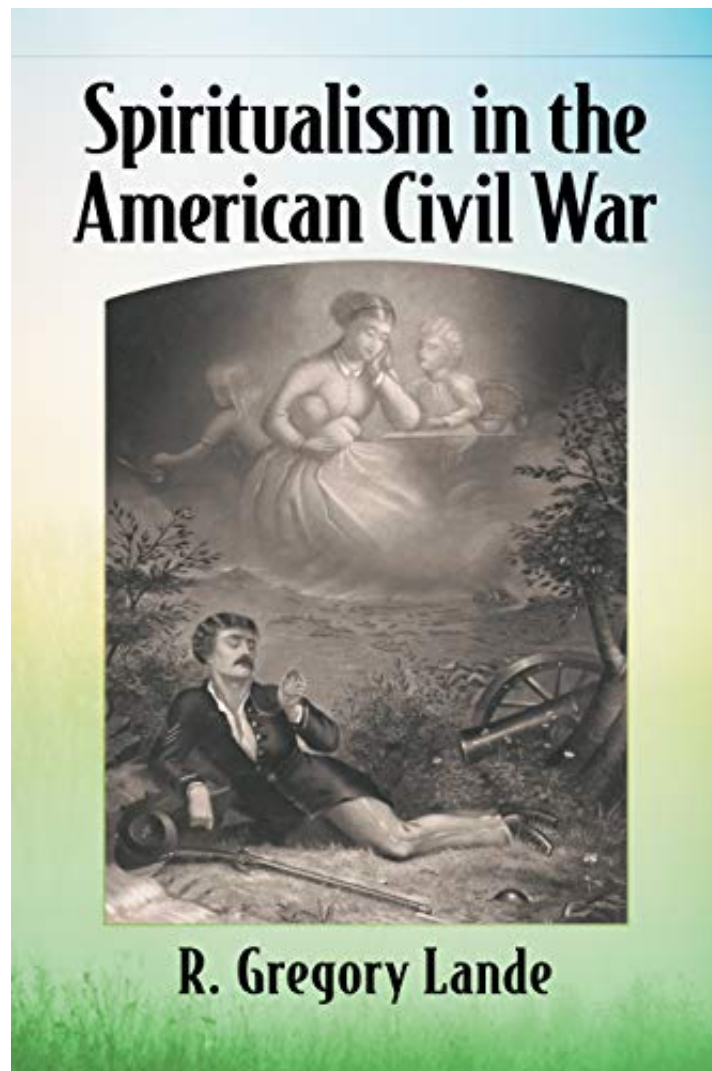


Spiritualism in the American Civil War

by

R. Gregory Lande



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Synopsis

America's Civil War took a dreadful toll on human lives, and the emotional repercussions were exacerbated by tales of battlefield atrocities, improper burials and by the lack of news that many received about the fate of their loved ones. Amidst widespread religious doubt and social skepticism, spiritualism--the belief that the spirits of the dead existed and could communicate with the living--filled a psychological void by providing a pathway towards closure during a time of mourning, and by promising an eternal reunion in the afterlife regardless of earthly sins. Primary research, including 55 months of the weekly spiritual newspaper, *Banner of Light* and records of hundreds of soldiers' and family members' spirit messages, reveals unique insights into battlefield deaths, the transition to spirit life, and the motivations prompting ethereal communications. This book focuses extensively on Spiritualism's religious, political, and commercial activities during the war years, as well as the controversies surrounding the faith, strengthening the connection between ante- and postbellum studies of Spiritualism.

What people say about this book

Anne HG, "Facinating and Interesting Book!. I really enjoyed reading this book as some one who has an interest in both history and spirituality. I am able to incorporate many interesting facts into the course that I teach on Death and Dying. This is a well researched and well written book. I recommend it to anyone who enjoys history and loves learning new facts."

Chocoholic, "A must-read book for all historians!. Review by Dr. Bhagwan A. Bahroo: Dr. R. Gregory Lande has once again exhibited his mastery on another topic from the American Civil War. His previous book "The Abraham Man" is a masterpiece and has a well-recognized place among those interested in Medico-Legal Practice during the war. His new book on Spirituality is a great narration on the Religion, Faith and Spiritualism during the tumultuous years when brothers fought with brothers over the question of principles. What I particularly enjoyed about the book is the manner in which the chapters are so concisely created and impart a wonderful sense of continuity of the narrative. It is like reading history in a chronological manner while not getting lost on the material for the dates. Each of the 8 chapters makes it so vivid that you can almost feel the events unfolding in your presence. Dr. Lande has written another masterpiece and in all seriousness, the touch of humor is not lost in the narration but is very much there for the readers to appreciate. The author certainly has an excellent command of the language. He reports the events almost like a news item without any bias or prejudice. His writeup does not pass judgments nor is critical of the processes that took place in that era, thus leaving the reader to come up with their own interpretations of whether it helped in healing the wounds of the conflict. The illustrations enhance the written material and give us a sense of the reality of those times. I highly recommend it to all the readers from those who wish to get acquainted with the subject matter to the scholars studying the various aspects of that time period."

Sadie, "An informative and captivating read. Spirituality in the American Civil War by R. Gregory Lande, DO offers a detailed and fascinating glimpse of an often overlooked aspect of the Civil War era. Dr. Lande writes in the manner of an engaging storyteller while still offering a thorough and critical history of the religious, political, social, legal, psychological, and even medical implications of spiritualism during what was an exceedingly bloody, emotional, and politically charged time in US history. He shares the stories of spiritualists, skeptics, and hucksters alike in a way that helps the reader better understand these players, their motives, and their beliefs and to appreciate the many factors that influenced them. Though some hints of humor add to the pleasure of reading this book, Dr. Lande clearly takes this subject matter seriously and writes objectively and without mocking spiritualism or its adherents. This book truly was a joy to read. I believe anyone with an interest in spiritualism, the American Civil War, or the war as it was experienced off the battlefields will find also this book to be an informative and captivating read."

None, "Brings to life quite a spirited read!. R. Gregory Lande brings to life a part of American

Civil War history, like reading a Harry Potter novel, introducing us to a little known fanciful world, and wanting more.”

J. Latronica, “Excellent Read on an Interesting and Under-Researched Topic. This is an expertly-written book on a significant part of history and society in the antebellum and Civil War-Era United States. Driving more than simply belief in the supernatural, spiritualism permeated the culture, and Lande does an excellent job detailing a peculiar and historically critical socio/quasi-religious movement in one of the most tumultuous periods in American history.”

De, “Captivating and yet another great read by DR. Lande. A very different and interesting take on the Civil War era. This is one subject that I never gave much thought to during the Civil War. It’s very intriguing and interesting how spiritualism had such an effect on the people of this time and it gave them something to look forward to and take their minds off of what was happening around them in their everyday lives! If you haven’t read Dr. Lande’s other books, I highly recommend that you do!”

T Foster, “Spiritualism in the American Civil War. I found this book exceptionally interesting. After a very brief introduction on the history of Spiritualism the author provides interesting stories from soldiers who appeared at seances. The stories about the soldiers from the 54th Massachusettes were the most intregging. I also found the many pictures in the book really fascinating. The authors writing style is most engaging.”

Nina Vidmer, “A rare find. A rare, insightful glimpse into a once popular phenomenon, though seldom examined sensation during the American Civil War. Extensively researched and a must read for historians and curious readers alike.”

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