>Speaking with the Dead in Early America</i>. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019.</p> | |
| <p>Stuart, Nancy Rubin. <i>The Reluctant Spiritualist: The Life of Maggie Fox</i>. Orlando: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, 2005.</p> | |
| <p>Trowbridge, John Townsend. "Early Investigations in Spiritualism." <i>The North American Review</i> 188, no. 635 (1908): 528-538.</p> | |
| <p>Walker, Barbara. <i>Out Of The Ordinary: Folklore and Supernatural</i>. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1995.</p> | |
| <p>Walker, David. "The Humbug in American Religion: Ritual Theories of Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism." <i>Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation</i> 23, no. 1. (2013): 30-74.</p> | |
| <p>Weisberg, Barbara. <i>Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism</i>. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, Inc., 2009.</p> | |
| <p>Wrobel, Arthur. <i>Pseudo-Science & Society in Nineteenth-Century America</i>. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1987.</p> | |
| <p>Zaretsky, Ian, and Mark Leone. <i>Religious Movements in Contemporary America</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.</p> | |
| <p>You may also explore the collection containing the newspaper articles included in this exhibit.</p> | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Suggested Reading List We'd Love To Hear From You! >>></p> | |









SENSATIONAL SPIRITUALISM: THE STUDY OF 19TH-CENTURY REPORTING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT

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| Suggested Reading List | We'd Love To Hear From You! |
| CONCLUSION | Suggested Reading List |


SENSATIONAL SPIRITUALISM: THE STUDY OF 19TH-CENTURY REPORTING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT

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| Browse Collections | Browse Exhibits |
| BROWSE COLLECTIONS (4 TOTAL) | |
| Sort by: Title Date Added | |
| Objects Related to Spiritualism View the items in Objects Related to Spiritualism |  |
| Misc Media on Spiritualism View the items in Misc Media on Spiritualism |  |
| Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism <small>These articles are featured in the exhibits, and are categorized into four general groups:</small> <small>1. Articles that reveal a society that accepts and is...</small> View the items in Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism |  |
| Important Figures related to Spiritualism <small>Individuals who are key to the Spiritualist movement, whether they are practitioners, supporters, or debunkers</small> View the items in Important Figures related to Spiritualism |  |


SENSATIONAL SPIRITUALISM: THE STUDY OF 19TH- CENTURY REPORTING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT

| Browse Collections | Browse Exhibits |
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| <h2>OBJECTS RELATED TO SPIRITUALISM</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title Objects Related to Spiritualism</p> <p>Collection Items</p> | |
| <p>Example of Ectoplasm</p>  | |
| <p>Example of Spirit Photography</p>  | |
| <p>Example of a Seance</p>  | |
| <p>Example of Levitation</p>  | |
| <p>Example of Spirit Writing</p>  | |
| <p>Example of a Spirit Trumpet</p>  | |
| <p>Example of an Oscillograph</p>  | |
| <p>Example of a Ululometer</p>  | |
| <p>View all 8 items</p> | |

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| Browse Collections | Browse Exhibits |
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| <h2>EXAMPLE OF ECTOPLASM</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title Example of Ectoplasm</p> <p>Source The Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/10/silencing-the-dead-the-decline-of-spiritualism/264005/.</p> <p>Still Image Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Original Format Photograph</p> <p>Files</p>  <p>Collection Objects Related to Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Example of Ectoplasm," <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i>, accessed January 5, 2023, https://ho792jnciaren.omeka.net/items/show/9.</p> <p>← Previous Item Next Item →</p> | |

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|--|-----------------|
| <h2>EXAMPLE OF SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title Example of Spirit Photography</p> <p>Source Smithsonian Magazine. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/meet-mr-munter-man-who-captured-lincolns-ghost-camera-16995090/.</p> <p>Still Image Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Original Format Photograph</p> <p>Files</p>  <p>Collection Objects Related to Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Example of Spirit Photography," <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i>, accessed January 5, 2023, https://ho792jnc1aren.omeka.net/items/show/32.</p> <p>← Previous Item Next Item →</p> | |

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EXAMPLE OF A SEANCE

Dublin Core


Title
Example of a Seance

Source
"Scented Seances." Werther & Gray. (Blog). October 5, 2017. <https://www.wertherandgray.com/blogs/news/scented-seances-smelling-the-spirit-world>.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Photo

Files



Collection
[Objects Related to Spiritualism](#)

Citation
"Example of a Seance." *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023. <https://ho792mcclaren.omeka.net/items/show/40>.

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EXAMPLE OF LEVITATION

Dublin Core


Title
Example of Levitation

Source
Media Wales Ltd. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/colin-evans-levitation-seance-london-25433683>.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Photo

Files



Collection
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Citation
"Example of Levitation." *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023. <https://ho792jnc1aren.omeka.net/items/show/83>.

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EXAMPLE OF SPIRIT WRITING

Dublin Core

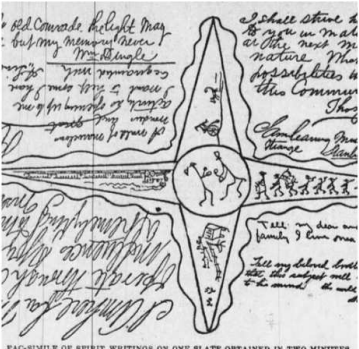
Title
Example of Spirit Writing

Source
St. Louis Globe Democrat. "Exposures of Mediums." St. Louis Globe Democrat (St. Louis, MO), March 26, 1893.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Photo

Files




FAC-SIMILE OF SPIRIT WRITINGS ON ONE SLATE OBTAINED IN TWO MINUTES.

Collection
[Objects Related to Spiritualism](#)

Citation
"Example of Spirit Writing." Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://ho792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/84>.

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| <h2>EXAMPLE OF A SPIRIT TRUMPET</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title Example of a Spirit Trumpet</p> <p>Source The Austin Seance (blog). https://austinseance.com/2020/07/04/guest-post-the-history-and-use-of-spirit-trumpets/</p> <p>Still Image Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Original Format Photograph</p> <p>Files</p>  <p>Collection Objects Related to Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Example of a Spirit Trumpet." <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i>, accessed January 5, 2023. https://ho792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/85.</p> <p>← Previous Item Next Item →</p> | |

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EXAMPLE OF AN OSCILLOGRAPH

Dublin Core

Title
Example of an Oscillograph

Source
The San Francisco Examiner "How Science Traps 'Ghosts'." The San Francisco Examiner (San Francisco, CA), April 16, 1922.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Photograph

Files

Collection
[Objects Related to Spiritualism](#)

Citation
"Example of an Oscillograph." *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023. <https://ho792jnc1aren.omeka.net/items/show/86>.

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EXAMPLE OF A ULULOMETER

Dublin Core

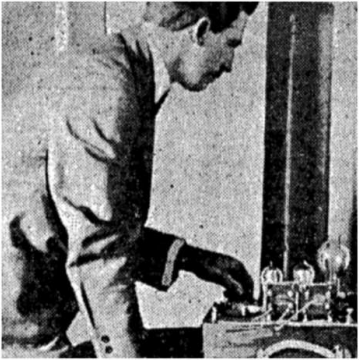
Title
Example of a Ululometer

Source
Library of Congress/Chronicling America. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87093407/1922-03-22/ed-1/seq-5/>

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Photograph

Files






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Citation
"Example of a Ululometer." *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://ho792jnc1aren.omeka.net/items/show/37>.

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| <h2>MISC MEDIA ON SPIRITUALISM</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title Misc Media on Spiritualism</p> <p>Subject Media items (excl. newspaper articles) that pertain to Spiritualism</p> <p>Collection Items</p> <hr/> <p>Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's speech on Spiritualism, May 14, 1930</p> <hr/> <p>"Spirit rappings - Music for a nation: American sheet music, 1820-1860" sheet music cover page</p>  <hr/> <p>"Movietone Films Medium's Trance"</p>  <hr/> <p>"Listen to the spirit voice of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle"</p> <hr/> <p>"Image 1 of Vol. I. Pictorial history of the cause of the great rebellion. Witchcraft."</p>  <hr/> <p>"Houdini's Spiritualism Lectures" blog post</p> <hr/> <p>The Final Halloween Houdini Seance</p> <p>The final Halloween Houdini seance was October 31, 1936 (the tenth anniversary of Harry Houdini's death), on the roof of the Knickerbocker Hotel in Hollywood.</p> <p>View all 7 items</p> | |

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| <h2>SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S SPEECH ON SPIRITUALISM, MAY 14, 1930</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's speech on Spiritualism, May 14, 1930</p> <p>Source The British Library, https://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/files/listen-to-sir-arthur-conan-doyle-on-spiritualism.mp3.</p> <p>Sound Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Original Format MP3</p> <p>Duration 2:40 minutes</p> <p>Files</p> <p>▶ 0:00 / 2:41 ◀ ⋮</p> <p>Collection Misc Media on Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's speech on Spiritualism, May 14, 1930." <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i>, accessed January 5, 2023, https://his792jmc1aren.omeka.net/items/show/30.</p> <p>← Previous Item Next Item →</p> | |

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"SPIRIT RAPPINGS - MUSIC FOR A NATION: AMERICAN SHEET MUSIC, 1820-1860" SHEET MUSIC COVER PAGE

Dublin Core

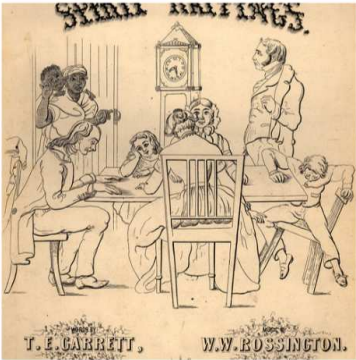
Title
"Spirit rappings - Music for a nation: American sheet music, 1820-1860" sheet music cover page

Source
"Spirit rappings - Music for a nation: American sheet music, 1820-1860." Library of Congress. Accessed December 18, 2022. <https://www.loc.gov/item/sm1853.530395/>

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Sheet music cover page, for voice and piano

Files



Collection
[Misc Media on Spiritualism](#)

Citation
"Spirit rappings - Music for a nation: American sheet music, 1820-1860" sheet music cover page." *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023, <http://his792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/42>.

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| <h2>"MOVIETONE FILMS MEDIUM'S TRANCE"</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title "Movietone Films Medium's Trance"</p> <p>Subject Lady Conan Doyle attends dramatic demonstration by Mrs. Meurig Morris</p> <p>Source Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopedia. "Medium Meurig Morris, with Denis and Lady Jean Conan Doyle during a seance." YouTube. September 24, 2016, online video, 3:00. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTvy1RK3BAG.</p> <p>Moving Image Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Original Format Video</p> <p>Duration 3:00 minutes</p> <p>Compression MP4</p> <p>Producer British Movietone News</p> <p>Files</p> <div data-bbox="479 1081 706 1249"> </div> <p>Collection Misc Media on Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Movietone Films Medium's Trance". Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023. https://his792mcclaren.omeka.net/items/show/43.</p> <p>-- Previous Item Next Item --</p> | |

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"LISTEN TO THE SPIRIT VOICE OF SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE"

Dublin Core

Title
"Listen to the spirit voice of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle"

Source
The British Library. <https://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/files/listen-to-the-spirit-voice-of-sir-arthur-conan-doyle.mp3>

Sound Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Sound clip

Duration
0:49 seconds

Files

▶ 0:00 / 0:49
◀
⋮

Collection
[Misc Media on Spiritualism](#)

Citation
"Listen to the spirit voice of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle". Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023. <https://his792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/57>

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"IMAGE 1 OF VOL. I. PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE CAUSE OF THE GREAT REBELLION. WITCHCRAFT."

Dublin Core


Title
"Image 1 of Vol. I. Pictorial history of the cause of the great rebellion. Witchcraft."

Source
Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/hpbe.10004500/>

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Broadsheet

Files



Collection
[Misc Media on Spiritualism](#)

Citation
"Image 1 of Vol. I. Pictorial history of the cause of the great rebellion. Witchcraft.," Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://his792mcclaren.omeka.net/items/show/90>.

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| "HOUDINI'S SPIRITUALISM LECTURES" BLOG POST | |
| Dublin Core | |
| Title "Houdini's Spiritualism Lectures" blog post | |
| Source Wild About Harry (blog). February 21, 2020. https://www.wildabouthoudini.com/houdini-spr.html | |
| Hyperlink Item Type Metadata | |
| URL https://www.wildabouthoudini.com/2020/02/houdini-describes-his-spiritualism.html | |
| Collection Misc Media on Spiritualism | |
| Citation "Houdini's Spiritualism Lectures" blog post, Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023. https://his792jmlaren.omeka.net/items/show/95 | |
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| <h2>THE FINAL HALLOWEEN HOUDINI SEANCE</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title The Final Halloween Houdini Seance</p> <p>Description The final Halloween Houdini seance was October 31, 1936 (the tenth anniversary of Harry Houdini's death), on the roof of the Knickerbocker Hotel in Hollywood.</p> <p>Source Internet Archive. https://archive.org/details/TheFinalHalloweenHoudiniSeance_850</p> <p>Hyperlink Item Type Metadata</p> <p>URL https://archive.org/details/TheFinalHalloweenHoudiniSeance_850</p> <p>Collection Misc Media on Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "The Final Halloween Houdini Seance." <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i>, accessed January 5, 2023. https://hs792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/100</p> <p>← Previous Item Next Item →</p> | |

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| <h2>SENSATIONAL NEWSPAPER ARTICLES REGARDING SPIRITUALISM</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism</p> <p>Description These articles are featured in the exhibits, and are categorized into four general groups: 1. Articles that reveal a society that accepts and is curious about Spiritualism. 2. Articles that reflect a transition to disinterest or opposition to the movement. 3. Articles that start to include images to strengthen the message of their sensational stories. 4. Articles reflecting Spiritualism's resurgence and reintroduction back into society, along with a strong movement to debunk it with 'scientific' methods.</p> <p>Collection Items</p> <p>"Early Ouija Advertisement"</p>  <p>"Enduring Mystery of the Ouija Board Reincarnation" newspaper article</p>  <p>"The Advent of Spiritism" newspaper article</p>  <p>"The Ghost of Ganargwa" newspaper article</p>  <p>"How The Spirits Knocked" newspaper article</p>  <p>"Spiritualism Exposed by Harry Houdini: I. Story of the Fox Sisters" newspaper article</p>  <p>"Spiritualism" newspaper article</p>  <p>"Last of Famous Fox Sisters Dies" newspaper article</p>  <p>"Spread of Spiritualism" newspaper article</p>  <p>"Mrs. Fox-Kane's Big Toe" newspaper article</p>  <p>View all 40 items</p> | |

SENSATIONAL SPIRITUALISM: THE STUDY OF 19TH- CENTURY REPORTING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT



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| <h2>"RIDDLE OF THE LIFE HEREAFTER DRAWS WORLD'S ATTENTION" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title "Riddle of the Life Hereafter Draws World's Attention" newspaper article</p> <p>Source The New York Sun. "Riddle of the Life Hereafter Draws World's Attention." The New York Sun (New York, NY). February 15, 1920.</p> <p>Still Image Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Original Format Newspaper article</p> <p>Files</p>  <p>Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Riddle of the Life Hereafter Draws World's Attention" newspaper article. Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023, https://his792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/95.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-- Previous Item Next Item --</p> | |

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| "SPIRITUALISM EXPOSED" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE | |
| Dublin Core | |
| Title "Spiritualism Exposed" newspaper article | |
| Source The Inter Ocean. "Spiritualism Exposed." The Inter Ocean (Chicago, IL). October 22, 1888. | |
| Still Image Item Type Metadata | |
| Original Format Newspaper article | |
| Files | |
| <p>was carried on by Dr. C. M. Richmond of this city, who has spent twenty years and perhaps as many thousands of dollars in investigating mediumistic tricks, and who, doubtless, knows as much about this particular species of fraud as any man living. After the Doctor had exposed a number of tricks Mrs. Margaret Fox-Kane came forward. The audience was pretty well tired out, and Mrs. Kane struck rather an unsympathetic crowd. Mrs. Kane seemed to have lost her tongue and could say nothing. But if her tongue had lost its power, her preternatural toe joint had not. Discovering that she was not in proper condition for a public address, her companions on the stage invited her to give a public demonstration of her ability to produce raps without further delay. A plain wooden stool or table resting upon four short legs and having the properties of a sounding board was placed in front of her. Removing her shoes</p> | |
| Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism | |
| Citation "Spiritualism Exposed" newspaper article. Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023. https://hs792jnc1aren.omeka.net/items/show/92 . | |
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"SPIRIT POWER IN FULL GASLIGHT" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core

Title
"Spirit Power in Full Gaslight" newspaper article

Source
The Independent Record Sun. "Spirit Power in Full Gaslight." The Independent Record Sun (Helena, MT). September 27, 1891.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

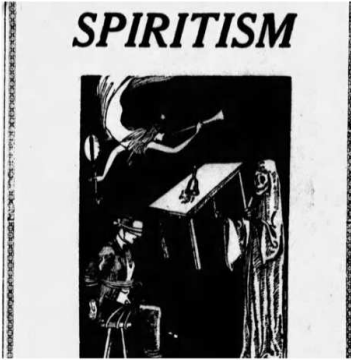
Files

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Citation
"Spirit Power in Full Gaslight" newspaper article. *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*. accessed January 5, 2023. <https://lib792mcclaren.omeka.net/items/show/81>

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| "KHIRO WORLD FAMOUS MEDIUM" ADVERTISEMENT | |
| Dublin Core | |
| Title "Khiro World Famous Medium" advertisement | |
| Source Times Record News. "Khiro World Famous Medium." Times Record News (Wichita, KS). February 4, 1923. | |
| Still Image Item Type Metadata | |
| Original Format Newspaper article | |
| Files | |
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| Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism | |
| Citation "Khiro World Famous Medium" advertisement. Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023, https://ha792jnc1aren.omeka.net/items/show/90 . | |
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"AN EVENING WITH SPIRITS" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core

Title
"An Evening With Spirits" newspaper article

Source
The Bangor Daily News. "An Evening With Spirits." The Bangor Daily News (Bangor, ME). December 1, 1906.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

Files



Collection
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Citation
"An Evening With Spirits" newspaper article. *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023. <https://hs792ynctaren.omeka.net/items/show/79>.

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"HOUDINI ANALYZES SPIRITUALISM" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core


Title
"Houdini Analyzes Spiritualism" newspaper article

Source
The Des Moines Register. "Houdini Analyzes Spiritualism." The Des Moines Register (Des Moines, IA). February 15, 1925.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

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Collection
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Citation
"Houdini Analyzes Spiritualism" newspaper article. Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023. <https://lib792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/76>

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| <h2>"SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S SPIRITUALISM" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Spiritualism" newspaper article</p> <p>Source The Montgomery Advertiser. "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Spiritualism." The Montgomery Advertiser (Montgomery, AL) April 23, 1922.</p> <p>Still Image Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Original Format Newspaper article</p> <p>Files</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>By Sir Arthur, the lecturer for instance was wide of the truth when he declared that the church had kept back spiritualism for seventy years. Why, we wonder, was the period of the ban fixed at seventy years? The Church has certainly not been typical in any effort to enforce the ban.</p> <p>The spiritualists have had, in our time, a fair field and plenty of favor. Sir Arthur himself is not encountering any opposition in spreading spiritualism. He is doing more than well and like the other various English lecturers who have visited these shores, he will sail for home with a comfortable fortune.</p> <p>Spiritualism had the start of the organized Christian church. It was far more conspicuous in the lives of pagan people than it has ever been since the establish-</p> </div> <p>Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Spiritualism" newspaper article," Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023, https://hdl792/mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/77.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> -- Previous Item Next Item -- </p> | |

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"SECRET PANELS GIVE ACCESS TO ORE-LADEN 'SPIRITS'" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core

Title
"Secret Panels Give Access to Ore-Laden 'Spirits'" newspaper article

Source
The San Francisco Examiner. "Secret Panels Give Access to Ore-Laden 'Spirits'." The San Francisco Examiner (San Francisco, CA), March 4, 1907.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

Files



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Citation
"Secret Panels Give Access to Ore-Laden 'Spirits'" newspaper article. Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://his792mcclaren.omeka.net/items/show/76>

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"HOW SCIENCE TRAPS 'GHOSTS'" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core


Title
"How Science Traps 'Ghosts'" newspaper article

Source
The San Francisco Examiner "How Science Traps 'Ghosts.'" The San Francisco Examiner (San Francisco, CA), April 16, 1922.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

Files



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Citation
"How Science Traps 'Ghosts'" newspaper article," *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023. <https://lib792mcclaren.omeka.net/items/show/75>

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"ASTONISHING CONFESSIONS OF BOGUS 'SPIRIT MEDIUM'" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core


Title
"Astonishing Confessions of Bogus 'Spirit Medium'" newspaper article

Source
The San Francisco Examiner: "Astonishing Confessions of Bogus 'Spirit Medium'." The San Francisco Examiner (San Francisco, CA), August 5, 1928.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

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Citation
"Astonishing Confessions of Bogus 'Spirit Medium'" newspaper article," *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://his792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/74>.

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"OUR SEANCES WERE SIMPLY FRAUDS,' IS CONFESSION OF MEDIUM" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core


Title
"Our Seances Were Simply Frauds,' Is Confession of Medium" newspaper article

Source
The San Francisco Examiner: "Our Seances Were Simply Frauds,' Is Confession of Medium." The San Francisco Examiner (San Francisco, CA), March 3, 1907.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

Files



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Citation
"Our Seances Were Simply Frauds,' Is Confession of Medium" newspaper article. *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://lib792mcclaren.omeka.net/items/show/73>.

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"SPIRIT RAPPERS CONVENTION" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core

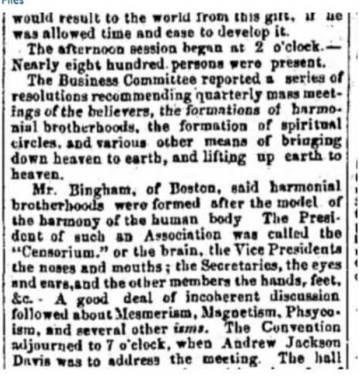
Title
"Spirit Rappers Convention" newspaper article

Source
The Weekly Wisconsin. "Spirit Rappers Convention." The Weekly Wisconsin (Milwaukee, WI). October 13, 1852.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

Files



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Citation
"Spirit Rappers Convention" newspaper article, *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://hs792jnc1aren.omeka.net/items/show/72>.

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| "SPIRITUALISM IN AMERICA" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE | |
| Dublin Core | |
| Title "Spiritualism in America" newspaper article | |
| Source Vermont Farmer "Spiritualism in America." Vermont Farmer (Newport, VT). November 10, 1876. | |
| Still Image Item Type Metadata | |
| Original Format Newspaper article | |
| Files | |
| <p>the picture of the believer is taken with the dim forms of various wellknown "spirits" seen in the background, peering over the shoulder, out into the eyes of the astonished beholder. The method by which these photographs is thus described in in an article in Chambers' Journal.</p> <p>A case brought to our notice from Paris will illustrate the way in which this class of photographers impose on the public. The police, hearing that a certain photographer of that city was pocketing large profits by taking these photographs for credulous people, dispatched an emissary to discover the fraud. On making known his wish to be photographed with his guardian spirit, he was requested to leave the studio for a short time for the purpose of the spirit being in-</p> | |
| Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism | |
| Citation "Spiritualism in America" newspaper article. Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023. https://hs792jncnaren.omeka.net/items/show/71 . | |
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"PHYSICAL COMBAT NEAR WHEN HOUDINI SAYS MEDIUMS ARE ALL 'FAKERS'" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core

Title
"Physical Combat Near When Houdini Says Mediums Are All 'Fakers'" newspaper article

Source
The San Bernardino County Sun. "Physical Combat near When Houdini Says Mediums Are All 'Fakers'." The San Bernardino County Sun (San Bernardino, CA). February 27, 1925.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

Files

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Citation
"Physical Combat Near When Houdini Says Mediums Are All 'Fakers'" newspaper article, Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://his792mcclaren.omeka.net/items/show/69>.

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"MATERIALIZATIONS: THE CRINDLE-REYNOLDS EXPOSE - HOW SOME RECENT SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS WERE PRODUCED" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core

Title
"MATERIALIZATIONS: The Crindle-Reynolds Expose - How Some Recent Spirit Manifestations were Produced" newspaper article

Source
The Record Union. "MANIFESTATIONS." The Record Union (Sacramento, CA), December 10, 1883.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

Files



Collection
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Citation
"MATERIALIZATIONS: The Crindle-Reynolds Expose - How Some Recent Spirit Manifestations were Produced" newspaper article. *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://hs792mciaren.omeka.net/items/show/68>.

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"SPIRITISM A HUMBUG" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core

Title
"Spiritism A Humbug" newspaper article

Source
The Evening Mail. "Spiritism A Humbug." The Evening Mail (New York, NY): August 22, 1881.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

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| <p>of evil. I class spiritism right here with superstition. I propose to show that spiritism is the outgrowth of superstition, or rather superstition itself.</p> <p>MERE SUPERSTITION.</p> <p>"Introduce the subject of spiritism to a spiritist or one leaning towards that faith, and in nine cases out of ten he will commence telling you about a dream he had, or some apparition that appeared to him during the night or under cover of the darkness."</p> <p>The speaker then went on to say that every spiritist is of a nervous temperament, and that those whose nervous system is in a state of derangement seem to be more advanced than others in spiritism. All the phenomena, as they are called, belong to the nervous system. Herbert</p> | <p>three Con been for until qua that that (po was feet the to b or e nec</p> <p>E was mo</p> |
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Collection
[Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism](#)


Citation
"Spiritism A Humbug" newspaper article, *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://lib792m2claren.omeka.net/items/show/96>.

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| "TRICKS AND NOT SPOOKS" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE | |
| Dublin Core | |
| Title "Tricks and Not Spooks" newspaper article | |
| Source The Boston Globe. "Tricks and Not Spooks." The Boston Globe (Boston, MA) October 22, 1888. | |
| Still Image Item Type Metadata | |
| Original Format Newspaper article | |
| Files | |
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| Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism | |
| Citation "Tricks and Not Spooks" newspaper article. Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023. https://hs792jnc1aren.omeka.net/items/show/93 . | |
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| "THE SEANCE STOPPED" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE | |
| Dublin Core | |
| Title "The Seance Stopped" newspaper article | |
| Source St. Louis Globe Democrat. "The Seance Stopped." St. Louis Globe Democrat (St. Louis, MO), May 6, 1885. | |
| Still Image Item Type Metadata | |
| Original Format Newspaper article | |
| Files | |
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| Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism | |
| Citation "The Seance Stopped" newspaper article. <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i> , accessed January 5, 2023. https://hdl.handle.net/10339/omeka-net/items/show/62 . | |
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| "SWINDLING SPIRITS" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE | |
| Dublin Core | |
| Title "Swindling Spirits" newspaper article | |
| Source San Francisco Chronicle "Swindling Spirits" San Francisco Chronicle (San Francisco, CA), December 9, 1883. | |
| Still Image Item Type Metadata | |
| Original Format Newspaper article | |
| Files | |
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| Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism | |
| Citation "Swindling Spirits" newspaper article. <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i> , accessed January 5, 2023, https://hs1792nc1aren.omeka.net/items/show/60 . | |
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"PIKE'S SEANCE RECALLS VIEWS OF HOUDINI" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core


Title
"Pike's Seance Recalls Views of Houdini" newspaper article

Source
Buffalo Evening News. "Pike's Seance Recalls Views of Houdini." Buffalo Evening News (Buffalo, NY), October 4, 1937.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

Files



Collection
[Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism](#)

Citation
"Pike's Seance Recalls Views of Houdini" newspaper article, *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://his792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/59>.

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| <h2>"HEADLESS SKELETON IN FOX SISTERS' HOME" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title "Headless Skeleton in Fox Sisters' Home" newspaper article</p> <p>Source New York Times. "Headless Skeleton in Fox Sisters' Home." New York Times (New York, NY), November 24, 1904.</p> <p>Still Image Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Original Format Newspaper article</p> <p>Files</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>On Sunday children playing in the cellar found a few bones and took them to W. H. Hyde, son of Artemus Hyde, who rented the house to the Fox family in 1847. Hyde thought they were human bones, and made an investigation. He began digging, and found out something he did not know before—that the house had two separate stone foundations. The outer walls are complete in themselves and support the house, the frame extending over on all sides, and the surface being filled in with earth up to the framework. Two feet inside of this foundation are the second walls, the space having been filled in with earth. Recent rain had weakened the inner walls, and on Sunday, while the children were playing in the cellar, the walls gave way, revealing the bones.</p> <p>Mr. Hyde began digging and near the doorway on the north side found human bones, consisting of vertebrae, rib, arm, and leg bones, a shoulder blade, and collar-bone. They had been buried between the two walls, and as earlier excavations had been made on to the inner wall of course</p> </div> <p>Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Headless Skeleton in Fox Sisters' Home" newspaper article. <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i>. accessed January 5, 2023. https://his792mclare.omeka.net/items/show/56.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> -- Previous Item Next Item -- </p> | |

SENSATIONAL SPIRITUALISM: THE STUDY OF 19TH- CENTURY REPORTING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT

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"SPIRIT RAPPING: THE TRUTH COMES OUT AT LAST" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core

Title
"Spirit Rapping: The Truth Comes Out At Last" newspaper article

Source
The Montreal Star. "Spirit Rapping: The Truth Comes Out At Last." The Montreal Star (Montreal, Quebec, CAN). October 25, 1888.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

Files

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| <p>...the most... the name of those... spirit... spread... highest... as well... the lowest... order... of... in... the... arrested... by... the... chains... Two... over... girls... full... little... beings... of... the... misery... of... a... million... in... a... million... years... who... had... the... entire... possession... for... good... in... their... sublimed... hearts... and... souls... to... evil... and... through... them... would... a... sublime... truth... which... could... never... be... acted... on... earth... Fifty... years... have... passed... away... in... which... those... little... waifs... have... grown... to... girlhood... from... girlhood... to... a... womanhood... and... now... late... to... spend... the... last... days... of... their... lives... in... peace... and... good... will... with... their... fellow... beings... whom... they... are... to... the... world... they... have... long... desired... the... freedom... and... then... depart... in... shame... to... the... obscurity... to... which... they... are... so... long... have... devoted...</p> <p>Mrs. Margaret Fox Rance's story is as follows: I think that it is about time that the truth of this miserable subject "Spiritualism" should be brought out. It is now widespread all over the world, and unless it is put down soon it...</p> <p>WILL BE GREAT EVIL.</p> <p>I was the first in the land and I have the right to expose it.</p> <p>My sister Kate and myself were very young children when this terrible deception began. I was six months old, and a week and a half older than you. We were very mischievous children, and we wanted to vent our little mother, who was very good woman and very well liked. At night, when we would go to bed, we used to get up to a string and have the apple in the door, or we would drop the apple on the floor, making a rattle noise every time it would rebound. Mother listened to this for a time, she could not understand it and did not suspect us of being capable of a trick because we were so young.</p> <p>At last she could stand it no longer and she called the neighbors in and told them about it. It was this that set us to discover the</p> | <p>and local... of... the... miserable... life... we... began... in... 1848... and... it... was... in... 1848... that... he... took... the... away... from... the... living... It... was... at... that... moment... the... first... time... that... he... went... to... a... country... and... my... uncles... were... spent... with... Mrs. Wilson... a... sister... of... brother... George... who... then... was... at... No. 7... East... thirty-second... street... she... was... a... little... inclined... to... believe... in... Spiritualism... later... although... she... never... had... Kate... known... it... I... was... taken... away... from... all... "spiritualist"... influences... and... for... a... long... time... did... not... know...</p> <p>ANY OF MY OLD ASSOCIATES.</p> <p>When Kate came into the room at Philadelphia, I told her that I had not time to tell her what I had found out. I felt obliged to tell her that I was a trick, that I had been forced into it and did not want to go on with it. Kate and I were not afraid to Mrs. Underhill like ladies. We went to New York from Rochester, then all over the United States. We drew immense crowds. I remember particularly the meetings. We were put at the "Borrett" House. The rooms were jammed from morning until night and we were surrounded by those old wretches to show our meetings who we should have been out of the way in the first place. We made the top of the Mother and came back to New York where Mrs. Underhill left us. Mother went on to Philadelphia and took me and that is where Dr. Kater first saw and brought me away from this life.</p> <p>A short time after the death of my mother I had been travelling. I have always been and again it. I have been going to spiritism. It then and then death after I married Dr. Kater would not be me. I was in my old life, but I could not be kept in. He had the public eye. When I was just after his death I was driven to it again. I have told my sister Mrs. Underhill, time and time again. Don't let people talk, what don't you save your soul!" But as my mother would never let me into a rapping, she wanted to establish a new religion, and</p> |
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Collection
Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism

Citation
"Spirit Rapping: The Truth Comes Out At Last" newspaper article. Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement. accessed January 5, 2023. <https://his792mclarena.omeka.net/items/show/54>.

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| <h2>"LECTURES OF ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title "Lectures of Andrew Jackson Davis" newspaper article</p> <p>Source The Liberator. "Lectures of Andrew Jackson Davis." <i>The Liberator</i> (Boston, MA) March 3, 1854.</p> <p>Still Image Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Original Format Newspaper article</p> <p>Files</p>  <p>Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Lectures of Andrew Jackson Davis" newspaper article. <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i>, accessed January 5, 2023. https://hdl792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/53.</p> <p>← Previous Item Next Item →</p> | |

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| "MRS. FOX-KANE'S BIG TOE" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE | |
| Dublin Core | |
| Title "Mrs. Fox-Kane's Big Toe" newspaper article | |
| Source The Inter Ocean. "Mrs. Fox-Kane's Big Toe." The Inter Ocean (Chicago, IL), October 22, 1888. | |
| Still Image Item Type Metadata | |
| Original Format Newspaper article | |
| Files | |
| <p>was carried on by Dr. C. M. Richmond of this city, who has spent twenty years and perhaps as many thousands of dollars in investigating mediumistic tricks, and who, doubtless, knows as much about this particular species of fraud as any man living. After the Doctor had exposed a number of tricks Mrs. Margaret Fox-Kane came forward. The audience was pretty well tired out, and Mrs. Kane struck rather an unsympathetic crowd. Mrs. Kane seemed to have lost her tongue and could say nothing. But if her tongue had lost its power, her preternatural toe joint had not. Discovering that she was not in proper condition for a public address, her companions on the stage invited her to give a public demonstration of her ability to produce raps without further delay. A plain wooden stool or table resting upon four short legs and having the properties of a sounding board was placed in front of her. Removing her shoes</p> | |
| Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism | |
| Citation "Mrs. Fox-Kane's Big Toe" newspaper article. <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i> , accessed January 5, 2023. https://hs792jncnaren.omeka.net/items/show/52 . | |
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"SPREAD OF SPIRITUALISM" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core

Title
"Spread of Spiritualism" newspaper article

Source
The Brooklyn Daily Eagle. "Spread of Spiritualism." The Brooklyn Daily Eagle (Brooklyn, NY), April 4, 1899.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

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afraid to wear any label that belongs to us." that would be true," responded the en-er-
regate unhesitatingly.

Dr. Barbee hesitates to declare himself a Spiritualist, although Spiritualists claim him as one of their number, and say he is a frequent attendant at Spiritualist seances. His disclaimer loses force when he says he believes that at the heart of Spiritualism there is a great truth, and then proceeds in the following language in articles in Dr. Lewis Abbott and Dr. Hilla Sharpie in the following language as reported in the Sun.

"The other day the paper contained a long account of the belief of Dr. Lewis Abbott and of Dr. Hilla, who is his successor. Both believe all the essentials that Spiritualists believe, only both were very careful to guard themselves against believing in such vulgar and foolish things as rappings on a table. For the life of me I cannot see what there is so foolish and degrading in rapping. If you are in one room of a hotel and I am in another I am not so impolite as to go into your room without rapping to find out whether you want to see me. If some one from the other world is aware of me and wants to see me, is it so dreadful that he should call my attention by rapping? I have been asked as to the nature of communications from the other side. I've had what purported to be hundreds of them, and I say that they are pretty much as I have said my daily mass. I get some foolish and some malicious communications, and each some noble and intelligent ones. In my faith every morning. So it is with those from the other side. If we can get rid of the old idea that the moment a man dies he is either a devil or an angel, we will see that this is true. It would be likely to be the communications being on a level with things as they are now. If I should die now here in this pulpit I should not expect to be in the next moment.

It is not the intention of the writer of this column to violate the beliefs of those Spiritualists, for I am convinced by investigation that many who entertain the beliefs in question are good men and women. These beliefs have unquestionably been a source of some comfort to some and possibly to others insensitive to ridicule and better things. Yet as a result of my inquiries it has seemed to me that these men and women are receiving shadows from which have come vague and unsatisfying messages. To illustrate: To a Spiritualist, formerly a well known abolition, who is the sole surviving member of a pair large and happy family, I put this question: "What do you think of the Founder of Christianity?" "I think he was the greatest man that ever lived," was the prompt answer. "Do you believe that he gave to the world a spiritual message?" "Yes." "Of all those disembodied spirits with whom you claim to have been in communication, did any of them lead lives that you consider very as pure as that of the Founder of Christianity?" "I think not. He was undoubtedly superior to any man or woman that ever lived in purity of character." "Have any of the spirits with whom you have communicated ever given to you or to Spiritualists any words of morals or ethics, or wisdom, or cheer, or comprehensive as the message of the Founder of Christianity to the world?" "No." "Then, if you are looking for spiritual messages, clearly, promptly put, why not take one

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Citation
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"LAST OF FAMOUS FOX SISTERS DIES" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core

Title
"Last of Famous Fox Sisters Dies" newspaper article

Source
St. Louis Post Dispatch. "Last of Famous Fox Sisters Dies." St. Louis Post Dispatch (St. Louis, MO), November 9, 1902.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

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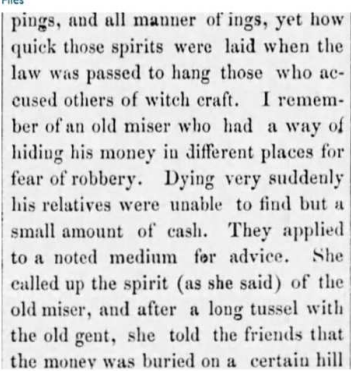
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| <p>The spiritualist movement has followed number thousands, and are in every part of the globe. The spiritualist encyclopedia contains a chronicle of their lives and deeds, which reads like the record in which they are held.</p> <p>There are many St. Louisans who will recall the time when these three sisters were the subjects of investigation by committees representing the most prominent colleges and the most eminent men in the country. These inquiries sought to verify rumors at their command to look down the world in the supernatural as related to these young women, but were unable to reach the pillar of explanation where the strange forces which followed them originated. And many became spiritualists themselves.</p> <p>St. Louisans Still Believe in Them.</p> <p>W. F. Cook, a spiritualist who lives at 303 Madison street, just the medicine at the result of their fame and remembers them distinctly, as well as the circumstances surrounding the discovery of their art.</p> <p>He has hundreds of letters to St. Louis from mediums as well as the Fox sisters, and believes that the exposure of their artifice was simply the result of a greed for money and the constant importunities on the part of persons accustomed to the faith, who played upon the mind of one of the women, who, Mr. Cook says, became the victim of the alcoholic habit. He says that she subsequently denied the truth of her exposure.</p> <p>There were Katherine, Margaret and Leah, the daughters of John Fox, who, spiritualist history states, was poor but of good character.</p> <p>The family lived at Reynolds, near Rochester, N. Y., in a small frame dwelling.</p> | <p>and Margaret passed away in November, March 9, 1882.</p> <p>FOUND KITCHENER A COOK.</p> <p>The Letters Help the Starboard Obtain a Suitable Chef.</p> <p>Special Cable to the Post-Dispatch.</p> <p>ST. LOUIS, Nov. 8.—(By E. L. Lister and her daughter, Dale, are still in Paris, but will soon have to join the Cursons in India, on the India Empire.</p> <p>While Lord Kitchener was here, recently he met them and was listening the difficulty of finding a chef to take to India.</p> <p>Mrs. Lister volunteered to find what he wanted. After searching Paris in vain, she went to London, where, with the help of Mrs. Asher, a first-class cook, was found for Lord Kitchener.</p> <p>Don't Buy Glasses at Random.</p> <p>Charles W. Bond, our expert optician, has will examine your eyes free of charge and guarantee a pair of glasses as needed. Best frames and top goods. E. and J. Bond, 1010 Market St. Telephone 1000.</p> <p>HOW GEN. REYNOLDS WAS SHOT.</p> <p>LANCASTER, Pa., Nov. 8.—(By a special cable to the Post-Dispatch.)</p> <p>Gen. Reynolds was shot at a point in the battle of Gettysburg, Pa., on July 3, 1863, by a Confederate sharpshooter named John J. Cook, who was a member of the Fifty-fifth North Carolina Infantry, and while in the service of the Confederate army.</p> <p>It was at a point in the battle of Gettysburg, Pa., on July 3, 1863, that Gen. Reynolds was shot at a point in the battle of Gettysburg, Pa., on July 3, 1863, by a Confederate sharpshooter named John J. Cook, who was a member of the Fifty-fifth North Carolina Infantry, and while in the service of the Confederate army.</p> <p>It was at a point in the battle of Gettysburg, Pa., on July 3, 1863, that Gen. Reynolds was shot at a point in the battle of Gettysburg, Pa., on July 3, 1863, by a Confederate sharpshooter named John J. Cook, who was a member of the Fifty-fifth North Carolina Infantry, and while in the service of the Confederate army.</p> |
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Citation
"Last of Famous Fox Sisters Dies" newspaper article, Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://his792mcclaren.omeka.net/items/show/50>.

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| "SPIRITUALISM" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE | |
| Dublin Core | |
| Title "Spiritualism" newspaper article | |
| Source Spirit of the Age: "Spiritualism." Spirit of the Age (Woodstock, VT), April 9, 1884. | |
| Still Image Item Type Metadata | |
| Original Format Newspaper article | |
| Files | |
|  <p>pings, and all manner of ings, yet how quick those spirits were laid when the law was passed to hang those who accused others of witch craft. I remember of an old miser who had a way of hiding his money in different places for fear of robbery. Dying very suddenly his relatives were unable to find but a small amount of cash. They applied to a noted medium for advice. She called up the spirit (as she said) of the old miser, and after a long tussel with the old gent, she told the friends that the money was buried on a certain hill</p> | |
| Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism | |
| Citation "Spiritualism" newspaper article." <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i> , accessed January 5, 2023, https://lib792jnc1aren.omeka.net/items/show/49 . | |
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"SPIRITUALISM EXPOSED BY HARRY HOUDINI: I. STORY OF THE FOX SISTERS" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Dublin Core

Title
"Spiritualism Exposed by Harry Houdini: I. Story of the Fox Sisters" newspaper article

Source
The Pantagraph, "Spiritualism Exposed." The Pantagraph (Bloomington, IL) November 22, 1924.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Newspaper article

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LEAH FOX FISH BROWN UNDER HILL.

down and sought merely to terrify our dear mother, who was a very good woman and very easily frightened. When we went to bed at night we used to tie an apple to a string and move the string up and down, under the apple to hang on the floor, or we would drop the apple on the floor, making a message each every time it would rebound. Mother believed in this for a time, she would not question it and did not suspect us as at being capable of a trick because we were so young.

"At last she could stand it no longer and she called the neighbors in and told them about it. It was then that we were to discover a means of making the raps more effectively. I think when I reflect about it, that it was a most wonderful discovery, a very wonderful thing that children should make such a discovery, and all three a desire to do mischief only.

"Our oldest sister was twenty-three years of age when I was born, she was in Rochester when these tricks first began that came in Hallowell, the little village in central New York where we were born and lived.

"All the neighbors around us I have well been called in to witness these manifestations. There were so many people coming to the house that we were not able to make use of the same.

... questions we answered by yes or no, according to certain signs which Mrs. Underhill gave us during the evening. A great many people who had heard the rapping imagine at once that the spirits are touching them. It is a very common delusion. Some very sensible people come to see the sisters years ago when I lived in Rochester then. I made the spirit tap on the chair and one of the ladies cried out, "I feel the spirit tapping me on the shoulder."

"Kate and I were led around the house. We went to New York and Rochester and then all over the United States. We drew hundreds of crowds. I remember particularly one called upon by the old woman in New York. The raps were so loud from exceeding still night and we could have been out at play in the fresh air. Nobody has ever suggested anything from the start in 1848 until the present day as to any fraudulent method. There has never been a revelation. But as the world grew wiser and science began to prevail we began to adapt our rappings to our audience. Our audience were still in a dream. There was a center table in the middle and we all stood around it.

"I can not say anything more concerning either my sister or I thought about it. I hope that there is no such thing as the departed returning to this life. Many people have said to me that such a thing was possible.

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Citation
"Spiritualism Exposed by Harry Houdini: I. Story of the Fox Sisters" newspaper article, *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://lib792mcclaren.omeka.net/items/show/48>.

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| "THE GHOST OF GANARGWA" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE | |
| Dublin Core | |
| Title "The Ghost of Ganargwa" newspaper article | |
| Source Buffalo Weekly Republic "The Ghost of Ganargwa." Buffalo Weekly Republic (Buffalo, NY), May 9, 1848. | |
| Still Image Item Type Metadata | |
| Original Format Newspaper article | |
| Files | |
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| Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism | |
| Citation "The Ghost of Ganargwa" newspaper article. <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i> , accessed January 5, 2023. https://hs792jncfaren.omeka.net/items/show/46 . | |
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| <h2>"ENDURING MYSTERY OF THE OUIJA BOARD REINCARNATION" NEWSPAPER ARTICLE</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title "Enduring Mystery of the Ouija Board Reincarnation" newspaper article</p> <p>Source New York Tribune. "Enduring Mystery of the Ouija Board Reincarnation." New York Tribune (New York, NY), November 23, 1919.</p> <p>Still Image Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Original Format Newspaper article</p> <p>Files</p>  <p>Collection Sensational newspaper articles regarding Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Enduring Mystery of the Ouija Board Reincarnation" newspaper article. <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i>, accessed January 5, 2023. https://his792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/38</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> ← Previous Item Next Item → </p> | |

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"EARLY OUIJA ADVERTISEMENT"

Dublin Core

Title
"Early Ouija Advertisement"

Source
"Early Ouija Advertisement." Lippincott Monthly Magazine, 1891.

Still Image Item Type Metadata

Original Format
Advertisement









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Citation
"Early Ouija Advertisement." *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023. <https://ho792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/37>

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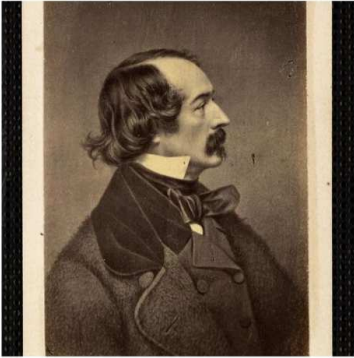
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| Subject Individuals who are key to the Spiritualist movement | |
| Description Individuals who are key to the Spiritualist movement, whether they are practitioners, supporters, or debunkers | |
| Collection Items | |
| Emanuel Swedenborg  | |
| Elisha Kent Kane  | |
| Emma Hardinge Britten  | |
| The Fox Sisters  Maggie (left), Kate (center), Leah (right) | |
| Franz Mesmer  | |
| Andrew Jackson Davis  | |
| Sir Arthur Conan Doyle  | |
| Harry Houdini  | |
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| EMANUEL SWEDENBORG | |
| Dublin Core | |
| Title Emanuel Swedenborg | |
| Person Item Type Metadata | |
| Birth Date January 29, 1688 | |
| Birthplace Stockholm, Sweden | |
| Death Date March 29, 1772 | |
| Occupation Theologian, scientist, philosopher, mystic | |
| Biographical Text https://www.britannica.com/biography/Emanuel-Swedenborg | |
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| Collection Important Figures related to Spiritualism | |
| Citation "Emanuel Swedenborg." Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement, accessed January 5, 2023, https://his792mcclaren.omeka.net/items/show/11 . | |
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| <h2>ELISHA KENT KANE</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title Elisha Kent Kane</p> <p>Person Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Birth Date February 3, 1820</p> <p>Birthplace Philadelphia, PA</p> <p>Death Date February 16, 1857</p> <p>Occupation U.S. Navy medical officer, Arctic explorer</p> <p>Biographical Text https://www.britannica.com/biography/Elisha-Kent-Kane</p> <p>Files</p>  <p>Collection Important Figures related to Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Elisha Kent Kane." <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i>, accessed January 5, 2023, https://his792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/20.</p> <p>← Previous Item Next Item →</p> | |

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| <h2>EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title Emma Hardinge Britten</p> <p>Person Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Birth Date May 2, 1823</p> <p>Birthplace London, England</p> <p>Death Date October 2, 1899</p> <p>Occupation Spiritualist, medium, lecturer, author</p> <p>Biographical Text https://spiritualpaths/spiritualistchurch.org/emma-hardinge-britten-the-seven-principles/</p> <p>Files</p>  <p>Collection Important Figures related to Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Emma Hardinge Britten." <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i>, accessed January 5, 2023, https://his792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/21.</p> <p>← Previous Item Next Item →</p> | |

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| <h2>THE FOX SISTERS</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title The Fox Sisters</p> <p>Description Maggie (left), Kate (center), Leah (right)</p> <p>Person Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Birth Date Maggie: October 7, 1833 Kate: March 27, 1837 Leah: April 8, 1813</p> <p>Birthplace Rochester, NY</p> <p>Death Date Maggie: March 8, 1893 Kate: July 2, 1892 Leah: November 1, 1890</p> <p>Files</p>  <p>Collection Important Figures related to Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "The Fox Sisters." <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i>, accessed January 5, 2023, https://his792inciarer.omeka.net/items/show/22.</p> <p>← Previous Item Next Item →</p> | |

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ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS

Dublin Core

Title
Andrew Jackson Davis

Source
National Portrait Gallery. https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.89.104

Person Item Type Metadata


Birth Date
January 11, 1826

Birthplace
Blooming Grove, New York

Death Date
January 13, 1910

Occupation
Spiritualist

Files




Collection
[Important Figures related to Spiritualism](#)

Citation
"Andrew Jackson Davis." *Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement*, accessed January 5, 2023. <https://his792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/36>

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| SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE | |
| Dublin Core | |
| Title Sir Arthur Conan Doyle | |
| Source The British Library. https://www.bl.uk/people/arthur-conan-doyle . | |
| Person Item Type Metadata | |
| Birth Date May 22, 1859 | |
| Birthplace Edinburgh, United Kingdom | |
| Death Date July 7, 1930 | |
| Occupation Writer, physician | |
| Files | |
|  | |
| Collection Important Figures related to Spiritualism | |
| Citation "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle." <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i> , accessed January 5, 2023, https://his792mclaren.omeka.net/items/show/59 . | |
| -- Previous Item | Next Item -- |

SENSATIONAL SPIRITUALISM: THE STUDY OF 19TH-CENTURY REPORTING AND ITS EFFECT ON THE SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT


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| <h2>HARRY HOUDINI</h2> <p>Dublin Core</p> <p>Title Harry Houdini</p> <p>Source National Portrait Gallery. https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NFG.2000.15</p> <p>Person Item Type Metadata</p> <p>Birth Date March 24, 1874</p> <p>Birthplace Budapest, Hungary</p> <p>Death Date October 31, 1926</p> <p>Occupation Escape artist, magician, stunt performer</p> <p>Biographical Text https://www.britannica.com/biography/Harry-Houdini</p> <p>Files</p>  <p>Collection Important Figures related to Spiritualism</p> <p>Citation "Harry Houdini," <i>Sensational Spiritualism: The Study of 19th-Century Reporting and Its Effect on the Spiritualist Movement</i>, accessed January 5, 2023, https://hdl792jnciarex.omeka.net/items/show/91.</p> <p>← Previous Item Next Item →</p> | |

Table 1: Project Budget

| Cost Analysis Worksheet | | | | |
|--|----------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Item | Quantity | Cost Rate | Total | Notes |
| SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT | | | | |
| Computer <i>If needed</i> | 1 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | As determined during project planning when evaluating hardware needs Cost can vary depending on model/storage size/specifications |
| External hard drive <i>If needed</i> | 1 | \$100 | \$100 | As determined during project planning when evaluating hardware needs Cost can vary depending on model/storage size/specifications |
| Multifunctional printer <i>If needed</i> | 1 | \$150 | \$150 | As determined during project planning when evaluating hardware needs Cost can vary depending on model/specifications |
| Large format flatbed scanner <i>If needed</i> | 1 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | As determined during project planning when evaluating hardware needs Cost can vary depending on model/specifications |
| Total Supplies & Equip Costs | 3 | \$2,250 | \$2,250 | |
| LABOR | | | | |
| Volunteers | TBA | \$0 | \$0 | As determined by institution Will require training |
| Interns | TBA | \$0 | \$0 | As determined by institution Any hired interns would be unpaid Will require training |
| Overtime Pay | TBA | TBA | TBA | For any paid staff overseeing volunteers and/or interns who work any overtime hours assisting on the transition from Omeka to the institution's preferred cataloguing system. Subject to state and federal wage laws. Total cost will vary by number of paid employees as well as salary rate <i>Overtime pay is in excess of 40 hours per week and is at least a rate of 1.5 times regular rate of pay per the U.S. Department of Labor</i> |
| Total Labor Cost | | | TBA | |
| INDIRECT COSTS | | | | |
| Legal Expenses | TBA | \$275 | \$275 | Copyright research, obtaining copyright permission (as needed) <i>All items obtained for "Sensational Spiritualism" were from the public domain Cost outlined is the average cost per the United States Copyright Office as of Spring 2020</i> |
| Omeka - "Platinum" Plan | 1 | \$1,000 | \$1,000 | Any further research would require additional exhibits, which can be provided through a paid Omeka plan <i>50 GB of storage, unlimited sites</i> |
| Newspapers.com "Publisher Extra" Plan | 1 | \$74.90 | \$74.90 | Access to 25,000+ newspapers dating back to 1690, archived through the prior month <i>6-month subscription</i> |
| Membership Costs | TBA | \$50 | \$50 | Average cost for an annual membership for a LAM or professional organization |
| Total Indirect Costs | | \$1,399.90 | \$1,399.90 | |
| Project Total | | \$3,649.90 | \$3,649.90 | <i>Final cost rate and project total is dependent on labor costs, specifically overtime pay, which is not a guarantee</i> |

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