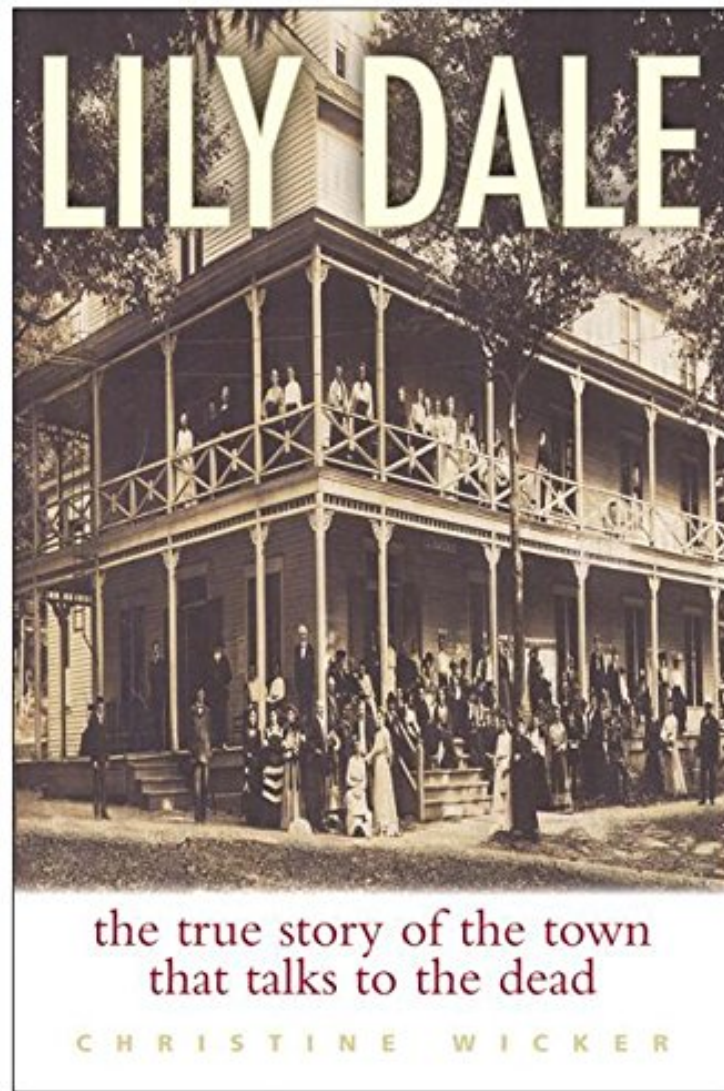


[Free and download] Lily Dale: The True Story of the Town that Talks to the Dead

Lily Dale: The True Story of the Town that Talks to the Dead

Christine Wicker

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#718761 in Books 2003-03-04 2003-03-04Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.25 x .97 x 5.50l, #File Name: 0060086661282 pagesHardcover with jacket showing scene from olden days. | File size: 75.Mb

Christine Wicker : Lily Dale: The True Story of the Town that Talks to the Dead before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lily Dale: The True Story of the Town that Talks to the Dead:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Not the Best OptionBy Dizzy!Had to buy it for a class. It's honestly not a "bad" book, but the author has a lot of trouble trying to decide how she feels about what she's writing, which doesn't translate well. She's supposedly an anthropologist, but she's extremely flighty and doesn't seem to form any really solid conclusion about anything she discusses. She also tells disjointed and unrelated stories in no particular

order and seemingly for no particular reason. I guess it's "interesting" but it's certainly not very entertaining or even very informative. I'd give it a miss unless it's your only option for some reason. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

THE FIRST BOOK WRITTEN ABOUT THE WORLD'S LARGEST COMMUNITY OF SPIRITUALISTS By Steven H Propp
Journalist Christine Wicker "is the first reporter to write a book on Lily Dale, a town that refused to co-operate with journalists until a few years ago." She wrote in the first chapter of this 2003 book, "I was a religion reporter ... when I first drove a rental car past the filigree sign that proclaims Lily Dale to be the world's largest community of Spiritualists... For more than a hundred years, people of the Dale have believed they can talk with the dead. They think anybody can. Call them demented, sneer at their gullibility, suspect them of trickery--- catch them in it even, lots of people have---but they won't give up what they believe... I wanted to know why this strange little outpost clings to such absurd ideas. I wanted to know who these people are and what makes them tick." (Pg. 1-2) She notes, "Only Spiritualists can buy houses in the 167-acre compound, a stricture that can be enforced because the Lily Dale Assembly is a religious corporation made up of community residents... Lily Dale residents don't own the land their houses sit on. They lease the land from the Assembly. This ensures the Spiritualists will never lose control of Lily Dale, but it also keeps real estate prices depressed." (Pg. 45) She records, "Their beliefs once caused them to be considered freethinkers. Freethinking about religion, which included escape from Christian ideas about original sin and atonement, were important reasons for the original appeal of Spiritualism." (Pg. 47) She interviews a person who "remembers when the Assembly went to court to evict Christian Spiritualists who wanted to start a church of their own." (Pg. 58) Later, she adds, "I noticed that a number of the Spiritualists' adult children were conservative, rather disapproving Christians. I wondered whether the loosey-goosey ways of their parents had sent these children scurrying toward faiths that give them certainties and firm doctrine." (Pg. 119) She observes, "Alcoholism is also a common affliction among mediums... John Slater, known as the dean of American spiritualists in the 1920s, often disappeared for multiple-day binges with his secretary, forcing Lily Dale authorities to pacify his fans with concocted stories of illness and emergency." (Pg. 25) She frankly reports, "Lily Dale... admits everything. There used to be a shocking amount of fraud, perpetuated by bad mediums, and there's still some of it around, the mediums say. It blackens the name of good, honest mediums, and it ought to be stopped. In the 1940s, Lily Dale outlawed all physical mediumship except in classes and private circles." (Pg. 67) This is an absolutely fascinating and utterly unique book, that will be "must reading" for students of religion, Spiritualists, New Age sympathizers, and anyone looking for an engaging book about a little-known culture.

12 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Our Spiritualist Heritage By Mark Newbold
Though not a spiritualist, I have long been fascinated by the American birth of this religion and its influence on the intellectual and social life of 19th century America. With Christine Wicker's work contributing to our understanding with a fresh assessment of this spiritual heritage through the microcosm of the Lily Dale community. We discover the progressive movements enhanced and energized by those Victorian Spiritualists, for examples, the surprising number of Spiritualists who were active in the abolitionist movement, human rights movements, not just for anglo-saxons but all Americans regardless of race, and perhaps the progenitor in the struggle for the rights of women (no small achievement). For the first time since ancient times, women were perceived as spiritual leaders role models rather than as silent, serving, disenfranchised members of a church congregation. Through mediumship women tasted for the first time a role of respect and leadership within their communities and there was no turning back. This book also serves as a spiritual diary of discovery for the author herself. Her chapter recounting an encounter with the Dalai Lama is extremely profound and moving. Observing the empowerment of women with low self-esteems and extremely difficult lives, that blossom through affiliation with the movement is insightful from a sociological perspective. And the comfort for the bereaved which Spiritualism has offered since its inception is well illustrated in a non-sensational manner. As with all religious/spiritual movements, we see the sublime as well as the ridiculous of human frailty at play with petty politics, back biting, artificial hierarchies, and the desire for power. But at the conclusion of the book one comes away with a sense of the nobility of the human spirit both in this life and just maybe in the next...

In Lily Dale, New York, the dead don't die. Instead, spirits flit among the elms and stroll along the streets, sometimes dressed in garb more common 120 years ago, when Lily Dale was founded and suffragette Susan B. Anthony was a frequent guest. According to Spiritualists who have ruled this Victorian hamlet for five generations, the dead don't go away and they stay anything but quiet. Every summer twenty thousand guests come to consult the town's mediums, who can hang out a shingle only after passing a test that confirms their connection to the spirit world. On the hot June day when reporter Christine Wicker comes to the world's oldest and largest Spiritualist community, she is determined to understand the secret forces -- human or otherwise -- that keep Lily Dale alive. She follows three visitors: a newly bereaved widow; a mother whose son killed himself; and a beautiful, happily married wife whose first visit to Lily Dale brings an ominous warning. Are the mediums cold-hearted charlatans, as Sinclair Lewis wrote of them? Or are they conduits for a hidden world that longs to bring peace and healing to the living, as psychologist William James and muckraker Upton Sinclair once hoped to prove? Investigating a movement that attracted millions of Americans in the 1800s and now barely survives, Wicker moves beyond the mediums' front parlors and into the lives that tourists never

see. She follows the mediums to a place where what we know and how we know it is the greatest mystery of all.

From Publishers Weekly Since it's become nearly extinguished, the American Spiritualism movement seems more ripe for sociological study and amused incredulity than a topic for deep reflection or journalistic memoir. But Wicker, a Dallas Morning News religion reporter, resists her own skepticism just as Lily Dale's citizens resist letting the movement die. The result is a portrait not just of an upstate New York town built 122 years ago on old-fashioned spirituality, but also of the mediums who practice there, their clients, and Wicker herself, who lets details of her own spiritual beliefs lightly shade her travels to Lily Dale. Although the book details the town's story, Wicker uses its history merely as a framework to explore more slippery topics, e.g., the nature of faith, the value of belief and the need for solace. She explores these areas through the stories of those who visit Lily Dale annually, craving a few insightful words about deceased family members or hoping for a premonition about romances, careers or children. Some of the tales are sad ones, but Wicker's jaunty pacing and humor keep the work from growing too dark and leave the reader with a feeling of tenderness, rather than pity, toward her subjects. She also weaves in stories of trickery, giving the tales of otherworldliness a nicely earthbound counterpoint. By the end, Wicker feels subtly changed, and she offers no answers as to why that might be or how long it may last. This lack of resolution is refreshing, however, and wonderfully fitting for a book about the mystery of faith. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. Thoroughly engaging. (Cleveland Plain Dealer) A probing study of the nature and power of faith, Wicker's story is often a hoot as well.... (Fort Worth Star-Telegram) Royally entertaining. (Dallas Morning News) About the Author Christine Wicker was raised in Oklahoma, Texas, and other parts of the South. Her mother's grandfather was an itinerant Baptist preacher, and her dad's father was a Kentucky coal miner. During her seventeen years at the Dallas Morning News, she was a feature writer, columnist, and religion reporter. She is the author of several books, including the highly acclaimed New York Times bestseller *Lily Dale: The True Story of the Town That Talks to the Dead*.