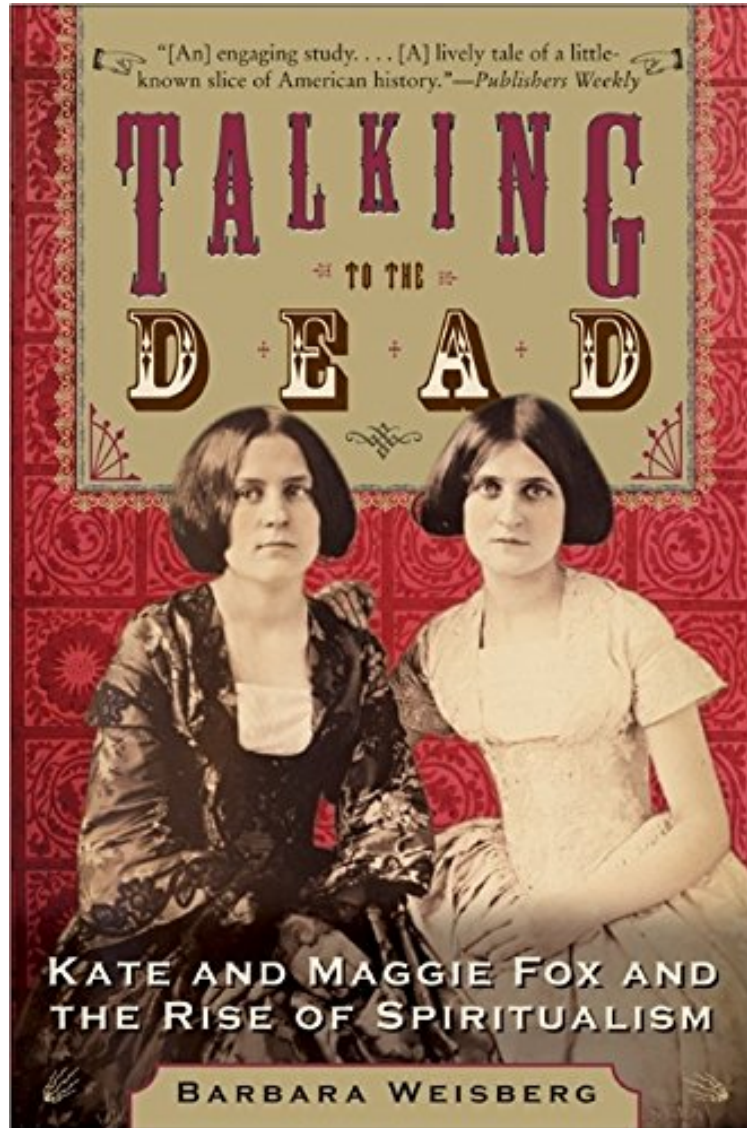


(Free read ebook) Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism

Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism

Barbara Weisberg

audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#40963 in Books Weisberg, Barbara 2005-03-29 2005-03-29 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .76 x 5.311, .61 #File Name: 006075060X336 pages | File size: 19.Mb

Barbara Weisberg : Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A fascinating look at spiritualism and its origins By Princess This is one of those subjects, as with the twists and turns of the lives of the Fox sisters, that leaves a reader looking for more.

A very good and thorough book. Read it!² of 2 people found the following review helpful. Insight into the Spirit World
By New Lebanon
This is a fascinating look at a phenomenon which swept American society in the 19th century, involving many of its leading citizens. By focusing on the Fox sisters, the author offers an up close view of spiritualism and the period.¹⁰ of 10 people found the following review helpful. 19th Century Psychic Hotline
By Deestarr1
The spiritualist movement of the 19th century was the beginning of America's obsession with the occult. While the psychics, and ghost hunters of today are often looked upon as frauds and con artists the spiritualists of the 19th century were often looked upon as celebrities. They traveled first class on trains and ocean liners, stayed in luxury hotels, and were hailed as proof that the afterlife existed. But, underneath it all they were as much frauds and hacks as the so-called psychics of today. The Fox Sisters were among the most well-known spiritualists of the day and interacted with celebrities such as, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the members of various scientific societies that also flourished during the same period.
Weisberg eloquently writes about both the tragedy, and the fame and fortune experienced by all three Fox sisters. She links the spiritualist movement to many of the other popular movements of the day and uses descriptive language to tell the reader about a time in history when occultism and scientific pursuits existed hand in hand.
Overall this book is well written and historically accurate. It is an interesting read for both the amateur and professional historian. There are some minor formatting and grammar issues and in some places there are citations lacking but in general this is a good book.

A fascinating story of spirits and conjurers, skeptics and converts in the second half of nineteenth century America viewed through the lives of Kate and Maggie Fox, the sisters whose purported communication with the dead gave rise to the Spiritualism movement - and whose recanting forty years later is still shrouded in mystery. In March of 1848, Kate and Maggie Fox - sisters aged 11 and 14 - anxiously reported to a neighbor that they had been hearing strange, unidentified sounds in their house. From a sequence of knocks and rattles translated by the young girls as a "voice from beyond," the Modern Spiritualism movement was born. Talking to the Dead follows the fascinating story of the two girls who were catapulted into an odd limelight after communicating with spirits that March night. Within a few years, tens of thousands of Americans were flocking to seances. An international movement followed. Yet thirty years after those first knocks, the sisters shocked the country by denying they had ever contacted spirits. Shortly after, the sisters once again changed their story and reaffirmed their belief in the spirit world. Weisberg traces not only the lives of the Fox sisters and their family (including their mysterious Svengali-like sister Leah) but also the social, religious, economic and political climates that provided the breeding ground for the movement. While this is a thorough, compelling overview of a potent time in US history, it is also an incredible ghost story. An entertaining read - a story of spirits and conjurers, skeptics and converts - Talking to the Dead is full of emotion and surprise. Yet it will also provoke questions that were being asked in the 19th century, and are still being asked today - how do we know what we know, and how secure are we in our knowledge?

.com Is it really possible to talk with the dead? As much as modern America is familiar with mediums--think bestselling authors John Edwards and Sylvia Browne--this question still generates passionate opinions from believers and skeptics alike. So one can only imagine the stir that the Fox sisters created in 1848 when they claimed to hear a ghost rapping on the wall of their Hydesville, New York rental house bedroom. The sisters soon discovered that the ghost would tap answers to specific questions. Within days neighbors and travelers were showing up at the house, wanting to converse with the dead rapper. The Fox sisters--Maggie and Kate--went onto become a national phenomenon, holding sances and making their livings as celebrity mediums. They were also the leaders of a new movement called the spiritualists. New York-based filmmaker Barbara Weisberg assembled this fascinating and expertly recounted biography. Beyond trying to prove whether the Fox girls were legitimate, Weisberg wrote a study of how two young girls could shape a new spiritual movement in mid-1800s America. "The more I thought about the Fox sisters, the more it seemed to me not only that Kate and Maggie sparked a movement, but that their lives epitomized the conflicts and urges that helped fuel its blaze. The question of the other world aside, the girls' appeal surely stemmed in part from the ways they embodied and intuited their culture's anxieties and ambitions." Ironically, in not trying to prove whether these two were frauds, Weisberg has created a more satisfying human story within a rich historical context, not unlike the tactics used for the bestseller Seabiscuit. And likewise, this could and should easily translate into a dynamite major motion picture. --Gail Hudson
From Publishers Weekly
When the Fox family moved to Hydesville, N.Y., in 1848, they were confronted with strange and unexplainable noises coming from their bedroom. After an evening of listening to these raps and knocks on the walls, the Foxes' youngest children, Maggie and Kate, discovered that they had a gift for communicating with the spirits that made the sounds--when one of the girls knocked on the wall, the spirits would knock back. In her engaging study, Weisberg, a former documentary filmmaker, sets the case of the Fox sisters into the context of a 19th-century America that was developing a fascination with the world of spirits and the paranormal. The two Fox sisters began making public appearances in which they would talk to ghosts; along with their older sister, Leah, they eventually developed a traveling psychic show that took them across America and to Europe, leading tens of thousands of Americans to attend seances. While many clerics accused them of working

for the devil, they cultivated a huge following, who, Weisberg says, needed to allay the anxieties of the modern age. In 1888, however, Maggie announced that the sisters had been engaged in deceptive practices. Her announcement shook the world of spiritualists. Although Maggie recanted one year later, the question had been raised: do spiritualists really speak to the dead? Weisberg refuses to judge the Fox sisters, saying only that it's plausible that they were deceptive, in this lively tale of a little-known slice of American history. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Few people know the Fox sisters, and those who do probably can't go much beyond the words mediums and frauds. But Weisberg goes way beyond those hazy stereotypes, not only bringing these fascinating young women to life but also portraying the quixotic mid-nineteenth-century era in which spiritualism was allowed to flourish. We are introduced to 11-year-old Kate and 14-year-old Maggie, who first heard the rapping of a dead peddler in their basement and went on to help found a movement that offered people a more benevolent picture of life after death than the then-prevalent Puritan version. Was it more than chance, Weisberg asks, that the area of western New York where the Fox sisters lived was also home to Mormon founder Joseph Smith as well as an active outpost of abolitionism and the burgeoning women's movement? Weisberg does an excellent job of showing how these various branches of an essentially reformist movement (reshaping culture, religion, and society) are intertwined. But always at the heart of the story are these young women (and their older, shrewder sister) and the effect their experiences with the occult were having on them. Were they faking? The book offers hints and clues, but readers must decide for themselves. A revealing look at the history of spiritualism and its place in nineteenth-century culture. Ilene Cooper Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved