

## ***Bumps in the Night!!!!***

September 2014 Issue

### ***Paranormal "U"***

#### **Flashback: Overview of Early Ghost Hunters**

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The study of the paranormal has been around as long as recorded history. Many religions are based upon paranormal study, while many ancient cultures believe in ghosts, demons, fairies, gods and other supernatural entities.

Some of the earliest references of ghosts can be found in the Old Testament; an example is the First Book of Samuel (28:7) where King Saul seeks guidance from the dead priest.

In Tibet, the Buddhist monks wrote the Bardo Todol to help the soul reach Nirvana. In Medieval Europe Heinrich Kramer wrote the Malleus Maleficarum as a way to identify witches.

With these examples, it is unreasonable to state that the study of the paranormal is relatively new. The difference is that modern paranormal investigators must prove the existence of the supernatural by using scientific methods, as well as presentation of evidence.

It is important to remember that most of the methodologies used in paranormal investigation originated in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. People like Edgar Cayce and Helena Blavatsky claimed to be able to speak with "higher beings". These claims led to the beginning of the spiritualist, and theosophical movements in America and Europe. Many studies of the paranormal began with these movements.

The first organization actively investigating the paranormal was The Ghost Club founded in London in 1862. In the 1880's societies were created to utilize scientific methodology to the study of ghosts and the paranormal, including the Society for Psychical Research in London and the American Society for Psychical Research in New York City.

Harry Price is seen as a pioneer in the methodical study of hauntings. He was also famous for exposing fake spiritualists. He debunked many famous pictographs including the ectoplasm, depicting Eva Carriere, as made of chewed paper. In 1936 Price made the first broadcast from a "haunted" manor house for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

Investigators would interview witnesses, gather information and keep extensive records of each incident. Harry Price added the use of camera with film, electronic bells as a motion detector, and measuring tapes.

In 1950 Fredrich Gurgenson accidentally discovered Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP) while tape recording bird songs. He started making recordings of EVP eventually writing two books "Voices from the Universe" and "Breakthrough".

According to "Breakthrough", EVPs have the following characteristics:

1. "The voice entities speak very rapidly, in a mixture of languages, sometimes as many as five or six in one sentence."

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2. "They speak in a definite rhythm, which seems forced on them."
3. "The rhythmic mode imposes a shortened, telegram-style phrase or sentence."
4. Probably because of this, "... grammatical rules are frequently abandoned and neologisms abound."

In the 1960s and 1970s, the well-known names were Hanz Holzer in the United States and Peter Underwood in Great Britain. Holzer became famous for his investigation into the Amityville Horror house where he claimed paranormal activity that was later debunked as a hoax.

After Ghost Busters was released in 1984, the tools used by paranormal investigators went high tech. Ghost hunting groups popped up using the latest technology; electronic field meters that had flashing lights and alarms, laser thermometers and closed circuit television.

Paranormal Investigators of today have electrostatic generators, EMF pumps, tone generators, motion sensors, high tech digital recorders, and infrared cameras/lights.

There were, and still are, many theories regarding the paranormal. Harry Price theorized that paranormal activity affected the ambient environment in the form of static electricity, humidity, temperature or radiation. Price encouraged investigators to monitor the environmental conditions and determine baselines to help identify patterns that could lead to explanations of paranormal activity.

The Stone Tape Theory is a hypothesis that was proposed in the 1970's. The hypothesis is that inanimate objects can absorb energy from living beings. The stored energy can be released as a display not unlike a movie. According to the hypothesis ghosts are not spirits, but instead are non-interactive emanations from the recorded energy. This phenomenon is considered residual haunting by most paranormal investigators.

Another interesting theory was proposed by G.N.M. Tyrrell. Though he believed in, and purportedly proved, the existence of ESP, Tyrrell believed that ghosts did not exist, but were in fact astral projections by another live person. In 1953 Tyrrell wrote "If we were to take a photograph of the two figures, a real man and an apparition, only the real man would come out. And if we had sound recording apparatus, only the sounds made by the real man would be recorded"

Carl Jung, on the other hand, was raised with the belief in spirits and manifestations. In 1945 Jung wrote ""All things considered, all these metapsychic phenomena could be explained better by the hypothesis of spirits than by the qualities and peculiarities of the unconscious. And here, on the basis of my own experience, I am bound to concede he is right. In each individual case I must of necessity be skeptical, but in the long run I have to admit that the spirit hypothesis yields better results in practice than any other ". Jung later wrote "As a psychiatrist and psychotherapist, I have often come up against the phenomena in question and could convince myself how much these inner experiences meant to my patients. In most cases they were things which people do not talk about for fear of exposing themselves to thoughtless ridicule. I was amazed to see how many people have had experiences of this kind and how carefully the secret was guarded".