the PIONEER

Volume 8, No. 6: December 2021

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The Pioneer (bi-monthly) is now part of the recommended reading for the Spiritualists' National Union's education courses.

This history journal is presented using original researched material wherever possible. Articles and quotes are taken from original sources as they were published at the time and reproduced by optical character recognition (OCR), the conversion of scanned images of handwritten, typewritten or printed text into machine-encoded text. This means that grammar, old English, spelling mistakes, etc. are not usually changed. However, long paragraphs are sometimes split for easier reading; any errors or explanations needed are noted in footnotes.

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

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1901 MANCHESTER LYCEUM PARADE

Alv Hirst is the Director of Communications for the Spiritualists' National Union. Alv contacted me and asked if I had seen the old silent film lasting around seven minutes of the "Manchester Spiritualists Procession (1901)".[1] The film is of very good quality, showing many of the Union's early pioneers.

At the time of this film the reconstitution of the Spiritualists' National Federation into the Spiritualists' National Union was nearing its final legal stages.



At the front on the left (facing) of the parade is James J. Morse, who had been fighting for a *National* Spiritualist movement, along with William Johnson (next to Morse), for over two decades.[2]

The gentleman in the top hat behind the three ladies[3] is John Venables. Venables was the President/Chairman[4] of the Spiritualists' National Federation during the trying period when it was becoming incorporated as the "Spiritualists' National Union" and occupied the chair in 1901 at the Annual Meeting at Sheffield, which finally decided on its incorporation.

[1] Google: "Manchester Spiritualists Procession (1901)" and watch free.

[2] See Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 8: "The Building of the Spiritualists' National Union" (over several issues).

[3] The lady behind Johnson I believe is Morse's wife Marion; they married in 1870.

[4] See Volume 7, No. 2: "President or Chairmen?".

At the Annual Conference held at the Music Hall, Surrey Street, Sheffield on Saturday and Sunday July 6th and 7th, James J. Morse, on behalf of the Executive, proposed:

> 'That this Conference adopt the advice of Mr. Bateman that the Federation be incorporated under the Joint Stock Companies' Act, with liability limited under guarantee, under the style of 'The Spiritualists' National Union Limited.' Mr. Johnson seconded, thinking it was the best scheme possible.[5]

William Johnson would incorporate our Seven Principles into the new constitution; the basis of these statements given by Emma Hardinge Britten were already in use in the Lyceum just prior to the formation of the Federation.[6] Please see Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 1: February 2016.

National Federation to National Union

William Johnson would be the last Federation President/Chairman and the first Spiritualists' National Union President. This beautiful historic film no doubt shows many of our pioneers and most probably included in the march are some of our later Union Presidents such as our first lady President (1923-1925), Jessie Greenwood. She was Lyceum President 1887-8 and, together with Messrs Kitson, Kersey, Venables, Morse and others, she was instrumental in laying the foundation of the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union (BSLU).

Pioneer has frequently emphasised the great impact the Lyceum movement had on the growth of our National Spiritualism. Some months earlier to this film no doubt many of these Lyceumists captured walking would have attended the funeral of Emma Hardinge Britten.

Below, appendixed to Emma Hardinge Britten's autobiography by her sister Margaret Wilkinson, are quoted some details of the latter part of her life and funeral:[7]

> The latter part of her life was a sad and suffering one, and more especially so, as her active brain and spirit still wished to do the work she had been accustomed to, and the poor enfeebled frame and worn-out constitution prevented her carrying out her desires.

Last public appearance:

> Mrs. Britten's last public efforts for the cause she had done so much to found, and which she loved so dearly, were the opening of the Jubilee Bazaar and the unveiling of a stained-glass window in the Salford Spiritual Church.[8] The following extracts are also from the pamphlet referred to:—
>
> At the Jubilee Bazaar Mrs. Britten threw aside the oncoming weakness, and appeared upon the platform to open the bazaar on the first day. She was greeted with the warmest marks of appreciation, and her appearance evoked the enthusiasm of the great crowd which had assembled.
>
> Loved and respected by all who knew her, she retains in our hearts a place of honour. She laboured for a cause which was all in all to her; for by its wondrous revelations she

[5] In October 1901 the Spiritualists' National Union Limited was incorporated under the Companies Acts as a company not for profit and limited by guarantee, and in July 1902 it succeeded to, and took over the property, rights and obligations of, the Spiritualists' National Federation.

[6] Except: "I believe in the communion of spirits as ministering angels".

[7] "At the request of some of the friends and workers in the Spiritual movement, I have annexed to these auto-biographical sketches a few extracts from a small pamphlet published after Mrs. E. H. Britten's decease." The Autobiography of Emma Hardinge Britten, posthumously published and edited in 1900 by Emma's sister, Margaret Wilkinson, is available as a free download via Google.

[8] Taken from her funeral service (Light, October 14th, 1899): "…and a beautiful floral harp from the Salford Spiritual Church, of which Mrs. Britten was an honorary life member and in which her last public service took place, when she unveiled the stained glass window."

had found the shining path of truth; and having her own spiritual wants relieved, she strove her utmost to meet the necessities of her fellowmen.

The last public ceremony which she performed was the unveiling of a stained-glass window in the Salford Spiritual Church, when she also made her last public appearance. Her wondrous strength and power were again manifested there, for, although weak and feeble, she rose to the occasion, and with much of her old accustomed vigour she spoke of the possibilities and progress of Spiritualism.

This last public act had in it a touch of deep significance. She found Spiritualism in the throes of its arduous birth struggle, and watched it and laboured for it through her life, beholding its steady growth with the intense interest of a parent for her child; and then, when her time was nearly come, her unveiling of the beautiful stained-glass window was a sign that Spiritualism was consolidating its forces, that gradually it was realising the full dignity of its position, and that it was commencing to bestir itself for a greater effort, which should appeal to the outer world, and answer its great need by providing a beautiful setting for the more lovely jewel of the Gospel of Spiritualism.

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Emma died on October 2nd, 1899; her funeral was held on October 7th:



FUNERAL RITES

The first part of the funeral service was conducted in the house, and only a few of the close personal friends of Mrs. Britten joined her relatives in her study, where, hushed by the icy hand of death, her body lay in calm repose, encased in a neat coffin of polished elm.

The face was calm and reposeful, bearing no trace of the suffering she had undergone. Age only had left its mark; her years numbered only 76, but into her active life she had crowded many times the number of experiences falling to the lot of the ordinary man or woman.

At Emma's request, her old friend, John Lamont, [9] performed the funeral rites, as he had done previously for her mother and her husband William. After his personal tribute to his old friend, who thirty years previously had heard her speaking at Hope Hall, Liverpool, Lamont read the short funeral service, with comments:

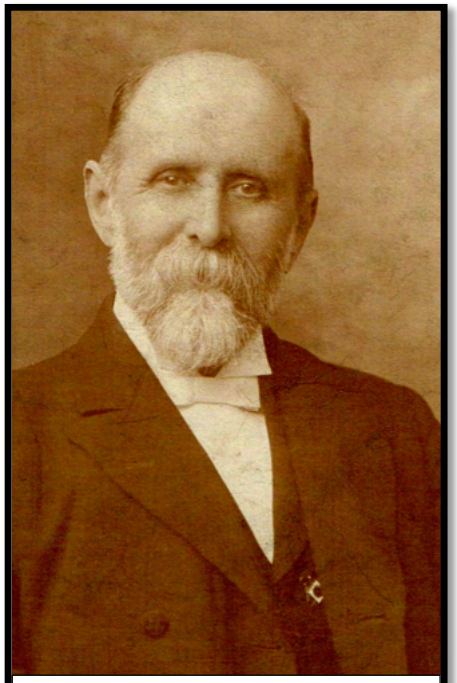
> Speaking of the natural body and the spiritual body, he said that "truly the spiritual body which was now hers was as natural as that decaying form which they there beheld. Both physical and spiritual bodies had their glories; and who, having looked upon the noble bearing and commanding presence of their sister, her face lighted up with the beauty of divine inspiration, could refuse to believe that there was a glory of the physical body ?"



John Lamont

[9] See Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: "John Lamont – Our first President", "The Passing of John Lamont – Two Worlds".

Then, amid a profound silence, broken only by the voice of the speaker, Mr. Lamont said: "Dear sister, we see and recognise you now in your radiant, celestial body, putting that away which you have left. We rejoice on this occasion that we have an opportunity of congratulating you upon your entrance into the higher and brighter life, of which you have so often spoken. We recognise you, not as an influence afar off, but as a living, sentient spirit in our midst, with a large number who have congratulated you on your second birth and entrance into the higher life, where you are surrounded by hundreds who received messages of love and liberty from your lips. We consider it our privilege to enter into the sacred circle of visible and invisible friends who have met together; and we earnestly pray that in some measure we may be able to follow in the steps of the noble reformers who have gone before. May the Holy Spirit bless us with light, and liberty, and goodness, now and ever. Amen."



James J. Morse

Mr. J. J. Morse, president of the National Conference and the British Lyceum Union, then delivered a brief but impressive oration. He said: "My esteemed friends and fellow-workers, I consider it an honour and a privilege just to add a few feeble words of my own to the feeling and eloquent testimony that our venerable senior, Mr. John Lamont, has just offered.

Earth has been made the richer by Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten having lived upon it. Thousands of men and women have had their souls touched and the divine spirit kindled to brighter beauty by the eloquence which has flowed from her lips. Not only her eloquence but the intelligence uttered in those rich reverberating tones echo in our hearts to-day. I treasure as a beautiful and precious possession that I, as a young man, was stimulated to greater and more arduous toil by having had her hand-clasp and encouragement to urge me on. If I can offer no more on the altar of her memory than my esteem for her because of this, I can offer no better nor richer treasure. She fainted not nor spared herself.

Consistent and earnest at all times and in all places; in the new life of a new country, and amid the polish of the great cities in the civilised world. Speaking bravely, living earnestly, she never held back to gain a favour, nor for fear of any living mortal. No one has done more to rationalise, to strengthen, and to beautify our Spiritualism than she. She is with us to-day, and the spirit of her life will, I am sure, linger in our minds and in our souls as long as Reason holds her throne and Memory retains her power. I will only say, 'God bless her for her work, and may the echo of her voice ever resound in our inmost beings, causing us to look higher and to be even more zealous than she, if that be possible.' If her life does this for us it will have preached the best sermon that has ever been given to us even through her noble inspiration. Let us remember these things; but let us also remember the sister who has to live for a while without the personal presence that we, too, loved. We know that death is not death, that our dear sister lives; but there is that sense of personal loss that *must* come to us; and the tears must flow to give relief to our overburdened souls. Looking beyond, we shall each of us come to that time when we shall be able to clasp her hand again, and say 'God bless you,' to her whom we all loved and honoured for her life and for her work."

This was followed with a tribute by fellow pioneer Mr Walter Howell:[10]

> This concluded the ceremonial in the house, and then the coffin was borne amid the lines of assembled friends to the hearse.
>
> "The funeral *cortége* was a long one, and contained representatives from all parts of the country."
>
> "First came a wreath-car, covered with lovely floral emblems, and then the hearse, also loaded with beautiful wreaths, which literally hid the coffin from sight. Punctually at two o'clock the *cortége* left the house, and passing through the heart of Manchester attracted widespread attention. The line of carriages was so extended that when the wreath-car was well out of Albert-square into Cross-street the last conveyance was just entering the square at the other end. Beside the Yorkshire Union, *Light*, the London Spiritualists' Alliance, and The *Two Worlds* Company were represented; but it would be invidious to attempt to record the names of the societies represented, for from far and near all had united to pay one vast tribute to the memory of our sister's noble work.
>
> From the entrance of the cemetery to the graveside the pathway was lined with Lyceumists, clothed in white, having been arranged in their places by Mr. J. B. Longstaff, ably assisted by Messrs. T. Taylor and Stafford. Mr. A. Rocke conducted the singing.
>
> 
>
> Around the grave there speedily gathered a great concourse of people. The Lyceum children were in the centre.[11]
>
> Mr. John Lamont gave out a hymn, which was heartily sung, and Mr. J. J. Morse offered an impressive invocation, after which Mr. Lamont spoke briefly in committing the coffin to the grave. He said: "We have not met to bury a woman, but to do honour to a woman who has been resurrected to the spiritual realm of life. She bore the holy flag of reform for many years unsullied and with bravery unexampled. We can here congratulate our sister on her resurrection. Here, standing over these remains, we simply say we are here to give back to nature the physical form through which our sister appeared, while she has arisen to wear the wreath which she wove by her earnest work and loving endeavour."

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Psypioneer published the funeral of Emma Hardinge Britten as published by Light, October 14th, 1899; below is a quote to finish:

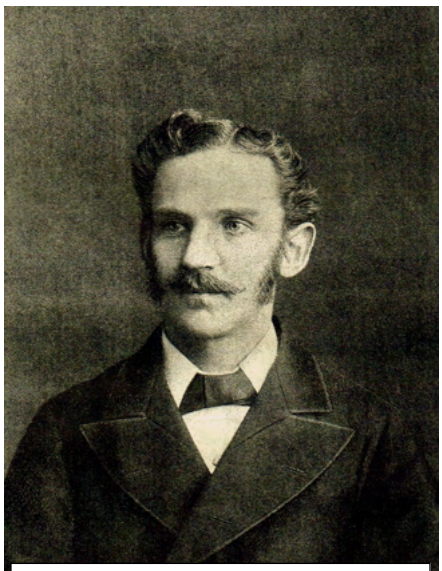
> The coffin having been lowered, Mr. Lamont gave out a hymn which was sung by the Lyceum children, led by Mr. A. Rocke, and taken up by the whole of the people, numbering about two thousand. Mr. J. J. Morse then offered a fervent and impressive invocation, and Mr. Lamont, in a few well chosen words, committed the body to the care of
>
> 

[10] Walter Howell was a trance medium; he was born blind but after some surgery limited sight was restored with the aid of strong spectacles. Howell was an active speaker in America and in the UK from around 1879.

[11] Images are screen shots: "Manchester Spiritualists Procession (1901)".

'mother earth' and bore sincere testimony to the worth and work and nobility of Mrs. Britten.

The children then walked past the grave dropping flowers upon the casket until it was almost hidden from view. After another hymn had been sung, Mr. Lamont called upon the secretary of the London Spiritualist Alliance, Mr. E. W. Wallis,[12] who in a few earnest words referred to the unique personality and generous spirit of Mrs. Britten. He thought no other occasion could have called together the large and truly representative concourse of Spiritualists, who, prompted by love, had assembled from all parts of the land to show their affectionate regard for their brave and loyal teacher and friend. 'For her the day has indeed dawned and for us this spot is sacred ground. Here,' said the speaker, 'the two worlds meet and we join with the angels in congratulating our sister upon the completion of her work and her entrance into the light and liberty of the spirit life. Such occasions as the present should teach us the necessity for greater sympathy, tolerance and kindliness. Mrs. Britten always stood forth firmly and consistently for Spiritualism, as an education, as a reform, and as a religion.



Edward Wallis

Let us remember her statement of principles:

"The Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the immortality of the soul, inter-communion between the two worlds and the path of eternal progress open to every soul who wills to tread therein"; and let her example and fidelity be an impetus to us all to continue the work to which she so fully and faithfully devoted her life.' With the singing of another hymn the proceedings terminated. Mr. A. W. Orr and Mr. W. Phillips kindly rendered every assistance possible to Mrs. Wilkinson and the relatives in carrying out the necessary arrangements, and the bright sunshine of the autumn day fitly symbolised the spiritual brightness following the close of the autumn time of physical life and the sunshine of the spiritual day.

Continued in the same edition of Light:

On Tuesday last a mass meeting in commemoration of the life and work of Mrs. Britten was held in the Co-operative Hall, Downing-street, Manchester,[13] when there was a large and representative audience. The hall was tastefully decorated with mottoes and flowers. The chair was occupied by Mr. J. J. Morse (president of the National Federation Conference) who was supported by a number of veteran workers and mediums. In opening the meeting the chairman gave an exhaustive review of the life-work and career of Mrs. Britten, and Mr. Johnson, of Hyde, one of the earliest lecturers, moved a resolution of loving sympathy with Mrs. M. Wilkinson, and of recognition of her faithful sisterly devotion to Mrs. Britten.

(Please see the Psypioneer issue to continue) [14]

[12] Edward Wallis has featured many times in Pioneer for his work within the Spiritualists' National Federation and more can be found in the Pioneer pdf booklets, "SNU History", as advertised elsewhere in this issue: "New SNU Pioneer Page".

[13] It was in this Hall that the Spiritualists' National Federation/Union was founded in 1890; for more information please see Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 3: "The Constitution of the Spiritualists' National Federation".

[14] Vol. 3, No. 2: "Funeral of Emma Hardinge Britten".

Editor's Note:

In time, sadly, the grave (No. 2111) was not kept up, becoming overgrown, and consisted merely of an engraved slab of stone, which had become broken over the years.[15] By 1912 the grave held five members of the family; they are:

Emma & Margaret's mother— Anne Sophia Floyd (93), d. March 31st, 1886.

Emma's husband—William Britten (75), d. November 24th, 1894.

Emma Hardinge Britten (76), d. October 2nd, 1899.

Margaret's husband—Gilbert Robinson Wilkinson (81), d. May 17th, 1906.

Emma's sister—Margaret Floyd Wilkinson (82), d. October 24th, 1912.



The original gravestone, now repaired, was removed to the beautiful grounds of the Arthur Findlay College (further news on this in the next issue).

[15] Please see Psypioneer, Vol. 1, No. 9: "Emma Hardinge Britten: grave news"; this was then followed up in issue Vol. 1, No. 18: "Grave News update by Malcolm A Lewis".

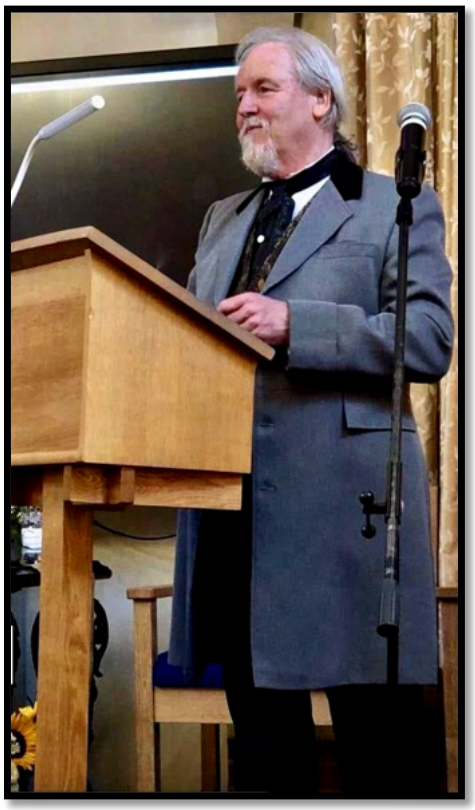
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This page also has a selection of downloadable important subjects from the history of the Spiritualists' National Union, designed to cover key topics for anyone studying one of our courses or for anyone looking to further their knowledge on the history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

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

LESLIE FLINT PUBLIC SÉANCES

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It was noted at the end of the last issue that Pioneer would publish a public séance by the direct – independent voice medium Leslie Flint, as shown below, taken from Psychic News, March 11th 1950

This is a facinating report of a public séance of direct – independent voice at Kingsway Hall, a popular venue of the time for large Spiritualist meetings to take place. This report includes an alleged spirit communicater using a member of the audience, a Mr Shead, to act as a *proxy* to get a message to the communicator's mother and father.

The image shown in the article below is from an earlier séance at Kingsway Hall by the "Link Association of Home Circles" in 1946, where over one thousand people witnessed direct voice. The photograph shows the cabinet Flint was sitting in; the microphone can be seen surrounded by Leslie Flint's home circle members.

Suicides Return And Prove They Could Not Die



HANGED HIMSELF ON BANISTERS DURING "A MAD MOMENT"

A FEW WEEKS AGO WHILST ATTENDING A SOCIAL GATHERING, A MAN NAMED SHEAD WAS DRAWN INTO CONVERSATION WITH A FELLOW-GUEST. INSTEAD OF THE USUAL PLEASANTRIES SO OFTEN DISCUSSED AT SUCH FUNCTIONS, THEIR CONVERSATION TURNED UPON DEATH AND TRAGEDY.

Mr. Shead's companion related a strange and moving story of his son's passing, of the rare circumstances surrounding the death, and the great shock it brought him and his wife.

On Saturday last, Mr. Shead sat in the Kingsway Hall, one of two thousand people who witnessed a direct-voice demonstration by Leslie Flint. Like the others, he probably hoped to receive some message from a loved one.

He did receive a message, but one that he could hardly have been prepared for, a message which showed that his conversation with the man at the social had been overheard and noted.

SPIRIT PUZZLES MICKY

A number of messages had been relayed when Micky, Flint's child control, spoke of the presence of a young man in spirit, who rather mysteriously refused to disclose his name.

This confounded Micky, who, naturally enough, wondered how it was possible to convey the spirit's identity without giving his name.

But the communicator was not confounded. He knew that Mr. Shead was present and he knew also that a detailing of the distinctive circumstances surrounding his passing would be sufficient proof of his identity.

Through Micky, he recalled how he had taken his own life whilst his parents were visiting the Empire Theatre at Hackney, East London.

"It was done in a mad moment—I regret it now—they came back and found me hanging from the banisters."

Immediately Mr. Shead's mind flew back to the social gathering and the strange conversation. "I know of that boy," he called out, adding, "His father told me about him."

"He wants you to tell them he is still alive—he knows that he shouldn't have done what he did. Joe Parrish has brought him," Micky replied.

After the meeting, Mr. Shead told our reporter that Micky's account of the spirit's passing had been the same, almost word for word, as that told by the father.

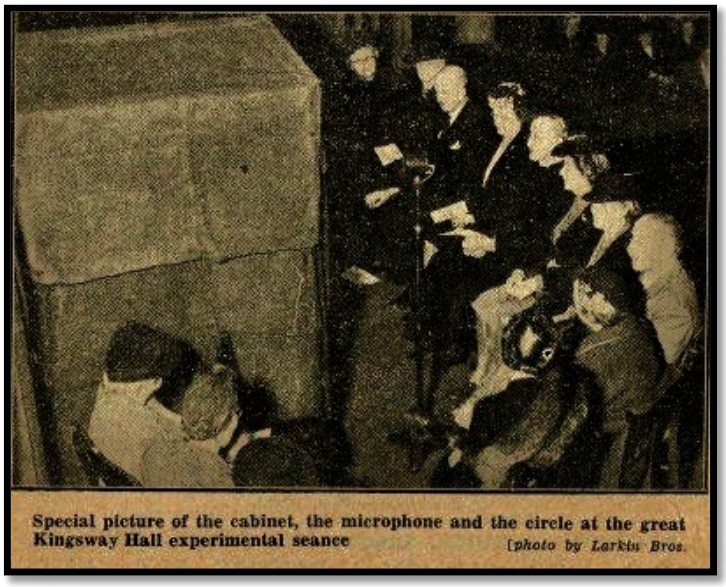
"Joe Parrish was a friend of my own son. He was drowned," he explained. "It was all perfectly true."

Very emotional and very moving was the reunion between a mother and son who had died at birth. The mother was Mrs. Wedge, of 21 Duncan House, Hackney, E.8.

GREW UP IN SPIRIT

With unmistakable pride in his voice, the boy informed her that he had grown up in the spirit world.

That he had quite recently helped his father who had been ill, was immediately confirmed by his father who was seated with the mother.



Special picture of the cabinet, the microphone and the circle at the great Kingsway Hall experimental seance [photo by Larkin Bros.

Then the boy withdrew and another voice came through the microphones. "Hello! I'm Lizzie Wedge. I brought Terry to speak to you. I'm just as excited as he is."

"Terry was still-born," Mrs. Wedge told *Psychic News*. "His voice was so like his brother's who is in the navy. It was marvellous." Mrs. Wedge had never met the medium before.

Behind another communication lay a story of friendship conceived during the war years and brought to a sudden end when the battleship H.M.S. Hood was sunk.

The threads of this friendship were renewed when Micky indicated the presence of a young sailor. Making contact with a woman, Micky proceeded to relay a description of the sailor and his passing, adding that Tony had brought him.

"His name is Michael. Your son and he were friends. They were transferred together from the Frobisher to the Hood. Had your boy not been recalled he too would have gone down with the Hood."

This highly condensed evidence was true in every detail, the woman, Mrs. Penn, of 32 Beachcroft Avenue, N, Malden, afterwards told our reporter. "Tony is my other son," she added.

CAPTURED IN BURMA

The very first message of the evening set a high standard which was maintained throughout this excellent meeting. The communicator, a Group Captain in the Air Force, delivered a graphic account of his death and the events preceding it.

Through Micky he stated that his name was Hank Moore and that he had belonged to the 73rd Fighter Squadron. Whilst in Burma, he continued, he had been captured and was placed on a Japanese prison ship which was torpedoed.

Mrs. Marchand, of 6 Hayes Road, Bromley, Kent, was able to confirm all these facts, and when Micky remarked that Roy had assisted the Group Captain to communicate, she called out: "Roy is my son."

"A short time ago I went to a reunion meeting of the 73rd Fighter Squadron and there met Hank's mother," she told *Psychic News*. "She told me how he had died."

The full effect of the return of Lilian Braithwaite, the famous actress, during this meeting was lost through the lack of response from persons in the audience whom she declared she knew.

Our reporter understands, however, that a group of people said after the meeting that they had known the actress and regretted not speaking up.

"I want a lady at the back by the name of Rogers. Her husband is here," was the beginning of yet another message which Micky guided, in his expert fashion, to a successful conclusion. Immediate response from a woman led to Micky asking: "Who is Winnie?" "I am Winnie," was the reply.

The contact established, Micky then said: "He's talking about Bentley." "That's where I live—Bentley House," the woman called out.

The conversation between the spirit and his wife was very emotional, but not so much so that the husband was unable to pick out a friend in the audience. "How are you, Hilda?" he asked.

When Mrs. Bullock of 116 Crofts Road, Kenton, Middlesex, was greeted by her husband, Arthur, from spirit, he spoke of being accompanied by a young man whose name he gave.

"He was in the Home Guard," Micky remarked, adding: "He wants you to tell his mother how sorry he is about what he did. He knows what a terrible shock it was for them when they found him in the kitchen. Give his love to Pearl."

"This man lived in the same village as I," Mrs. Bullock told our reporter. "He shot himself with his own gun and was found in the kitchen. Pearl was his girl friend."

Harold Vigurs, deputising for the Rev. Drayton Thomas, spoke clearly and lucidly on the mechanics of direct-voice communication.[16]

As at all previous public meetings conducted by Leslie Flint, the microphones were placed outside the cabinet.

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[16] Harold Vigurs, SNU President (1943-1948): see Pioneer SNU Presidents pdf booklet, as shown at the end of this issue.

Editors Note:

This is what caught my eye in the above article:

> **Behind another communication lay a story of friendship conceived during the war years and brought to a sudden end when the battleship H.M.S. Hood was sunk.**

It was the sinking of the battleship HMS Hood, which was sunk at 06:00 hrs in the Denmark Strait on Saturday May 24th, 1941; it would be this incident which would put into motion the later arrest of Helen Duncan in 1944.



Later that day Roy C. Firebrace attended a séance with Helen Duncan in Edinburgh:

> **"There appeared during the séance the form of a control, Albert and he suddenly said a great British battleship has just been sunk"**

In 1958 Brigadier Roy Firebrace recounted his sitting:

> During the war I was head of Intelligence in Scotland and I had the opportunity of attending a seance with Mrs. Duncan in Edinburgh. There appeared during the seance the form of a control, Albert, and he suddenly said "a great British battleship has just been sunk". Well, I had no knowledge of this.
>
> After the seance I returned to my headquarters and as soon as I got back, about two hours after the sitting, I heard on the private line from the Admiralty in Scotland the news that the Hood had been sunk. And I was then able to check up that at the time of the seance the Admiralty had no knowledge whatever of the sinking of the ship.
>
> That was an instance of a materialised form, whatever you like to call it, which did give, I think the correct time, the fact about the sinking of the battleship. So you understand from the point of view of the authorities, Mrs. Duncan was a somewhat dangerous person.



BRIGADIER R. C. FIREBRACE, C.B.E.
President, The College of Psychic Science.

It is a fact that the police from Scotland Yard did come to the International Institute while these stories were current,[17] and consulted Mrs. Duncan there, and myself, as to how Mrs. Duncan could be prevented from giving this information out, because the authorities admitted that the information was authentic.

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Later that year another battleship was sunk: HMS Barham was sunk at 16:25 hrs, while steaming to cover an attack on Italian convoys on November 25th, 1941. Once again this incident was given in a séance, this time at Portsmouth, by the said control Albert—however, this time naming the torpedoed ship as HMS Barham.

Maurice Barbanell during lunch asked Percy Wilson if he had heard what happened at a Helen Duncan seance at Portsmouth the previous evening. Wilson was a senior official of the Ministry of War Transport and Barbanell told him that he had had a message that morning to say that at this séance a figure had appeared of a sailor with a capband reading HMS Barham and had given the information that the Barham had been sunk in the Mediterranean.

Wilson returned to his office:

"I deliberately went along to Berkeley Square House to ask some of my senior colleagues and remember, the Ministry of Shipping was part of the Ministry of War Transport whether they had heard of the sinking of the Barham in the Mediterranean. No one had heard, but one of them said he would make an enquiry; and he told me later that afternoon that it was not known in the Ministry of War Transport. That was on the day after the message had been given in Portsmouth."

—~—☼—~—

The full interesting discussion on Helen Duncan with Psychic News editor Maurice Barbanell, former SNU President Percy Wilson,[18] and Roy Firebrace, who was President of the College of Psychic Science for 13 years,[19] is taken from part of a conference organised by the College of Psychic Science at Brighton on November 28th and 30th, 1958: "The Problem of Survival", published in its journal, Light, Spring, 1959.

Brigadier Roy C. Firebrace CBE, born in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1889, had had a distinguished military career, acting as an observer and interpreter for Winston Churchill at the Potsdam and Yalta conferences; when Molotov visited London in 1942, he ran the War Office Russian Liaison Group and, while British Military Attaché at Riga, he formed a direct voice circle. In 1946 Firebrace retired from the army and died on November 10th, 1974.[20] At the end of this article his obituary is published from Psychic News, November 23rd, 1974, which gives some of his extraordinary experiences with Helen Duncan and Alec Harris; he was also involved in test sittings with Leslie Flint.

Flint on numerous occasions submitted to tests with an infra-red telescope, enabling the researchers to see in the dark séance; naturally, if you had something to hide it would not be a good idea to submit yourself to this type of investigation! Numerous fake mediums had been

[17] Pioneer, Vol. 6, No. 5: "International Institute for Psychical Research – The Case for Real Psychical Research by Arthur Findlay."

[18] See Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 4: "Helen Duncan séance during her 1944 Trial – *New séance evidence!*"

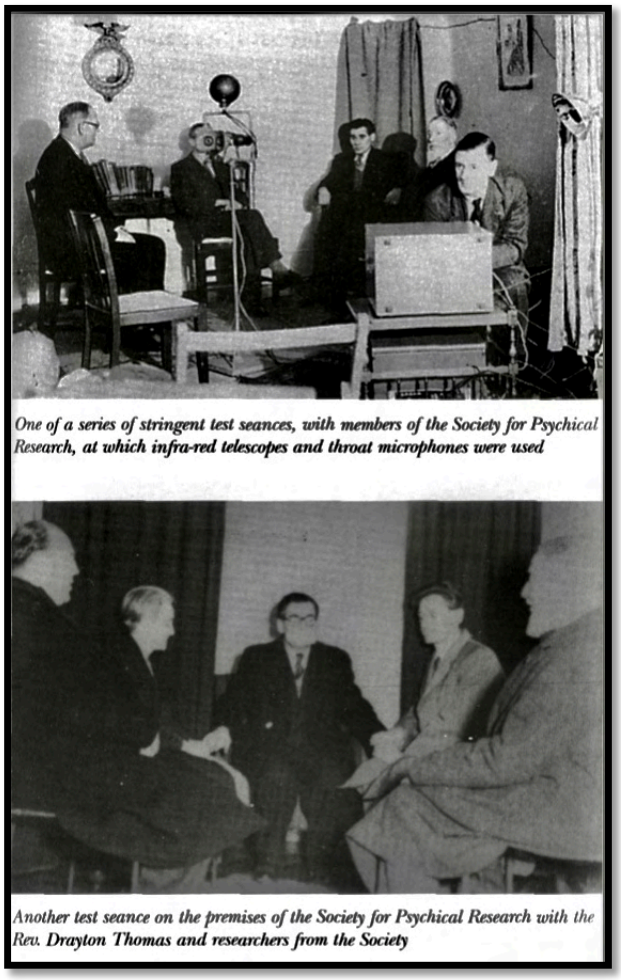
[19] London Spiritualist Alliance, founded in 1883, changing its name in 1955 to The College of Psychic Science. Later, in 1970, it became The College of Psychic Studies, as it remains today.

[20] See Psypioneer, Vol 11, Nos. 4/5: "Direct Voice – Two Views"; "Direct Voice: Some Difficulties and a Warning by Marcy Phillimore"; "Direct Voice Phenomena by Brigadier R. C. Firebrace, C.B.E.".

caught through infra-red detection and publicly exposed in the psychic press.[21] Flint notes in his "Voices in the Dark", first published in 1971:

A favourite explanation of my voice phenomena is that I am some kind of super-ventriloquist-cum-mimic.

It is not possible for ventriloquism to work in complete darkness; it requires distraction. Psychical researcher and author Hereward Carrington (1880-1958), ably tackled this suggestion, "Ventriloquism, Considered as A Possible Explanation of 'Independent Voice' Phenomena", in his 1930 book, "The Story of Psychic Science"; this is published in Pioneer, Vol. 5, No. 6.

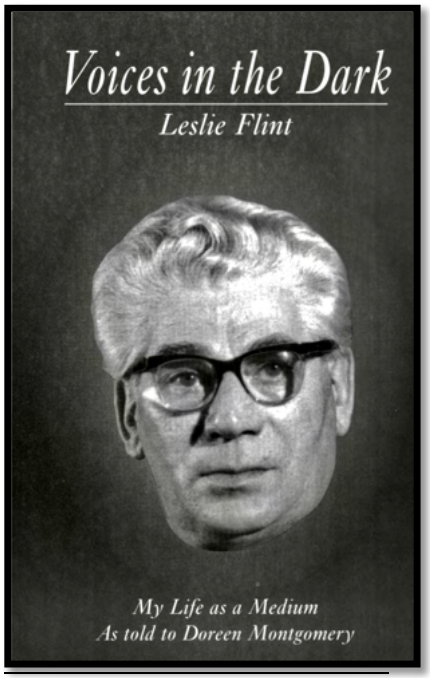


One of a series of stringent test seances, with members of the Society for Psychical Research, at which infra-red telescopes and throat microphones were used

Another test seance on the premises of the Society for Psychical Research with the Rev. Drayton Thomas and researchers from the Society

Leslie Flint in his book, Chapter 11, talks of the tests referred to by Brigadier Firebrace:

> In his capacity as a member of the Council of the S.P.R. Drayton Thomas had made contact with another psychical researcher who was an electronics expert and able to provide various devices which could be used to prove or to disprove the reality of my voices and a series of tests were held, some at the flat of the electronics expert, others on the premises of the Society for Psychical Research under the aegis of the Rev. Drayton Thomas and in the presence of such notable researchers as Brigadier R. C. Firebrace, C.B.E., Father Arthur Sharp, Mr F. Sibley and others too numerous to mention here.



The conditions under which I sat for these tests were: (*a*) my lips were sealed with plaster, (*b*) a throat microphone was attached to my throat and wired to amplifiers so that the slightest sound made through my own larynx would be magnified enormously, (*c*) the researchers were able to watch my every movement in the dark by means of an infra-red telescope and finally, (*d*) my hands were held by a sitter on either side of me.

Voices spoke at many of the tests under these conditions and on more than one occasion a researcher viewing through the infra-red telescope was able to see the ectoplasmic larynx through which the discarnate speak forming on my left side some two feet distant from me which is the point in space where the spirit voices are normally located during my seances.

[21] See Psypioneer, Vol. 4, No. 5: "Fraud Uncovered at Chesterfield Spiritualist Camp – Infra-Red Motion Pictures Reveal This Great Deception".

My thanks are due to Brigadier Firebrace for his courtesy in allowing me to quote an extract from his recent letter to me which speaks for itself:

> I well remember the test sittings I had with you and Drayton Thomas. At these sittings, during the seance we had an infra-red telescope focused on you and you had a throat microphone round your throat. There was an electronic expert present who watched the instruments which were attached to the throat microphone. I can well remember that under these conditions we got the direct voice without any indication on the instruments that it was registered by the throat microphone. But the voices were fainter than on previous sittings I had had with you. An interesting point was on the final occasion when with a voice speaking faintly the infra-red telescope suddenly fused; the voice immediately doubled in volume. This indicated to me that infra-red rays weaken mediumship in some way. I must add you could not possibly have known that the infra-red telescope was out of action. Altogether an impressive exhibition of mediumistic power.[22]

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Percy Wilson

Firebrace makes an interesting observation that the voice phenomena were substantially reduced with the infra-red telescope on the said occasion of testing. Once the infra-red telescope was off, the phenomena were immediately stronger! Former SNU President (1950-1953) Percy Wilson was well versed in technical work; to give some background, he was technical adviser to "The Gramophone" magazine from 1924 to 1938, and its technical editor from 1953 to 1966. Wilson wrote two books, "Modern Gramophones and Electrical Reproducers", in 1929 and "The Gramophone Handbook" in 1957. He was a founder-member of the British Sound Recording Association and also a member of the Audio Engineering Society, USA, with a citation award in 1966. It was Wilson who put together the infra-red telescope which was used at Kingsway Hall to keep the medium under observation.[23]

Published in the Two Worlds, January 7th, 1949: "The Infra-Red Telescope and Its Uses in Seances", by Percy Wilson, M.A., as published below:

> In some accounts of the recent Leslie Flint meeting at the Kingsway Hall the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas is reported as saying that the infra-red apparatus, through which he had kept Mr. Flint under observation during a dark seance, was on the Secret List.[24]
>
> That is not so. The apparatus Mr. Thomas has used with such encouraging results on three occasions was put together by me largely from ex-Service material. There is nothing secret about it. The infra-red image converter tube on which the design is based has been released for general sale for some time, and can be obtained for 14s. 6d. For the rest, there is nothing particularly difficult or "advanced" in the design to anyone with experience of electronic research. The most troublesome parts are first,

[22] "I was therefore doubly blessed when I met and was tested by men of the calibre of the Rev. Drayton Thomas, Father Arthur Sharp and Brigadier Firebrace who, when the tests they made were successful, publicly stated their conviction."

[23] There are many references to Percy Wilson in Pioneer, for example in the free pdf booklets "SNU Presidents", as shown at the end of this issue.

[24] Charles Drayton Thomas, a Methodist minister, an early sitter of Mrs Osborn Leonard; he wrote many books and contributed to SPR Journal and Proceedings numerous papers on the mechanics of mediumship that repay careful study.

to obtain the optical system required; and second, so to design and construct the apparatus as to safeguard the user from electric shock in every possible contingency, since a D.C. voltage in the region of 6,000 to 7,000 volts is used. (The corresponding apparatus of German design which is installed in the rooms of the S.P.R. uses over 17,000 volts in order to get better definition).

Two Warnings

Perhaps it will not be out of place for me to give two warnings to such of your readers as may be thinking of acquiring or building an infra-red unit.

First, remember that as yet we do not know whether infrared rays in the region where the image-converter operates will be deleterious to phenomena or medium. We have good reason to suppose that visible light is deleterious; and it would be a curious coincidence (or, possibly, a significant observation) if the border-line between the noxious and the innocuous were found to be the same as that between the visible and the invisible. Since, therefore, at present the infrared rays have to be "beamed" on to the object to be viewed through the telescope, it is an essential precaution to switch on the beam *before the seance starts* and not suddenly during the seance. In these circumstances the beam will be there before the medium goes into a sensitive state. Phenomena may be inhibited thereby (indeed, Mr. Thomas's experiments seem to indicate that there is interference) but at any rate the medium will be protected against the shock caused by sudden exposure.

May Mislead

The second warning is that there is on the "surplus" market at present an infra-red apparatus using a Zamboni Pile which may mislead the unwary. The apparatus was designed for use by Commandos as a "beacon marker" and is quite unsuitable for our purposes. The pile will give a voltage of some 2,000-3,000 provided that only a tiny current is drawn. But as soon as the infra-red illumination is increased to an extent sufficient to ensure even a faint definition, the current drawn by the image converter tube becomes more than the pile can deliver, and the pile therefore polarises, its voltage drops, and the image blacks out entirely.[25]

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As previously mentioned, Kingsway Hall, Holborn, London, built in 1912 and demolished in 1998, was a popular venue for large Spiritualist meetings. It was considered to have the finest acoustics in London for recording orchestral and choral repertory; one can only imagine what it was like with seating for 2,000 people listening to Hannen Swaffer, Maurice Barbanell, and watching demonstrations through the likes of Estelle Roberts, Helen Hughes, etc. in this great hall!

In 1957 Spiritualist history was made when more than 1,000 people witnessed the first-ever attempt at public post-mortem portraiture by famous psychic artist Frank Leah, with Helen Hughes making the link clairvoyantly/clairaudiently at the Kingsway Hall, the meeting organised by Two Worlds.[26]

[25] Readers who are interested will find information about this infrared apparatus (though not enough to enable them to construct a telescope for themselves) in the *Journal of Scientific Instruments* for December 1947 and in *Electronic Engineering* for September and October 1948. An extended list of references is given in the latter articles.

[26] Pioneer, Vol. 4, No. 3: "Frank Leah – Psychic artist", "First-ever attempt at public post-mortem portraiture by Frank Leah partnered by the clairvoyant Helen Hughes".

Estelle Roberts gave her only public demonstration of direct voice in this hall. During the war years numerous meetings took place; this rather poor reproduction shown is Estelle Roberts seen giving clairvoyance at the Kingsway Hall on September 12th, 1942. Sitting at the table closest is Hannen Swaffer; next to him is Maurice Barbanell.



The famous medium photographed while giving clairvoyance.

The report was published in Psychic News the following week. The meeting was arranged by Psychic News in aid of its fund to supply free literature to the Forces; it is noted in the report:

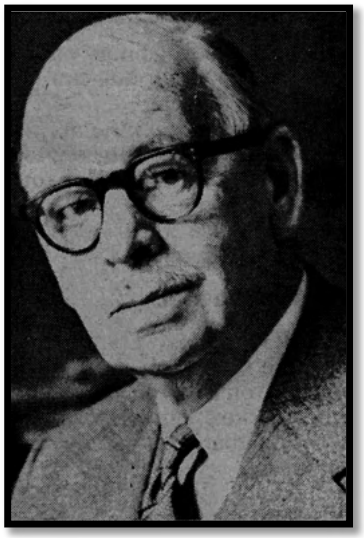
> Few of the 2,000 people who were at the Kingsway Hall, London, last Saturday, could withhold tears when Estelle Roberts, in a triumphant demonstration of clairvoyance, reunited a father and mother with their son who had passed on less than a year ago.
>
> The dramatic series of spirit messages began when the medium, pointing to two people seated side by side, asked:
>
> "*Which one of you two has a portrait of a young man with you ?*"
>
> When the woman answered, Estelle declared,
>
> "*You are his mother.*"
>
> Then the medium turned to the man seated by her and said:
>
> "*You are his father. I know because your son is here and he tells me.*"

—~—☼—~—

Below is Brigadier R.C. Firebrace's obituary notice as previously referenced:

There must have been a wonderful welcome for this doughty exponent in the spirit world, which is enriched by his presence.

—~—☼—~—



A MATERIALISED form speaking to him in Russian, a language he knew, was among the remarkable Survival proofs received by Brigadier R. C. Firebrace, 85, who passed on last week.

He became one of the most knowledgeable and experienced Spiritualists who had witnessed every phase of mediumship.

Yet his psychic quest began seemingly by accident when, as a young staff officer, he was stationed near Salisbury, Wilts. A lover of detective stories, he used to borrow them from a neighbour's collection.

Name appealed

One day he chose a book called, "Phantom Walls," which seemed a promising name for a thriller. He discovered it dealt with Survival evidence by Sir. Oliver Lodge. The neighbour was the famous scientist's daughter.

"I was struck by the evidence it presented," he said. "Later I met Sir Oliver. From then on psychics became my study."

As soon as he could he formed a home circle. It began with table tipping indicating letters of the alphabet that spelt out messages.

One communication promised the table would move when no one touched it — and it did.

Firebrace then had sittings with professional mediums. Through them, "I had convincing proof of the identity of my father, including facts entirely unknown to me which I had to verify from my mother."

Several mediums forecast he would get the direct voice in his own circle.

Direct voice heard

Specialising in foreign affairs, Firebrace became British Military Attache at Riga and later held the same post in Moscow.

An accomplished linguist, he was fluent in French, German, Italian, Russian and Hindustani.

At Riga he formed a direct-voice circle. After sitting regularly twice a week for nearly two years, the trumpet moved with great speed and freedom all over the room. The first spirit voice was heard.

The development continued, resulting in intelligible communications, sometimes lasting half an hour, of almost continuous speech on serious themes.

Among his outstanding experiences was attending a Helen Duncan materialisation seance. One solid-looking figure conversed with him in Russian.

"I consider this to be one of the finest proofs of spirit communication," he said. "No one could suggest Mrs Duncan's subconscious mind spoke Russian."

Firebrace made a pact with a friend who also spoke Russian. Whoever passed on first would try to return through a medium and repeat two Russian words. "I regret to say they were swear words," said Firebrace.

Full name given

Two years later his friend passed on. After an interval of four years, through an English medium the friend's christian and surnames were given.

The control said the communicator was trying to transmit something in a foreign language. With difficulty the control repeated phonetically the two Russian words.



Helen Duncan in 1942

Firebrace paid tribute to an Estelle Roberts voice seance he attended. "The evidence was clear cut and direct, full christian and surnames being given." [27]

He also praised an Alec Harris seance at Cardiff where 18 forms materialised. They varied from small children to a figure "six inches taller than I am" — he was a six-footer.

He was one of the few to witness the whole process of materialisation. It occurred at a seance in good red light with Louisa Bolt, who was roped to her chair.

First came what seemed like a puff of smoke from her spleen. This formed into vapour, at the end of which there emerged a perfectly-shaped hand, though cut off at the wrist. From the hand the vapour trail led back to the medium.

Firebrace asked permission, which was given, to touch the hand. It felt exactly like a human hand, complete even to fingernails, but was cold to the touch.

He participated in test sittings with voice medium Leslie Flint.

An infra-red telescope was focused on the medium, who wore a throat microphone. An electronic expert watched the instruments which were attached to this microphone.

Under these conditions the direct voice came without any indication on the instruments that it was registered by the throat microphone.

For 13 years Firebrace was president of the London Spiritualist Alliance, now the College of Psychic Studies.

He was the first and only president of the Survival Joint Research Committee. Its Spiritualist and research members have worked harmoniously in psychic experiments since the formation in 1963. [28]

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[27] Pioneer, Vol. 3, No. 3: "Behind the scenes at Estelle Roberts' Voice Seances – Psychic News".

[28] "Survival Joint Research Committee Trust" (SJRCT), a charity founded in 1963, *exclusively concerned with the survival of human personality after bodily death.* The SJRCT have strongly supported my work for around fifteen years in connection with my research and publication of Psypioneer and this journal, Pioneer.

In addition to being a leading astrologer, Firebrace practised a system of healing by radionics based on diagnosing blood spots.

There must have been a wonderful welcome for this doughty exponent in the spirit world, which is enriched by his presence.



NEW SNU PIONEER PAGE

Looking for a specific subject?



All the articles published in Pioneer over the last eight years have been grouped together within their category as much as possible

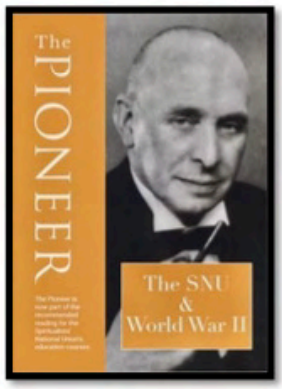
A selection of important subjects from the history of the Spiritualists' National Union.

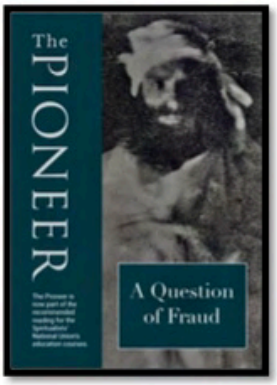
Designed to cover key topics for anyone studying one of our courses or for anyone looking to further their knowledge on the history of our movement.

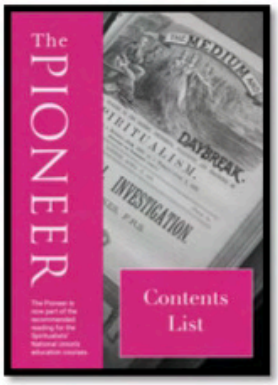
https://www.snu.org.uk/the-pioneer-journal

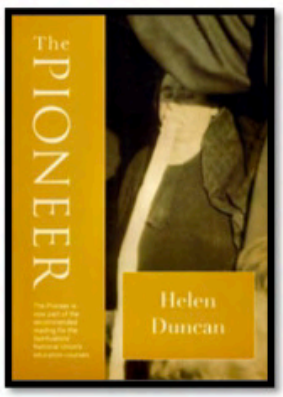
The Pioneer journal is a unique insight into the history of the Spiritualists' National Union and its pioneers.

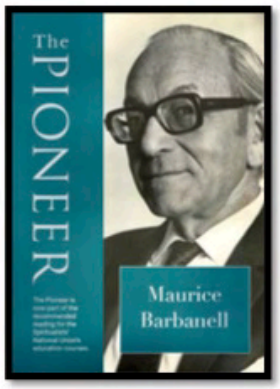








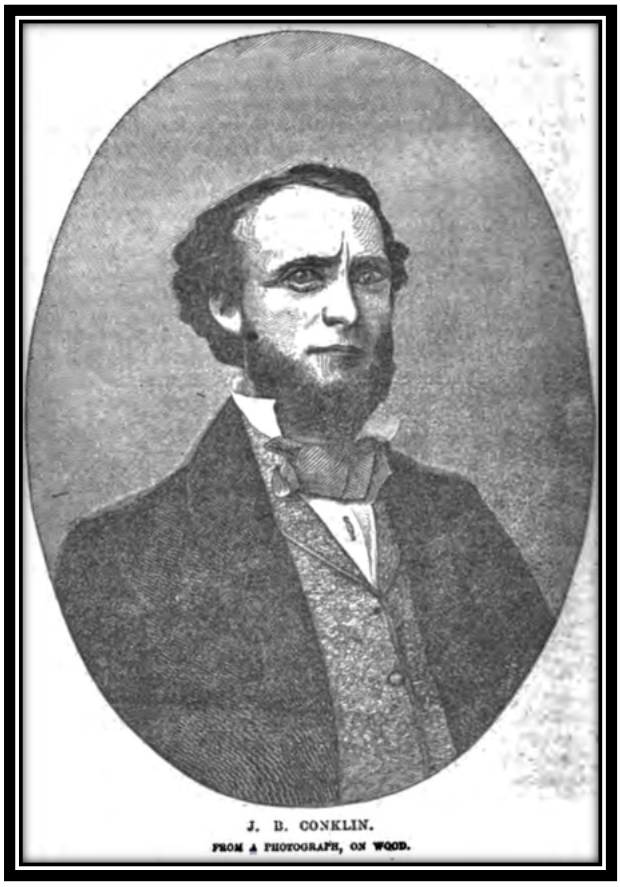




JOHN B. CONKLIN

An Early American Pioneer Medium

In the last issue of Pioneer it is noted:



My research into J.B. Conklin began some years ago in Psypioneer, Vol. 5, No. 10, October 2009: "Nettie Colburn Maynard (part one)" [29] The second part was published in Vol. 6, No. 2, February 2010: "Dr. Walter Franklin Prince versus Simon P. Kase". It is during the second article that the alleged involvement occurred between John B. Conklin and President Abraham Lincoln. This research would bring into play a more critical look into Lincoln – Maynard – Conklin.

At the time of the above-mentioned articles I had little early biographical information on Conklin. This came to light more recently from a Nichols' Monthly: [30] "THE LIFE OF A MEDIUM *Or, the Spiritual Experiences of J. B. Conklin*", which is archived at the valuable website run by historian Marc Demarest, "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals" [31] (IAPSOP). [32]

The last issue of Pioneer quoted from Nichols' Monthly John Conklin's early development as a medium, his meetings with the eldest Fox sister, then known as Ann Leah (née Fox) Brown, where Conklin eventually received a communication via the alphabet from a spirit to guide him through his work. It was claimed to be the celebrated Quaker George Fox. Conklin became a test medium; one first-*time* sitter was then known as actress Emma Hardinge.

In this issue Pioneer will continue to quote some of the research done in Psypioneer as previously noted in relationship to the alleged involvement occurring between the medium, John B. Conklin, and President Abraham Lincoln.

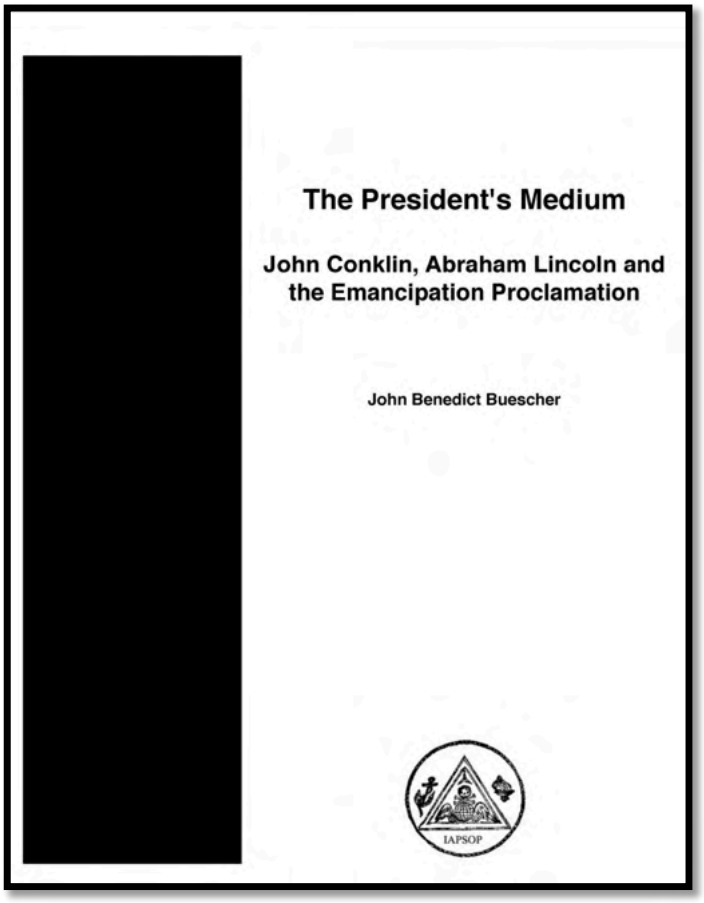
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[29] "Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?" by Nettie Colburn.

[30] A Magazine of Social Science and Progressive Literature, 1855-1857, monthly, New York, NY, then Cincinnati, OH. Publisher: H. Watkin & Valentine Nicholson. Editor: Thomas Low Nichols and Mary Sargeant Gove Nichols.

[31] "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".

[32] 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.



After sending out the previous October issue of Pioneer I received an e-mail from Marc Demarest, where he noted: *Reading the latest issue of the Pioneer… wanted to make sure you were aware that there's a precedence issue, potentially*. Marc is referring to the excellent paper by American historian and author John Buescher, published in May 2015 and available as a free download,

"The President's Medium: John Conklin, Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation" [33]

I was not aware of Buescher's research into Conklin and Lincoln, whereas in the last issue I took a candid look at some of Conklin's early development as a medium from the autobiographical sketch referred to. Buescher gives a much more detailed insight into his life and his work as a medium, both positive and negative. Using genealogy, census reports and general research, we find that some of the timeline, birth date and some of the events are likely to be misplaced.

For example, John Buescher notes:

Conklin states: "I was born in the city of New York, in 1825"; however, his research has shown:

> "John Benjamin Conklin, born September 24, 1820, in New York City; died August 4, 1870; buried at the Cemetery of the Evergreens, Brooklyn and Queens, New York City."

Albeit his age may seem relatively unimportant on the surface it can throw some doubt on his seafaring days, where he claimed he was saved on occasions while at sea by *Providence* simply by the timeline of the *historic facts* by claiming to be born in 1825 rather than five years earlier in 1820.

John Buescher notes early in his paper:

> "Because no one has ever published any historical research on our man John B. Conklin, we are forced to begin by fishing for the most basic details of his life, without being able to get our bearings by consulting anyone's previous work."

Below is some of the research originally published in Psypioneer Vol 6, No. 2, February 2010, which appears to have been overlooked over the years.

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[33] http://iapsop.com/jbb/2015__buescher___the_presidents_medium_introduction.pdf

Dr Walter Franklin Prince

versus

Simon P. Kase

—~—☼—~—

Considering the worldwide attention that has been given to "*Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?*" by Nettie Colburn and to earlier accounts by Simon Kase, there is little ready information as to what actually happened and whether the scattered reports are authentic.

There is, to my knowledge, only one investigation into the accounts where the information is collated—by the prominent American psychical researcher, Dr Walter Franklin Prince (1863-1934) [34] —but this has remained rather obscure.

It should be noted that Dr Walter Franklin Prince spells the name of one of the central characters of the story, the medium J. B. Conklin, *incorrectly* as 'Conkling'.

Prince's research was published by the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in its Journal (JSPR), December 1930, [35] then a private publication, unlike its Proceedings. We express our thanks to the SPR for supplying Psypioneer with a photocopy, which we republish below:

THE AETIOLOGY OF A "PSYCHICAL" LEGEND

BY DR WALTER FRANKLIN PRINCE

FOR half a century a certain story, in one or another form, relating to Abraham Lincoln, has been in circulation, and I do not remember to have seen in print any refutation. At last it has come to pass that a book entitled *The History of Spiritualism* [36] boldly affirms:



Walter Franklin Prince

"We may fitly end this short review of the early days in America by an event where spirit intervention proved to be of importance in the world's history. This was the instance of the inspired messages which determined the action of Abraham Lincoln at the supreme moment of the Civil War. The facts are beyond dispute....." And it has come to pass that a magazine purporting to be devoted to research [37] declares: "There is a remarkable story extant in regard to the influence which led Lincoln to conceive the idea of emancipation and to act upon it by the issue of his famous proclamation. It seems authentic and if so, it deserves to be widely known." When a legend has reached the point that it is sponsored by what to many readers are authorities,

[34] Prince was born in Detroit, Maine, on April 22nd, 1863. He became director of research and editor of publications, 1920-1925c, to the American Society for Psychical Research, (ASPR, founded in 1885 by William Barrett). He was one of the founders and research officer to the Boston Society for Psychic Research (BSPR, founded 1925) and later become President of the Society for Psychical Research, London 1930-31.

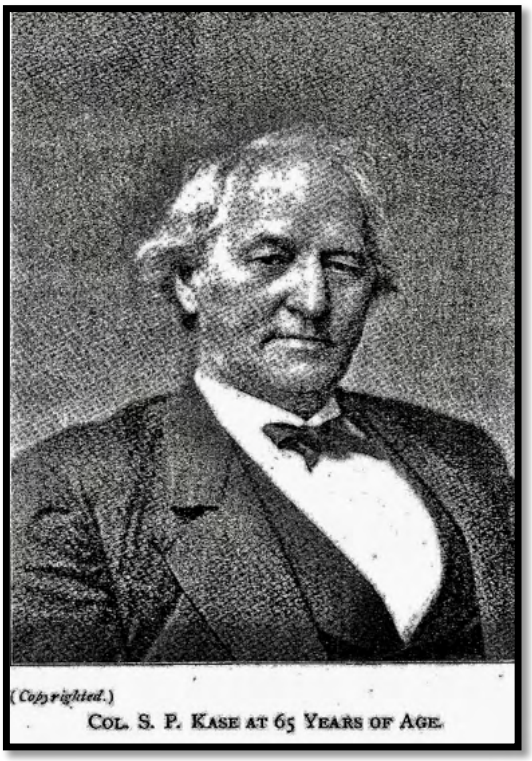
[35] JSPR, Volume 26, 1930, pages 148-157.

[36] By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1926), i. 146.

[37] *Psychic Research* (New York, March 1930), xxiv. 115.

when it then attracts editorial attention from the Boston *Herald*, and revives in Spiritualist [38] and other periodicals, it is time to confront it with an array of historical facts, and of interest to trace it to its origins.

The learned writer of the magazine article says that "the credit for the preservation of this story is due to Mrs M. E. Williams," [39] and after grateful acknowledgment that "our thanks are due to this lady for her kind permission to reproduce the story," proceeds to reproduce it as embodied in a pamphlet by Mrs Williams, and, she declares, told by Colonel S. P. Kase [40] of Philadelphia to her, and set down at her request so that it should not be lost to posterity. This version, in honour of Mrs Williams, who is thus credited with its salvation from oblivion, we will call the W-version.


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COL. S. P. KASE AT 65 YEARS OF AGE.

According to the W-version, then, Col. Kase obeyed a voice which told him, as he was walking on a street in Washington, to enter the house of a medium named Conkling, who at once engaged him to carry a letter written by himself (Conkling) to the President. Conkling, however, accompanied Kase, but remained in an adjoining room while the latter, equally a stranger to Lincoln, presented the letter which stated that its writer had been sent "by spiritual influences to confer with you regarding the interests of the nation." Lincoln consented to see Conkling and did so the following Sunday. Four weeks later Kase was present one evening in a certain house, together with President and Mrs Lincoln and other persons, when a young girl advanced toward Lincoln with closed eyes and said: "Sir, you were called to the position you occupy for a very great purpose. The world is universally in bondage. It must be physically set free, so that it may mentally rise to its proper status. There is a spiritual Congress supervising the affairs of this nation as well as a congress at Washington. This republic will lead the van of republics throughout the world."

This is as Col. Kase remembered it at this telling, and he added: "This was a text on which she lectured the President for a full hour and a half, dwelling strongly on the importance of

[38] E.g. *Light* (London, 26 April 1930), 1. 199.

[39] Mrs Williams, the author of the pamphlet referred to (*Abraham Lincoln Facts Indisputable*, 4th ed.), was invited by prominent French Spiritualists, in 1894, to give sittings for the materialization of spirits in Paris, and planned a tour over Europe, which was suddenly terminated by her exposure in that city, in the Ironic of a Spiritualist, by Spiritualists, including M. Leymarie, of the *Revue Spirite*. She was "grabbed" and found in the pantaloons and other garments appropriate to a male spirit, and the mask and drapery which stood for another spirit, and other apparatus, were discovered. The whole matter was published in a special supplement to *Light* (1894, xiv. 545-52; cp. xiv. 566-9) and was extensively printed in American journals. I may instance the New York *Sun* of 23 November 1894, which published cuts from photographs of the paraphernalia. The lady has since had a variegated career. Within the last decade a clergyman and his wife, acting under my instructions, twice caught her impersonating a spirit.

[40] "Col. Kase was a very prominent Spiritualist of the more credulous type. I have an abundance of material showing that he was deceived by some of the most notorious tricksters of his time. His reports of what took place in his presence were so far from the facts that I would not trust his memory or judgment for anything he said on the subject of Lincoln and mediums, because I would expect that any interest which the President showed in the way of trying out mediums would be exaggerated and warped out of semblance to the reality. The fact that Col. Kase was "fully assured in his own mind" that Lincoln was influenced by messages through a medium to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, weighs little in view of the cases of fakery of whose genuineness he was also fully assured.

the emancipation of the slaves; saying that the war could not end unless slavery were abolished." He also thought he remembered hearing "the child" predict that the North would undergo no military reverses after the issue of the proposed proclamation. Then "the little girl" woke, and a lady began to play the piano. [41]

Finally, according to Kase, Lincoln, a few weeks afterward, issued the proclamation, to take effect on 1 January 1863, and Kase was quite certain that he was caused to do so by the message through "the child." [42]

But it happens that the world does not owe such a debt of gratitude to Mrs Williams, after all. Many years ago, at a time when that lady's illustrious career was not far advanced, Col. Kase told the story to Mrs Emma Hardinge Britten, who embalmed it in her *Nineteenth Century Miracles* (1884, pp. 484-7), published in 1884. This we will call the B-version. Moreover, as Mrs Britten informs us, the tale had been told by him still earlier, and printed in a Spiritualist paper called the *Spiritual Scientist,* and the B-version includes extracts from that organ.

There are many discrepancies between the two versions. [43] According to B "the President looked somewhat disappointed," and it is explained that the name sent in, S. P. Kase, gave Lincoln the impression that S. P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, had called. According to W, the President was "apparently a little frightened," and it is explained that Kase much resembled George Washington (to meet whom, in 1862, one would naturally be a bit startled). In each version Kase purports to give a copy of the letter; the two are not verbally identical, although essentially so.

The versions of the trance address verbally differ more widely, although the trend of thought is similar. This is shown by the first sentences of B: "You, sir, as President of the Republic, are called to the position you occupy for a very important purpose. The world is not only groaning under the weight of mental and spiritual bondage, but four millions, made in God's image, are enduring physical slavery. Their yokes must be broken, the fetters must be severed," etc. And by a sentence farther on: "This civil war will never cease; the shout of victory will never ring through the North, will never reverberate along the valleys of the South; the olive-branch of peace will never wave over your fields, and lakes, and mountains, till you issue a proclamation of freedom—a proclamation that shall set forever free the enslaved millions of your distracted country."

The effect of all this eloquence, says Col. Kase, "was that President Lincoln was convinced as to the course he should pursue; the command coming from the all-seeing angel world was not to be overlooked, so like a faithful servant, when convinced of his duty, he feared not to do it and to proclaim freedom by the Emancipation Proclamation to four millions of slaves. That Proclamation was issued on September 22, 1862, to take effect the first day of January, 1862." [Should read 1863]

I have no objection to any proof the "all-seeing angel world" may give as to the validity of its messages, but should lose something of my respect for Lincoln if he accepted a mere

[41] At this point the magazine omits the only sentences *of* the Colonel which make the piano interesting; his statement that one side of it hopped four inches above the floor, in time to the music, and continued to do so with four men roosting upon it.

[42] It may also be noted that according to Mrs Williams's pamphlet Mrs Maynard was for two years, 1863-1865, "engaged exclusively by President Lincoln, and made her home in the White House where she gave the President seances almost daily." This is a fearful perversion of the facts, as measured by the statements of Mrs Maynard herself, who claims to have given "a number of seances with President Lincoln and his wife" in February and March 1864, and mentions only seven other meetings with him, several of which were casual only.

[43] One queer item of Kase's story may be noted in passing. He reported that he advised the President to write a letter to Conkling making an appointment with him, although all the while that gentleman was sitting in an adjoining room. To those who remember how accessible Lincoln it was is incomprehensible that, having become interested in Conkling, he did not call him in then and there.

mediumistic harangue as proof. Still, if this is history, we must accept it. Fortunately the good Colonel said something else, which enables us to estimate his reliability as a historian.

In the version told to Mrs Williams, he added: "I believe we had twenty-six battles after this great event [the preliminary proclamation of *22* September], and all were successful on the Union side except possibly one or two unimportant skirmishes." This affirmation seemingly applies to the remainder of the war, and is an egregiously mistaken one. Of major defeats which the North afterward underwent there may be cited the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Chickamauga, Cold Harbor, Petersburg. Grant fought battle after battle with Lee in the Wilderness campaign, which battles certainly were not victories. Among minor defeats may be listed the battles of Drury's Bluff, Olustee, Sabine Crossroads, Pleasant Hill, Pine Mountain, Kenesaw Mountain, New Market. If the Colonel was capable of such contradiction of public records of his own day, how could one rest content on his uncorroborated story of an unrecorded mediumistic speech which took place years before the telling?

In the B-version, we find the Colonel saying that it was, not through the rest of the war, but "in the intermediate time" between the two proclamations that there occurred twenty-six battles, and now he says that "every one of them was a success upon the Union side." By the time of the W-version his formula had somehow got twisted, but the earlier one was only a shade less false. For between *22* September 1862 and 1 January 1863, came the terrible Union defeat of Fredericksburg, the defeat of Sherman at Vicksburg, the failure of Rosecrans at Stone River, the stalemate of even the iron-willed Grant, and on the very day of the final proclamation the rebels broke the blockade of Galveston. Instead of being a period of victory it was one of special gloom for the North.

Considering that Kase was able to imagine and allege a military Utopia which never existed, that he apparently recorded not a line of the trance address and only vaguely attempted to fix its date as "some three or four weeks" before the preliminary proclamation, that he told his story years after the proclamations and the war and Lincoln's death had passed into history, and that the sentences attributed to the medium cannot be verbally correct or they would not so markedly differ in the two versions, even if I knew no more, I should say that without impugning Col. Kase's honesty in the least, I could only infer from his yarns that the medium probably said *something* about freeing the slaves, about the war and about the country.

But I do know something more, as does every person familiar with American history, and that is, that on 22 July 1862, Abraham Lincoln read to his Cabinet the draft of a preliminary proclamation of emancipation, fully a month before, according to Kase, he listened to the trance-address from "the all-seeing angel world" which (still according to Kase) first convinced him that such a proclamation should be made. The only reason it was not actually issued that month was because it was thought best to defer it until after a Union victory. When Lee had been checked in the battle of Antietam, 16-17 September, it was determined that a fit time had come. This explodes the legend thoroughly.



Nettie Colburn Maynard

But there is more to learn. In the B-version we find that the medium was Nettie Maynard (really, at that time, Nettie Colburn). And she, as it happens, thirty-nine years ago wrote a book entitled *Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?* (Philadelphia 1891). Mrs Nettie

Colburn Maynard included in this book her version of what happened on the same evening with Lincoln which Kase had in mind, and of the trance-address. She had every motive not to minimize the facts.

The first particular which strikes our attention is that the medium, whom Kase remembered as "a little girl," (he calls her this thrice, and says that she reminded him of the scriptural passage about "babes and sucklings") in 1862, was, according to her own testimony, "a mere child" in 1845, and that she began to engage in public lecturing in 1856. That is, she was probably not less than *22* years old, and very likely older, [44] when she delivered the celebrated trance oration. [45]

The next fact which we discover from her testimony is that the trance address, the first time she ever saw President Lincoln, was not some time in August, as Kase remembered it (although even that date was fatal to the claim that she inspired the preliminary proclamation), but sometime in December 1862. [46] But the preliminary proclamation had been issued more than two months before, and this had declared that on 1 January 1863, all slaves in States then continuing rebellious would be legally free. The absurdity of claiming that Nettie brought about the act already *in esse*, *or* the one already *in posse*, needs no accentuation.

But Nettie herself does not make the claim, or anything like it. She admits that she knew that the final Proclamation was at hand. This is her entire account of the address, the parts she thought most important italicised as she italicised them. Beginning with the statement that no one but Lincoln seemed to understand her "until that portion was reached that related to the forthcoming Emancipation Proclamation," she goes on thus: "He was charged with the utmost solemnity and force of manner not to abate the terms of its issue, and not to delay its enforcement as a law beyond the opening of the year; and he was assured that it was to be the *crowning event of his administration and his life,* and that while he was being counselled by strong parties to defer the enforcement of it, hoping to supplant it by other measures and to delay action, *he must in no wise heed such counsel, but stand firm to his convictions and fearlessly perform the work and* fulfil *the mission for which he had been raised up by an overruling Providence*." [47]

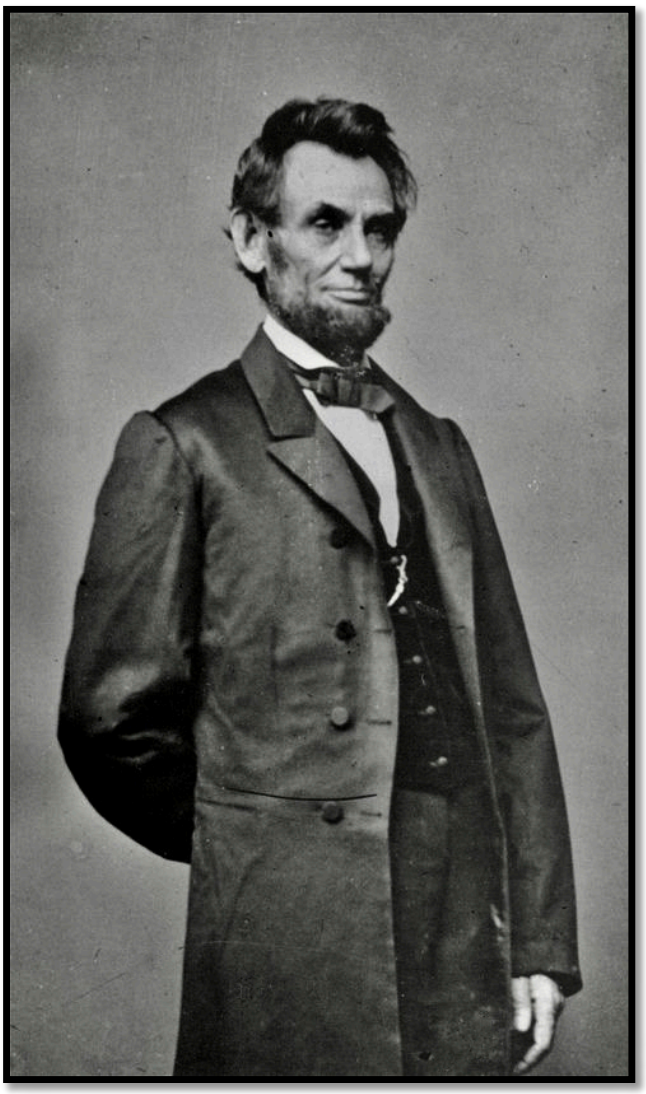
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[44] Pioneer: Nettie Colburn Maynard also known as Henrietta Sturdevant Maynard 1841-1892.

[45] Mrs Maynard also told of the terpsichorean piano but stated that its saltations occurred before her oration, not after it as according to Col. Kase.

[46] A little chronology will be useful, to show the slow evolution of the idea of emancipation in Lincoln's mind. Lincoln from the beginning of the war favoured compensated emancipation. He brought about a joint resolution of Congress to pay for the slaves of any state not in rebellion, and signed it 10 April 1862.
16 April he signed an act abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia.
12 July 1862 he met a delegation from the border States and urged that these accept compensated emancipation.
13 July he told Secretary Welles that after much thought he had about come to the conclusion that it was a military necessity to proclaim freedom to all the slaves.
17 July he approved an act freeing slaves under certain military conditions.
21 July he read to the Cabinet a draft of a proclamation of emancipation to become effective on 1 January 1863, but it was judged best to postpone it until after a Union victory.
6 August he signed an act freeing all slaves employed in rebel military service.
13 September he made a long reply, which has been preserved, to a committee from Chicago religious bodies urging him to issue a proclamation of emancipation. In it he gave no hint of his intentions.
22 September he issued the preliminary proclamation, following the battle of Antietam, giving notice that on 1 January 1863, all persons held slaves in territory then in rebellion should be free.
1 December he again urged his plan of gradual compensated emancipation. This producing no results, on 1 January 1863 he issued the final Emancipation Proclamation.

[47] Since Mrs Maynard turned from the temptation of endorsing Kase's claim that she inspired Lincoln to emancipate the slaves and told so tame a story of what occurred, her honesty is beyond question. However, one is not compelled to accept her inference that since Lincoln glanced at Webster's portrait on the wall he implied a conviction that the "Defender of the Constitution" had been addressing him, nor that her memory of the conversation which ensued was verbally exact. I do not believe that an intelligent official asked the President if pressure had been brought to bear upon



Here is not a word about the world being universally in bondage, or about the impossibility of the war ending unless slavery should be abolished, or about victories which would result, or any of the hifalutin contained in Kase's two versions. She first saw Lincoln more than two months after the preliminary proclamation and within a few weeks (nobody gives exact dates) of the final one, which was already absolutely determined upon, and which nothing short of the surrender of the States in rebellion or the death of Lincoln could prevent. All that the medium did, according to her own account, was to exhort the President to do what he had announced he would do, to tell him this would be a very important thing, which he knew already, to entreat him to be true to his convictions, which was his life-long habit, and to direct him not to delay the enforcement of the Proclamation beyond the first of the year, whereas it was absurd to suppose that he could *enforce* it before the downfall of the Rebellion. [48]

Kase says that the lecture was "so grand and sublime" that the "little girl must have been under deep control of the spirit of some ancient philosopher." Mrs Maynard hints that this "ancient philosopher" was Daniel Webster!

I do not believe that Kase was a conscious liar, but that he was a very badly mixed up old gentleman. To remember a young woman hardly less, and very likely more than 22 years old, one who began to deliver public lectures six years before, as a "little girl," a "child," is alone sufficient to show that his memory was in a mussy condition. The date he assigns to the trance-address is inconsistent with the claim that it brought about the document already existent in writing. His varying but equally untrue affirmations regarding victories show how unreliable he was. And the statement of the medium herself utterly refutes his story, except

him to "defer the enforcement of the Proclamation." That word *enforcement* echoes the medium's naive assumption that the President could give the impending Proclamation immediate effect in the actual liberation of the slaves in rebellious States. Consequently it is unlikely that Lincoln replied: "It is taking all my nerve and strength to withstand *such* [my italics] a pressure," though he may well have said that there was opposition to his plan. And did not the medium know that? His message of 1 December to Congress had been printed in the newspapers, and that had said that "among the friends of the Union there is great diversity of sentiment and of policy in regard to slavery and the African race amongst us. Some would perpetuate slavery; some would abolish it suddenly and without compensation; some would abolish it gradually and with compensation," etc. The public knowledge of these utterances deprives the trance-oration of its last scrap of significance.

[48] *Nineteenth Century Miracles* was regarded as a Spiritualist masterpiece; it was in print seven years before Mrs Maynard printed her book, and it is impossible that she was not familiar with the Kase story. Her account of what really happened must be regarded as a conscious and deliberate contradiction of the tale credited by the *Spiritual Scientist* and by Mrs Britten. She did not expressly denounce that tale, probably out of respect for "the female St Paul of the movement" (see Doyle's *History of Spiritualism*, i. 138), whose book had given it wide circulation.

for the commonplace facts that Nettie was there and harangued the President about his proclamations concerning which everyone then had knowledge.



Incidentally a pretty story told by the medium Conkling to Mrs Britten must go into the ash-barrel too. Roused probably by the interest taken in Kase's dreamy memories imparted to the *Spiritual Scientist*, one of which was that Conkling spent four Sundays with Lincoln, this medium told Mrs Britten that his spirits "spelled out, letter by letter, the preliminary draft of that famous document. The result of these interviews was the President's proposition to his Cabinet to issue such a proclamation." Alas! Kase informs us that these four Sundays immediately preceded the occasion when Nettie first met the President, and she tells us that she first met him in December. But the preliminary draft had been read to the Cabinet in July, and, substantially unaltered, had been issued in September!

The stages in the evolution of the legend, then, were somewhat as follows:

1. Nettie Colburn, in December 1862, when all the country was on tiptoe awaiting the final Emancipation Proclamation, had the opportunity to display her mediumistic oratory before President Lincoln. Stimulated by the stirring events happening and about to happen, she, in what purported to be a trance state, made a very ordinary address, telling him that the freeing of four millions of slaves would be the greatest act of his life, and exhorting him to stick to his announced purposes against all opposition—as any country parson might have preached to him.

2. During the years that followed, Colonel Kase, so credulous that he was the delight of tricksters, and so befuddled that the last three months of 1862 appeared to him a period of uninterrupted Union triumph, really remembering that Nettie had told the President something about a proclamation freeing the slaves, and that she had appeared to him to be very eloquent, gradually and unconsciously concocted for her, in his mind, an unstable speech, and developed the conviction that it first suggested to Lincoln the idea of issuing a proclamation of emancipation, guileless of the fact that the date he assigned to the interview by itself defeated the claim.

3. After the incident had become thoroughly transformed in the laboratory of the Colonel's mind, its importance impressed him to the point of telling it in the *Spiritual Scientist*.

4. The tale attracting wide attention among Spiritualists, the medium Conkling became dissatisfied with the minor part assigned to him therein, and gave out the story that his controls dictated, "letter by letter," the preliminary proclamation, although again dates refute the claim and, were it true, it would completely annul Kase's allegation that the President was indebted to Nettie for the idea. Kase, although so familiarly associated with Conkling, was evidently ignorant of this feature. [49]

[49] The two stories, (1) that Nettie Colburn inspired the preliminary Proclamation, and, (2) that Conkling dictated it verbally rest, each upon the testimony of one person alone. But the cynical Muse who presides over the growth of legends has perpetuated the one which long ago was repudiated by its heroine, and allowed to lapse into "innocuous desuetude" the other, which has never been refuted until the present writing.

5. “The narrative in substance was given to the author,” that is to Mrs Britten, by Col. Kase himself, but as she passes on, for the most part, the *Spiritual Scientist* version, she probably made no written record of the tale he told her, consequently we do not know what variations it contained.

6. Mrs Nettie Colburn Maynard, the heroine of the Kase tale, demolished it in a book of her own, but it already had too much impetus to be thus stopped.

7. Kase told the story with many verbal and a few factual variations to Mrs Williams who, not being addicted to research, supposed that she was the discoverer of it, and printed it anew.

8. Ignoring the medium’s own repudiation of the claim that she influenced President Lincoln to declare emancipation, and neglecting its historical chronology not difficult of access, a professed history insists that Nettie Colburn “determined the action of Abraham Lincoln at the supreme moment of the Civil War,” and that “the facts are beyond dispute,” [50] a professed researcher is impressed that the story “seems authentic,” a newspaper which professes nothing but a desire to impart news thinks the claim worth editorial attention, the legend starts again on its world-wide travels, and the indignant ghost of Mrs Maynard protests in vain.

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Editor’s Note:

In my editor’s note I brought forward some possible points of discussion or, more simply, *food for thought*, with some further information to evaluate more fully Dr Walter Prince’s conclusions and deductions regarding the Simon P. Kase story; now over a decade later some of the observations are still relevant albeit I have lightly edited some of the material below:

On the surface Prince has given a detailed, well-researched perspective on the entire story—but was he governed by his own opinion of Simon Kase? [51] Kase was only the storyteller; Dr Prince throughout his research has put all the discrepancies, contradictions and historical incorrectness entirely on the shoulders of Kase, who had come to Washington on a business trip! It is surprising that Prince makes no allowances that the various publishers of his story might have added their own interpretation, or exaggerated, or perhaps wrongly formatted Kase’s experience!

Prince was comparing the W and B version comments on Kase’s “reliability as a historian” but Simon Kase was only relating his experience; he was a businessman, not a historian.

We could counter Dr Prince’s remark about Kase’s “reliability as a historian”; he states in footnote 48, for example:

> Nineteenth Century Miracles was regarded as a Spiritualist masterpiece; it was in print seven years before Mrs Maynard printed her book, and it is impossible that she was not familiar with the Kase story. Her account of what really happened must be regarded as a conscious and deliberate contradiction of the tale credited by the *Spiritual Scientist*

[50] Doyle bases his certainty, strange to say, not upon the Kase story, but that of Mrs Maynard, which does not in a single sentence, or by any inference that Sherlock Holmes himself could draw from it, support the notion that Lincoln was influenced in the least by any medium on earth to emancipate the slaves.

[51] Prince gives Simon P. Kase very little credibility in his relating of his story; we note that he regards Kase thus—“Col. Kase was a very prominent Spiritualist of the more credulous type”—“His reports of what took place in his presence were so far from the facts that I would not trust his memory or judgment for anything he said on the subject of Lincoln and mediums, because I would expect that any interest which the President showed in the way of trying out mediums would be exaggerated and warped out of semblance to the reality”—“I do not believe that Kase was a conscious liar, but that he was a very badly mixed up old gentleman,” etc.

> and by Mrs Britten. She did not expressly denounce that tale, probably out of respect for "the female St Paul of the movement …"

Nettie Maynard states in her Author's Preface:[52]

> Some years ago, at the request of that scholarly writer, the late Prof. S. B. Brittan, I prepared a manuscript, which he offered to edit for publication, but his death following shortly, the MS. was lost and never recovered. The present one has been prepared at intervals during the past three years by the aid of an amanuensis.

Samuel Byron Brittan died in July 1883; Nettie Maynard's *original* manuscript would have predated the above-referenced published account in *Nineteenth Century Miracles,* which perhaps is a consideration given Dr Prince's remarks.

On continuously reading the Dr Prince report, it appeared to me that there are probably two stories here that have become confused and mixed up and are being presented as one event; or possibly some dates used by Prince are erroneous. We have seen this all too clearly in the Hydesville story, the formation of the Seven Principles, etc., how *facts and dates* become interchanged, exaggerated and distorted.

As noted in the Dr Prince paper, there is contradiction of the *facts* brought forward by S.P. Kase and Prince presents these in the two versions—W and B (Williams and Britten). Dr Prince tends to put his narrative into a time-frame to emphasise his point, i.e. to show contradictions in the Kase story.

Dr Prince firstly claimed that "the preservation of this story is due to Mrs M. E. Williams..." We come against the problem of not knowing the actual date of the 1st edition of Mrs Williams' pamphlet—*Abraham Lincoln Facts Indisputable*. Prince references the 4th edition but does not give a date. However, the first teller of the Kase story is reported to be of dubious character (Materialization with Mrs. Williams was grabbed and found to be the medium in disguise); [53] this version of the story he calls the "W-version". Below are Dr Prince's points of reference regarding the medium Conklin. [54]

Dr Prince's "W—version":

> According to the W-version, … then, Col. Kase obeyed a voice which told him, as he was walking on a street in Washington, to enter the house of a medium named Conkling, who at once engaged him to carry a letter written by himself (Conkling) to the President. Conkling, however, accompanied Kase, but remained in an adjoining room while the latter, equally a stranger to Lincoln, presented the letter which stated that its writer had been sent "by spiritual influences to confer with you regarding the interests of the nation." Lincoln consented to see Conkling and did so the following Sunday.

Dr Prince's "B—version":

> Col. Kase told the story to Mrs Emma Hardinge Britten, who enshrined it in her Nineteenth Century Miracles (1884, pp. 484-7), published in 1884. This we will call the B-version. Moreover, as Mrs Britten informs us, the tale had been told by him still

[52] *Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?* Rufus C. Hartranft, Philadelphia, 1891, pages 3-4.

[53] Dariex, X. (1894). Le flagrant délit de la célèbre Mrs Williams. [The flagrant misdeed of the famous Mrs Williams]. *Annales des sciences psychiques, 4,* 333-354.

[54] This is the correct spelling for the medium J. B. Conklin, as previously pointed out. Dr Price incorrectly spells his name as Conkling. It should be noted that the quotes in the B Version of the *Spiritual Scientist* also spell his name incorrectly as Conkling.

earlier, and printed in a Spiritualist paper called the *Spiritual Scientist*, and the B-version includes extracts from that organ.

In referring again to Conklin, Prince states only:

> In each version Kase purports to give a copy of the letter; the two are not verbally identical, although essentially so.

In the B-version we find also:

> Incidentally a pretty story told by the medium Conkling to Mrs Britten must go into the ash-barrel too. Roused probably by the interest taken in Kase's dreamy memories imparted to the *Spiritual Scientist*, one of which was that Conkling spent four Sundays with Lincoln, this medium told Mrs Britten that his spirits "spelled out, letter by letter, the preliminary draft of that famous document. The result of these interviews was the President's proposition to his Cabinet to issue such a proclamation." Alas! Kase informs us that these four Sundays immediately preceded the occasion when Nettie first met the President, and she tells us that she first met him in December. But the preliminary draft had been read to the Cabinet in July, and, substantially unaltered, had been issued in September!

This gives a timeline on Dr Prince's research—Kase gave his experiences to Mr E. Gerry Brown, editor of an American weekly Journal, *Spiritual Scientist*, published in Boston, founded in 1874. [55] Mr Brown would have published the Kase article sometime between 1874 and 1878, making this the earliest known version at the time of the Prince investigation. Next was Emma Hardinge Britten, 1883, [56] followed by Mrs. Williams. It may seem, with the little information Prince provides, that he probably did not in fact see the *Spiritual Scientist* article and relies solely on Mrs Britten's narrative.

The final reference to the medium Conklin is to be found in his conclusion.

The stages in the evolution of the legend, then, were somewhat as follows:

> 4. The tale attracting wide attention among Spiritualists, the medium Conkling became dissatisfied with the minor part assigned to him therein, and gave out the story that his controls dictated, "letter by letter," the preliminary proclamation, although again dates refute the claim and, were it true, it would completely annul Kase's allegation that the President was indebted to Nettie for the idea. Kase, although so familiarly associated with Conkling, was evidently ignorant of this feature.[57]

Looking further afield we find that Conklin did have other *reported* dealings with Abraham Lincoln; however, this was before the alleged meeting between Conklin and Kase in Washington, which happened to be in the same room that Kase had occupied in 1850! Dr Prince makes no mention of any other possible relevant material that may have been available to him.

Below are some references regarding Conklin and Lincoln:

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[55] A weekly journal of spiritual science, literature, art and inspiration, edited E. Gerry Brown, 1874-1878.

[56] Nineteenth Century Miracles 1884, pp. 484-7; the English edition, published by William Britten, was 1883.

[57] Note by Dr Prince: The two stories, (1) that Nettie Colburn inspired the preliminary Proclamation, and, (2) that Conklin dictated it verbally rest, each upon the testimony of one person alone. But the cynical Muse who presides over the growth of legends has perpetuated the one which long ago was repudiated by its heroine, and allowed to lapse into "innocuous desuetude" the other, which has never been refuted until the present writing.

In Emma Hardinge's (Britten) statement given verbally, dated Tuesday 2nd February 1869, before the London Dialectical Society, she refers to a Conklin séance in Washington at which she claims Lincoln was present: [58]

> Any strong emotion, Mrs. Hardinge considered, was also detrimental to the exercise of spiritual power. Mr. Conklin, of whom she had previously spoken, was invited to attend a number of séances at Washington with some five or six gentlemen, who were evidently desirous not to be known. The manifestations were very marked and decisive, until Mr. Conklin discovered that one of the gentlemen present was no other than President Lincoln; when his anxiety and surprise became so great as entirely to stop the manifestations, which were not again renewed till a mutual explanation had restored him to his normal state of mind. Thus, it would seem, that any very strong emotion had also the effect of rendering the magnetism positive, and neutralising the action of the spirits.

Further, in *Modern American Spiritualism*, Hardinge gives another account of Conklin—Lincoln: [59]

> Immediately after the election of the late lamented President Lincoln, [60] an article appeared in the Cleveland *Plaindealer* which the timid feared, and the antagonistic hoped, would greatly prejudice the cause of the popular Republican leader, by associating his name with Spiritualism.
>
> In the expectation that he would give a public denial to what some interested parties were pleased to consider "a most injurious statement," the article in question was submitted to the President, who quietly glanced over it, and in answer to the earnest request that he would furnish a contradiction to the papers, replied: "The only falsehood in the statement is that the half of it has not been told. This article does not begin to tell the wonderful things I have witnessed."
>
> The anti-spiritual friends of President Lincoln were henceforth silent on such subjects; but rumor was less obliging and constantly circulated reports of the *séances* in which the noble and greatly harassed martyr communed with the spirits of wise and perfected men, through whose prescient power and far-seeing judgment, counsels were poured into his ear, which bore mighty and fateful fruit.
>
> A gentleman lately resident in Washington and only known by his most intimate friends as a strong physical medium, became familiarly acquainted with the contents of many an eventful state paper before it ever saw official light—aye, even whilst it was being issued from the spiritual press over the telegraphic wires which run between the mortal and immortal worlds. Doubtless the human "wire-pullers," who surround the seats of office and plant their batteries of influence so as to make the nation's welfare bear primarily on their own, imagine they have exerted an immense power in the great ultimates of national destiny, but they little deem that there are also invisible machinists at work inclosing themselves no less than the country in a network of hidden causes, whose woof is spun by the hands of mightier statesmen than earth, and rulers whose viewless batteries of power galvanize even the very stones beneath men's feet into preachers of their resistless purposes.

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[58] Taken (edited) from: *Report on Spiritualism, of the committee of the London Dialectical Society*, J. Burns edition, 1873, pages 111-112.

[59] Modern American Spiritualism, published by the Author, New York, 1870, pages 301-302.

[60] Abraham Lincoln (February 12, 1809 – April 15, 1865) was the 16th President of the United States, serving from March 1861 until his assassination in April 1865.

The paragraph in the Cleveland *Plaindealer*, above referred to, is as follows:

"THE PRESIDENT ELECT A SPIRITUALIST"

"It so happened that Conklin, the test medium from New York, was in Cleveland on the day when President Lincoln arrived on his way to Washington. Being a Republican himself, and not wishing to run an opposition to the distinguished visitant, he broke up his own levees at the Johnson to attend that of President Lincoln at the Weddell. The moment he set eyes on Mr. Lincoln, he recognized in him a very peculiar individual who had formerly been a frequent visitor at his room in New York, but whose name he had never been made acquainted with. He used to come alone, sit silently, question mentally, and depart as he came, unnoticed. On one occasion he got a remarkable test, which was published in the *Spiritualist* at the time, in New York. On referring to a file of that paper, Mr. Conklin furnished us with the narrative, which ran as follows: [61]

" 'A GOOD TEST

" 'A gentleman who has often visited Mr. Conklin, called upon him on the evening of March 23, for the usual purpose of communicating with his spirit friends.

" 'After asking some twenty or more mental questions, which he briefly stated were answered correctly, he put the following, question: 'Can you inform me of Mr. K.'s condition?'

The answer, written through Conklin's hand, was: 'Yes; he is present now.'

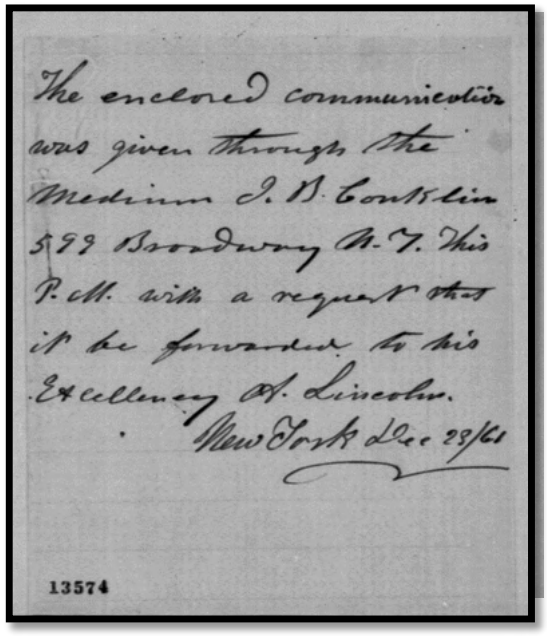
Q. When did he die?

A. Yesterday morning; he is happy, but cannot communicate. The gentleman departed from his generally taciturn conduct to say this was a very remarkable case, for the friend he had inquired for and whom that communication stated to be present, he had left three days previously in Wisconsin, twelve hundred miles distant, alive, and though indisposed, pronounced by his physician to be fast recovering from a long illness. At Mr. Conklin's solicitation he promised to inform him if the communication should prove correct. In accordance with his word, the stranger did call on Conklin the next morning and informed him that he had just received a telegraphic dispatch from a brother-in-law of Mr. K.'s, announcing his death on the previous morning, and at the hour stated by the spirit. Mr. Conklin says that Mr. Lincoln is the identical gentleman referred to in the *Spiritualist*; that he remembers him from the peculiarity of his appearance, from his frequent calls, and as the recipient of this particular test.' "

—~—☼—~—

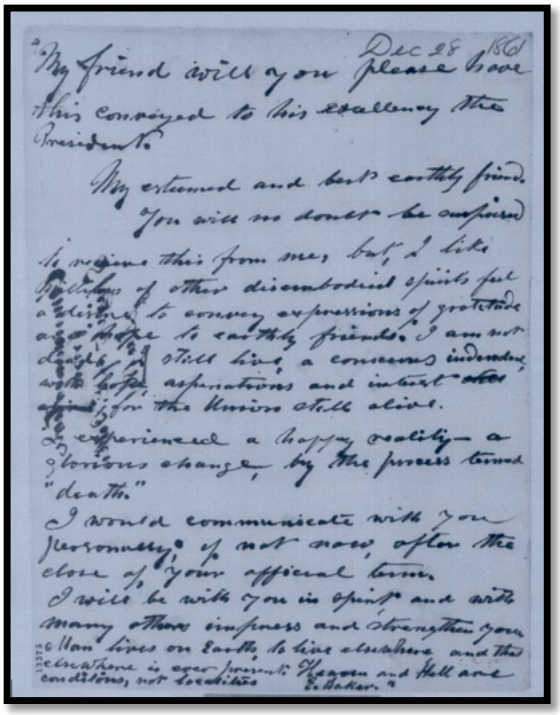
[61] To my knowledge there was no journal in America named "The Spiritualist"!

The evidence that Conklin had some early involvement with Lincoln is naturally open to much more dedicated research. However, we know that on occasion Conklin certainly sent President Lincoln written communication from the spirit of one of Lincoln's close friends, Edward D. Baker. [62] These two letters shown are a part of eight letters sent to President Lincoln from J. B. Conklin: note that they are recorded as I. B. Conklin, rather than the correct initials J. B.


The enclosed communication
was given through the
Medium I. B. Conklin
599 Broadway N. Y. This
P. M. with a request that
it be forwarded to his
Excellency A. Lincoln.
New York Dec 28/61
13574

From I. B. Conklin to Abraham Lincoln, December 28, 1861.

Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress. Transcribed and Annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center, Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois. [63]


Dec 28 1861
My friend will you please have
this conveyed to his Excellency the
President.
My esteemed and best earthly friend.
You will no doubt be surprised
to receive this from me, but, I like
millions of other disembodied spirits feel
a desire to convey expressions of gratitude
and hope to earthly friends. I am not
dead. I still live, a conscious
individual, with hope, aspirations and interest
for the Union still alive.
I experienced a happy reality—a
glorious change, by the process termed
"death."
I would communicate with you
personally, if not now, after the
close of your official term.
I will be with you in spirit and with
many others impress and strengthen you.
Man lives on Earth, to live elsewhere and that
elsewhere is ever present. Heaven and Hell are
conditions, not localities
E. Baker.

The enclosed communication was given through the medium I. B. Conklin 599 Broadway N. Y. this P. M. with a request that it be forwarded to his Excellency A. Lincoln.

New York Dec 28/61

"My friend will you please have this conveyed to his excellency the President.

My esteemed and best earthly friend.

You will no doubt be surprised to receive this from me, but, I like millions of other disembodied spirits feel a desire to convey expressions of gratitude and hope to earthly friends. I am not dead. I still live, a conscious individual, with hope, aspirations and interest; for the Union still alive.

I experienced a happy reality—a glorious change, by the process termed "death."

I would communicate with you personally, if not now, after the close of your official term.

I will be with you in spirit, and with many others impress and strengthen you. Man lives on Earth, to live elsewhere, and that elsewhere is ever present. Heaven and Hell are conditions, not localities

E. Baker." [64]

[62] Edward Dickinson Baker (February 24, 1811 – October 21, 1861).

[63] Google: Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, using the keyword Conklin. There are other numerous letters, for example by Robert Dale Owen. The keyword 'Spiritualism' brings up, for example, Judge John W. Edmonds. Another early letter sent to Lincoln by J. S. Hastings, Saturday, September 7, 1861 (Spiritual communications with John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and others), however, has no transcription.

[64] Lincoln's friend, Edward D. Baker, had been killed in the battle of Ball's Bluff on October 21, 1861.

In Conclusion:

1) Conklin's letter content and later meeting/s, etc:

W version: "by spiritual influences to confer with you regarding the interests of the nation." The President met Conklin the following Sunday—Conklin was not mentioned again.

B version: "I have been sent from the city of New York by Spiritual influence pertaining to the interest of the nation. I can't return until I see you. Appoint the time. Yours, etc., " '(Signed) J. B. CONKLIN.' "

Re meeting: "President Lincoln seemed very much interested and said: 'Tell Mr. Conklin that I will see him on Sunday, between 9 and 10 a.m.' 'Oh, no,' was my reply; 'write him a letter.' This is the last we hear of Conklin; "we returned to our respective lodgings." (E.H. Britten).

In addition, in the B Version we have the *Spiritual Scientist* bold claim: "For four succeeding Sundays Mr. Conkling was a guest at the Presidential mansion."

The editor (1874-1878) of the *Spiritual Scientist*, E. Gerry Brown, continues: "Mr. Conkling has himself alleged to the author, that the Spirits not only urged the subject of the emancipation proclamation, but that they, in the name of the Independence Fathers, spelled out, *letter by letter*, the preliminary draft of that famous document."

As at present we do not know what date this article was published, [65] not having read the original text by Brown, it is difficult to comment, except to say that Brown must have obtained this *alleged* story from Conklin some years prior to the *Spiritual Scientist*, as J.B. Conklin died in 1870c. [66] In the B Version E.H. Britten dates the Kase visit as 1862, but with no indication of the month; the *Spiritual Scientist* quoted in her narrative is not dated by the editor.

2) When President Lincoln read the letter given to him by Kase, did he immediately consent to see Conklin, because he already knew the medium J. B. Conklin? Because he had attended séances: "*who* [Lincoln] *had formerly been a frequent visitor at his room in New York...*" as reported by Cleveland *Plaindealer*. The report *certainly, if correct*, furnished the President with excellent evidence of Conklin's ability.

There is also Emma Hardinge Britten's report to the London Dialectical Society: "*The manifestations were very marked and decisive, until Mr. Conklin discovered that one of the gentlemen present was no other than President Lincoln...*"

3) It may be that the medium Conklin does not *fully* belong in the Kase narrative in the dates presented by Dr Prince!

4) Dr Prince places much of his conclusions on the date (in general) that Kase, Nettie and Conklin came into contact with President Lincoln; he states that this was August/December 1862, but on 22nd July 1862 *Abraham Lincoln read to his Cabinet the draft of a preliminary proclamation of emancipation*.

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[65] E. Gerry Brown, "How Spiritualism Abolished Slavery in the United States," *Spiritual Scientist* 7.2 (March 1878). Taken from "The President's Medium: John Conklin, Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation", by John Benedict Buescher, May 2015.

[66] An undated obituary appears in *The Year-Book of Spiritualism for 1871* by/edited Hudson Tuttle and J.M. Peebles, William White and Company, Boston, and James Burns, London, 1871, page 221. The book, it appears, was completed by October 1870 from its various contributors, then published in 1871.

5) Dr Prince had consulted two, perhaps three accounts of Simon Kase's story, as given by Williams, Britten and the *Spiritual Scientist*. There is little information as to the correct dating of all these associated events. As I have already mentioned, Nettie's MS was lost, [37] so while on her death-bed she had now to dictate the entire book; at this point she was unable to write (this was over a three-year period).

In her Author's Preface, page 1, she states:

> There may be some inaccuracy in dates, as the more prominent events occurred many years ago; but the circumstances as stated are correctly recorded.

It should be noted that Nettie Maynard does not mention the medium Conklin in her book, and only briefly Kase as being present. It is mentioned in the Publisher's Preface, pages XVi, and only mentioned once on page 90 (first edition).

6) Dr Prince himself made date errors in his paper, recording the proclamation date incorrectly (no doubt a typing error) in one part of his paper. Some of his dates referring to Kase, etc. he does not reference, so one wonders as to its origin, as the whole story depends on correct dating! Dr Price appears not to have furthered his research and had accepted that the few references he had to hand finalised the story. The arrival of Simon Kase, the Conklin letter, and the young entranced medium, who spoke to the President, all depend on the dates that they allegedly took place! If reference could be found that all this allegedly took place earlier, this would certainly add a new perspective to the entire Simon Kase story.

Further research was done into John Conklin with his visit to England in around 1864. Part of his visit was spent with the veteran Spiritualist, Robert Cooper, at Eastbourne. This proved to be very successful; his mediumship is recorded by Cooper in his book, "Spiritual Experiences". However, from the Cooper household he continued to Glasgow, where his mediumship was suspected of fraud…

See Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 8, August 2012:

Mr. J. B. Conklin and the Founding of Glasgow Association of Spiritualists



Pioneer ends its eighth volume

Pioneer was launched at the Torquay AGM 2013, replacing the SNU hardback magazine of the same title; a special edited edition of the first issue was published for the delegates. Starting as a quarterly electronic journal, from January 2015 it went bi-monthly and continues as such today.

The front page noted:

The foundations of the Spiritualists' National Union were laid over a long period of time, and its growth ensured by dedicated pioneers, many of whom have been forgotten. Most readers will be unacquainted with their names and the roles they so valiantly played in the building of the SNU, an organisation that today stands firm due to their bold efforts.

This journal is dedicated to those Pioneers.

To date it has published 1,691 pages of researched materials; it is read in various societies, such as the Society for Psychical Research. It is recommended reading for the SNU education courses; it is also used by universities and has attracted numerous students and on occasion their professors to attend the Britten Museum and Library Research – Study Weeks, as noted elsewhere in this issue.

In the last year individual subscribers have substantially increased, rising to 2,500; in addition, it is sent out to SNUi members and is available on the SNU website.

Extended thanks are due to David Hopkins and Leslie Price, who sub-edited the early issues of the journal.

Editor Paul J. Gaunt and sub-editor, former SNU General Secretary, Charles Coulston

