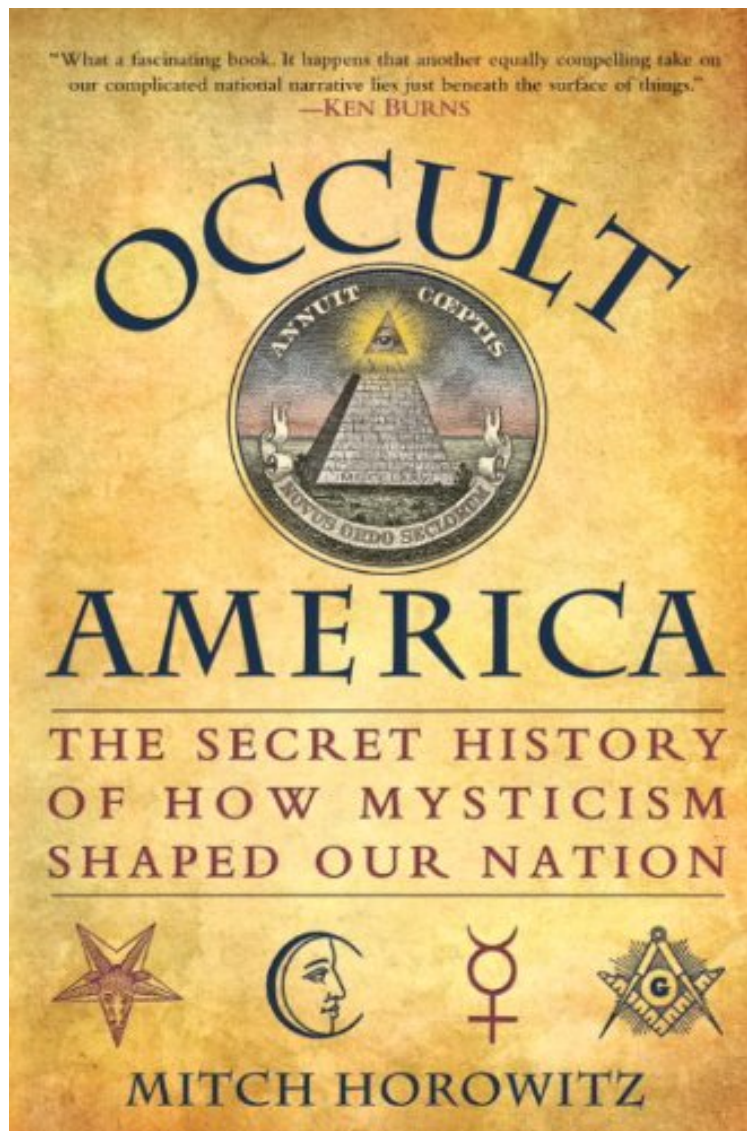


(Mobile book) Occult America: White House Seances, Ouija Circles, Masons, and the Secret Mystic History of Our Nation

Occult America: White House Seances, Ouija Circles, Masons, and the Secret Mystic History of Our Nation

Mitch Horowitz

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Mitch Horowitz : Occult America: White House Seances, Ouija Circles, Masons, and the Secret Mystic History of Our Nation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Occult America: White House Seances, Ouija Circles, Masons, and the Secret Mystic History of Our Nation:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Mitch Horowitz does a wonderful job of showing the unique way that Americans wove ...By Richard W. Roscoe Mitch Horowitz does a wonderful job of showing the unique way that

Americans wove spiritualism, mesmerism, and the human potential movement into their brand of Christianity. There are also wonderful chapters on Black Americans experiences with the occult. One of my favorite books. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Bit Dry By pattybnindy While it is a very informative book, it can also make for some very dry reading. Persevere and you will have some interesting trivia to have on hand when discussions turn to religion. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Dannobe Everybody should read

From its earliest days, America served as an arena for the revolutions in alternative spirituality that eventually swept the globe. Esoteric philosophies and personas from Freemasonry to Spiritualism, from Madame H. P. Blavatsky to Edgar Cayce dramatically altered the nations culture, politics, and religion. Yet the mystical roots of our identity are often ignored or overlooked. Opening a new window on the past, *Occult America* presents a dramatic, pioneering study of the esoteric undercurrents of our history and their profound impact across modern life.

.com Book Description It touched lives as disparate as those of Frederick Douglass, Franklin Roosevelt, and Mary Todd Lincoln--who once convinced her husband, Abe, to host a sance in the White House. Americans all, they were among the famous figures whose paths intertwined with the mystical and esoteric movement broadly known as the occult. Brought over from the Old World and spread throughout the New by some of the most obscure but gifted men and women of early U.S. history, this hidden wisdom transformed the spiritual life of the still-young nation and, through it, much of the Western world. Yet the story of the American occult has remained largely untold. Now a leading writer on the subject of alternative spirituality brings it out of the shadows. Here is a rich, fascinating, and colorful history of a religious revolution and an epic of offbeat history. From the meaning of the symbols on the one-dollar bill to the origins of the Ouija board, *Occult America* briskly sweeps from the nations earliest days to the birth of the New Age era and traces many people and episodes, including: The spirit medium who became Americas first female religious leader in 1776 The supernatural passions that marked the career of Mormon prophet Joseph Smith The rural Sunday-school teacher whose clairvoyant visions instigated the dawn of the New Age The prominence of mind-power mysticism in the black-nationalist politics of Marcus Garvey The Idaho druggist whose mail-order mystical religion ranked as the eighth-largest faith in the world during the Great Depression Here, too, are Americas homegrown religious movements, from transcendentalism to spiritualism to Christian Science to the positive-thinking philosophy that continues to exert such a powerful pull on the public today. A feast for believers in alternative spirituality, an eye-opener for anyone curious about the unknown byroads of American history, *Occult America* is an engaging, long-overdue portrait of one nation, under many gods, whose revolutionary influence is still being felt in every corner of the globe. Exclusive: Mitch Horowitz on the Occult in American History Scholars of American history have often dismissed occult traditions, such as Spiritualism, Mesmerism, divination, channeling, and mental-healing, as little more than oddball social trends to be analyzed, fretted over, and debunked. This is a mistake. To really grasp the religious development of our nation, its occult movements and believers must be understood for what they are: communities of belief, who left a profound impact on the culture of America and the modern world. Early American history is entwined with esoteric spirituality. North Americas first intentional mystical community reached its shores in the summer of 1694. That year, the determined spiritual philosopher Johannes Kelpius led about forty pilgrims out of Central Germany--a region decimated by the Thirty Years War--and to the banks of the Wissahickon Creek, just beyond Philadelphia. The city then hosted only about 500 houses, but it represented a Mecca of freedom for the Kelpius circle, who longed for a new homeland where they could practice their brands of astrology, alchemy, numerology, and mystical Christianity without fear of harassment from church or government. Soon more mystical thinkers from the Rhine Valley journeyed to America, building a larger commune at Ephrata, Pennsylvania. A young woman named Ann Lee fled persecution in her native Manchester, England and relocated her esoteric sect, the "Shaking Quakers"--or the Shakers--to upstate New York in 1776. That same year, a Rhode Island girl, Jemima Wilkinson, declared herself a spirit channeler, took the name Publick Universal Friend, and began to preach across the northeast. The trend was set: America became a destination for religious idealists, especially those of a supernatural bent. By the 1830s and 40s, a region of central New York State called "the Burned-Over District" (so-named for its religious passions) became the magnetic center for the religious radicalism sweeping the young nation. Stretching from Albany to Buffalo, it was the Mt. Sinai of American mysticism, giving birth to new religions such as Mormonism and Seventh-Day Adventism, and also to Spiritualism, mediumship, table-rapping, sances, and other occult sensations--many of which mirrored, and aided, the rise of Suffragism and related progressive movements. The nations occult culture gave women their first opportunity to openly serve as religious leaders--in this case as spirit mediums, seers, and channlers. Americas social and spiritual radicals were becoming joined, and the partnership would never fade. Indeed, the robust growth of occult and mystical movements in nineteenth-century America--aided by the influence of Freemasonry and Transcendentalism--helped transform the young nation into a laboratory for religious experiment and a launching pad for the revolutions in alternative and New Age spirituality that eventually swept the globe. In the early twentieth century, the new spiritual therapies--from meditation to mind-body healing to motivational thinking--began revolutionizing how religion was understood in contemporary times: not only as a source of salvation but as a means

of healing. In this sense, occult America had changed our world. --Mitch Horowitz
From Publishers Weekly
America has provided fertile ground for alternative spirituality, particularly the form known as occult, whose American leaders, unlike their more grandiose European counterparts, sought to remake mystical ideas as tools of public good and self-help, says Horowitz, editor-in-chief at Tarcher. Looking back at the growth of the spiritualist and utopian movements, he introduces the reader to a parade of personalities, both familiar and obscure: dreamers and planners who flourished along the Psychic Highway. He begins with Shaker Mother Ann, who arrived in America in 1774 followed by, among many others, pioneer prophetess Jemima Wilkinson; Poughkeepsie Seer Andrew Jackson Davis; Madame Blavatsky, who founded the Theosophical Society in 1875 and popularized the word occultism; Frank B. Robinson, the Mail Order Messiah; and Edgar Cayce with his past-life readings. Horowitz covers a wide variety of topics, from voodoo to the tenets of the New Age, psychics in the White House, Rosicrucianism, Wicca, arcane Masonic imagery, Tarot cards, the controversial reincarnation of Bridey Murphy and the origin of the science fictional Shaver mystery. Employing extensive research while writing with an authoritative tone, Horowitz succeeds in showing how a new spiritual culture developed in America. (Sept. 15) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "What a fascinating book. So it happens that another equally compelling take on our complicated national narrative lies just beneath the surface of things; not the grand procession of presidents, generals, and wars, but something more hidden, more mysterious, but often no less revealing." Ken Burns
Invisible and mysterious forces have shaped and guided the destiny of individuals and nations throughout history. From Moses to Gandhi, Jesus to Muhammad, Lincoln to Obama, hidden dimensions, in both our personal and collective consciousness, were conceiving, constructing, and shaping the course of civilization. In his precise and often detailed history of mysticism in America, Mitch Horowitz, has, in a way, tracked the evolution of our consciousness over 300 years. Deepak Chopra "A sparkling, down-to-earth and often deeply touching account of a powerful, much misunderstood force in the formation of America's cultural and spiritual identity." Jacob Needleman, author of *The American Soul and The New Religions*. "Occult America is a truly remarkable achievement. Exhaustively researched, it takes the reader from the early concepts of the supernatural, personified by Mother Ann Lee, Joseph Smith, and Madame Blavatsky, through such modern-day figures as Henry A. Wallace and Norman Vincent Peale. It opens the eyes of the relatively uninitiated, in which I include myself, to the effect the occult has had, is having, and will have on the American experience. John S.D. Eisenhower, author of *The Bitter Woods: The Battle of the Bulge and So Far From God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848*" Religious people tend to be afraid of the word occult. Horowitz examines this aspect of life and religion in penetrating ways...and revealing its not unsubstantial influence on mainline Christianity. Truth seekers have always come from the edges. Religion itself should be ...