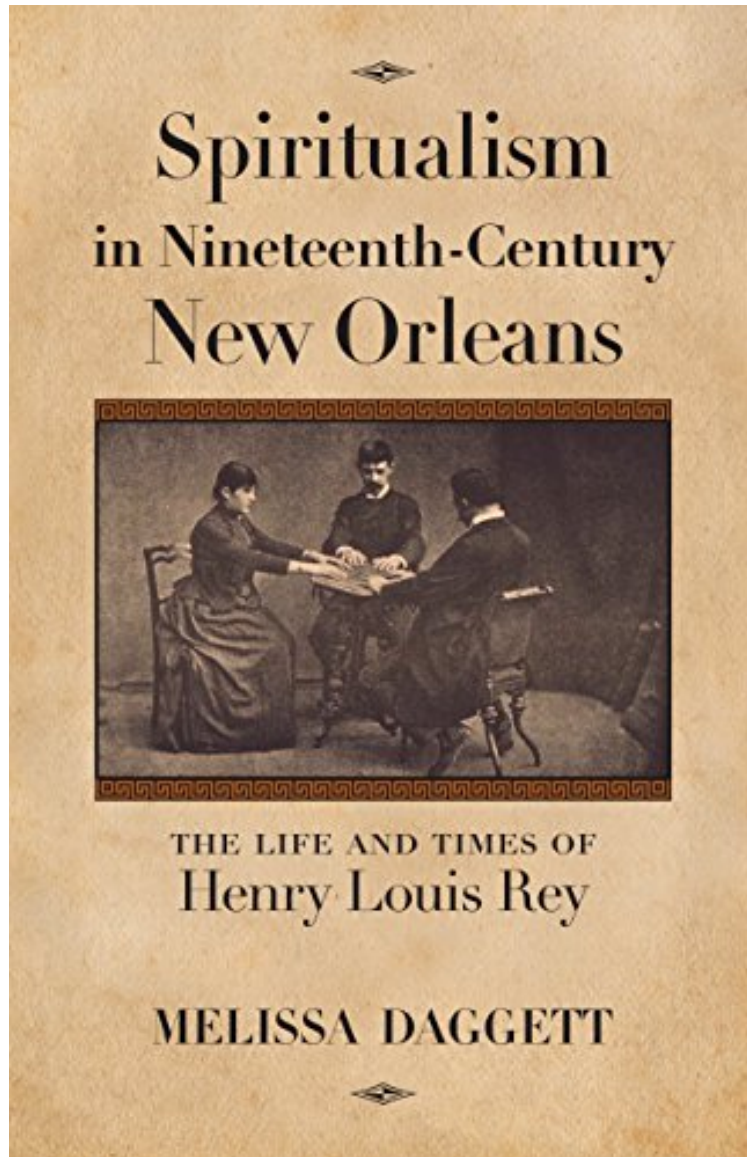


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Spiritualism in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans: The Life and Times of Henry Louis Rey

Melissa Daggett

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Melissa Daggett : Spiritualism in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans: The Life and Times of Henry Louis Rey before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Spiritualism in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans: The Life and Times of Henry Louis Rey:

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Kristine Fisher
Spiritualism in 19th Century New Orleans: The Life and Times of Henry Louis Rey by Melissa Daggett is a free NetGalley ebook that I read in late November. You get impressions early on that Daggett's book will only be a direct transcription of Rey's Spiritualist seance notebooks and Rene Corandjean's purple-jotted subscriptions, but, no, it's a portrayal of the history that occurs around the notebooks. It's the history of New Orleans, Spiritualism in general, a more directed personal history of Rey and his family, his spiritual guides, Creole culture, as well as ongoing civic social history throughout the 1800s. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very interesting read
By Bonnye Reed Fry
I received a free electronic copy of this biography from Netgalley, Melissa Daggett, and University Press of Mississippi in exchange for an honest review. Thank you all, for sharing your hard work with me. This is a book that will go on my research shelf and will be read again at my leisure. Melissa Daggett does a wonderful job of bringing us to the table on New Orleans history involving American Spiritualism, Reconstruction, and the impact of Afro-Creole free blacks in education and integration from 1860 through World War I. There is a bit of back and forth that I at first found confusing but the information is all there to make a complete circle of racial, educational and financial oppression from the passing of the 13th and 14th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States in 1865 to the passing of the Louisiana Separate Car Act on July 10, 1890. I enjoyed the look into American Spiritualism, and especially into the lifetime contributions of Henry Louis Rey. I loved watching New Orleans grow, and become the belle of the south that she will always be. New Orleans is definitely a fully integrated state of mind. Long may she live and prosper.

Modern American Spiritualism blossomed in the 1850s and continued as a viable faith into the 1870s. Because of its diversity and openness to new cultures and religions, New Orleans provided fertile ground to nurture Spiritualism, and many sance circles flourished in the Creole Faubourgs of Trem and Marigny as well as the American sector of the city. Melissa Daggett focuses on Le Cercle Harmonique, the francophone sance circle of Henry Louis Rey (1831-1894), a Creole of color who was a key civil rights activist, author, and Civil War and Reconstruction leader. His life has so far remained largely in the shadows of New Orleans history, partly due to a language barrier. *Spiritualism in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans* focuses on the turbulent years between the late antebellum period and the end of Reconstruction. Translating and interpreting numerous primary sources and one of the only surviving registers of sance proceedings, Daggett has opened a window into a fascinating life as well as a period of tumult and change. She provides unparalleled insights into the history of the Creoles of color and renders a better understanding of New Orleans's complex history. The author weaves an intriguing tale of the supernatural, of chaotic post-bellum politics, of transatlantic linkages, and of the personal triumphs and tragedies of Rey as a notable citizen and medium. Wonderful illustrations, reproductions of the original spiritual communications, and photographs, many of which have never before appeared in published form, accompany this study of Rey and his world.

Ever since seeing the Grandjean Sance Registers at the University of New Orleans decades ago, I wondered when they would be brought to the public's attention. Author Melissa Daggett is to be thanked for skillfully and sensitively doing that. Mary Gehman, author of *The Free People of Color of New Orleans: An Introduction* Melissa Daggett's unrivaled grasp of a voluminous collection of French-language spiritualist texts makes *Spiritualism in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans: The Life and Times of Henry Louis Rey* a must-read for anyone interested in the city's multifaceted religious culture with its links to the North, the Caribbean, and Europe. With Henry Louis Rey as her focus, the author adds a valuable new chapter to religious studies while making an important contribution to the historiography of the city's Afro-Creole Francophone community. With this first book-length study of New Orleans spiritualism, Daggett joins a new generation of revisionist scholars who view the movement seriously and consider its vision for the future as important as its concern for the past. As Daggett makes abundantly clear, her history of New Orleans spiritualism and Henry Louis Rey is long overdue. Caryn Coss Bell, author of *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana, 1718-1868* About the Author Melissa Daggett, Houston, Texas, and New Orleans, Louisiana, is an instructor of United States history at San Jacinto College in Pasadena, Texas. Her work has appeared in *Louisiana History*.