

# THE PARANORMAL MUSEUM

San Benedetto, CA

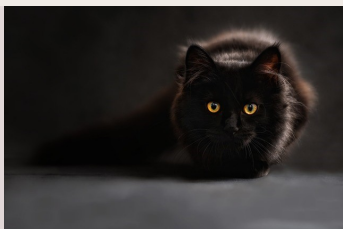


# BE ENCHANTED

Welcome to the San Benedetto Paranormal Museum! We're so glad you've taken some time away from our beautiful region's vineyards to commune with some real spirits.

Perhaps it's because of the museum's concentration of occult and paranormal items, but many of our visitors have reported sensing an unseen presence, that prickly feeling of being watched.

But if you're not the sensitive type, never fear. Pay attention to GD Cat—our resident ghost detector!



According to legend, GD Cat turned up on the museum's doorstep. When the owner fed him, the cat moved in. He soon repaid his host by pointing out the museum ghosts. Is GD related to a long line of spirit-seeing cats? We may never know.



OUIJA

In February, 1891, mysterious advertisements began to appear: "Ouija, the Wonderful Talking Board." Though it's unclear where the name, "Ouija," originated, the history of the board can be traced to America's 19th century spiritualist movement.

During this period, contacting the dead was all the rage. Mediums and table knocking flourished. But a séance could be a complicated affair. Automatic writing often produced nonsense, and rapping for letters (one knock for A, two knocks for B...) took a boring amount of time.

Innovations resulted, such as a dial plate with numbers and letters set into a wooden table. These inventions grew in complexity.

The earliest iteration of a Ouija board married the French planchette, used for automatic writing, with an alphabet board – a board with letters printed on it – to create the "talking board."

The religious community reacted predictably to the spiritualist craze, labeling it necromancy. Since any calling up of the dead is necromancy, technically, they were right! Perhaps that's why in February, 1910, Charles Kennard and his Kennard Novelty Company patented the Ouija board – not as an occult item, but as a party game. This likely broadened its marketing appeal. But the board didn't take off until the 1960s, when Parker Brothers bought the rights to the board, selling two million boards in 1967.



## WHAT'S SO CREEPY ABOUT A DOLL?

What makes dolls so creepy? Is it the dead eyes? The fact that they're like us on the outside but lacking a soul? Their aliveness/not aliveness?

Science (!) may have the answer. Japanese roboticist Masahiro Mori theorized that as objects like dolls become more lifelike, they will cause an initial positive emotional response but quickly reach a point where these feelings turn to revulsion. This gap is the Uncanny Valley, where the familiar becomes unfamiliar.

Whatever the reason, the Creepy Doll room is one of the most popular in the Paranormal Museum.

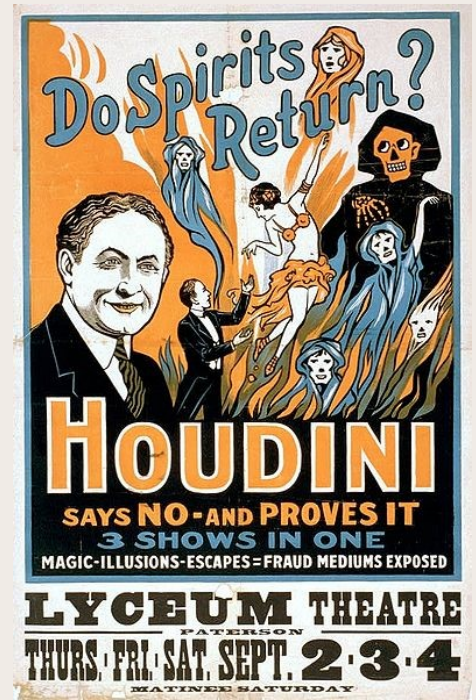
### NOTE FROM MADDIE KOSLOSKI

The Paranormal Museum is really important to me. I hope you're as curious and inquisitive as I am! We'll be adding new exhibits of paranormal interest as time goes on. If there's anything you'd like to see in the museum, please let me know!

# THE AMERICAN SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT

19<sup>th</sup> century America gave birth to the Spiritualist Movement when the young Fox sisters began “communicating” with a ghost in their house. The sisters became a sensation, and more and more people became fascinated by séances and mediums. The fad soon spread to Europe.

This interest in the supernatural may have been a backlash against the Victorian age of science. Though the 19th century seems primitive today, it was a period of vast technological upheaval. And many believed that man could finally use science to prove there was life after death. Whatever the case, mediums and spiritualist shows flourished, and spiritualism had millions of followers in the 1800s.



This obsession with the spirits carried on well into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with believers like Arthur Conan Doyle battling skeptics such as Harry Houdini.

The mediums and their skeptics each used tools. Charlatans used “spirit cabinets” (left) to fool their audiences. Those who wanted to believe designed “spiritoscopes” to determine if a medium was cheating.

The Paranormal Museum has one of the country’s largest collections of objects from this period. You can find them in our Fortune Telling Room.

