

The PIONEER

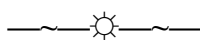
The Pioneer is
now part of the
recommended
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Spiritualists'
National Union's
education courses.





Volume 9, No. 1: February 2022

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Special thanks to Charles Coulston for his work in sub-editing this issue

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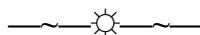
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Hydesville Day – March 31st



Let's get it right:

Each year we see and read the reports of the various events of celebration of what many consider to be the birth of Modern Spiritualism. Hydesville, in my view, is one of Spiritualism's greatest events, where hundreds of people witnessed the physical *audible* communication between the spirit and physical worlds! The story itself is well-documented by the persons who were present, who took part, witnessing the extraordinary phenomena first-hand:

However, sadly, this celebration has been marred by inaccurate information for around the last hundred and thirty years or so...

Resulting in this incredible simplistic story being transformed by intentionally altering the original documented statements and material added on years later by persons who were not actually there; for example, a term used by some to describe the devil, "Mr Splitfoot", the cloven hoof of a goat, split-foot, was added. In addition, regarding the alleged murdered man at the centre of the story, said to be a pedlar, a name has been later added—Rosma or sometimes Rosna, etc.—so the whole story became distorted, false and exaggerated.

The phenomena of Hydesville expand for around five years, not over a short period on March 31st 1848, as some perceive. It's a story of an alleged grisly murder in the east bedroom of the small Hydesville house and his body buried in the centre of the cellar circa 1843; from then on it is reported that he haunted the house!

The story is collated from the various families, maids and those who were present during these years by Ebenezer E. Lewis, who collected twenty-two signed, dated statements from those who experienced, and participated over this period in, the record of these events which were published in April 1848 as "Mysterious Noises" by E. E. Lewis.

The story starts circa 1843 when the tenants of the house were Mr and Mrs John C. Bell, albeit at the time when Lewis took this statement the names were not given and remained blank. Below is the account given in her signed statement by Lucretia Pulver dated April 11th, 1848:

Statement of Miss Lucretia Pulver.

I live about a mile and a half north of the house occupied by Mr. Fox, in which it is said that noises are heard. I have always lived in this vicinity. I have not heard these noise since they have produced this excitement. I am now 19 years old. I lived in this house all one winter, in the family of Mr.—. I worked for them part of the time, and part of the time I boarded there and went to school. I lived there about three months. During the latter part of the time that I was there, I heard this knocking frequently, in the bed-room, under the foot of the bed. I heard it a number of nights, as I slept in the bed-room all of the time I staid there.

One night I thought I heard a man walking in the buttery. This buttery is near the bed-room, with a stairway between them. Miss Aurelia Losey staid with me on that night; she also heard the noise, and were both much frightened, and got up and fastened down the windows and fastened the door. It sounded as if the person walked through the buttery, down cellar, and part way across the cellar bottom, and there the noise ceased. There was no one else in the house at this time, except my little brother, who was asleep in the same room with us. This was about 12 o'clock, I should think. We did not go to bed until after

11, and had not been asleep when we heard the noise. Mr. and Mrs.— had gone to Lock Berlin, to be gone until the next day.

We did'nt hear any thing more that night. We were a good deal alarmed, but after a while got over it. We thought it might be Mr *— *—, because I heard Mrs.— say that she had often heard somebody around the house, and that she believed it was this man, for that she thought he would steal. I heard nothing more after this but the rapping, which continued as before.

One evening about a week after this, Mrs.—sent me down cellar to shut the outside door. In going across the cellar, I fell down near the center of it. It appeared to be uneven and loose in this place. After I got up stairs, Mrs. — asked me what I screamed for, and I told her; she laughed at me for being frightened, and said that it was only where the rats had been at work in the ground. A few days after this, Mr.— carried a lot of dirt into the cellar just at night, and was at work there some time. Mrs— told me that he was filling up the rat holes.

A few days before the time when I first heard these noises, or any thing of this kind had ever occurred, a foot pedler called there, about two o'clock in the afternoon. Mrs.— told me that Mr.— tho't they should not want to hire me anymore, and that I might go home, but that if they wanted me any more, they would send for me. Mrs.— was going to Lock Berlin to stay that night. I wanted to buy some things of the pedler, but had no money with me, and he said he would call at our house the next morning and sell them to me. I never saw him after this. About three days after this, they sent for me to come back and board with them and go to school. I accordingly came back, and went to school about a week; when she wanted I should stay out of school and do the housework, as she had got a couple of coats to fix over for her husband. She said that they were rather too large for him, and out of fashion, and she must alter them. These coats were ripped to pieces when I saw them.

I should think this pedler, of whom I have spoken, was about 30 years old. I heard him conversing with Mrs.—about his family: he told how many children he had, in answer to her inquiries. I do not recollect now how many he said he had. Mrs.— told me that he was an old acquaintance of theirs; that she had seen him several times before.

A short time after this Mrs.— gave me a thimble, which she said she had bought of this pedler and paid him fifty cents for. About three months after this time I visited her, and she said that this pedler had been there again, and showed me another thimble which she said she had bought of him. She said that he had cheated her; that he sold it to her for pure silver, but that it was only German silver. She also showed me some other things, which she said she had bought of him.

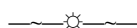
I did not know what to think of those noises which I heard. I did not know but what it might be rats, as Mrs.— said, I did'nt think it was anything supernatural at the time their dog would sit under the bed room window, sometimes most all night, and howl; and this made me think that there was somebody about there that wanted to steal. Mr. and Mrs.— appeared to be very good folks, only they were rather quick tempered. I never had any difficulty with them during the time that I staid there.

This pedler carried a trunk,—and a basket, I think, with vials of essence in it. He wore a black frock coat, and light colored pants. I am willing to swear to the above statement, if it is necessary.

(Signed,)

LUCRETIA PULVER.

April 11th, 1848.



This is where the unnamed pedlar enters and exits the story. It was assumed that it was John Bell who killed the pedlar, burying him in the cellar; however, forty-four people who were acquainted with John Bell for the last five years or so considered him “a man of honest and upright character, incapable of committing crime...” This testimony to the Bells is included and published in the Lewis report dated April 5th, 1848.

After the Bells the house was occupied by Michael and Hannah Weekman, who both made statements; below is published Hannah’s statement:

Statement of Mrs. Hannah Weekman.

We have lived in this place about five months. I have heard about these mysterious noises that have been heard in the house now occupied by Mr. Fox. We used to live in the same house; we lived there about a year and a half, and moved from there here. About a year ago, while we were living there, we heard some one, as we supposed, rapping on the outside door. I had just got into bed, but my husband had not. He went to the door and opened it; and said that there was no one there; and he came back and was about getting into bed, when we heard the rapping upon the door again. He then went to the door and opened it, and said that he could see no one although he stepped out a little ways. He then came back and got into bed. He was quite angry: he thought ’twas some of the neighboring boys that were trying to disturb us, and said that “they might knock away, but they would not fool him,” or something of that kind. The knocking was heard again, and after a while he got up and went to the door and went out. I told him not to go out doors, for perhaps somebody wanted to get him out and hurt him. He came back and said he could see nothing.¹ We heard a good deal of noise during that night; we could hardly tell where it was; it sounded sometimes as if some one was walking about in the cellar. But the house was old, and we thought it might be a rattling of some loose boards, or something of that kind.

A few nights afterwards, one of our little girls who slept in the bedroom where the noises are now heard, woke us all up by screaming very loud. My husband and I and our hired girl, got up immediately to see what was the matter. She sat up in the bed crying and screaming, and it was some time before we could find out from her what the matter was. She said that something had been moving around over her head and face,—that it was cold, and she did not know what it was. She said that she felt it all over her, but she appeared to be more alarmed at feeling it in her face. She was very much frightened.—This was between twelve and one o’clock at night. She got up and got into bed with us, and it was a long time before she could go to sleep. It was several days before we could get her to sleep in that room again. She was eight years old at that time.

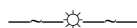
There was nothing else that happened to me during the time that we lived there; but my husband told me that one night he heard some one call him by name, somewhere about the house; he did not know where; but could never find out where or what it was. I was not at home on that night. I was away setting up with a sick person. We did not think the house was haunted at this time.

¹ Her husband Michael further noted in his statement dated April 11th, 1848:

“After a few minutes I heard the knocking again, and after waiting a spell and still hearing it, I got up and went to the door. This time I went clear out and looked around the house, but could find no one. I then stepped back and shut the door, and held on to the latch; and thought if there was any one there, I would catch them at it. In a minute or two I heard the rapping again. My hand was on the door, and the knocking appeared to be on the door. I could feel it jar with the raps. I instantly opened the door and sprang out, but there was no one in sight. I then went round the house again, but could find no one as before. My wife told me I had better not go out doors, as it might be that some one wanted to hurt me. I did not know what to think of it, it seemed so strange and unaccountable.”

I do not believe in *spooks*, or any thing of that kind; but I hardly know what to say about it now;—so many have heard the noise that it seems as if something must be the matter.

(Signed,) Tuesday, 11th April, 1848. HANNAH WEEKMAN.



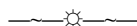
Hannah Weekman makes reference to their maid. This was most likely to be Jane Lape, who also gives a statement:

Statement of Mrs. Jane C Lape.

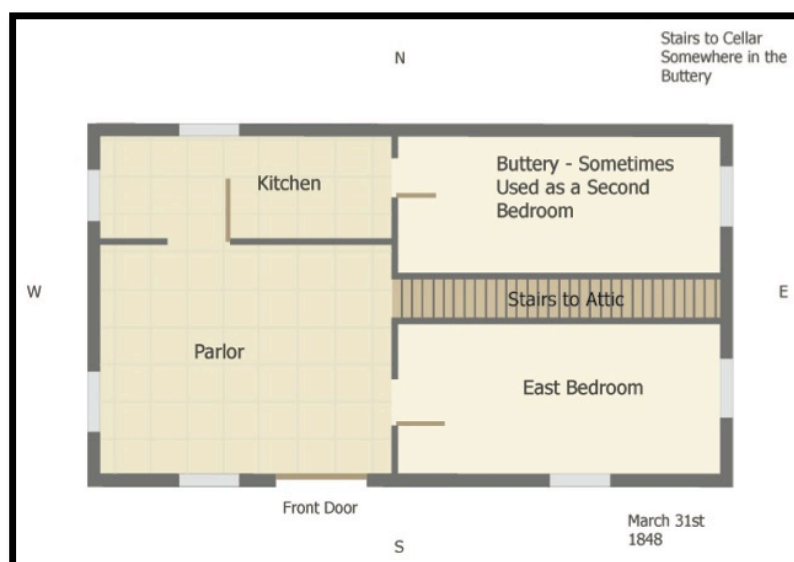
I am the wife of HENRY LAPE, and am 19 years old. I lived with Mr. Weekman's folks, about a year and a half ago, when he occupied the house where Mr. Fox now lives. I staid there until the spring of 47. One day, about two o'clock P. M., while I was doing my work in the kitchen, I saw a man in the bed-room joining the kitchen. The bed-room door was open, and I saw the man distinctly. I was much frightened. I had been in the kitchen some time at work, and knew that no one had gone into that room. There was only one door to the bed-room, and that opened into the kitchen. The man stood facing me when I saw him. He did not speak, nor did I hear any noise at any time, like a person walking or moving about in the room. He had on grey pants, black frock coat and black cap. He was about middling size, I should think. I knew of no person in that vicinity who wore a similar dress. Mrs. Weekman was in another part of the house at this time I was very much frightened and left the room, and when I returned with Mrs. W. there was no person there. She thought that it was some one who had been trying to frighten me; but we were never able to ascertain who or what it was. I have always thought, and still do think, that that was a supernatural appearance. I never had been a believer in such things until I saw this.

Should I ever be called upon to testify to the truthfulness of the above statement, I would do so cheerfully. (Signed,)

Sodus, 17th April, 1848. JANE C. LAPE.

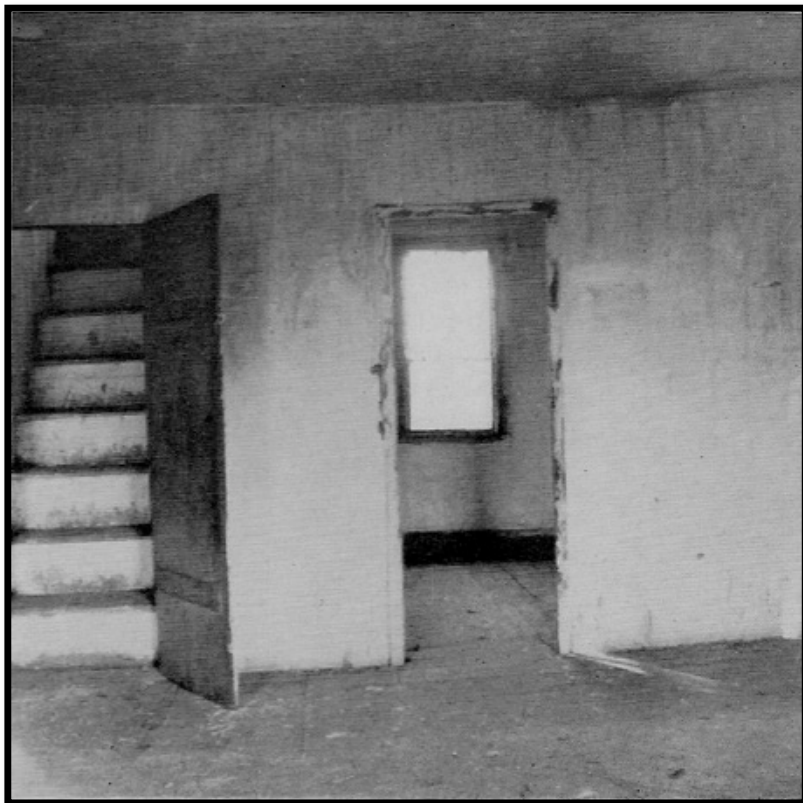


It can be noted that Lucretia Pulver stated that the pedlar “wore a black frock coat, and light colored pants”. Above, Jane Lape noted that the man “had on grey pants, black frock coat and black cap”, who Jane considered to be of “supernatural appearance”; she said she “saw a man in the bed-room joining the kitchen.” Taking descriptions of the Hydesville house from numerous old references, which are mostly consistent, I was able to make a floor plan of the original building, shown below:



So it would appear that Jane Lape is talking about seeing the mysterious figure in the buttery, also used as a spare bedroom, as she noted that it joined the kitchen with the door open. However, she notes there is only one door but in the buttery/second bedroom there were stairs down to the cellar; we can note in Lucretia Pulver's statement: "Mrs.—sent me down cellar to shut the outside door"!

A rare image of the interior of the house: the photograph was taken in 1905 by Mr Adelbert Cronise.



⇐ East bedroom, where most of the phenomena took place.

The Weekmans moved out in 1847 and the Fox family moved into the one-and-a-half-storey frame house. Hydesville was a hamlet in the town of Arcadia, a small cluster of farms, sawmill, Methodist church, district school and general store, with a few workshops such as a cobbler, blacksmith, etc. The hamlet had been named after Henry Hyde, a doctor, who arrived in 1810; later, he opened a public house at the busy crossroads and named it "The Hyde's Tavern". By 1847 the Hyde's Tavern was gone and Henry was dead; the Hyde family remained to manage their family properties, etc.

FOX FAMILY	
Emily:	Died in infancy
Ann Leah – called Leah	married names: Fish – Brown – Underhill lived at Rochester
Daughter:	Elizabeth called Lizzie
Maria:	lived in the area and married one of her cousins Stephen Smith
Elizabeth	was married and lived in Canada as Mrs Osterout
David:	lived in Arcadia with his wife Elizabeth and family – the house once belonged to his maternal uncle John Smith
Margaretta:	Known as Maggie Married name Kane
Catherine:	Known as Katie or Kate Married name Jencken Children: Ferdinand and Henry.

John David Fox (1780's–1865) married Margaret (née Smith) (1796–1865) on March 7th, 1812. John Fox was building a house near his son David but bad weather and snow had halted the work, so he rented a house about two miles away from the Hyde family on December 11th, 1847.

Their children who were involved in the disturbances at the Hydesville house were daughter Maria and her husband, Stephen Smith, son David and his wife, Elizabeth, daughters Margaretta and Catherine, and

possibly Elizabeth (Lizzie), daughter of Ann Leah, who was in Rochester at the time her parents and two younger sisters occupied the Hydesville house.

With regard to the communications between the alleged murdered man and those who asked the questions, the two most important statements are those of Mrs Margaret Fox and a former tenant of the house, then occupied by the Fox family, Mr William Duesler.

Pioneer will publish both these statements for full reference:

Certificate of Mrs. Margaret Fox,

WIFE OF JOHN D. FOX, THE PRESENT OCCUPANT OF THE HOUSE.



We moved into this house on the 11th December, 1847, and have resided here ever since. We formerly resided in the city of Rochester. We first heard this noise about a fortnight ago. It sounded like some one knocking in the east bed-room, on the floor; sometimes it sounded as if the chair moved on the floor; we could hardly tell where it was. This was in the evening, just after we had gone to bed. The whole family slept in that room together, and all heard the noise. There was four of our family, and sometimes five. The first night that we heard the rapping, we all got up and lit a candle; and searched all over the house. The noise continued while we were hunting, and was heard near the same place all the time. It was not very loud, yet it produced a jar of the bedsteads and chairs, that could be felt by placing our hands on the chair, or while we were in bed. It was a feeling of a tremulous motion, more than a sudden jar. It

seemed as if we could feel it jar while we were standing on the floor. It continued this night until we went to sleep. I did not go to sleep until nearly 12 o'clock. The noise continued to be heard every night.

On Friday night, the 31st of March, it was heard as usual, and, we then for the first time called in the neighbors. Up to this time we had never heard it in the day time, or at least did not notice it at all.

On Friday night we concluded to go to bed early, and not let it disturb us; if it came, we thought we would not mind it, but try and get a good night's rest. My husband was here on all these occasions, heard the noise and helped search. It was very early when we went to bed on this night; hardly dark. We went to bed so early, because we had been broken so much of our rest that I was almost sick.



My husband had not gone to bed when we first heard the noise on this evening. I had just laid down. It commenced as usual. I knew it from all other noises I had ever heard in the house. The girls, who slept in the other bed in the room, heard the noise, and tried to make a similar noise by snapping their fingers. The youngest girl is about 12 years old;—she is the one who made her hand go. As fast as she made the noise with her hands or fingers, the sound was followed up in the room. It did not sound any different at that time, only it made the same number of noises that the girl did. When she stopped, the sound itself stopped for a short time.

The other girl, who is in her 15th year, then spoke in sport and said, "Now do this just as I do. Count one, two, three, four;" &c., striking one hand in the other at the same time. The blows which she made were repeated as before. It appeared to answer her by repeating every blow that she made. She only did so once. She then began to be startled; and then I spoke and said to the noise, "Count ten," and it made ten strokes or noises. Then I asked the ages of my different children successively, and it gave a number of raps, corresponding to the ages of my children.

I then asked if it was a human being that was making the noise? and if it was, to manifest it by the same noise. There was no noise. I then asked if it was a spirit? and if it was, to manifest it by two sounds. I heard two sounds as soon as the words were spoken. I then asked, if it was an injured spirit? to give me the sound, and I heard the rapping distinctly. I then asked if it was injured in this house? and it manifested it by the noise. If the person was living that injured it? and got the same answer. I then ascertained, by the same method that its remains were buried under the dwelling, and how old it was. When I asked how many years old it was? it rapped 31 times; that it was a male; that it had left a family of five children; that it had two sons and three daughters, all living. I asked if it left a wife? and it rapped. If its wife was then living? no rapping; if she was dead? and the rapping was distinctly heard how long she had been dead? and it rapped twice.

About this time I asked, will this noise continue if I call in my neighbors, that they may hear it too? It answered me by the usual token of rapping. My husband went and called Mrs. Redfield, our next door neighbor. She is a very candid woman. The girls were then sitting up in bed, somewhat terrified and clinging to each other. I was as calm, I think, as I am now.

Mrs. Redfield came immediately. This was about half past seven o'clock. She came in, thinking to joke and laugh at the children: but when she came, she see that we were all amazed like, and that there was something in it. I then asked a few questions, and they were answered as before; and she was satisfied that there was something strange about it. It told her age exactly. She would then call her husband, and he came; and the same questions were asked over again, and the answers were the same as before. It was then asked how long it had been injured? and the sound was repeated four times at regular intervals, and then, after a short pause, one more; and the same was repeated every time the same question was asked.

Then Mr. Redfield called in Mr. Duesler and wife, and several others. A great many questions were asked over, and the same answers given as before. Mr. Duesler then called in Mr. and Mrs. Hyde; they came, and also Mr. and Mrs. Jewell. Mr. Duesler asked many questions and got the answers.

I then named over all the neighbors that I could think of, and asked if any of them had injured it, and got no answer. Then Mr. Duesler asked it some questions, the same as I had, and got the same answers. He asked if it was murdered? and it answered in the usual way; and if the murderer could be brought to justice? and there was no sound: and then, if he could be punished by the law? and there was no rapping. He then asked, "if this murderer cannot be punished by the law, manifest it by the noise?" and the noise was repeated.

In the same way Mr. Duesler ascertained that it was murdered in the bed room, about five years ago, and that the murder was committed by a Mr. — —, on a Tuesday night, at 12 o'clock; that it was murdered by having its throat cut, with a butcher knife; that the body did not remain in the room next day, but that it was taken down cellar, and that it was not buried until the next night that it was not taken down through the outside door, but through the buttery, down the stairway; that it was buried ten feet below the surface of the ground.

It was then asked if money was the object of the murder? and the rapping commenced. How much money was obtained? was it one hundred dollars? two hundred? three hundred? four hundred? No noise. Five hundred? and the usual rapping was heard. We were all in the bed-room at that time.

Many called in that night, who were out fishing in the creek, and they all heard the same noise. The same questions were frequently repeated as others came in, and the same answers were obtained. Some of them staid here all night. I and my family all left the house but my husband. I went to Mrs. Redfield's and staid all night: my children staid at some of the other neighbors. My husband and Mr. Redfield staid in the house all that night.

On the next day the house was filled to overflowing all day. This was on Saturday. There was no sound heard through the day; but in the evening the noise commenced again. Some said that there were three hundred people present at this time. They appointed a committee, and many questions were asked. I did not know much what was done that night, only by hearsay, as I went to Mr. Duesler's to stay all night.

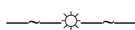
On Sunday morning, the 2nd day of April, the noise commenced again, and was heard throughout the day by all who came here. On Saturday night they commenced digging in the cellar, and dug until they came to water, and then gave it up. The noise was not heard on Sunday evening, nor during the night. Stephen B. Smith and wife and David S. Fox and wife, slept in the room this night. I have heard nothing since that time, until yesterday. In the forenoon of yesterday, there were several questions answered in the usual way, by rapping. I have heard the noise several times to-day.

I am not a believer in haunted houses or supernatural appearances. I am very sorry that there has been so much excitement about it. It has been a great deal of trouble to us. It was our misfortune to live here at this time; but I am willing and anxious that the truth should be known, and that a true statement should be made. I cannot account for these noises; all that I know is, that they have been heard repeatedly, as I have stated. I have heard this rapping again this (Tuesday) morning, April 4. My children also heard it.

I certify that the above statement has been read to me; and that the same is true; and that I should be willing to take my oath that it was so, if necessary. (Signed,)

April 11th, 1848.

MARGARET FOX.



Duesler's statement gives body to the events which took place; it was he who tried to get the pedlar's name and devised the "alphabet code" on the night of March 31st—and *not the Fox sisters*, which is so often wrongly claimed:

Statement of Wm. Duesler of Arcadia.

I live in this place. I moved from Cayuga county here, last October. I live within a few rods of the house in which these noises have been heard. The first I heard any thing about them was, a week ago last Friday evening, (31st day of March.) Mrs. Redfield came over to my house to get my wife to go over to Mr. Fox's. Mrs. R. appeared to be very much agitated. My wife wanted I should go over with them, and I accordingly went. When she told us what she wanted us to go over there for, I laughed at her; and ridiculed the idea that there was any thing mysterious in it. I told her it was all nonsense, and that we would find out the cause of the noise, and that it could easily be accounted for. This was about 9 o'clock in the evening. There were some 12 or 14 persons there when I got there. Some were so frightened that they did not want to go into the room. I went into the room and sat down on the bed. Mr. Fox asked a question, and I heard the rapping which they had spoken of, distinctly. I felt the bedstead jar when the sound was produced.

Mrs. Fox then asked if it would answer my questions, if I asked any? and if so, rap. It then rapped three times. I then asked, if it was an injured spirit? and it rapped. I asked if it had come to hurt any one who was then present? and it did not rap. I then reversed the question, and it rapped. I asked if I or my father had injured it? (as we had formerly lived in the house,) and there was no noise. If we have not injured you, manifest it by rapping, and we all heard three distinct raps. I then asked it such and such a one had injured it? (naming over several families who had formerly lived in the house,) and there was no noise. Upon asking the negative of these questions, the rapping was heard. I then asked if Mr.— (naming a person who had formerly lived in the house,) had injured it? and if so, manifest it by rapping, and it made three knocks louder than common and at the same time the bedstead jarred more than it had done before. I then inquired if it was murdered for money, and the knocking was heard. I then requested it to rap when I mentioned the sum of money for which it was murdered. I then asked if it was one hundred? two, three or four? And when I came to five hundred, the rapping was heard. All in the room said they heard it distinctly. I then asked the question, if it was five hundred dollars? and the rapping was heard.

After that I went over and got ARTEMAS W. HYDE to come over. He came over. I then asked over nearly the same questions as before, and got the same answers. Mr. Redfield went after David Jewell and wife, and Mrs. Hyde also came. After they came in, I asked the same questions over again, and got the same answers.

Then I asked the question, how it was murdered. I asked if it was murdered by being struck on the head, and there was no noise. I then reversed the question, and the rapping was heard. Then I asked if it was stabbed in the side? and there was no answer; upon asking the negative of this, the rapping was heard. It usually rapped three times in answer to my questions. I then asked if it had its throat cut? and it rapped as usual. Then, if it was with a butcher knife? and the rapping was heard. In the same way it was ascertained that it was asleep at the time, but was awakened when the knife entered the throat; that it struggled, and made some noise and resistance. Then I asked it if there was any one in the house at the time but him? and it did not rap. I then asked if they two were alone? and the rapping was heard. I then asked if Lucretia Pulver worked there at the time? and it answered by rapping; if she had gone away that night? and if Mrs.— was gone away also? and the rapping was renewed each time.

There was no rapping heard only when we asked questions.—I then asked if any one in Hydesville knew of the murder at the time, except—? and it rapped. Then I asked about a number of persons, if they knew it? and there way no rap, until I came to Mrs.—, and when I mentioned her name the rapping was heard; then if any one but—and wife knew of it? and I got no rap,—then if they were all that knew of the murder? and it rapped. I asked if the body was put in the cellar? and it rapped. I then asked if it was buried in the different parts of the cellar? and to all my questions there was no rapping, until I asked if it was near the center? and the rapping was heard.

Charles Redfield then took a candle and went down cellar.—I told him to place himself in different parts of the cellar, and as he did so, I asked the question, if a person was over the place where it was buried? and I got no answer, until he got over a certain place in the cellar, when it rapped. He then stepped one side, and when I asked the question, there was no noise.—This we repeated several times, and we found that whenever he stood over this one place, the rapping was heard, and whenever be moved away from that place, there was no rapping in answer to my questions. Mr. Redfield said that he could hear the noise himself.

I then asked, which way it was carried down cellar; if round through the outside cellar door? and there was no rapping:—then if it was carried down through the buttery, by the inside stairway? and the rapping was heard.

I then asked it to rap my age? the number of years of my age. It rapped 30 times. This is my age, and I do not think that any one about here knows my age, but myself and my own family. I then told it to rap my wife's age? and it rapped 30 times, which is her exact age: several of us counted it at the time.—I then asked it to rap A. W. Hyde's age? and it rapped 32, which he says is his age: he was there at the time, and counted it with the rest of us:—then Mrs. A. W. Hyde's age? and it rapped 31 which she said was her age: she was also there at the time. I then continued to ask it to rap the ages of different persons, (naming them,) in the room? and it did so correctly, as they all said.

I then asked the number of children in the different families in the neighborhood? and it told them correctly in the usual way, by rapping. Also, the number of deaths that had taken place in these families? and it told correctly. I then asked it, to rap its own age? and it rapped 31 times distinctly. I then asked it if it left a family? and it rapped. I then asked it to rap the number of children which it had? It knocked five times; then the number of girls? and it rapped three times; then the number of boys? and it rapped twice. Before this I had asked if it was a man? and it answered by rapping, that it was:—if it was a peddler? and it rapped.

I then asked in regard to the time that it was murdered, and in the usual way, by asking the different days of the week, and the different hours of the day;—that it was murdered on a Tuesday night, about 12 o'clock. The rapping was heard only when this particular time was mentioned. When it was asked if it was murdered on a Wednesday or Thursday or Friday night, &c.? there was no rapping. I asked if it carried any trunk, and it rapped that it did. Then how many? It rapped once. In the same way we ascertained that it had goods in its trunk, and that—took them when he murdered him; and that he had a pack of goods besides.

I asked if its wife was living? and it did not rap;—if she was dead, and it rapped. I then asked it to rap the number of years its wife had been dead? And it rapped twice. In the same way I ascertained that its children were now all living;—that they lived in this state,—and after asking if in such and such a county, (naming over the different counties,) at last when I asked if they lived in Orleans county? the rapping was heard, and at no other time. This was tried over several times, and the result was always the same.

I then tried to ascertain the first letters of its name, by calling over the different letters of the alphabet. I commenced with A, and asked if that was the initial of its first name? there was no rapping. When I came to C, the rapping was heard, and at no other letter in the alphabet. I then asked in the same way, in regard to the initial of its sir-name; and when I asked if it was B? the rapping commenced. We then tried all the other letters, but could get no answer by the usual rapping. I then asked if we could find out the whole name by reading over all the letters of the alphabet? and there was no rapping. I then reversed the question, and the rapping was heard. I asked if the murderer would be punished by the law of the land for committing this murder? there was no knocking. I then reversed the question, and the knocking was heard. I then asked the reason? and after asking a great many different questions in regard to it, to which I got no answer, I at last asked if it was because there was no witnesses of the murder? and it rapped. I asked if the murderer would be punished hereafter? the rapping was heard quite loud. I then asked if there was punishment after death? and it answered, by rapping, that there was. I then asked if it would rap on Saturday night? the knocking was heard in answer,—and also that it would continue to rap at times until its bones were found, and then it would rap no more.

There were a good many more questions asked on that night, by myself and others; which I do not now remember. They were all answered readily in the same way. I staid in the house until about 12 o'clock, and then came home. Mr. Redfield and Mr. Fox staid in the house that night.

Saturday night, I went over again, about 7 o'clock. The house was full of people when I got there; they said it had been rapping some time. I went into the room. It was rapping in answer to questions when I went in. I went to asking questions, and asked over the same ones that I did the night before, and it answered me the same as it did then. I also asked different questions, and it answered them. Some of those in the room wanted me to go out and let some one else ask the questions I did so, and came home. There were as many as 300 people in and around the house at this time, I should think. Hiram Soverhill, Esq., and Volney Brown asked it questions while I was there, and it rapped in answer to them.

I went over again on Sunday, between 1 and 2 o'clock P. M. I went in to the cellar with several others, and had them all leave the house over our heads; and then I asked, if there had been a man buried in that cellar, to manifest it by rapping, or any other noise or sign? The moment I asked the questions, there was a sound like the falling of a stick, about a foot long and half an inch through, on the floor in the bed-room over our heads. It did not seem to bound at all; there was but one sound. I then told Stephen Smith to go right up and examine the room, and see if he could discover the cause of the noise.—He came back, and said that he could discover nothing,—that there was no one in the room, or in that part of the house. I then asked two more questions, and it rapped in the usual way. We all went up stairs, and made a thorough search around the rooms, but could find nothing.

I then got a knife and a fork and tried to see if I could make the same noise by dropping them, but I could not. This was all I heard on Sunday. There is only one floor, or partition, or thickness between the bed-room and the cellar—no place where any thing could be secreted to make the noise. When this noise was heard in the bed- room, I could feel a slight tremulous motion or jar.

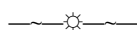
There was some digging in the cellar on Saturday night.—They dug until they came to water, and then gave it up. The question had been previously asked, whether it was right that they should dig on that night? and there was no rapping.—Then, whether it was wrong? and the rapping; was heard.—Whether they should dig on Sunday? no rapping: on Monday? and the rapping commenced again. However, some insisted on digging at this time, and dug accordingly, but with no success.

On Monday night heard this noise again, and asked the same questions I did before, and got the same answers. This is the last time that I have heard the rapping.

I can in no way account for this singular noise, which others and I have heard. It is a mystery to me, which I am wholly unable to solve. I am willing to testify under oath that I did not make the noises or rapping which I and others heard: that I do not know of any person who did or could have made them; that I have spent considerable time since then, in order to satisfy myself as to the cause of it; but cannot account for it on any other ground than it is supernatural. I lived in the same house about seven years ago, and at that time never heard any noise of the kind in or about the premises. I have understood from Johnson and others, who had lived there before — — moved there, that there were no such sounds heard there while they occupied the house. I never believed in haunted houses, or heard or saw any thing but what I could account for before; but this I cannot account for as yet.

April 12, 1848.

(Signed,) WM. DUESLER.



Outline of the murder and phenomena as recorded:

So here we have the account of events as given first-hand by those who were directly involved, and the communications by rapping of the said brutally murdered pedlar—who claimed he was butchered by the then tenant of the rented house, Mr John C. Bell; only his wife knew of the murder. Previous tenants stated that no disturbances were ever heard prior to Mr and Mrs John Bell moving into residence.

The disturbances appeared to start soon after a foot pedlar called at the Bell residence who “wore a black frock coat, and light colored pants he was: about 30 years old”, as told by the Bell’s young teenage maid, Lucretia Pulver, in her statement. Lucretia continued by saying how Mrs Bell “had got a couple of coats to fix over for her husband. She said that they were rather too large for him, and out of fashion, and she must alter them. These coats were ripped to pieces when I saw them. A few days later the first disturbances begin”. Lucretia and her friend Aurelia, who was staying at the house, stated: “It sounded as if the person walked through the buttery, down cellar, and part way across the cellar bottom, and there the noise ceased. There was no one else in the house at this time, except my little brother, who was asleep in the same room with us.”

About a week later Lucretia went down the cellar: “I fell down near the center of it. It appeared to be uneven and loose in this place.” Mrs Bell told her “it was only where the rats had been at work in the ground. A few days after this, Mr.— carried a lot of dirt into the cellar just at night, and was at work there some time. Mrs— told me that he was filling up the rat holes.”

After the Bells left the residence, the next family continued to experience some unexplained phenomena, as outlined in Hannah Weekman’s statement. The Weekman family’s maid said in her statement that she saw a man while working in the kitchen in the adjoining buttery/spare bedroom: “The man stood facing me when I saw him. He did not speak, nor did I hear any noise at any time, like a person walking or moving about in the room. He had on grey pants, black frock coat and black cap. He was about middling size, I should think. I knew of no person in that vicinity who wore a similar dress.”

Later in the same year, on December 11th 1847, the Fox family moved in; no disturbances were heard until around the middle of March 1848. Mrs Fox tells us that on the first night the family heard the rapping “we all got up and lit a candle; and searched all over the house. The noise continued while we were hunting, and was heard near the same place all the time. It was not very loud, yet it produced a jar of the bedsteads and chairs, that could be felt by placing our hands on the chair, or while we were in bed. It was a feeling of a tremulous motion, more than a sudden jar.”

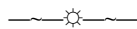
It appears that the rapping continued each night, then on Friday March 31st it was heard for the first time in daytime, or at least previously not noticed by the family. It was decided to call in the neighbours for some kind of explanation. Just prior to this the family decided to go to bed very early to sleep because of their broken sleep with the nightly rappings, but to no avail: the noises began as Mrs Fox had just lain down. It was at this point that the unnamed girls would play their *only part* at the Hydesville house. It can be noted from Mrs Fox’s signed statement that she noted: “There was four of our family, and sometimes five”; this interesting comment will be addressed later in the article.

Margaret Fox states:

“The girls, who slept in the other bed in the room, heard the noise, and tried to make a similar noise by snapping their fingers. The youngest girl is about 12 years old;—she is the one who made her hand go. As fast as she made the noise with her hands or fingers, the sound was followed up in the room. It did not sound any different at that time, only it

made the same number of noises that the girl did. When she stopped, the sound itself stopped for a short time.

“The other girl, who is in her 15th year, then spoke in sport and said, “Now do this just as I do. Count one, two, three, four;” &c., striking one hand in the other at the same time. The blows which she made were repeated as before. It appeared to answer her by repeating every blow that she made. She only did so once.”

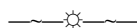


The girl (Margaretta, known as Margaret or Maggie) began to be startled and Mrs Fox took over: “... then I spoke and said to the noise, “Count ten,” and it made ten strokes or noises. Then I asked the ages of my different children successively, and it gave a number of raps, corresponding to the ages of my children.” Mrs Margaret Fox and William Duesler’s statements hold no contradictions; their communications with the raps in response to their questions build up the story from when John Bell and his wife lived in the premises—as told in Miss Lucretia Pulver’s statement around five years earlier.

Mrs Fox and Wm Duesler established:—The raps were produced by a spirit, a thirty-one-year-old pedlar, whose wife was now deceased by two years; they had five children and then lived in Orleans County. The man said that he was murdered in the east bedroom, about five years ago, by the then resident Mr John Bell, on a Tuesday night at midnight; it can be noted that 12 o’clock is sometimes stated by those who witnessed the disturbances. He was killed by having his throat cut with a butcher’s knife. The body was taken down to the cellar, through the buttery/second bedroom, down the stairway, and was buried the next evening in the centre of the cellar, the motive being simple robbery of the five hundred dollars he was carrying, his trunk and some items for sale.²

Duesler stated:

“I then tried to ascertain the first letters of its name, by calling over the different letters of the alphabet. I commenced with A, and asked if that was the initial of its first name? there was no rapping. When I came to C, the rapping was heard, and at no other letter in the alphabet. I then asked in the same way, in regard to the initial of its sir-name; and when I asked if it was B? the rapping commenced. We then tried all the other letters, but could get no answer by the usual rapping. I then asked if we could find out the whole name by reading over all the letters of the alphabet? and there was no rapping. I then reversed the question, and the rapping was heard.”



Duesler noted the next day around 7.00pm that there were as many as 300 people in and around the house and some: “... digging in the cellar on Saturday night.—They dug until they came to water, and then gave it up. The question had been previously asked, whether it was right that they should dig on that night? and there was no rapping.—Then, whether it was wrong? and the rapping; was heard.—Whether they should dig on Sunday? no rapping: on Monday? and the rapping commenced again. However, some insisted on digging at this time, and dug accordingly, but with no success.”

Mr and Mrs Fox’s son David and his wife Elizabeth both made signed statements. David’s was signed on April 11th 1848, where he stated:

Saturday:

“There was a large collection of people there at this time, many more than could get into the house. Committees were chosen and placed in different parts of the house in

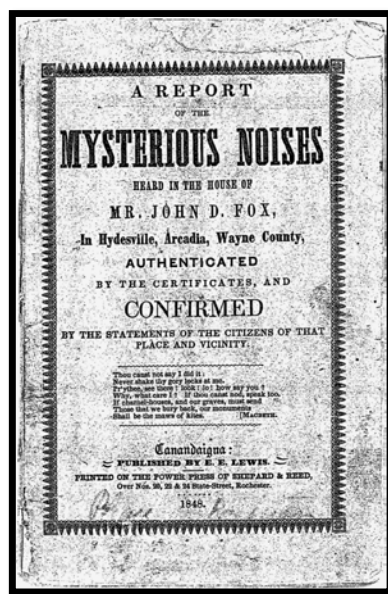
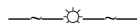
² The figure of five hundred dollars seems rather exaggerated, giving it a cumulative value today of just under nineteen thousand dollars!

order to see that there was no deception practiced by any one. These committees were composed of the neighbors and people who live about here.”³

“There is no place about the house in which any person could be secreted so as to produce these sounds. There is only one floor between this bed-room and the cellar. The question was then asked in regard to the place in which it was buried in the cellar. It was asked successively if it was buried in each corner, and there was no answer. It was then asked if it was buried in the center? and it rapped that it was, Mr. Carlos Hyde was in the cellar, and he walked about, and the question was repeated if he was over the place where the body was buried? and there was no rapping, only when he stood over the center of the cellar; no one out of the cellar could see him, so as to know where he was standing at this time. Whenever he stood near the center of the cellar, it rapped, so that those in the cellar as well as in the room above could hear it.

“I staid in the house until about one o’clock in the morning, but the noise had stopped before I left. It stopped a little before twelve o’clock. After some of the crowd had left, some of the people went to digging in the cellar. They dug about three feet deep, when the water came in so fast that they had to stop.⁴ I do not know that I have heard the noise since until to-day.—It has been rapping to-day in answer to a good many questions, and gave the same answers that it has before.

“I was here on Monday the 3rd of April, and we commenced digging again in the cellar and bailing out the water, but we found it impossible to make much headway. On Tuesday evening they began digging again. I got a pump, and we took up the floor and put it in the hole, and began to pump and bail out the water at the same time. We could not lower the water much, and had to give it up. The water is in the hole, although it is lowering gradually.”



Others asked the same or similar questions at different times, days, etc.; there were no contradictions—ages, how many children, were frequently asked by the many who flocked to the house to ask questions, which appeared to be correct on all accounts. The Lewis signed statements, etc. are available on the SNU website,⁵ and at the Arthur Findlay College shop.

Let's get it right

The story is clearly outlined by those who participated over around a five-year period; it's a remarkable demonstration of a pedlar's grisly murder and his desire to tell his story during this period by rapping to gain attention and eventually a two-way communication being established. However, his

³ Elizabeth Fox's signed statement, April 12th 1848—Saturday:

There were a great many people there at the time. I heard the rapping soon after I got there. Wm. Duesler was in the bed-room, asking questions. He asked if it was murdered in that room, and it rapped. It also rapped when asked if it was buried in the cellar. He then asked if the remains were under water? and it rapped.

I did not stay in the room but a few minutes. There were so many there that they kept going out and in every few minutes, so that they could all have a chance to hear the noise. There were committees appointed by those present, and stationed, some in the cellar and some about the house in different places, in order to ascertain the cause of this rapping. I believe they began to dig before I came away that night. I staid at Wm. Duesler's that night.

⁴ We can note in Mrs Fox's statement that "it was buried ten feet below the surface of the ground."

⁵ "A Report of the Mysterious Noises" <https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/a-report-of-the-mysterious-noises>

murderer was not brought to justice in this world and his body was not found at this time; digging was severely hampered by the high water level. There are some later accounts of some hair, a few bones found, etc. but no tangible evidence of a body being recovered in the centre of the cellar.

Today's account has been exaggerated; bits have been added on by poorly researched materials over many decades. Writers, editors of publications, organisations, etc. have based their research and conclusions on post-1885 reports, where it can be clearly seen that the story becomes intentionally misdirected and has generally remained unchallenged or corrected. To my knowledge, only SNU Education uses the original corrected accounts of what is generally accepted as the birth of Modern Spiritualism. It would be untrue to state that Hydesville was the governing factor in the birth of Modern Spiritualism but it was, for a better expression, the final piece of the jigsaw.⁶

It is clear to see that today's storytelling of the Hydesville phenomena varies greatly from what is actually recorded in 1848—for many decades it has been incorrectly stated that:

The girls, Kate and Maggie, devised an alphabet code.

The dead pedlar gave his name as Charles B. Rosma.

The young sisters were the power bank for the phenomena.

The name "Mr Splitfoot" was used.

"Mr and Mrs Fox stood either side of the door: *and the knocks came on the door between us.*"

"...Then Cathie said, in her childish simplicity: 'O mother, I know what it is: tomorrow is April-fool day, and it's somebody trying to fool us'."

"I then said: 'If it was an injured spirit, make two raps,' which were instantly made, causing the house to tremble."

to name some of the errors...

How to account for all these errors

Firstly, the accounts of what took place on March 31st, 1848, show that it was former resident, now a neighbor of the Fox residence, William Duesler who introduced the 'alphabet code' and not the young Fox girls, as is so often stated. Duesler's alphabet code would be later introduced in 1849 at Rochester, making Kate, Maggie and the elder sister, Ann Leah (who was not at Hydesville during the phenomena), the 'Rochester Rappers'.

Duesler's attempts to get the communicator's name were unsuccessful except for the initials of his *first* and *last name*—C. B. No references to date have shown or indicated that the Fox sisters ever gave any name for the pedlar, albeit names were given by various writers, etc.:

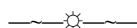
1849: Charles Rasme (Capron)

1953: Charles Rayn (Spicer)

1860: Charles B Rosma (Owen)

1870: Charles B. Rosna (Britten)

1879: Charles B Rosemond (Pool)



⁶ Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 1: "When did Modern Spiritualism begin? 1848?"

It can be noted that all the first names begin with C but no surnames beginning with B, though some middle names.

The general claims that the two sisters were the power bank for the phenomena make little sense given that it was recorded by its residents for around five years, and during the Fox residence the rapping was *not* reliant on the girls being present; their mediumship began shortly after the family's removal from the Hydesville house to their brother David's and his wife Elizabeth's home about two miles away. It was here, at this time, that the eldest sister, Ann Leah, arrived from Rochester on hearing about her family's problems with the disturbance at the Hydesville house. Here we get the first reports of the developing mediumship from Kate and Maggie, and, soon after, the development of Ann Leah—resulting in the first demonstration of public mediumship at the Corinthian Hall, Rochester. Please see Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 4: "Ordered by the spirits: How the First Public Meetings Came About to Demonstrate Mediumship".

From 1885 I noted that "*it can be clearly seen that the story becomes intentionally misdirected*"; this refers to the publication by Ann Leah Underhill, the eldest Fox sister, of "The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism", which is available as a free download. Chapter One of this book starts with the 1848 Lewis report, where Ann Leah notes:

The following statements were made by the different persons whose names are signed to them, and taken down in writing as they made them; after which they were carefully read to them, and signed by them. They comprise but a small number of those who heard these noises, or have been knowing to these transactions; but they are deemed sufficient to satisfy the public mind in regard to their truthfulness.

The first statement is her mother's:

"Certificate of Mrs. Margaret Fox, wife of John D. Fox, the present occupant of the house"

Leah, as she was better known, claimed that the Lewis certificate of her mother's testimony as published in her book is authentic; so it remained since 1885 as a point of reference. However, the reader of this statement, published in full in Leah's book, which is signed 'April 11th, 1848, by Margaret Fox', was *not* informed that the original statement of her mother had been *substantially changed*. Many writers and Spiritualist organisations are still, today, using the Ann Leah Underhill statement as to the early beginnings of Modern Spiritualism at Hydesville, believing that it is the authentic version as produced by Mr E.E. Lewis in 1848. No doubt, owing to the rarity of the Lewis report, it was unchallenged, as no comparison report was then readily available until the original Lewis report was published in Psypioneer (April 2005).

However, in the important William Duesler statement (April 12th, 1848) Leah slightly modifies it or makes an error by involving Mr Fox more. In the questioning of the alleged pedlar spirit, she changes 'Mrs' to 'Mr' Fox. She again makes no notation for the changes in Duesler's statement. Finally, she curtails the statement, explaining:

NOTE. -The remainder of Mr. Duesler's statement does not vary from that of my mother and others, and, for want of room, is omitted.

Omitting Duesler's full statement is removing the important introduction of the alphabet code and introducing the first recorded initials of the communicator's name, "C & B"; as already noted, the alphabet code would be later used in Rochester, launching the career of all three Fox Sisters as the 'Rochester Rappers'.



A standard textbook was later published in 1917 by Mercy Cadwallader, “Hydesville in History: Testimony of Eye-Witnesses”, taking some of the information from Leah Underhill’s *changed* re-publishing of the signed statements as published in April 1848 by Ebenezer E. Lewis.

This book has been re-published at various times and is still in publication to-day, hence adding to the incorrect account of:

What Actually Happened at Hydesville?

Further ad-lib material is added by Mercy Cadwallader which will also lead the reader to the confusion of the younger Fox sisters’ ages; we can note in Mrs Fox’s statement that she said: “The youngest girl is about 12 years old – The other girl, who is in her 15th year”. However, Cadwallader states: “Margaretta, aged twelve, and Kate, aged nine years.” The bottom line is that the birth dates are unknown; the sisters during their lives, including Leah, continually lied about their ages and this is seen in the census reports. An excellent article which addresses the problems of the various Foxes’ ages is published in Psypioneer, Vol. 4, No. 9: “The Fox Sisters: Riddle of the records” by Lis J. Warwood”.

However, the confusion may not end there! Throughout all the signed statements in the Lewis report it is clearly noted that the children were unnamed!

Mrs Fox’s statement:

“The girls, who slept in the other bed in the room, heard the noise, ...”

“The youngest girl is about 12 years old; ... The other girl, who is in her 15th year, ...”

“The girls were then sitting up in bed, somewhat terrified and clinging to each other”

Mrs Redfield’s statement: ⁷

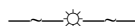
Mrs. Fox met me at the bed-room door, and she and the girls appeared to be much agitated. They looked very pale. Mrs. F. said, “Mrs. Redfield, what shall we do?”

Walter Scotten’s statement: ⁸

“... and two girls, were down in the cellar with me”

Elizabeth Fox’s statement:

“I sent one of the little girls out doors to see that there was no one about there to make the noise”



⁷ Not published in this article.

⁸ Not published in this article.

But Who Were These Girls?

One would naturally consider by tradition that they were Margaretta and Catherine, later known as Maggie and Kate: however, history suggests, and the Fox sisters would later state, that there were three “girls” at Hydesville!

Mrs Fox said in her statement: “There was four of our family, and sometimes five”; it is most probable that Mrs Fox was referring to Leah’s daughter, Elizabeth, known as Lizzie. I have noted over the years that a few old reports do put Lizzie at Hydesville during the time of the disturbances in March/April 1848.

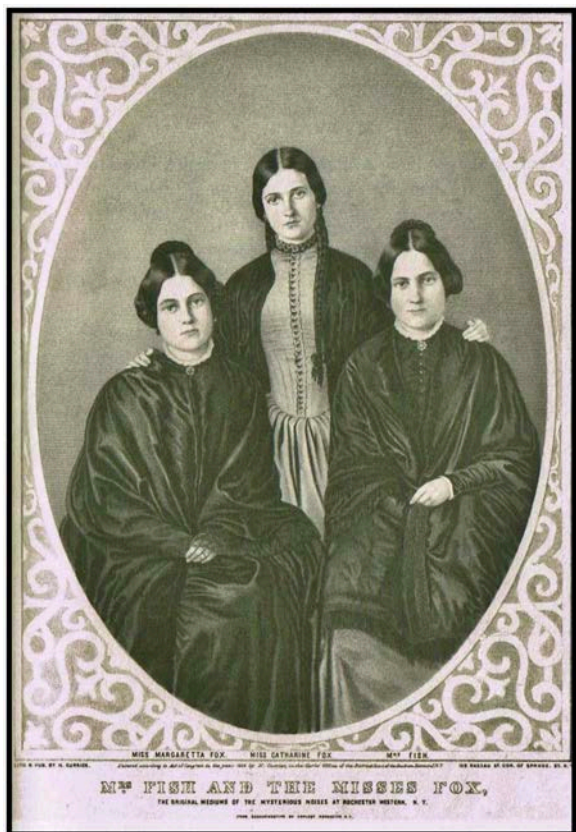
Mrs Fox herself does make a clear distinction from the above quotes of “the girls”; she also states:

“I went to Mrs. Redfield's and staid all night: my children staid at some of the other neighbors.”

“I have heard this rapping again this (Tuesday) morning, April 4. My children also heard it.”

This gives some indication; there was the possibly of another girl other than just her two daughters, given that she mentions “The girls” and “My children”.

If indeed there was a third girl, the daughter of the eldest sister, Ann Leah Lizzie Fish, spent some of her time with her grandparents and aunties Maggie and Kate at Hydesville. The eldest daughter, known as Leah Fish, lived in Rochester and was a music teacher; reports suggest that she knew nothing of the activities at Hydesville until around late April–early May 1848, which is after the Fox family moved to David Fox's farmhouse. On hearing the news (it is said in a copy of the Lewis report published circa April 20th, 1848) Leah, accompanied by two friends, Mrs Granger and Mrs Grover, travelled to the empty Hydesville house, then to David’s farmhouse. As previously noted, it was at this time after their move from Hydesville to David’s house that Kate seemed to attract the spirits and showed signs of her mediumistic abilities.



This is the First Known Image of the Fox Girls:

Little is known about this image of circa 1852; the image shown is a lithograph, an early process of producing an image on a flat, specially prepared stone, treating the items to be printed with a greasy substance to which ink adheres, and taking impressions from this on paper.

⇐ This lithograph is, as I understand, taken from a daguerreotype – the first practicable method of obtaining permanent images with a camera. The man who gave his name to the process and perfected the method of producing direct positive images on a silver-coated copper plate was Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre (1787-1851).

On 19th August, 1839, at a meeting in Paris, the daguerreotype process was revealed to the world.

In the “Medium and Daybreak” of June 22nd, 1888, I found on the front page a similar image, which the journal’s founder editor, James Burns, published. Burns noted: “... it is gratifying to be able to place such an “antiquity” in the present issue ...”.⁹

The daguerreotype below, as published in the “Medium and Daybreak”, appears to have possibly been processed around the same period as the lithograph or it may be the original image from which the lithograph is taken. The lithograph left a margin for the image to be changed by the artist; we can note especially that Katie is not pretty in the camera image as in the reproduced lithograph.

From what we can note with this early image taken circa 1852 (if correct), around four years after Hydesville some physical estimation of the ages can be made. In addition, there is some doubt as to who one of the women was:

Is this an image of the ‘Rochester Rappers’, Katie, Maggie and Leah?

Or

Elizabeth, Leah’s daughter, known as Lizzie, with her two aunts, Katie and Maggie, as the three girls at Hydesville?



Daguerreotype

⁹ The full article is available in Psypioneer, Vol. 6, No. 3: “The wrong Fox sister? – Paul J. Gaunt”.



Lithograph images

An example of this reporting can be found at the thirtieth Anniversary of Hydesville on April 17th, 1878:

“At the thirtieth Anniversary Meeting, held at Grafton Hall on the 17th of April last, under the presidency of Mr. Enmore Jones, several interesting facts were mentioned in connection with the two Fox sisters, now Mrs. Kane and Mrs. Jencken, and better known as Margaret and Kate Fox. Both these ladies were on the platform, and, strange enough to say, for the first time (that is together) since Spiritualism had its inception at Hydesville, near Rochester, in the year 1848.”

“A granddaughter of Mrs. Fox (Elizabeth Fish, aged eleven years) was at that time staying with the grandparents. This older niece was the questioner with whom the early conversations were carried on with the unseen communicants, little Katie merely responding by clasping her tiny fingers together.”

The full article is published in *Psypioneer*.¹⁰ It brings in again the big problem of the sisters' and also Elizabeth (Lizzie) Fish's ages, as at this meeting it is stated that Lizzie was eleven years old, while Maggie and Kate “... were only four and six years old respectively on the 31st March, 1848, ...”

The implications are obviously far-reaching; but is it correct? Whether or not Lizzie was at home in Rochester with her mother Leah or at Hydesville with her grandparents at the time in question is a matter of conjecture. For example, Leah makes no reference to taking her daughter to Hydesville when she first heard about the haunting but does make reference to bringing her back home to Rochester with Kate:

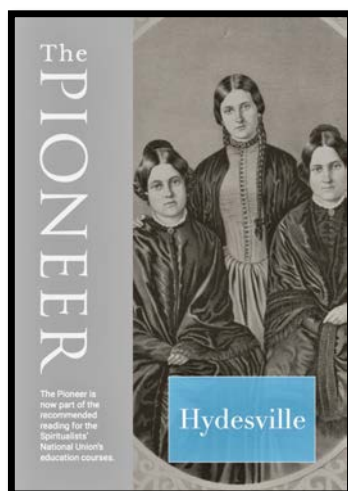
“I with the ladies who accompanied me remained about two weeks, when we concluded to take Katie and Lizzie (my daughter) with us and return home to Rochester.....”¹¹

¹⁰ The full article is available in *Psypioneer*, Vol. 6, No. 3: “The wrong Fox sister? – Paul J. Gaunt”.

¹¹ “The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism” by A. Leah Underhill. Thomas R. Knox, New York, 1885, page 32.



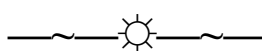
Another image published on June 14th, 1856



For more detailed information please see the Pioneer PDF Hydesville booklet, as advertised elsewhere in this issue; it also contains my PowerPoint presentation given to SNU Education and Tutors. Please note that this does not include my lecture notes; for further information please contact me. In addition, it gives a full list of the Psypioneer articles for those who may wish to delve deeper into Hydesville and the Fox sisters.

The story of the events at Hydesville as given over around a five-year period by those persons who witnessed and participated at first hand is without doubt a great exhibition of direct spirit communication.

Paul J. Gaunt.

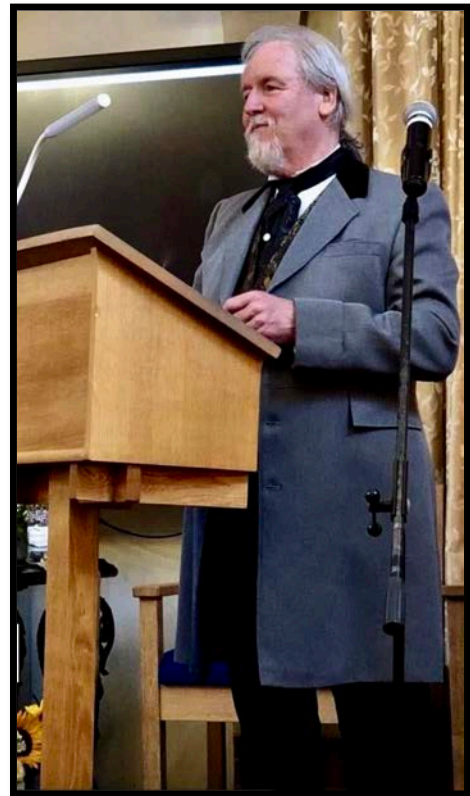


One-stop Website

www.pauljgaunt.com

The home page gives a direct link to all the back copies of “Pioneer”;
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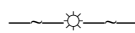
Research - Study Weeks at the Arthur Findlay College 2022

July 2nd – 9th 2022
September 3rd – 10th 2022



This page also has a selection of downloadable important subjects from the history of the Spiritualists' National Union, designed to cover key topics for anyone studying one of our courses or for anyone looking to further their knowledge on the history of our movement.

Also, a link to all “Psypioneer” issues often referenced in Pioneer



PUBLIC DEBATES:

Spiritualism – Christianity

Throughout the history of the Spiritualist movement the relationship between Spiritualism and the Christian religions was publicly debated, often in heated discussion. In the “Medium and Daybreak” of April 20th, 1883, Emma Hardinge Britten publicly replied to an attack on Spiritualism by a Reverend Skewes. The full interesting debate is available online; ¹² below is published Emma’s introduction:

SPIRITUALISM VINDICATED !

CLERICAL SLANDERS REFUTED

BY

EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN

EXPLANATORY INTRODUCTION.



By information received from my Spiritualistic Friends in Liverpool, I learn that the Faith they profess, and of which I am one of the public exponents, has been repeatedly attacked by certain members of the clergy of that city, in sermons denunciatory of Spiritualism, and by the openly avowed “moral support” rendered to those travelling conjurers who profess by the exhibition of a few clumsy tricks to imitate and explain the modus operandi of Spiritual Phenomena. The last, and, as I understand, the most pertinacious of the clerical assailants above named, is a “Rev. J. H. Skewes.”

Within the last few weeks, two Sermons have been delivered by this gentleman, reported in a paper called the “Protestant Standard,” under the several (Editorial) titles of “Death-Blow to Spiritualism,” and “Spiritualism in its Coffin !—Nailing Down the Lid ! !” It being the desire of my Committee in Liverpool that I should answer these discourses, I

¹² http://iapsop.com/archive/materials/medium_and_daybreak/medium_and_daybreak_v14_n681_apr_20_1883.pdf

proceeded to do so in two Lectures, given at Rodney Hall, on the Sunday evenings of Feb. 18th and March 4th.

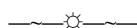
As Mr. Skewes stated in his second Sermon that there were still many points in Spiritualism that he had not noticed, my Committee followed up my Lectures by challenging him to debate the subject with me on a public platform, on conditions honourable to him and beneficial to the Charities of Liverpool. In answer to the repeated invitations to accept this challenge, addressed to Mr. Skewes both by public and private correspondence, the rev. gentleman declines, on the ground that he has had no fair report of my Answers to his Sermons.

As the only report that has been given of my Lectures is a series of paragraphs, headed "Howlings from the Pit," put forth by the "Protestant Standard," a report which is not only interpolated by rude and unworthy personal remarks, but is most imperfect, and scarcely touches on half the matter contained in my first Lectures, my Committee have urged Mr. Skewes to debate the subject of Spiritualism either from the stand-points assumed in his Sermons, or any fresh ones he might be able to allege against the Spiritual Movement. As Mr. Skewes continues to base his refusal upon the absence of any authentic report of my Answer to his Sermons, I deem it my duty to the Cause I represent, to place my Answer to Mr. Skewes's attack on record, and in such a form as cannot be mistaken. It is with this view that I put the annexed statements before the tribunal of public opinion.

Before entering upon my task, I wish it distinctly understood that I make no profession to repeat, except in general terms, the Lectures given by me at Rodney Hall, in answer to Mr. Skewes's Sermons. I am not ashamed to avow that I speak in public under the inspiration of those whom I deem to be good spirits, whose wisdom supplies me with the ideas most appropriate to the occasion, and whose power far transcends my own to meet the demands which the spiritual rostrum makes upon me. Under these conditions I find it impossible to recall my Lectures by memory, or to transcribe them, as they were originally delivered.

The following Answer will, however, embody the sum of the arguments before used, and I have only to add, that, for any further elucidation of the question at issue, I still hold myself ready to meet Mr. Skewes in public discussion, under such conditions as may be agreed upon between him and my Liverpool Committee of Spiritualists.

Emma Hardinge Britten.



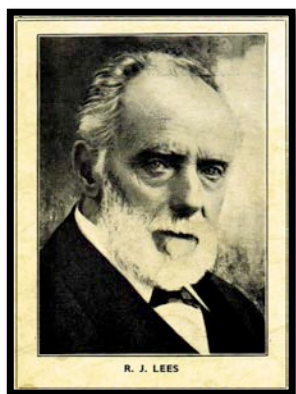
A similar earlier debate by Emma Hardinge Britten was given on July 8th, 1879:

NOTE BY THE REPORTER.

On the evening of July 8th, 1879, Mrs Emma Hardinge. Britten delivered the above address to an immense meeting, which completely packed every seat and corner of the Garrison Hall. The Hon. Robert Stout, late Attorney-General and M.P. for Dunedin, occupied the chair. Mrs Britten was frequently interrupted by hooting and hissings from the followers and friends of her Christian opponent, and vociferous and long-continued cheering from her own supporters.

Mrs Britten bore the storm with unflinching fortitude, deliberately and firmly repeating the sentences which called forth the hootings of the Christian minister's allies, whilst Mr Stout, with indomitable good humour and serenity, quelled the tumult, and insisted upon fair play and justice to both sides. At the close of the address Mr Green [opponent] asked some questions and made some remarks, which the reporter failed to understand; their gist, however, appeared to be an attempt to reiterate the assertions of his previous lectures. Mrs Britten's lecture occupied over two hours in delivery, during which, and despite the prevailing excitement, she was listened to with never-flagging interest and attention.

This is available as a free download, “Spiritualism Vindicated, and Clerical Slanders Refuted”; the same title is given in the “Medium and Daybreak” article above to save any confusion.¹³



Another Victorian medium, Robert James Lees,¹⁴ was well known for his public debates, interestingly *for* and *against* Spiritualism. Please see “Robert James Lees and The Revd Thomas Ashcroft” by Stephen Butt.¹⁵ At the Britten Museum and Library several of his large public debate posters are displayed.

Former SNU President Ernest Oaten has been featured many times in *Pioneer*;¹⁶ below, Oaten puts forward his views to a large audience on the relationship of Spiritualism in the Bible:

“Spiritualism affirms the central doctrine of Christianity, and in fact, of all religions; viz., immortality—or at least life beyond the tomb; but a great deal of confusion exists as to the exact relationship which ought to exist between modern Spiritualism and Christianity.”

“No one could even begin to understand the Bible until he was conversant with spirit communion, for the book was largely a record of psychical phenomena.”



The “Two Worlds” 1924 publication published below was kindly sent to *Pioneer* by historian Marc Demarest, who runs “The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals” (IAPSOP):¹⁷

¹³ http://www.ehbritten.org/texts/primary/ehb_spiritualism_vindicated_1879.pdf

¹⁴ See *Pioneer*, Vol. 3, Nos. 5/6: “Robert James Lees: Did he really sit for Queen Victoria as a young boy? Lees’ involvement with the 1888 Jack the Ripper case”.

¹⁵ *Psypioneer*, Vol. 5, No. 12: “Robert James Lees and the Revd Thomas Ashcroft – Stephen Butt”.

¹⁶ See *Pioneer*, Vol. 1, No. 2: “Ernest Walter Oaten (1875-1952) – His contribution to Spiritualism was long and notable, giving almost 60 years’ service”.

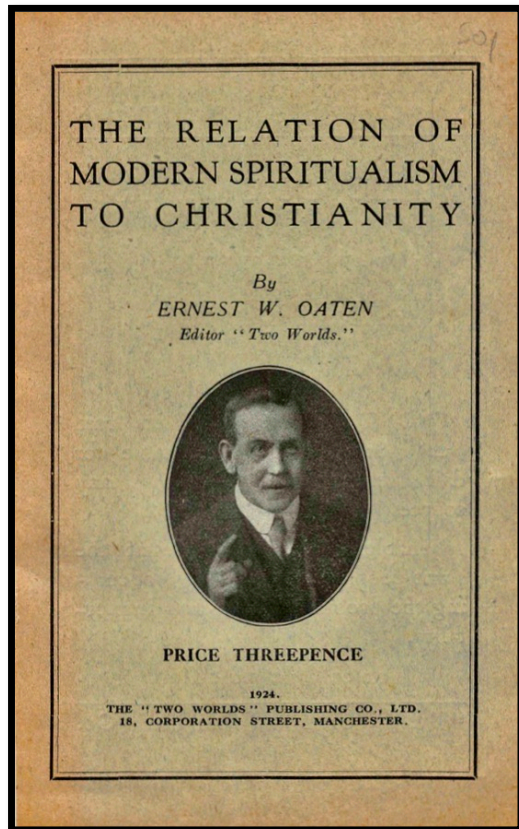
¹⁷ “The IAPSOP is a US-based private organization focused on the digital preservation of Spiritualist and occult periodicals published between the Congress of Vienna and the start of the Second World War. Our all-volunteer staff digitizes, indexes and makes available free of charge these periodicals, in our archive, for use by students and researchers: <http://iapsop.com>”.

The site also archives the now defunct issues of *Psypioneer* (May 2004 until December of 2016) noted on the index page of the *Pioneer* issues.

The Relation of Modern Spiritualism to Christianity.

An address delivered at the Ardwick Picture Theatre, Manchester, on Sunday, February 4th, 1923, by Ernest W. Oaten (Editor *Two Worlds*).

J. Cuming Walters, M.A., in the Chair.



Mr. Walters, in introducing the speaker, said rumour had it that when editors meet there must be heated differences. That would not be so to-night, for the speaker and he were in perfect accord. They were both there to bear testimony to the same great fact, and even if their points of view might differ in minor detail, they were united upon the conclusion that Spiritualism was the living factor in the religion of to-day and to-morrow. He could not understand the opposition levelled at Spiritualism by Christians; the two systems were complementary, and such opposition was inconsistent. He could understand the Roman Catholic position, since they refused to allow freedom of opinion, but Protestantism stood for a larger view, and the foundations of set creeds and dogmas were fetters they could do without.

Men were beginning to do their own thinking on religious matters. As the result of independent thinking and investigation Spiritualists were able to give a logical and decided reason for the faith that was in them. And why should they not investigate? Knowledge was growing in all departments of life as the result of search, and to forego investigation of natural phenomena was to place a premium on ignorance. He himself had been intended for the Church, but foolish creedal restrictions cast him out, and altered his whole life. There were religious mysteries, but no good purpose was served by refusing inquiry into them. He would rejoice if the churches would examine our case, and give a fair verdict,¹⁸ for we could supply the very elements which were causing them to wither. One thing is sure: they will need us long before we need them. He wanted the ideals of Christianity to prevail. We seek reconciliation, co-operation, and he believed it would come, for we ought to go forward together. He believed Christianity and Spiritualism were natural partners, and had a common mission to bring the power of the spirit world into the lives of men.

Mr. Oaten said:—

Such a fine audience as I see before me (about 1,600) is an evidence of the interest which is to-day being taken in the subject of Spiritualism. The subject I have to deal with is an important one, for Spiritualism is assailed from two points—that of the materialist on the one hand, and that of the religionist on the other. The former complains that the study of Spiritualism and of the evidence for human survival is mere dabbling with forms of superstition, whilst the latter grumbles because Spiritualism apparently falls foul of his long cherished creeds and dogmas.

¹⁸ In 1937 a Committee was appointed by Dr. Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury, to investigate Spiritualism. It carefully studied the subject for two years – but the report was suppressed. See *Pioneer*, Vol. 3, No.6: "Maurice Barbanell – My greatest journalistic "Scoop" ”.

SURVIVAL THE PRELUDE TO IMMORTALITY.

Now Spiritualism affirms the central doctrine of Christianity, and in fact, of all religions; viz., immortality—or at least life beyond the tomb; but a great deal of confusion exists as to the exact relationship which ought to exist between modern Spiritualism and Christianity. I am dealing with this subject to-night because I have been asked to do so. I hope to show that the Christianity of 1900 years ago was almost identical with the practice of Spiritualism to-day, but the original foundations laid by Jesus and his immediate successors has been so overlaid with traditional heathen symbology and theological priestly incrustations that it is in my opinion quite as easy to rebuild the whole structure as to attempt to clear it of the accumulated rubbish of the last sixteen hundred years or so.

Modern Spiritualism is a recognition of the fact that systematic communication has been established between this life and the life hereafter. The continuity of life beyond the grave has been definitely proven to hundreds of thousands of people—it is not a mere act of faith or article of belief, but a demonstrated fact. This lays the basis for the idea of immortality, by bringing us into personal contact with those who have survived death. Communication having been established with them, information as to the next state of life is available. Such information brings the knowledge that there exists, plane above plane, higher and ever higher degrees of spiritual beings, reaching even to the throne of the Infinite, and that spiritual revelation is and ever has been handed down to us stage by stage, according to the respective capacities of the messenger and the recipient.

We Spiritualists have opened up a contact with the spiritual worlds, where all knowledge abounds, and the measure of revelation receivable is apportioned according to our fitness and capacity.

SPIRITUALISM'S INDEPENDENCE.

That being so, we are not dependent at all upon past tradition. Spiritualism is a movement which is in present day touch with the spiritual worlds—whence all revelations have come—and having a true contact with such source, it can well be independent of all past systems. It is dependent on none of them. The spiritual world which directed them in past times, directs us. If, therefore, all the religious systems of the world, and all the Bibles of the world, were by some calamity destroyed and forgotten, we should still be able to reconstruct on present day facts all that had been lost, since behind us is the inexhaustible supplies of the eternal spheres. That is, the strength and independence of our position, and I want to make it clear. Spiritualism is based upon present day facts, and not upon past records, and in any case of disagreement, appeal must be made to the present day provable facts, rather than to past traditional beliefs. Having said that much, however, I believe that such independence is quite unnecessary. History is one of the most valuable of studies, if only because it contains the experience of others equally as sincere as ourselves. History teaches us the important lesson of what to avoid, and the history of religion contains valuable hints. My studies have led me to the conclusion that there is only one religion in the world—there never had been more. The quarrels which had arisen between sectarians was due to the fact that each had a piece of it, and each imagined that its piece was the whole. That was a type of ignorant egotism. There never had been a volume of Scripture or a phase of thought large enough to contain the whole of God's truth. In the world's great religions there were clear indications of a progressive revelation. Each religious system had concentrated on one central truth, which others had relegated to a secondary place. Even the last (Islam) had its message: "There is One God," which had been the rallying cry of the East. Spiritualism is but a younger and stronger brother of all past systems, and probably will not be the last revelation which the bounty of God will give us.

Having stated the basis of Spiritualism, I must claim that Christianity (with the exception of Romanism, perhaps) was based upon the Bible. Spiritualists knew it, for they were continually bombarded with texts. These did not perturb them, since they could find just as many to hurl back. All religious controversialists seemed to find their weapons in the same armoury. Texts were there to suit everyone, which was what might be expected from a compilation gathered from many writers over centuries of time. The book embodied the spiritual and material experiences of hundreds of men in many centuries, living under many varied conditions, and therefore, it reflects very divergent opinions.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Deuteronomical and Levitical texts were often used against Spiritualists, but they were of little value. "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." "A consuler with familiar spirits is an abomination to the Lord." Injunctions to take such people outside the city and stone them were often quoted, but the fact that the people who used these texts would not for the life of them obey the commands, somewhat negated their value. It was indeed strange that Exodus gave us the command, "Thou shalt not kill," whilst Deuteronomy and Leviticus were largely concerned with devising methods of putting to death those who offended against priestly law. It was notable, however, that not until after the Levitical priesthood had been set up were these injunctions given. The priesthood were appointed as the mouthpiece of "the Gods," and then through the lips of that priesthood prohibitions were uttered that all others should "keep off the grass." It was a mere attempt to corner spirit communication and to reserve all the power to the priests who promulgated these laws for their own protection and glory. Yet, Old Testament history bore witness to the fact that all the greatest blessings which ancient Israel enjoyed came—not from the priests—but from the prophets. The man who cornered wheat and starved the people was an enemy of the race, but the man who attempted to corner the truths of God was an unmitigated scoundrel.

THE SACRED ARK.

A historical study of the Old Testament is very illuminating. The chief object of reverence was the Ark of the Covenant which became so holy that only the chosen of God could approach it. It was the instrument of revelation and the repository of the sacred records. It accompanied the Israelites in all their wanderings. It went with them into the Babylonian captivity; it was the holy of holies in which the presence of Jehovah was centred and through which God made His revelations. As a lad he had tried to make a model of the ark and found that it was but a wooden table with the sides boxed in, and with fitments at the sides through which two poles were slipped in order that it might be carried by bearers. Many Christians to-day scoffed at a tilting table as a means of communication with the spirit world. They had forgotten "the pit out of which they were digged." The ark had a movable back like a cheffionier, elaborately carved, which could be unshipped for convenience of transport.

Aye, it was just a wooden table through which the communications of the "Lord" were received and transferred to the people. The boxed-in sides formed a receptacle for the sacred records and was supposed to contain the tables of stone and the tablets of the law. So holy was this sacred instrument that it was unapproachable by any but the high priest, and only under exceptional circumstances was even he allowed to open it. The mass of the people were expected to know the law, and the devout Jew prided himself upon his ability to recite it perfectly.

After the return from the Babylonian captivity there came a time when divergent renderings of the law were found amongst the people, and the sacred ark was opened in order to check oral tradition by the records themselves. The box was found to be empty ! Whether the records had been stolen, or whether the bearers had jettisoned the tables of

stone in order to lighten their burden is a question on which no evidence exists, but the apocraphal books of the Old Testament show that the law had to be re-written, and this was probably done by Ezra—the most erudite of the priests of ancient Israel.

It is quite possible—nay, even probable—that many of the commands for the protection of the priestly monopoly did not creep in until the re-writing of the law, for by this time the priesthood had become a powerful autocracy.

A similar condition exists with many other of the Old Testament books. Biblical scholars go so far as to say that most of the Psalms (attributed to David) could not have been written until long after David's death, and in these ancient times it was not an uncommon thing for writers and singers to apply some famous name to their own productions.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

We have the same thing happening with the New Testament. Biblical criticism shows clearly that the Books of Matthew, Mark, and John were not written by the Apostles of that name. The gospel *according to* (not necessarily by) Mark is probably the oldest, and dates 30 to 35 years after the crucifixion. The gospel according to Matthew followed shortly afterwards, but was certainly not written by Matthew. The writers of the Gospel of Luke and John in all probability never saw Jesus. Luke frankly tells us that he gathered the information as the result of enquiry amongst the followers of Jesus, and this gospel probably dates about 50 years after the crucifixion. The Gospel of John is even later than this, and the writer is referred to by scholars as "John the Alexandrian," to distinguish him from the apostle of that name. The writer was evidently trained in the Egyptian school and familiar with the occult lore of the Nile delta, and his gospel is a mixture of his own preconceptions with the traditions of the Nazarene. It was probably written A.D. 100 or thereabouts.

There was no reason why the Apostles should record the facts, since they all expected Jesus to come back in physical form and establish his kingdom on earth very shortly. The second advent was daily expected. For a time the Apostles stuck together in a little community, "having all things in common." That community soon broke up. It is the essential weakness of communism that though one thousand honest persons establish communism, one dishonest, selfish person can effectually destroy it, just as one discordant note can destroy a piece of harmonised music. Ananias and Sapphira quickly destroyed the early communists. The Apostles then drifted apart, and each aggregated round himself some few followers, to whom he conveyed the message and teaching of his Lord. They went their several ways to spread abroad the teachings dear to them.

Presently the original Apostles went the way of all flesh, and variations probably sprung up amongst the faithful in reciting the story of the Lord's life and teaching. Then would come the necessity of making records and choosing between varied versions.

WHY NOT BE HONEST ?

These appear to be the rough facts, and every parson who has had a modern theological training knows them; but, he asked, is there a single person present who has ever been told those facts from the pulpit ? He paused for an answer. Then why this policy of suppression? Some folk imagined that God would suffer unless they protected Him. The theologian feared that the truth would destroy their faith, but dishonesty destroyed it still more. The people can be trusted with the truth. We heard a lot about the gospel according to Matthew and Mark, but there was an inference that we had the gospel according to JESUS. He wished we had; unfortunately we have only the edited and revised oral traditions. Some of the Epistles were several years older than any of the Gospels.

WHERE DO WE STAND ?

So far he had been critical, but criticism was of little value unless it paved the way to reconstruction. Despite the blemishes which destroyed the literal text of the Testament, we must not forget that the oral tradition from which the records were collated must have had a foundation. Beneath the superficial mists there was an ocean of truth, if only we could disperse the haze. He believed it would be the province of Spiritualism to re-establish the basic facts of the life of Jesus. No one could even begin to understand the Bible until he was conversant with spirit communion, for the book was largely a record of psychical phenomena. Men did not in those days understand the modern theories of spirit communion, and yet strangely enough the records of the New Testament phenomena embody details which modern research show to be only explicable by psychic power exerted in the presence of a powerful medium. He wanted them to see Jesus with his eyes, and then to ask themselves whether he had displaced Him, or whether on the other hand he had found a higher place for Jesus in the economy of God's purpose than Christianity had ever given Him. Let them examine the records in the light of Spiritualistic research.

HIS BIRTH

Dismissing the vexed question of antecedent genealogy, we come to his birth. I do not accept the story of the Immaculate conception. Such stories were prevalent long before the birth of Jesus, both in India and Egypt. The idea commonly held that children were born in sin and that the act of procreation was a result of disobedience made it essential for these ancient peoples to postulate an alternative for their sacred avatars. The Hebrew conception that the children of men were born under the curse of God made it essential that the "Divine Being," or "Sinless One" should have a sinless birth, but such theories were not put forward till long after the crucifixion. The laws which govern human birth are part of the orderly course of nature, and are therefore the laws of God. They may be abused and thereby entail suffering, but to say that obedience to such laws constitutes sin is equal to saying that Eternal Wisdom is not wise. All laws of life must be used with reason and discretion—without license and without lust. When children are forthcoming as the result of true and honest affection between men and women of honour and responsibility they are born as divinely and as spiritually as God or nature makes possible. If Deity broke His own laws He would have no sense of justice if He punished lesser beings for doing so.

I think it is more honourable to God and more in accordance with the constancy of natural law to accept the natural laws of procreation as the cause of his birth. In my opinion if his birth was superhuman and miraculous no credit attaches to him for his wonderful life. Deity cannot sin ! And again, the theory of the miraculous conception would make Him different from us in his innate nature—in which case he is no example to us. A rose is not an "example" to a cabbage. Jesus was, I believe, the child of God's own laws even as you and I are. Much has been made of the fact of his nativity in a stable. Humility is a useful virtue, but it would appear that the only reason for the event happening in a stable was that "there was no room in the inn." Hence there was no choice on the part of the parents. There is no virtue in the place of one's birth, such events have taken place in tramcars and fields. We have two stories of visitors (1) the shepherds watching their flocks by night (not on December 25th, he hoped), who heard the herald angels. A very pretty story, which might well have a solid foundation, since the "angel's song" has been the same throughout the ages. "Peace on earth, goodwill to men." He called them all to witness that the Christian world had not heard that song as yet. (2) The "magi" or wise men from the East—students of the occult—who came to worship the new life promised by the star.

FOUR DREAMS.

The birth of Jesus had been smoothed by a dream which came to Joseph, without which he might have disclaimed the paternity of the child. The “magi” called upon Herod the King, and promised to report on the finding of the child, but being warned of God in a dream, they returned home by another way. The slaughter of the innocents was resolved on by Herod, and Joseph was again warned in a dream, and fled to Egypt, returning after Herod’s death had been similarly communicated to him. The whole birth story rests on four dreams, without which the child might never have lived. The modern Christian laughs at dreams and talks of heavy suppers and indigestion. He would confess that his own dreams were useless and chaotic wanderings, with little sense or meaning, but there were dreamers of different types—he had known several such, and related a case within his knowledge of an accurate forecast of unforeseen events being foretold in a dream. Joseph was probably a dreamer of the psychic type.

We then lose sight of the child, and later find a boy of twelve arguing with doctors in the Temple, and apparently holding his own. He had known young mediums who could do the same. What would happen if a boy of twelve were taken to the University today, and could hold his own in argument with the professors. They would be the first to recognise his ability, and would probably say, “This youngster has the makings of a clever man. We must take him in hand, and train him to bring his powers to their fulness.” They would see that he had a proper training, and we need have no surprise that Jesus disappeared at twelve years of age, and was no more seen until he was about thirty, when he returned in the fulness of his power. Where had he been ?

THE BAPTISM.

Possibly, in the schools at Alexandria, the centre of educational culture in those days, for on his return he presents himself to John for baptism—a decidedly and definitely Egyptian ceremony. The annual rising of the Nile in a hot country where there was no sanitation, had a twofold effect—it carried the filth into a state of solution and deposited it in slime upon the land, thus manuring it. The Nile flood was both a purification and a preparation for future harvests, and thus the symbol of regeneration. Jesus came to John with the recognition of his Egyptian training, but John knew he was coming, and recognised him at once; had even announced his coming. This is not strange, if we recognise the Egyptian ceremony of John. Both were probably trained in the same school, and John finished his course first. On entering on his work John knew of the greater pupil who was coming, and was able to tell of one who would soon come “whose shoe latchet I am unworthy to unloose.” At the baptism there came a light from heaven, and a voice said, “This is my beloved son.” Whose was the voice ? Does God speak Greek or Hebrew ? It apparently was a human voice, and was understood by the hearers. It was a voice that spoke in the language of the times.

He could understand a poetic allusion to the voice of God in the winds—in the roll of the breakers on the shore, or the voice of God in nature—but what voice was this ? Well, we hear nothing of Joseph after the return from Egypt. We hear of the mother and brothers of Jesus, but not a word of the father. Further, Joseph was getting on in life at his marriage over thirty years before. It does no violence to common sense to suppose that Joseph had died, and this was his voice speaking commendation of his son’s work. He (the speaker) had heard his father’s voice in similar manner, and the phenomenon was quite in accordance with Spiritualistic experience. He knew of no person in the universe who had a better right to be proud of a son than he who had been responsible for his birth. He believed it was the voice of Joseph expressing proud approval.

CHOOSING THE APOSTLES.

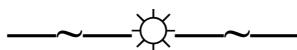
Then Jesus started on his mission, after a preparation lasting from twelve years of age until he was thirty—eighteen years. How many folks come to the Spiritualistic movement and grumble because they are not wonderful mediums in about twelve months ? Talking to a lady of this type recently, he elicited that she had been a Spiritualist eighteen months, and had developed no mediumship. He pointed her to the experience of the great Nazarene. Some folk did manifest psychic faculty in a few months, but when their phenomena was compared with past records, we could draw natural conclusions as to the value of a deep and lengthy development.

He believed, however, that a close study of the New Testament record in the light of modern psychic investigation would show that the mediumship of Jesus was not so great as had been imagined. That he was a medium may be true, but he was *considerably more than that*; he was the ADEPT WHO KNEW THE LAWS of psychic manifestation, and was able to use the psychic faculties of others as well as his own. He commenced by calling his Apostles. Matthew sat at the receipt of custom. He was a tax collector, a profession which is not admired to-day, but which in those days might well be called that of an extortioner. He paid a lump sum to the authorities, and extracted what he could (cent. per cent. if possible). A man with the money instinct. Yet at the bare words, "Matthew ! follow me," he left everything, and followed. This was a phenomenon in itself, and required explanation. Peter, too, busy with his fishing nets, obeyed the call without question, and the other ten, even to Judas, left everything at the call. What does it mean ? You may call it in modern terms "personality," "hypnotic suggestion," or what not. He believed that it was the power of the spirit world behind the caller. Modern mediums, too, have thrown up their positions to obey the call of the spirit world. But what guided Jesus in his wonderful choice ? It was not their education—they were a crude and ignorant crowd. It was not their social position, for that was negligible. Judging by the imaginary pictures which have been painted and drawn by artists, it would not appear that their personal beauty was a decisive factor, whilst their characters were very ordinary. One turned out to be a traitor, whilst the terminological inexactitudes of another were punctuated by the crowing of the cockerel. What was the reason for the choice of these men ? To his thinking, the deciding factor was their possession of certain psychic gifts.

A close reading of the New Testament in the light of present day psychic experience, convinces one that the Apostles constituted a well-balanced circle, containing many varied phases of mediumship, with those positive elements which are often the accompaniment of rough natures. The physical mediumship of Peter and the sympathetic, soft and mild nature of John are but two elements which stand out from the others.

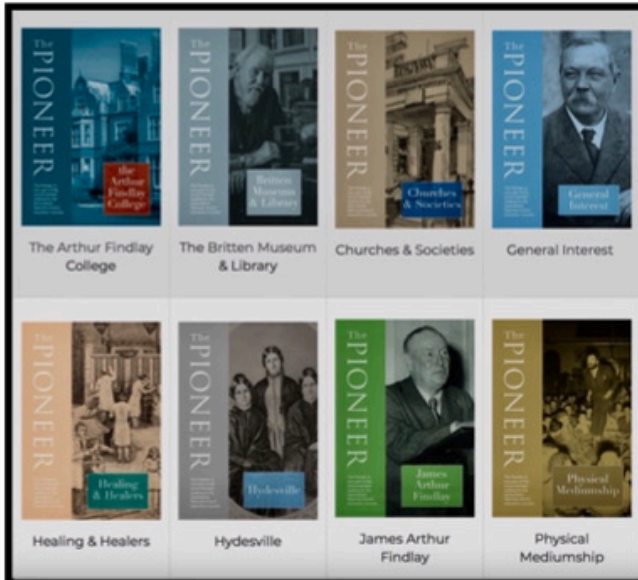
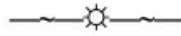
To be continued in the next issue:

THE MEDIUMSHIP OF JESUS.



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