The PIONEER

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



Hydesville

the PIONEER

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Presentation given to SNU Education and Tutors: Please note this does not include my lecture notes, for further information please contact me

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All references to Psypioneer in these issues are archived at http://psypioneer.iapsop.com/ or via: www.pauljgaunt.com

Special thanks to Charles Coulston for his work in sub-editing these issues – also acknowledged to Minister David Hopkins and Leslie Price for their past work in sub-editing the issues

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WHEN DID MODERN SPIRITUALISM BEGIN? 1848?

In the nineteenth century questions were asked as to when Modern Spiritualism actually began; some prominent Spiritualists considered it started earlier than Hydesville!

Mr Alonzo G. Hollister published an article, which appeared in *The World's Advanced Thought*, Portland, Oregon in May 1888. In the same year excerpts of Hollister's article were published in the "Two Worlds", edited by Emma Hardinge Britten, and in "Light", edited by Stainton Moses (M.A. Oxon). The "Two Worlds" gave a fuller account of Hollister's article but, owing to space, reprinted below is the coverage given by "Light". First is the preface to the article by Emma, who had a personal connection with the Shakers, published in the "Two Worlds", Friday July 6th 1888, under the weekly front page titled "The Rostrum" – *Pre-Hydesville Manifestations: Birth of Modern Spiritualism*:

EXTRAORDINARY REVELATIONS; OR, ADVENT VOICES PROCLAMING THE BIRTH OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM


Emma Hardinge Britten

"SOME twenty-five years ago the Editor of this paper, hearing reports of spiritual manifestations amongst the Shakers of America, made visits to several of their villages, especially to those situated in the neighbourhood of Troy,[16] Northampton, and the head quarters of Shakerism, the Community at Lebanon. In each place, remarkable evidences of clairvoyance, seership, trance and impressional mediumship were displayed, and the singing and dancing of the members partook unmistakably of the nature of ecstasy. Several of the Elders in each place, also in the Communities situated more in the South, assured the Editor that spiritual manifestations had been prevalent amongst them long in advance of the Hydesville disturbances; that the Shakers in general claimed, upon unquestionable authority, to have been the John Baptists of the modern spiritual movement; and some of the most intelligent of them promised to write out for publication in the Editor's work, "The History of Modern American Spiritualism," a thoroughly attested account of what they claimed.

As that promise was not redeemed by the time when the work above-named was going to press, no detailed account was given therein of Shaker Spiritualism. The promised document, however, has just appeared in the May number of The World's Advance Thought, a very fine and high-toned paper, published at Portland, Oregon. The facts in question are drawn up by one of the most candid and reliable writers in the spiritual movement, Mr. A. G. Hollister, …"

[16] Emma's début trance lecture was at Troy, New York on July 5th, 1857.

Below was published in "Light", July 7th 1888, pages 326-327:

PRE-HYDESVILLE SPIRITUALISM



Stainton Moses (M.A. Oxon)

The *World's Advance Thought* gives prominence to an account of certain manifestations akin to those subsequently called Spiritualistic, which occurred amongst the Shaker communities in the early part of August, 1837. We have frequently protested against the mistaken idea that Modern Spiritualism originated with the Fox mediums at Rochester. The outbreak there was more widely known chiefly by reason of the sprightly Kate establishing communication with the unseen intelligences. But the outburst was by no means confined to one place, nor was Rochester the first locality where it was observed. Koons's circle-rooms, where John King the ubiquitous first manifested his presence, antedated Hydesville,[17] and here we have Shaker Spiritualism in 1837.

Mr. Hollister, who has been connected with the Mount Lebanon group of Shaker families from early childhood, has compiled the account from unimpeachable records in the possession of the community.

The manifestations of occult power were seen first in three children, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Clarissa, They had been influenced in the meeting in the way peculiar to Shakers, and were laid upon their beds about 7.30 in the evening, the other Shaker children gathering in the room. Then a scene of turning, shaking, and so forth, such as had never before been witnessed, took place. The room was filled with a display of power, like "a rushing mighty wind," for about half an hour. The children dropped exhausted, and were again placed on their beds, when they sang hymns and had clairvoyant visions. The influence seems to have been elevating and good.

"We were frequently cited by mediums, speaking under loved and venerated names, to close self-examination, to test our motives and conduct by our best light and convictions of truth and duty; all the love we had for righteousness, and all our manly and womanly dignity of conscience and self-respect, were energised to maintain fidelity and integrity to principle. We were reproved, encouraged, corrected, entreated, exhorted, or, comforted, collectively and individually, in public and in private, according to our various needs and conditions. We felt for a season that we were constantly under the inspection and instruction of the heavenly hosts; concealment was impossible – our inmost thoughts were scanned, and none escaped the notice of invisible guardians in any and all acts of life; each was approved and blessed by those whose blessing was most desired precisely according to merit. We thank God and His holy messengers for the scorching, fiery furnace of purification – if for nothing else, that it has brought liberation and peace to our souls. The evidence of spirit-power and its direction in this movement came like a flood, and was so convincing to the sinner, by its opposition to a selfish will and carnal life, the entire weight of its influence agreeing

[17] It should be noted that this is incorect: Jonathan Koons's circle-rooms (Ohio) did not start until the early 1850s.

with our convictions of truth and duty, that the voice of cavil and unbelief was silenced for a season."

Attention having been thus excited, and conviction brought home, the spirits of Shaker leaders became less prominently in evidence, and direction was given as to the future progress of the work, a mission entrusted to recipients of these messages and manifestations, These orders were given in the names "of ancient prophets, patriarchs, and sages," and were accompanied by outward signs, such as knocking and the like.

It is instructive to pause here and observe how similar this account is to the experience of Spiritualists in recent years. The invisible beings first seek to attract attention and awaken interest. To this end they use various means, adapting them to the special idiosyncrasies with which they have to deal. Usually some form of objective manifestation is employed, but at times the excitation of the spiritual faculties by clairvoyance or clairaudience, dream or vision, subserves the purpose. Then usually comes the lesson personal to the medium, and the mission entrusted to him to discharge. And this is very frequently even in the names of "ancient prophets, patriarchs, and sages," though to impress and overawe by authority. These names and messages are to be understood mystically. Literal interpretation is misleading. Very instructive it is to find this method in some of the earliest recorded manifestations of spirit-power. After this phase was over, there

"Followed next the visitations of spirits of various ages and nations, and of various stations and callings in life. Learned and ignorant, kings and subjects, civilised and barbarian, with all their native habits clinging to them, characters noted in history, and those who lived and died in obscurity, were freely represented. Tribe after tribe of native Indian spirits were instructed in our meetings how to behave, how to worship the Great Spirit, and in the importance of confessing and forsaking sin, forgiving injuries and returning good for evil; their ways, exhibited through the bodies of the brethren and sisters most impressible to spirit control, were at first rough and uncouth, but in the course of a number of visits they became gentle and refined in manner, and manifested deep gratitude for kindness shown them. Of course in our family meetings but a few members of a tribe could manifest at once, but they seemed to act as delegates and spokesmen for the remainder, who were referred to as present."

Here, again, we have that very common experience, especially among American mediums, of the presence of Red Indians. We have never found a sufficiently satisfactory explanation of this well-known fact: but here it is as it has since been and is now.

These varied phenomena seemed to have lasted from first to last for about fifteen years, for the first four of which the old Shaker, "Mother Ann," specially controlled manifestations. It was not until January 1850, that these Mount Lebanon Shakers heard of the Rochester knockings.

Finally, it is worth while to quote the very reasonable methods prescribed to mediums, so that they alight keep themselves "unspotted from the world" and free from risk of obsession.

"Some precautions taken to insure reliable communications were as follows: Mediums were not allowed to converse with members, nor with each other, about their spiritual gifts, but with the Elders only. Members were required to conform to the same rule, and not judge mediums or their gifts adversely. Mediums were required to abstain from all unnecessary conversation for days together. Sometimes their own gifts required them to diet a few days solely on bread and water. Special acts of humiliation and mortification were sometimes enjoined upon them, that their gifts

might come through pure channels. Above all things they were to observe all the rules or orders of the community, keep close union to their Elders, and strictly obey the monitions of conscience, that they should not be deceived by treacherous, dark, lying, and malicious spirits, who were represented as on the alert to decoy and lead captive whoever would listen to them, and were doing all that lay in their power to defeat and overthrow the work which the ministering angels were striving to accomplish."

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Emma Hardinge was one of the first historians of what became known as "Modern Spiritualism,"[18] Emma emphasises the problem *of dating the commencement of the modern movement*, in the introduction of her book "Nineteenth Century Miracles," quoted from the first edition (Manchester) published by her husband 1883 (USA 1884) page 4:

"In endeavouring to trace out with all fidelity, the origin of the great modern spiritual movement, it will soon become apparent that though very momentous results were obtained in the Hydesville investigations of 1848 –especially in the discovery of a systematic mode of communing with spirits through a set of concerted signals – yet even in America, the land in which Spiritualism has attained to a pre-eminent degree of popularity, spirit communion was demonstrated, long prior to the "Hydesville disturbances"; in fact, it is obvious that this century in the New, as well as the Old World, has been remarkable for the persistence with which spirits have endeavoured to effect a direct method of intercourse with mortals.

The causes before alluded to, which have favoured the marked publicity to which Spiritualism has attained in America, should be carefully considered, and will be found explanatory of the custom of dating the commencement of the modern movement, from the "Rochester knockings" in 1848. One great difficulty in attempting to chronicle the details of this movement, is the very fact that it did not originate in any special locality, or at any given time, inasmuch as it manifested its influence in a spontaneous and universal outpouring all over the world, coming and going like the wind – few, if any, could say whence, or whitherward. Again; it is because we cannot trace up the history of modern Spiritualism consecutively from point to point, either in time or place, that we find it expedient to take the commencement of this century for our data, and propose to treat of the manifestations as they occurred, independently, in the various countries of earth from which authentic records are obtainable. In pursuance of this plan, we shall commence our researches in Germany, where we shall find abundant testimony to the supra-mundane character of the intelligence derivable from spirit sources, as well as proof positive, that spirits have manifested their presence on earth through spontaneous action and wholly unprepared conditions."

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[18] "Who First Spoke of Modern Spiritualism? – Marc Demarest". See Psypioneer: Volume 9, No 01: January 2013.

Emma continues in Chapter I page 7, "Spiritualism in Germany" covering the period from the close of the 18th to the beginning of the 19th century:

> "William Howitt,[19] that most indefatigable student of every subject on which he chose to exercise his facile pen, in his "History of the Supernatural" writes in strong terms against the custom of identifying the modern spiritual movement with America as its birth place, or the "Rochester Knockings" as the opening of intelligent communication between mortals and spirits."

Below is the original text sourcing what Emma referred to, by William Howitt in his "History of the Supernatural", published by J.B. Lippincott & Co in 1863, taken from Volume 1, Chapter II, American Spiritualism:

SPIRITUALISTS BEFORE THE AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT

SO profound is the ignorance of the great subject of Spiritualism, which is but another term for the belief in the Supernatural, in this age – an influence pervading all ages and all nations, wide as the spread of the sun's light, repeating its operations as incessantly as the return of morning - so thoroughly has the ocean of mere mundane affairs and affections submerged as in its waves – that if presented with a new phase of a most ancient and indestructible power, we stand astonished before it, as something hitherto unheard of. If our knowledge reaches yesterday, it is absolutely at fault in the day before. This has never been more conspicuous than in the estimation of American spiritualism in this country. Because it has assumed a novel shape, that of moving physical objects, and has introduced spirits speaking through the means of an alphabet, rapping, drawing, and writing, either through the hand of mediums, or independently of them, it has almost universally in this country been regarded as an entirely new phenomenon. We still continually hear of spiritualism as originating in America within the last ten years.

The evidence produced in this volume will show that no view of the matter can be more discreditable to our knowledge of psychology. Nothing can be more self-evident than that American spiritualism is but the last new blossom of a very ancient tree, colored by the atmosphere in which it has put forth, and somewhat modified in its shape by the pressure of circumstances upon it. In other words, it has burst forth from the old, all–prolific stem, to answer the needs of the time. As materialism has made a great advance, this grand old Proteus of Truth has assumed a shape expressly adapted to stop its way.

As materialism has tinctured all philosophy, spiritualism has spoken out more plainly in resistance of it. The spirit-world has come, as it were, a step nearer to our firesides, and by what seemed the happy accident of a child's expression, but which, undoubtedly, was the usual promptings of Providence in all times of need, America learned to speak to spirits and to receive replies, though only, like Thisbe [*sic*], through the still sturdy wall of fleshly matter, explaining the mystery of all those knockings and hauntings, those sighings and rustlings, those thrillings through our nerves, and awe-overshadowings of the minds of men, through many a long age.

The sensation which this has created has been in proportion to the instinctively perceived value of this new key to the great old storehouse of spirit treasures. It has shown how much the modern Sadduceeism, by its holding up new obstructions between us and our invisible Fatherland, has made such an additional instrument requisite. We must clear away the death-wall of doubt and

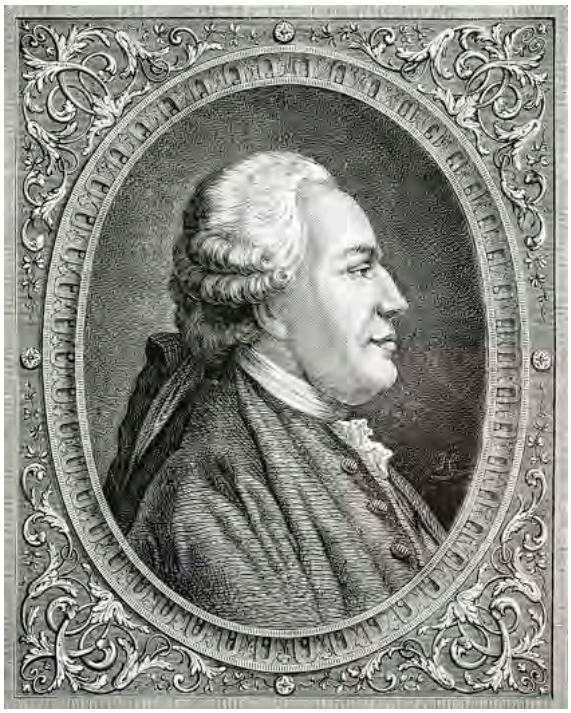
[19] William Howitt (1792-1879). See Psypioneer: Volume 8, No 9: September 2012.

negation, or we must perish. America, by the simple discovery of the telegraphy of rapping, and the further developments of mediumship, made intelligible by this discovery, has, in truth, inaugurated a new era of spiritualism; but it has by no means created or has had created within it the power of spiritualism itself. That power is the all-time inheritance of the human race.

For about a hundred years before, Germany and Switzerland had their spiritualists, developing, or believing in phenomena, almost in all particulars identical with those of America. If they had not discovered the mode of conversing with spirits by means of rapping and the alphabet, they had been enabled to converse with them by other means. They had spirit-vision, spirit-writing, knowledge of coming events from the spirit-world, and daily direct intercourse with its inhabitants. Pre-eminent amongst these spiritualists were Jung-Stilling, Kerner, Lavater, Eschenmayer, Zschokke, Schubert, Werner, Kant, of the German portion; France had Oberlin, &c. England, at a little earlier period, had its John Wesley and his disciples, who had full faith in these phenomena, and Sweden its Swedenborg, perhaps the greatest spirit-medium that ever appeared, passing in and out of the spirit-world and holding converse with its inhabitants almost at his pleasure. But leaving Wesley and Swedenborg for another notice, I shall now devote my attention to the spiritualists of Germany and Switzerland who flourished from the middle of the eighteenth century to within less than twenty years of the spiritual outbreak in America, and one of whose most distinguished members, Dr. Kerner, was, indeed, still living at the time of commencing this work. I shall notice this group of spiritualists here, otherwise out of their course, simply because they will at once deprive the American dispensation of much of its novelty, and clear away thus the gross error of making America within the last ten years the original mother of spiritualism.

Magnetic subjects are the mediums for the spirits still in the body, and mediums are the subjects of spirits out of the body.
Emma Hardinge Britten.[20]

This brief appraisal of the founding of "Modern Spiritualism" would be far from complete without mention of Franz Anton Mesmer, 1734-1815, the founder of Animal Magnetism, later known as Mesmerism, which played a vital part in pre-and post-Hydesville days. It may be interesting to know that the word *Spiritualists* was in use years prior to 1848. The term, *spiritualist*, was used in the school of Chevalier de Barbarin in Lyon, France. According to Jules D. Dupotet de Sennevoy (1796-1881), in his book, "An Introduction to the Study of Animal Magnetism", we find that three separate schools of magnetism arose, those of Anton Mesmer, Chevalier de Barbarin and Marquis de Puységur.



Mesmer was principally located in Paris, Barbarin at Lyon, and Puységur founded a school at Strasburg. Puységur's school characteristically featured a combination of Mesmer's purely *physica*l treatments and Barbarin's *psychical* treatments. Dupotet de Sennevoy remarks on page 17:

The school of the Chevalier de Barbarin. This was founded at Lyons, and, although it had many partisans in France, prevailed principally in Sweden and Germany. Its principles remind us of the Platonic philosophy; its disciples maintained that the magnetic operation depended entirely upon a pure "effort of the soul," and was to be conducted only upon psychical principles. They were therefore termed spiritualists.[21]

Mesmerism continued in Spiritualism for many years to induce, or as an aid to, a mediumistic trance state. As late as the 1920s James Hewat McKenzie (1869-1929), an adept in mesmerism-hypnotism, would use *passes* with

[20] Taken from Chapter III, page 17: "Nineteenth-Century Miracles", by Emma Hardinge Britten. The early chapters in this book are most valuable in order to understand the relevance of mesmerism in the development of early mediumship. The book is available as a free download: https://archive.org/details/nineteenthcentur01brit

[21] Spelt Barberini in "Nineteenth-Century Miracles", by Emma Hardinge Britten. Quoted from page 16: Whilst the Marquis de Puységur was making converts in every direction, by his wonderful somnambulists, a magnetizer of a still higher tone appeared on the scene in the person of the Chevalier de Barberini, a gentleman of Lyons, whose magnetic processes, associated with prayer, produced results even more extraordinary than the clairvoyants of Puységur. The Chevalier de Barberini magnetized his subjects both by manipulations and will, but in most instances, the effects he produced, threw the patients into that state now known as trance and ecstasy. Visions of the most exalted character followed. The "lucids" described scenes and persons in the other world; traversed the regions of disembodied souls, and only returned to earth reluctantly, to relate their aerial flights to wondering listeners, and describe to bereaved mourners, the apparitions of friends who had long since passed beyond the grave. *The Continental Miscellany and Foreign Review*, describes "The New Sect of Barberinists," and affirms that in Sweden and Germany, where they were very numerous, "these fanatics were called *Spiritualists*, to distinguish them from the followers of M. de Puységur, who were termed *Experimentalists*."

Eileen Garrett to induce her into a deeper stage of unconsciousness. A few years prior to Hydesville we observe that Andrew Jackson Davis had established a *defined status* through philosophical thought as to a foundation and explanation of *Modern Spiritualism* through Mesmerism.

So why mark the birth of Modern Spiritualism with the events of Hydesville in 1848?

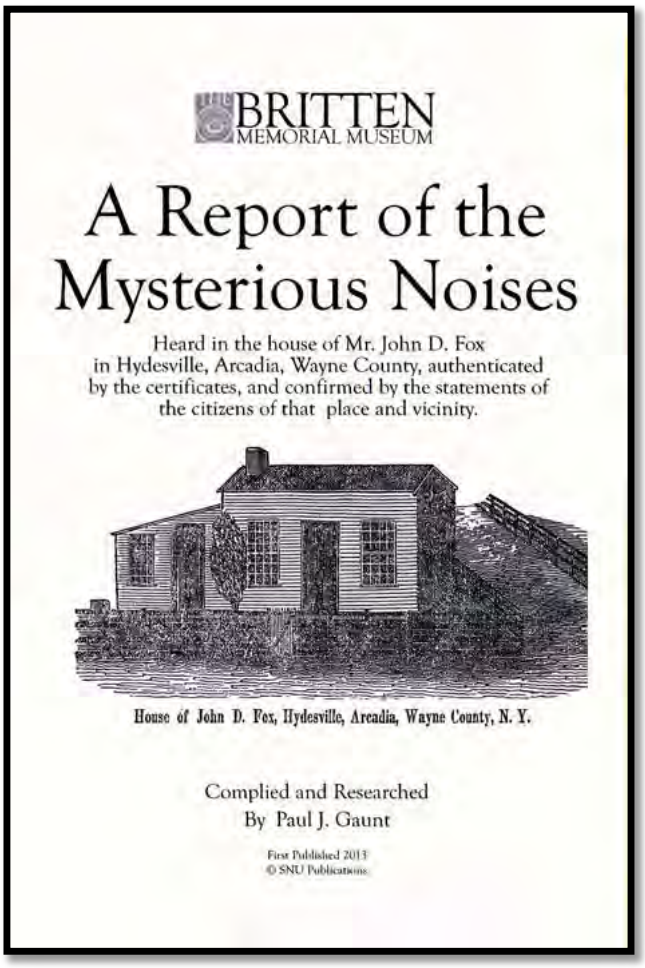
Hydesville demonstrated physically two-way communication between the spirit world and the physical world.

The words of William Howitt sum up the title of this article: "When did Modern Spiritualism begin? 1848?"

America, by the simple discovery of the telegraphy of rapping, and the further developments of mediumship, made intelligible by this discovery, has, in truth, inaugurated a new era of spiritualism; but it has by no means created or has had created within it the power of spiritualism itself.

WHAT TOOK PLACE AT HYDESVILLE?

Booklet Introduction:



Most Spiritualists are familiar with the story of the occurrences at Hydesville on March 31st 1848. However, some of these claims have veered away from the original records, partly because the original report on the Hydesville phenomena by Mr E. E. Lewis, who obtained twenty-two signed statements from witnesses in April 1848, soon became extremely rare – and partly because the story was changed from its original reports by Lewis and other early historians like Eliab Capron, with later unsubstantiated verbal reports added to it by Robert Dale Owen eleven years or so later.

Owen appears to have also introduced the name Charles B. Ros**m**a into the story. Ten years later Emma Hardinge (Britten) wrote her "Modern American Spiritualism", published in 1870. She quoted from Owen's book, "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World", published in 1860, and we appear to have the first introduction of the peddler's name, Charles B. Ros**n**a ("n"!). It would appear that this is possibly a spelling or publisher's error; it would be doubtful that Emma Hardinge would bring in another name for the peddler without some explanation for contradicting Owen's Rosma while quoting him.

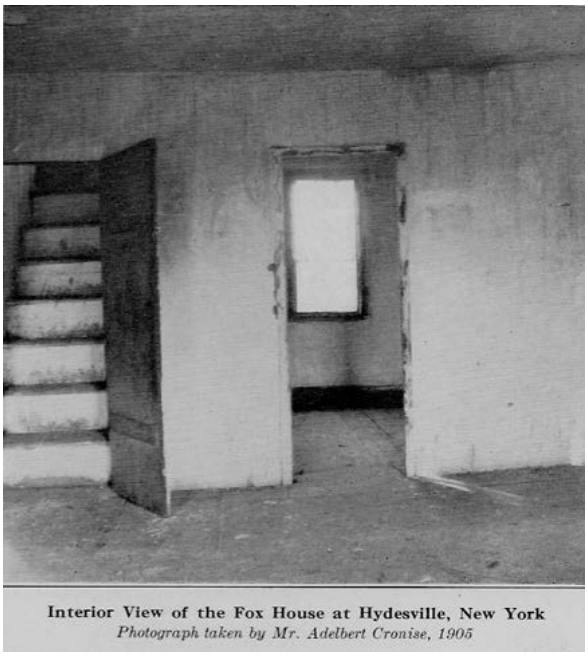
Later the eldest Fox sister, Ann Leah Underhill, published "The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism" in 1885. In the opening chapter she republishes some of the sworn statements recorded and published by Mr E. E. Lewis in April 1848. However, she failed to tell her readers that she had in fact changed some of these statements; these changes would be reflected in later works by others.

Research also shows that according to some later reports by the two younger Fox sisters (and also hinted at in some of the original material) the eldest Fox sister, then known as Leah Fish, had a daughter called Elizabeth (also known as Lizzie), who was at that time staying with her grandparents, where she was present and participated in the unfolding Hydesville events.

What actually occurred on the night of 31st March 1848?

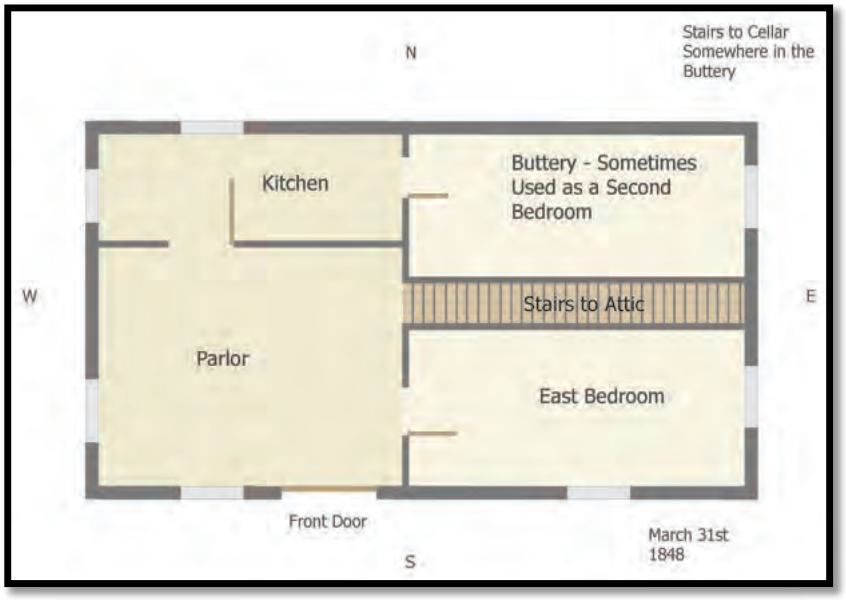
Mr and Mrs Fox had two young daughters living with them, Catherine and Margaretta; they are not actually named in the original reports. In later life they would claim there was a third girl present – their niece Elizabeth. It is also often stated that a code was adopted by the two young sisters and that the peddler's name, Charles B. Rosna, was revealed. An alphabet code was established on March 31st and would be later used by the Fox sisters in Rochester. The code was actually established by Mr William Duesler, a former resident of the house. However, no name was given at this time except the letter "C", followed by the initial of the communicator's surname, "B".

Published below is the full text of the *original* Hydesville report made by Mr E. E. Lewis in April 1848; it is not always realised that the phenomena were not just active on March 31st but continued for some days. Although the reader will find this somewhat repetitive, unlike most reports it has remarkable testimonial consistency – without contradiction. The report builds up to a remarkable and unique testament of spirit communication. It is this crude two-way communication which involved so many individuals, questioners and witnesses that would establish the foundation of Modern Spiritualism. This report gives a concise overview of what actually *was recorded and took place*, by those who were present and participated in the spirit communications.[22]



Interior View of the Fox House at Hydesville, New York
Photograph taken by Mr. Adelbert Cronise, 1905

⇐East Bedroom where the phenomena took place.

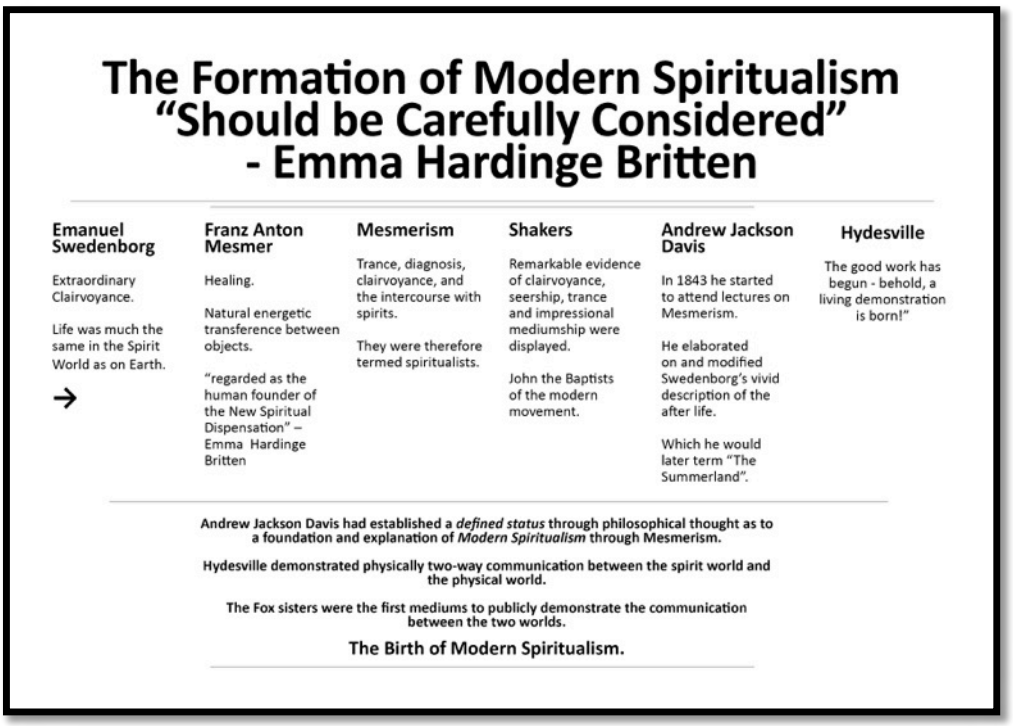


[22] Britten Memorial Museum Booklet – "A Report of Mysterious Noises" £3.99 (images above are not from the booklet): http://www.shop.snu.org.uk/new.html

South Wales District Council

Barry Spiritualist Church & Centre

Celebrated 'Hydesville Day' with a talk and discussion on the importance of Hydesville and the formation of Modern Spiritualism



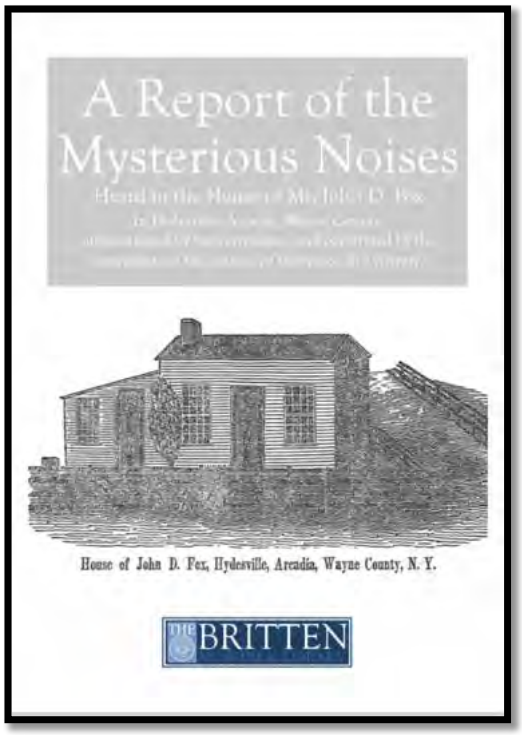
Emma Hardinge Britten:

"In endeavouring to trace out with all fidelity, the origin of the great modern spiritual movement, it will soon become apparent that though very momentous results were obtained in the Hydesville investigations of 1848 – especially in the discovery of a systematic mode of communing with spirits through a set of concerted signals – yet even in America, the land in which Spiritualism has attained to a pre-eminent degree of popularity, spirit communion was demonstrated, long prior to the "Hydesville disturbances"; in fact, it is obvious that this century in the New, as well as the Old World, has been remarkable for the persistence with which spirits have endeavoured to effect a direct method of intercourse with mortals.

"The causes before alluded to, which have favoured the marked publicity to which Spiritualism has attained in America, should be carefully considered, and will be found explanatory of the custom of dating the commencement of the modern movement, from the "Rochester knockings" in 1848. One great difficulty in attempting to chronicle the details of this movement, is the very fact that it did not originate in any special locality, or at any given time, inasmuch as it manifested its influence in a spontaneous and universal outpouring all over the world, coming and going like the wind – few, if any, could say whence, or whitherward. Again; it is because we cannot trace up the history of modern Spiritualism consecutively from point to point, either in time or place, that we find it expedient to take the commencement of this century for our data, and propose to treat of the manifestations as they occurred, independently, in the various countries of earth from which authentic records are obtainable. …"

'Nineteenth-Century Miracles', Emma Hardinge Britten, 1883, pages 4-5.

Over the last few years the errors in the Hydesville story have been corrected within the SNU education courses. To my knowledge, the SNU is the only major Spiritualist organisation which has updated the Hydesville history as a result of the recovery of the *original* 1848 Hydesville Lewis report. This report contains the twenty-two signed witness accounts; the Union used it to update and correct errors. For further information please see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 2015: "When Did Modern Spiritualism Begin? 1848?" In addition, the Spiritualists' National Union has republished the 1848 Lewis report, available at the Arthur Findlay College or at the online shop.[11]



Another problem with the Fox sisters which will probably remain unsolved is their precise ages. In the various censuses during their lifetimes they continually lied about their ages. We may note that Houdini states "Margaret, eight, and Kate, younger by a year and a half".

But in the original Lewis report Mrs Fox states: "The youngest girl is about 12 years old…" "The other girl, who is in her 15th year…"



Minister Steven Upton recently sent me some photographs of the Fox sisters' tombstone at Cypress Hills cemetery, Brooklyn, New York.

These three examples of their ages at the time of Hydesville, March 31th 1848:

Margaret: 8 years, 14 years (15th year), gravestone 10 years old.

Kate: 6 years, 12 years, gravestone 9 years old.

However, the dates of death are correct.

[11] https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/a-report-of-the-mysterious-noises

For further information please see Vol. 4, No. 9, September 2008:

"The Fox Sisters: Riddle of The Records", by Lis J. Warwood

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However, in adding Lis's excellent research my eye caught reference to the tombstone, which reads (see original article for references, etc.):

When Margaretta died, her body was placed for a year in a receiving vault at Greenwood cemetery. Later, Joseph La Fumee, who had first met the Fox sisters in New York in 1850, offered to have the remains of Margaretta and Catharine placed in his plot at Cypress Hill cemetery.
The tomb stone records a birth date of Oct. 7, 1833, for Margaretta and March 27, 1837, for Catharine. The dates were provided by Titus Merritt, friend and confidante of Margaretta Fox.

Today, the inscriptions on the Fox sister's grave markers are all but worn away, and the burial site is sadly neglected.

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We can note Lis's comment that the "grave markers are all but worn away."

But the gravestone has been restored and all the inscriptions are clear.

BUT THE RIDDLE OF THE RECORDS CONTINUES!

The two birth dates have been changed?

<u>More in the next issue</u>



HYDESVILLE HOUSE — REBUILT!



Earlier this year Minister Steven Upton, who, as part of his Ministerial role, works as a Prison Spiritualist Chaplain, told me of a prisoner he visits, known only as A.B., who makes models out of matchsticks; he has previously made a Land Rover and a Reliant Robin from 'Only Fools and Horses', and he is currently working on the 'foundations of the Fox House'!

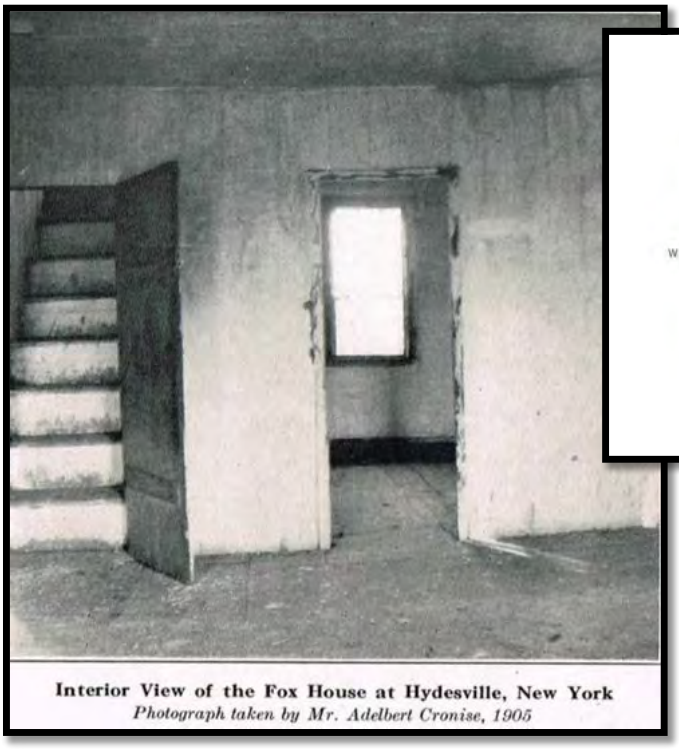
A.B. is himself a Spiritualist — Steven asked me if a model of the Fox house would be of interest to the Britten Museum & Library — *indeed it would*. I gave Steven a diagram and a rare image of the inside of the original house as shown below.

Please note:

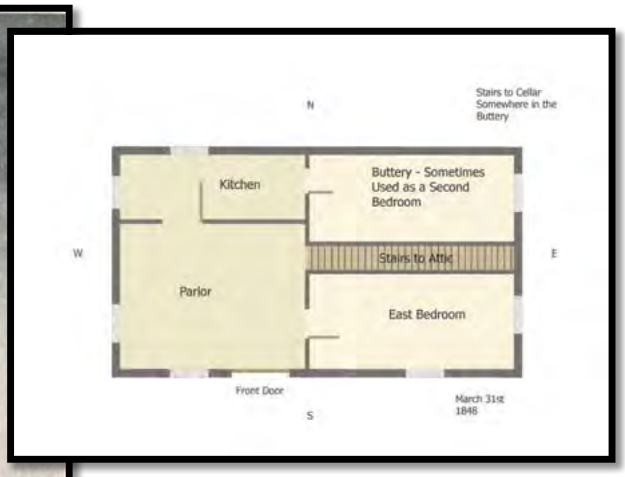
Anybody studying the history of Hydesville for an education course, etc: It should be strongly noted that over recent years new information has been uncovered which significantly changes the story. The Spiritualists' National Union uses these changes and has updated their course notes, etc. accordingly to reflect this.

In 2013 the SNU published the original signed statements by Mr E. E. Lewis of the events surrounding the Hydesville House.[14]

All the information contained in this short article is available from the editor.



Interior View of the Fox House at Hydesville, New York
Photograph taken by Mr. Adelbert Cronise, 1905



The front door opened directly into the south-facing parlour. The kitchen was set back, on the northwest side, and had its own door to the yard.

On the east side, a buttery – sometimes used as a second bedroom – connected to the kitchen, and the main east bedroom adjoined to the parlour. An enclosed staircase between the buttery and main bedroom led up to a large attic, while another staircase from the buttery led down to a dirt-floor cellar.

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[13] Notes: REPORT1: This number refers to July 7th 2018 at 8.20 pm UK time. Numbers will continue to increase within at least the next coming three weeks.

[14] pioneer@snu.org.uk

From the diagrams layout A.B. has constructed a remarkable reconstruction of Fox House, as can be seen in the images shown. David Bruton is noting some of the windows and doors which actually open and close; the images shown are with the roof removed and the attic rooms lifted out, for display over the World Congress, giving much interest.



The story of the Hydesville rappings does not just concern the happenings on March 31st 1848, as many believe. The phenomena continued after this date on successive days and a committee was formed to see if a trickster could be found!

> Elizabeth Fox stated: "There were committees appointed by those present, and stationed, some in the cellar and some about the house in different places, in order to ascertain the cause of this rapping" [15]



But the phenomena were not reliant on anyone particular being present, I have found not a single contradiction in the communications with different parties on different days. The phenomena were present in daytime or at night by the unknown spirit rapper and reportedly witnessed by hundreds of people.

The real value and understanding of the events of 1848 include a return to the beginning of the story around five years earlier. The Hydesville story in my opinion should be looked at as an *accumulation of phenomena* over these years, with the sworn statements by the people who actually witnessed the story unfold — where the true body of evidence is located.

It is not a story of just "March 31st 1848"

We can note from the statements at different periods and by different occupants of the house that much of the recorded phenomena was located in the east bedroom.

The story of the unnamed pedlar appears to begin with the signed statement of Miss Lucretia Pulver on April 11th 1848, who at this time was 19 years old but who around five years earlier had worked for Mr and Mrs John C. Bell, who then occupied what became known as Fox House.

Lucretia recalls in her statement noted below, summarised in my own words:

> A pedlar called to the Bells one afternoon — Mr. Bell did not want to hire Lucretia anymore— Lucretia wanted to buy some things off the pedlar, he never called at her house the next morning as arranged — After a few days the Bells sent for Lucretia to

[15] Elizabeth was the wife of David Fox, the sisters' brother.

return — Mrs. Bell had a couple of coats to fix for her husband — they were too large for him — out of fashion – and needed to alter them – the coats were ripped to pieces.

The pedlar was about 30 years old — he had a family and children — Lucretia did not recollect the details — The pedlar carried a trunk and a basket — he wore a black frock coat — and light-coloured pants.

During the latter part of the time — Lucretia heard this knocking frequently — in the (east) bedroom under the foot of the bed.

One night I thought I heard a man walking in the buttery — it sounded as if the person walked through the buttery, down cellar, and part way across the cellar bottom, and there the noise ceased.

One evening about a week after this — Mrs. Bell sent me down cellar to shut the outside door — in going across the cellar — I fell down near the center of it — It appeared to be uneven and loose in this place.

A few days after this — Mr. Bell carried a lot of dirt into the cellar just at night — and he was at work there some time — Mrs Bell told me that he was filling up the rat holes.

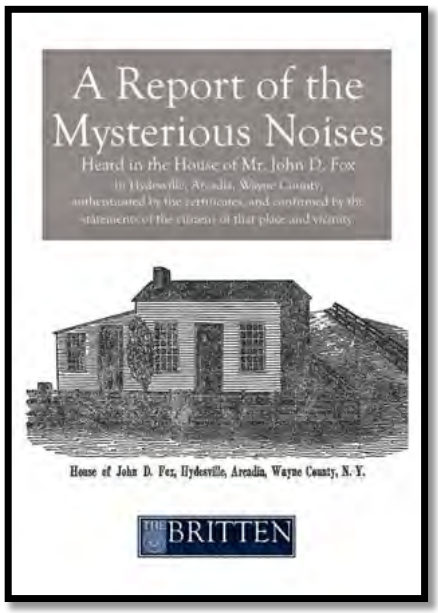
After the Bells the Weekman family moved into the house; we can note Michael & Hannah Weekman's signed statement dated Tuesday April 11th 1848:

The Weekman family were disturbed by the rapping on the outside door — sounded sometimes as if someone was walking about in the cellar.

A few nights afterwards, one of our little girls who slept in the east bedroom — woke the family by screaming — the girl said that something had been moving around over her head and face — it was cold — she felt it all over her.

Their maid, Jane C. Lape, notes in her signed statement dated April 17th 1848:

While she was working in the kitchen — she saw a man in the bed-room joining the kitchen — no one had gone into that room — there was only one door to the bed-room, and that opened into the kitchen.



The man stood facing me when I saw him — he did not speak — he had on grey pants — black frock coat and black cap — I knew of no person in that vicinity who wore a similar dress.

These are the foundations which would lead to the next tenants, Mr and Mrs John D. Fox and their family

'The Report of the Mysterious Noises' by E. E. Lewis is available on the SNU online shop.[16]

[16] SNU On-line shop: https://www.snu.org.uk/shop/a-report-of-the-mysterious-noises





Last year during Tanya Smith's "Christmas Week" the lecture room at the Arthur Findlay College was transformed into the Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey for a re-enactment of the 1944 trial of the physical medium, Helen Duncan.

This Christmas Week, December 15th - 22nd, we will be going back further another hundred years and the lecture room will become the "East Bedroom" of Hydesville House and our *foundation story* re-enacted from the disappearance of the pedlar to 1848, the generally accepted birth of:

"Modern Spiritualism"

HYDESVILLE

RETURNS TO LILY DALE

I was very honoured to be invited to Lily Dale to give two lectures in the lovely Assembly Hall.



"Built in 1888 the Lily Dale Assembly Hall has been the hub of activity. It is famous as a home for thought exchange and class work.

"Many portraits of historical leaders in the Spiritualist Movement grace its walls.

"It is now the home of the Church of the living Spirit and is the center for Lily Dale workshop activity during the summer season."

The event was over two days, July 25th, 26th.

"Science of Things Spiritual:

Spiritualist History Revealed:
A Symposium in Lily Dale"



Other speakers were Susan B. Barnes, Ph.D., CSNU, and Shannon Taggart, photographer and author of *Séance*, who jointly organised the conference.

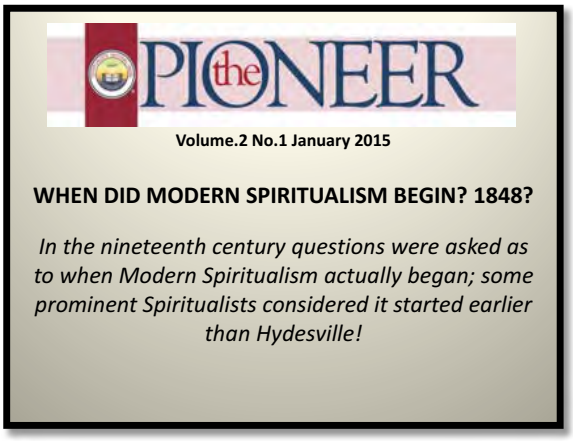
The academic side was well represented by Richard Noll, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, DeSales University, Center Valley, PA., Cathy Guiterrez, Ph.D., Adelphi University, Garden City, NY, Jesse Bransford, Associate Professor of Art, New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development, New York City, Jason Baumann, Assistant Director for Collection Development, The New York Library, and Visiting Associate Professor, Pratt Institute, New York City, Asti Hustvedt, Ph.D., author of *Medical Muses*, and George P. Hansen, author of *The Trickster and the Paranormal*.

My lectures were naturally in the *Spiritualist History Revealed* section, being an in-depth look into the history of

Part I: A Report of Mysterious Noises: Hydesville and the Fox Sisters.

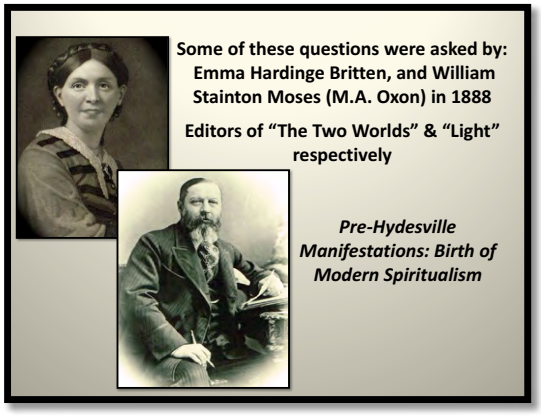
Part II: The Materialisations of Helen Duncan.

Each lecture lasted around two-and-a-half-hours, giving time to delve deep into the histories of these subjects, revealing firstly: 'What Actually Happened at Hydesville'.



The lecture began with the history of the development of what became known as "Modern Spiritualism" in the early 1850s, its development considered reaching back to Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). In 1741, aged 53, he entered into a spiritual phase, the world of the spirits—where everyone went directly upon dying. Eventually graduating to other like-minded spirits in the different spheres, Swedenborg's descriptions were vivid: life was much the same in the spirit world as on earth, with cities, handsome buildings, parks, trees, flowers, etc.

Following on to Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), he believed there was a natural energetic transference that occurred between objects; he named this Animal Magnetism ⇒ Mesmerism.



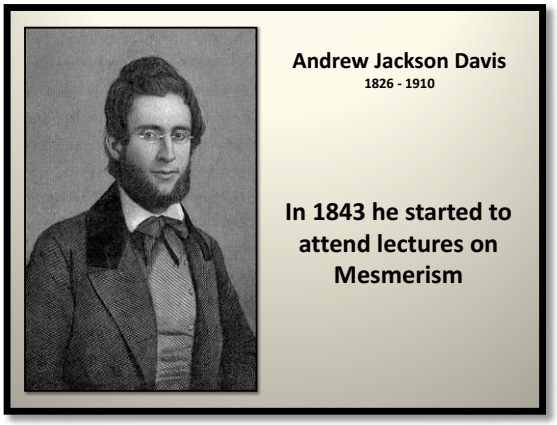
Three separate schools of magnetism arose: Anton Mesmer, principally located in Paris, Chevalier de Barbarin in Lyon, and Marquis de Puységur in Strasburg. The entranced subjects were called "somnambulists" or "lucids" ⇒ mediums.

Marquis de Puységur in Strasburg (1751–1825) is regarded as one of the founders of hypnosis; he was, I believe, the first experimenter to stumble upon the phenomenon of mind-to-mind communication, otherwise known as telepathy. Healing continued (principally by Mesmer), but some expanded into diagnosis, clairvoyance and intercourse with spirits. The Barbarin school maintained that the magnetic operation depended entirely upon a pure "effort of the soul" and was to be conducted only upon psychical principles. They were therefore termed Spiritualists.

Shakers were founded in the 18th century in England, having branched off from a Quaker community—they were known as "Shaking Quakers". In 1747 women assumed leadership roles—notably Jane Wardley and Mother Ann Lee; Shakers settled in colonial America, with initial settlements in New Lebanon, New York.

Emma Hardinge (later Britten) made several visits in the early 1860s to the Shaker villages; she noted:

> "In each place, remarkable evidences of clairvoyance, seership, trance and impressional mediumship were displayed, …"
>
> "… spiritual manifestations had been prevalent amongst them long in advance of the Hydesville disturbances; that the Shakers in general claimed, upon unquestionable authority, to have been the John Baptists of the modern spiritual movement; …"



In a mesmeric trance state, Andrew Jackson Davis experienced visions and claimed he communicated with Emanuel Swedenborg. Davis elaborated on and modified Swedenborg's vivid descriptions of the afterlife, which he would later term "The Summerland".

In 1845 Davis began to dictate to his scribe while in a mesmeric trance, which he would call the "Superior Condition". In 1847 Davis published his two-volume work, "The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind", becoming known as the Poughkeepsie Seer. Davis claimed he wrote on the morning of March 31st, 1848:

> About daylight this morning, a warm breathing passed over my face, suddenly waking me from a profound slumber; and I heard a voice, tender yet peculiarly strong saying:
>
> "Brother! The good work has begun—behold, a living demonstration is born!" . . . . The breathing and the voice ceased immediately, and I was left wondering what could be meant by such a message

Emma Hardinge Britten warns in her 1883 book:

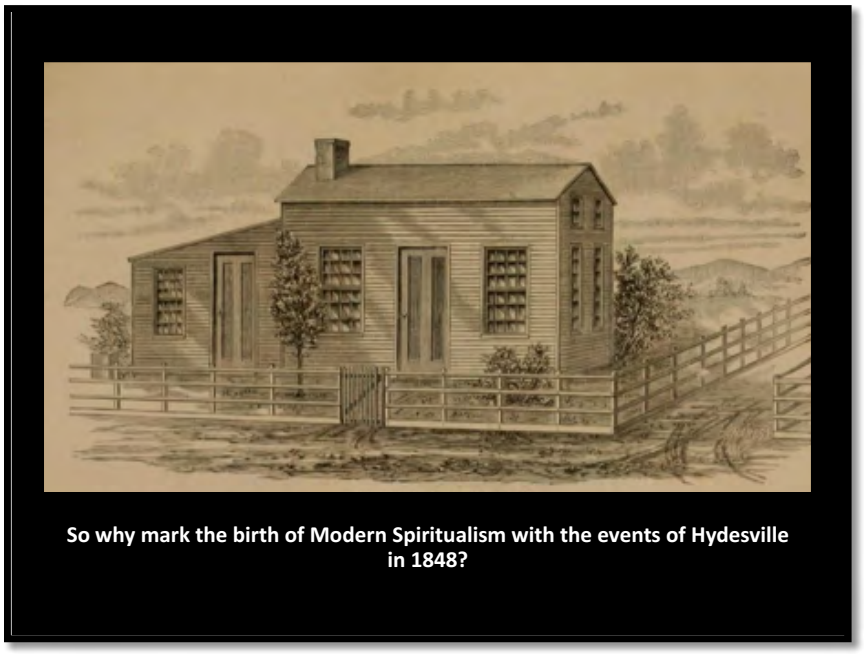
"Nineteenth Century Miracles"

The formation of Modern Spiritualism

"*should be carefully considered*"

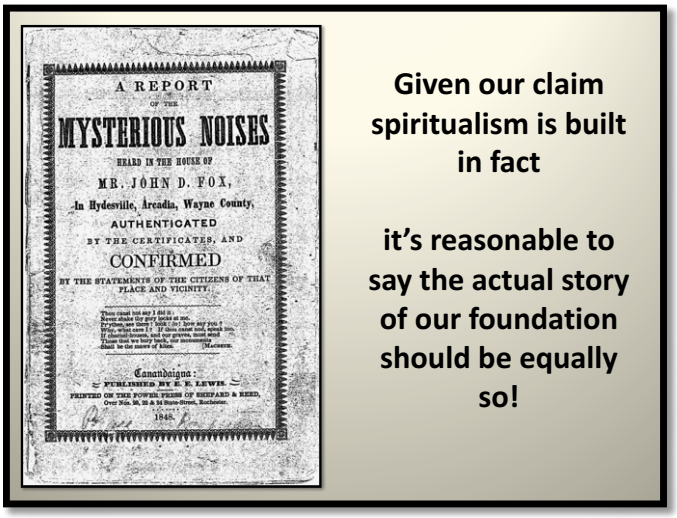
Emma continued:

"One great difficulty in attempting to chronicle the details of this movement, is the very fact that it did not originate in any special locality, or at any given time, inasmuch as it manifested its influence in a spontaneous and universal outpouring all over the world, …"



The Spiritualists' National Union a few years ago updated its educational courses to reflect the actual Hydesville story as recorded by those who were present in their sworn statements taken shortly after their experiences. The events of Hydesville, which covered around a five-year period of phenomena, are told in some detail in their statements recorded by Ebenezer E. Lewis and published in April 1848. Historians Henry D. Barron and Eliab W. Capron published the events of Hydesville but there is sometimes confusion in references to various early Hydesville booklets; all had long titles but collectively were often referred to in short as "Mysterious Noises".[1] In 1855 E.W. Capron wrote "Modern Spiritualism: its Facts and Fanaticisms, its Consistencies and Contradictions".

The book published some of the signed statements taken by E. E. Lewis; however, in 1885, with the Lewis report booklets and Capron's book being out of print, the eldest Fox sister, Ann Leah, published "The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism". Leah also published some of the signed statements taken by Lewis; the two most important signed statements were her mother's and a former resident of the house, William Duesler. However, what her readers did not know was the fact that Leah actually *changed the statements*, adding to them, deleting an important section of Duesler's statement (signed April 12th, 1848), and exaggerating other parts!



Given our claim spiritualism is built in fact

it's reasonable to say the actual story of our foundation should be equally so!

This resulted in Leah's book becoming the template for the Hydesville story. My lecture was to explain these errors and to bring back the original story as told by those present, which also included other members of the Fox family, not often realised.

Many of the claims in today's story have been added on by Leah and others years later, for example the Fox sisters did not devise an alphabetical code whereby questions could be answered!

It was William Duesler who devised this on March 31st 1848, the part of Duesler's signed statement which Leah deleted! There was in fact no peddler's name given at this period, often claimed to be Charles B. Rosma or Rosna.

My Powerpoint (in PDF) and a fact sheet is freely available to download at:

https://www.pauljgaunt.co.uk

Over the last 100 years authors have generally took the Hydesville story from

↓

"Hydesville in History: Testimony of Eye-Witnesses" published in 1917 by M. E. Cadwallader

↓

Mercy Cadwallader in turn takes her "Testimony of Eye-Witnesses" from "The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism," by Ann Leah Underhill published in 1885

[1] The full title, for example: "History of the strange sounds or rappings, heard in Rochester and western New-York, and usually called the mysterious noises! Which are supposed by many to be communications from the spirit world, together with all the explanation that can as yet be given of the matter." Rochester, D.M. Dewey, 1850.

"*Ordered by the spirits*"

HOW THE FIRST PUBLIC MEETING CAME ABOUT TO DEMONSTRATE MEDIUMSHIP

The beings of the investigations—The first psychical researchers

Eliab W. Capron, in his *Modern Spiritualism*, published in 1855, records on pages 90-92:



The first message on this subject was given through the alphabet thus: "You all have a duty to perform. We want you to make this matter more public." We urged the awkwardness of the position we should be placed in, the ridicule that would be heaped upon us or any one who should attempt to lecture on this subject. The answer to this was: "That will be so much the better,—your triumph will be so much the greater."

The plan proposed by the spirits was as follows: Corinthian Hall should be hired; Mrs. Fish and Margaretta should go there; E. W. Capron should deliver the lecture, explaining the commencement of the sounds at Hydesville, and their progress up to that time, and George Willets should act as the business man, doorkeeper, &c. At each meeting there must be a committee of five persons, appointed by the audience, to investigate the matter and report at the next meeting. The spirits promised to make sounds so loud as to be heard in all parts of the hall. The names of several persons were given to accompany Mrs. Fish and her sister on the platform.[3] Among these were Amy Post, and one or two other ladies, Rev. A. H. Jervis, N. Draper, Esq., Lyman Granger, and other well-known citizens. The charge for admission was to be twenty-five cents. All these directions were given by using the alphabet, without a suggestion on our parts."

To this plan we objected that Corinthian Hall, being the largest in the city, was larger than necessary, and too expensive; that people would not attend in numbers sufficient to pay expenses, and that we were not able to pay the bill ourselves. We were assured that we should have enough to pay expenses, and the end would be a complete triumph for all concerned. We were assured that it was the best course in order to silence all slanders and establish the truth; and they declared that this would prepare the way for a

[3] Leah (Fox) Fish and Maggie Fox.

more general development of spiritual communication which would take place at no distant day.

After receiving so much of the directions, and still declining to go forward, the writer retuned to Auburn. Catharine Fox was there with us, and through her the spirits urged us to do as we had been directed at Rochester. Finally, the spirits proposed that meetings should take place at private houses, where large parlors could be had, in order to test the ability of the spirits to make the sounds in the presence of a promiscuous assembly. My friends wrote me, urging the trial, at least, of that test. After much deliberation, we consented to make the trial, not without many misgivings as to the result. My friends at Auburn predicted a failure and disgrace for being engaged in so unpopular a cause; but I had made up my mind to make the trial, testing every inch of ground to see whether the promises would be fulfilled. I went to Rochester and commenced the meetings in private houses. They were often crowded to a jam, but the spirits made their promise good. The rapping was loud and distinct in every instance.

After testing the matter in this way for several nights, and receiving more minute directions and constant encouragement, we gave notice of a meeting to be held in Corinthian Hall, on the evening of the 14th of November, 1848 [This should read 1849].

At the appointed, time, an audience of some four hundred persons assembled to hear what might be said, and also to hear the sounds, as the spirits had promised that they would produce the sounds sufficiently loud to be heard in all parts of the hall.

The lecture consisted of a simple and plain explanation of the whole matter, from its commencement to that time, carefully avoiding any assertion as to what it was; but merely stating, from well proved facts, what it was *not*. The audience listened with respectful attention, and at the close of the lecture appointed the following gentlemen as a committee of investigation, namely, A. J. Combs, Daniel Marsh, Nathaniel Clark, Esq., A. Judson and Edwin Jones.

This was the first great step towards laying the whole matter before the world in a way that should either settle its falsity or establish its truth. The fact that the audience appointed an intelligent committee to investigate the subject was very freely commented upon in a tone of assurance that now a "fraud would be exposed." So sure were the editors of the *Rochester Democrat*, that this was the last of the rappings, that they wrote an article, and had it in type, saying that the whole thing was exploded. When the committee reported, they had the article suppressed. They were disappointed in a very important and interesting item. The committee reported, in substance, as follows:

"That without the knowledge of the persons in whose presence the manifestations are made, the Committee selected the hall of the Sons of Temperance for the investigation; that the sound on the floor near where the two ladies stood was heard as distinctly as at other places, and that part of the committee heard the rapping on the wall behind them; that a number of questions were asked which were answered not altogether right nor altogether wrong; that in the afternoon they went to the house of a private citizen, and while there the sounds were heard on the outside (apparently) of the front door, after they had entered and on the door of a closet. By placing the hand upon the door, there, was a sensible jar felt when the rapping was heard. One of the committee placed one of his hands upon the feet of the ladies and the other on the floor, and though the feet were not moved, there was a distinct jar on the floor. On the *pavement* and on the *ground* the same sound was heard,——a kind of double rap as if a

stroke and a rebound were distinguishable. When the ladies were separated at a distance no sound was heard; but when third person was interposed between them the sounds were heard. The ladies seemed to give every opportunity to the committee to investigate the cause fully, and would submit to a thorough investigation by a committee of ladies if desired. They all agreed that the sounds were heard, *but they entirely failed to discover any means by which it could be done*." [4]

Each one of the committee spoke for themselves, and they were well agreed as to the facts as stated.

After this report and some discussion on the subject, the audience selected another Committee composed of the following persons Doctor H. H. Langworthy, Hon. Frederick Whittlesey, D. C. McCallum, William Fisher, of Rochester, and Hon. A. P. Hascall (late member of Congress), of Leroy. At the next lecture this Committee reported that they went into the investigation at the office of Chancellor Whittlesey, and they heard the sound on the floor, on the wall and door; that the ladies were placed in different positions, and, like the other committee, they were wholly unable to tell from what the sounds proceeded, or how it was made; that Dr. Langworthy made observations with a stethoscope to ascertain whether there was any movement of the lungs, and found not the least difference when the sounds were made; and that there was no kind of *probability or possibility of their being made by ventriloquism as some had supposed; and they could not have been made by machinery*.

Much excitement was manifested by the audience at the announcement of the second committee's failure to account for the sounds. Just in proportion as the honesty of the mediums were proved did the wrath of a portion of the community enkindle against them.

On the third evening, a much larger number were present, and a portion seemed determined that it should be found out. Mr. W. L. Burtis declared that those girls would not have *him* on the committee for a hundred dollars, intimating that *he* was known to possess unusual facilities for the detection of such a fraud. He was immediately voted on to the committee, and then declared that, if he could not find it out, he would forfeit a new beaver hat.

Mr. L. Kenyon declared that if he could not find out the trick, he would throw himself over Genesee Falls; and *he* was straightway voted on to the committee. 'The other members of the committee were no more favorably disposed. The whole committee was composed of Dr. E. P. Langworthy, Dr. J. Gates, Wm. Fitzhugh, Esq., W. L. Burtis and L. Kenyon. This committee met at the rooms of Dr. Gates, at the Rochester House, and appointed a committee of ladies, who took the young women into a room, disrobed them, and examined their persons and clothing, to be sure there were no fixtures about them that could produce the sounds. When satisfied on this point, the committee of ladies tried some other experiments, and gave the young ladies the following certificate:

[4] Note a claim of fraud made against Kate in particular by Mrs Norman Culver: *The raps are produced with the toes*. See *Mrs. Norman Culver, and Kate Fox* (Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 9).

"When they were standing on pillows with a handkerchief tied around the bottom of their dresses, tight to the ankles, we all heard the rapping on the wall and floor distinctly.

"(Signed)

MRS. STONE,
MRS. J. GATES,
MISS M. P. LAWRENCE"

In the evening the committee, through their Chairman, Dr. Langworthy, made a very full report of their examination during the day. They reported that they had excluded all friends of the two ladies from the committee room and had the examination only in presence of the committee of gentlemen, and ladies chosen by them. Notwithstanding all this precaution, these sounds were heard when the ladies stood on large *feather pillows, without shoes*, and in various other positions, both on the floor and on the wall; that a number of questions were asked which, were answered, were generally correct. Each member of the committee reported separately agreeing with and corroborating the first statements.

None but those who were present can tell the inquisitorial trials that Mrs. Fish and Margaretta were forced to undergo during these three days of trial. Never were two persons more thoroughly scrutinized, and never was triumph more complete.

The report of the last committee was more full and complete than any of the former ones. Mr. Burtis, who was so sure that he could find out the whole thing, was honest enough to report fully and frankly in the ladies' favor; and Mr. Kenyon did not throw himself over Genesee Falls, or explain how the sounds were made.

The report seemed to work the rowdy portion of the audience who evidently came there to make disturbance, into a perfect furor. Josiah Bissel, Esq., soon after the audience had assembled, passed out, and soon returned with his hands full of "torpedoes," which he distributed among the boys, old and young, to throw upon the floor, explode and make a noise. This gentleman (?) was soon appointed "chairman of the meeting," by this gang of riotous men and boys, although others had hired the hall and paid for it, not for the purpose of a riotous meeting, but to investigate this strange phenomenon according, to certain rules.

The prominent and leading men, in all this noisy and indecent conduct, were, besides Mr, Bissel, ex-alderman Seeley and a couple of men by the name of Jerome, part proprietors or employees in the *Daily American* office, and a Major Packard, cabinet-ware dealer. The latter made a speech, in which he pretended that the sounds were made by leaden balls fastened to the ladies' dresses! Finding that all attempts to explain the matter further were useless, we left the hall in possession of the rowdies and the police, the chief of whom informed J. Bissel, Esq., that if any one was taken into custody it would be him.

Thus ended the public meetings; but they had done their work, and set a ball in motion which has already rolled over the whole Union, and much of the civilized world besides. The attention of the public was called to it. The press commenced its comments, generally in ridicule, but still in a way that aroused the curiosity of people to know what it was.

[E. W. Capron, Auburn., George Willets, Rochester. *Rochester*, Nov. 22, 1849].

Below is a rather interesting overview of the start of the modern Spiritualist moment just after the demonstration at the Corinthian Hall at Rochester, published by Capron, in the last issue of Pioneer:

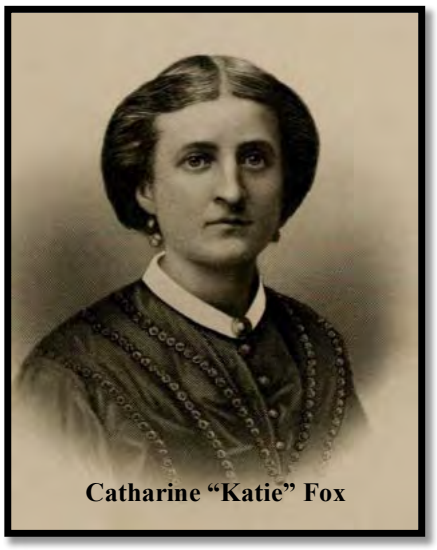
CHAPTER V.
SPIRITUALISM IN AUBURN, NEW YORK.

PROGRESS OF SPIRITUALISM FROM 1849 TO 1855—CATHARINE FOX AT AUBURN—MRS. TAMLIN AND MRS. BENEDICT—SPIRIT MUSIC—THE OPPOSITION—TROUBLES WITHIN THE CAMP—THE APOSTOLIC CIRCLE.

IT was in November, 1849, that the scenes were enacted in Corinthian Hall, Rochester, described in the last chapter.

The immense geographical areas embraced in the thirty-six States of the Union, and the fact that no regular system of human propagandism issuing from a central source and ramifying through the country, or, indeed, anything analagous to such a procedure, has ever been attempted, to account for the spread of Spiritualism, embarrasses the historian in describing its progress. “Progress,” in fact, it can scarcely be called; for, if modern Spiritualism had been promulgated as well as inaugurated by the Rochester mediums, its course might have been traced in their footprints; but whilst we are considering the effects upon some town or State which the visits of the Misses Fox produced, behold we find a great spiritual outpouring in sections of country where the echoes of the Rochester vibrations could never even have reached.

Spiritualism did not radiate from a definite centre, but sprang with a spontaneous and irresistible life of its own, independent of human propagandism, the contagious force of public sentiment, or the psychological effect of common report. If the ends of the countless threads that with sudden and magical rapidity appeared to be inclosing the whole continent of America in one vast woof of spirit-power, were not spun, held, and intelligently directed by the unseen people of the spirit country, then all theories of causation must fail, and the marvellous growth and blossoming of Spiritualism, the germs of which no visible hands had planted, will forever remain one of the unfinished problems of the universe. Apart from the obviously supramundane character of its production in various sections of country at once, it is not difficult to trace the secondary causes of its rapid growth in the all-absorbing nature of its revealments and the passionate emotions of love and hatred which it excited in its friends and foes. In fact it would be difficult to determine which was the most effective form of propaganda for the spread of the belief, namely, the zealous enthusiasm of its admirers or the bitter persecution of its antagonists.


Catharine “Katie” Fox

To do justice to the uprising of this mighty power, we must consider its manifestations in different States about the same period of time. The first which we shall notice is the State of New York, in which the communion between mortals and spirits first took the form of a scientific telegraphy.

In the city of Auburn, New York State, resided Mr. E. W. Capron, to whom allusion has already been made in connection with the earliest manifestations and the Corinthian Hall investigation. To strengthen the convictions of a spiritual source for the phenomena, an opinion which had irresistibly forced itself upon his reason, Mr. Capron induced Mrs, Fox to permit her youngest daughter, Catharine, to spend some time in his

family. During the *séances* conducted through the mediumship of this young lady, many of the principal inhabitants of Auburn had the opportunity of witnessing the most astounding phenomena under circumstances which precluded even the suspicion of deception. Spirit music was produced; hands were seen, felt, and even examined, forming and melting apparently in the clasp that held them; messages of affection, timely warning, and prescient intelligence were constantly spelled out through the raps; the furniture moved in supra-mundane feats of power, and almost every conceivable phase of intelligent spiritual phenomena was exhibited to all who chose to come and witness it. Two remarkable results followed the first introduction of "the power" into Auburn. The first was the fact that though the press were permitted free access to the circles, and the most abundant opportunity for investigation, yet the strength of the occult force, whose evidences they beheld, only seemed to arouse in the most of their number a vindictive and unreasoning spirit of antagonism, which broke forth in unqualified and often senseless slander.



JOHN DAVID FOX

For example: *The Auburn Daily Advertiser* coolly stated that old Mr. Fox [a quiet, inoffensive farmer, chiefly remarkable for simple-minded devotion to the Wesleyan Church and his retired, peaceful habits] had by a cunning contrivance of springs and wires managed to produce all the marvels witnessed at Hydesville! The fact that every plank, board, and brick, or inch of matter connected with the possessed house had been ransacked in vain by hundreds of persons in the attempt to detect any trickery, all went for nothing with this shrewd editor. The still more awkward fact that the phenomena had continued to increase in strength and variety for upwards of a twelve month, moving about from place to place, house to house, person to person, involving the action of above a hundred different mediums; and that the poor old gentleman accused of its production had never, except in the first two or three months of the Hydesville excitement, been in the spirit circles or in any way connected with the movement —all this was with equal *sense* and *candor* utterly disregarded, and good Mr. Fox's "springs and wires," invisibly fixed into *nothing*, still continued to stretch from the cottage at Hydesville and to rap over hundreds of miles sounding down to the valley of the Mississippi along the vast seaboard of the New England States, and up to the northern regions of Lake Superior! Wonderful invention of a quiet little New York farmer! and marvellous springs and wires, the intelligent action of which could reveal past, present, and future with an accuracy that would have put to shame Egyptian magic or Chaldean astrology! We must here remark that if from time to time we insert the puerilities and baseless slanders which have been levelled against "the cause" and its adherents, it is not for their worth or efficacy, but rather to show the utter futility and even desperation of that opposition which has been forced to create such childish fictions in order to discredit the spiritual hypothesis.

The second result of Miss Kate Fox's visit to Aubum seemed to be the unfoldment of medium powers not less remarkable than her own in many persons who attended her *séances*. The most prominent cases of this kind occurred in the persons of Mrs. Tamlin and Mrs. Benedict, mediums whose names have since become an integral part of the great American spiritual record. Several other ladies were also developed in the Auburn circles as mediums and clairvoyants. A great variety of gifts in the direction of physical, writing, healing, seeing, and trance mediumship also became rapidly manifest in various families of the highest respectability, and the great majority of these developments took place

irrespective of Miss Fox's presence, although, her visit first called the attention of the community to the subject, and induced the formation of the circles in which these powers in the various media became externalized. In Mr. Capron's work on the early Spiritualism of America are recorded some very interesting accounts of the manifestations at Aubum; amongst others, the following incident, which were also verified to the author by Mr. Henry C. Wright, an eye-witness of the scenes. Mr. Capron writes:

"Mrs. Tamlin was, so far as I have been able to learn, the first medium through whom the guitar or other musical instruments were played, without visible contact, so as to recognize tunes. In her presence it was played with all the exactness of an experienced musician, although she is not acquainted with music, or herself able to play on any instrument. The tones varied from loud and vigorous to the most refined touches of the strings that could be imagined."

At a circle held at Mrs. Tamlin's, when about seven or eight persons were present, whose testimony was afterwards publicly tendered for the truth of what follows, Mr. Capron goes on to say:

"I had magnetized the medium, and, after various manifestations of the spirits, she said that they were about to do something new which she could not understand. After sitting a few minutes, we heard a low sound like a distant locomotive whistle. Soon, however, the sound grew louder, and softened into the most exquisite music. One of the company was requested to sing and she did so; the most beautiful music accompanied. It was like the notes of an exquisite Æolian harp, but any attempt to describe its beauty would fail. . . . . We frequently had the same kind of music in the presence of Mrs. Tamlin. . . . . At times it would resemble the finest conceivable tones of the human voice, and almost seem to be dissolved into words.

"Another phase of this musical manifestation was the imitation of 'Fabyan's' horn. This was first produced when Henry C, Wright was present. He called for the spirit of N. P. Rogers and asked him to sound the horn, when immediately a sound came like the sounding of a horn and its reverberation among distant hills, echoing and re-echoing for a long time. Mr, Wright had visited the White Mountains in company with N. P. Rogers some years before, and there had heard Fabyan, the hotel-keeper, wind his horn among the hills, and it was this sound that was so exactly imitated. Mr. Wright afterwards published a description of this scene in a pamphlet."

So long as the manifestations continued to be of the character above narrated, their appearance in Auburn was hailed with delight by bereaved mourners, to whom conclusive evidences of the presence and watchful guardianship of beloved spirit friends was clearly proven.

It excited the interest of the scientific from the fact that wonderful phenomena of a novel and interesting character were produced. It startled the learned by the exhibition of ignorant adults and uninstructed children speaking in foreign languages, and often with marvellous eloquence. Clairvoyance, psychometry, and healing by the laying on of hands or spiritual prescriptions, testified to the beneficent character of the intelligence and the vast range of uses which it included.

But the profound ignorance of all psychological phenomena in which this material age has been steeped, soon operated to mar and deform the infant movement.

The world had to learn that the spirit country is peopled from earth, and that spirit-life commences from the point where mortal existence ends. Unconscious of this solemn truth, the early communicants with the unseen world were unprepared for the visitation

of the *dark spirits* whom the sad experiences of earth had manufactured into criminals. Unaware that life, whether here or hereafter, is *progress*, not violent and unnatural change, investigators were appalled at the representations, produced through media, of the same vicious tendencies in spirits which they had beheld with indifference from the same spirits whilst inhabitants of earth; in a word, they did not realize the fact that spirits were still human, and that the soul in many respects remained unchanged by the mere act of physical dissolution. In this state of perplexity and ignorance the return of earth's criminals was generally met, either by the superstitious and unavailing exercises of old Catholic rites, or submitted to blindly in the idea that all spirits must necessarily be authoritative, until the unwary medium became the subject of the distressing condition now known as "obsession." Still, though the first circles were conducted in a condition of mental blindness scandalous to the religious teachers who should long since have instructed mankind concerning "spiritual gifts" and spiritual existences, in course of time the investigators learned *experimentally* to realize the true character of the spirit-world, and that more conclusively by their failures than they could have done by contemplating the sunlit side of the picture only.

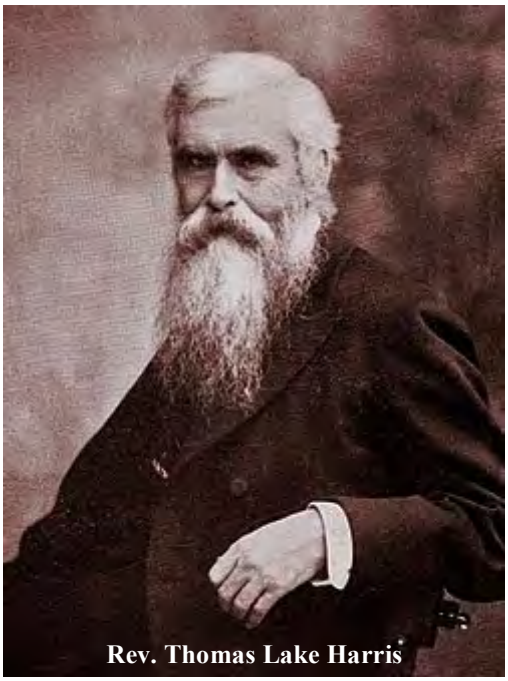
But whilst the philosophical Spiritualist began to realize the true conditions of immortality from communion with the beings who were living in its experience, the egotist and fanatic appropriated as their share of the great spiritual outpouring, precisely those elements which were best calculated to stimulate their vanity and pander to their superstitious imaginings. Amongst the Auburn Spiritualists were to be found several extremely ignorant but strongly bigoted persons of the Second Advent persuasion. The phenomena of modern Spiritualism, interpreted through their own narrow credal views, appeared to them to be the actual inauguration of the long-promised "millennium," whilst they—the "true believers"— must of course be the chosen ones through whom the millennial dynasty was to be established on earth.

Quite early in the movement a circle had been formed, which at first had received the modest title of "The Auburn Circle;" but no sooner did the "chosen few" of the millennial belief gain a foothold in this happy gathering than they bent themselves to the work of converting it to their own purposes and using the manifestations as an endorsement of their peculiar opinions; in fact, as an eye-witness of the scenes here enacted described to the author, "in return for their conversion to Spiritualism they strove to convert the spirits to Second Adventism."

In pursuance of this notable idea they secured the services of Mrs. Benedict, an impressible rapping medium, through whom the influences mortal and immortal that operated in this circle, dictated plans of action designed to make "the universe rock," and that portion of it which they modestly called *this little planet*, a convert to their faith and a subject to the spiritual authority of *John the Divine, Daniel the Prophet, Paul the Apostle*, and other Biblical worthies whom they assumed to have become temporarily reincarnated in their mediumship. The title of the circle was changed from the "Auburn" to the "Apostolic Circle;" Mrs. Benedict, the medium, was dispatched to New York, where, under *spirit direction*, she summoned a certain Baptist preacher, named James D. Scott, to come to Auburn to minister in the work. A series of papers were published purporting to emanate from various distinguished personages of Jewish origin and af the Apostolic age.

Some of these publications were well calculated to produce the results which their authors predicted for them, namely, a revolution, though not exactly in the universe, or even in the "little planet" earth, but simply in the fortunes of the luckless publishers, who found the issue of the said pamphlets exciting a very revolutionary effect upon their worldly prosperity. To the disbelievers in the Divine origin of these papers they certainly

created no little feeling of indignation at the audacity which could append the names of prophets and apostles to their absurd puerilities, whilst even the most credulous of the well-educated Spiritualists had cause to mourn over the deterioration in grammar and orthography which befalls the exalted dead by a long residence in the spirit-world.


Rev. Thomas Lake Harris

About the commencement of the year 1850 the "Apostolic Brotherhood" assumed a more respectable literary shape under the authority of the Rev. James Scott, and actually rose into eminence by the accession to their ranks of the renowned poet, preacher, and medium, the Rev. Thomas L. Harris, who was also spiritually called to "the work." With the leadership of these accomplished gentlemen,—who claimed to act under the highest spiritual guidance,—the movement gained in numbers and in importance until it seemed to absorb and control nearly all the Spiritualism in Auburn, reflect itself through the chief of the communications, crystallize into a numerously attended religious meeting, and finally to culminate in the famous "Mountain Cove movement," of which a detailed description will be given in a later chapter. And here it may be asked whether these shadows, cast by human pride, presumption, and fanaticism, did not irrevocably quench the dawning fight of the still embryotic spiritual movement?

We answer, most unquestionably not; although many were the confident predictions of such a result; indeed certain journalistic magnates who had hitherto been indefatigable in castigating the cause through their columns, now abandoned their efforts with the complaisant remark that "the Spiritualists themselves were performing the work of self-destruction, and it was only necessary to give them rope enough and they would inevitably hang themselves." In view of what has been already narrated, there is no doubt but that this enlightened policy would have had the desired effect had it so happened that *all* the Spiritualists of Auburn were included by the followers of *Pope Harris* and *Cardinal Scott*; but besides a very considerable number outside of their ranks, even some of those who had been subject to their authority gained by their experience some very wise and useful lessons, and not a few of these deluded ones, instead of rushing to the destruction so liberally predicated for them, exchanged their leadership for *Pope Judgment* and *Cardinal Reason*, dignitaries who were henceforth enshrined in plenary authority over the spiritualistic circles at Auburn.

Amongst the lessons that these rulers taught was the very important one that no spirit, mortal or immortal, should stand between the creature and the Creator; that it was necessary to try the spirits *out of the form* by precisely the same rules of good and use as those which applied to spirits *in the form*, and finally that the spirit-world was of no more authority as spirits unbodied than the earth-world as spirits still embodied. These lessons the recipients deemed cheaply learned, even though the price paid for them was the ridicule of a community profoundly ignorant of the subject they ridiculed.

As to the "faithful" amongst the "Apostolic Brotherhood," they soon disposed of the question, as far as the people of Auburn were concerned, by quitting that "reprobate community" for the holy retreat of "Mountain Cove" under the leadership of their inspired shepherds. After this instructive episode Spiritualism in Auburn rose, Phoenix-

like, resurrected from the ashes of fanaticism into purified life, strength, and increasing numbers. Mediums began to multiply, the gifts of the spirit became constantly more abundant, and the ranks of Spiritualism were swelled with daily added converts.

Sunday meetings were in due time established, and a well written weekly paper entitled *The Spiritual Clarion*, together with an annual statistical register, was issued from the office of the Rev. Uriah Clark, an ex-Universalist minister, who established the above-named periodicals in Auburn, from whence they long continued to go forth as welcome evangels of the spiritual Gospel to the world. 'The city now numbers thousands of Spiritualists; nor, with all the "rope" that Christian ministers and learned editors so generously allowed them, have they yet "hanged themselves," or permanently hindered the progress of their glorious cause.

To conclude: W.H. Evans' article, which started this discussion, noted:

There is one thing about the Spiritualists' National Union which I commend to those who like to speak in its name: it is the spirit of tolerance it shows. It opens its arms to all Spiritualists.

It is wise in that it realises that the sectarian spirit is separative and disruptive. And while it asks those who would join it to accept its principles, it allows each the right to interpret them in his own way.

After the death of Evans this would indeed change. The SNU churches were infiltrated with Christian Spiritualists; please see Pioneer, Vol. 2, No. 2, March 2015: "Were the S.N.U. Seven Principles changed?" A short quote below:



Jean Bassett

This is exactly what happened. The Union started to lose churches to breakaway independent Spiritualist groups and to Christian Spiritualists, especially the Greater World Christian Spiritualists League (GWCSL), founded on May 30th, 1931, later known as the Greater World Christian Spiritualist Association (GWCSA). By the mid-1930s it was having an impact on Union churches. Some Union churches were starting to run on Christian lines, the Seven Principles being taken over with Christian trappings. Attempts were made to retain the traditional teachings of Union Spiritualism within their churches, including discussions with the Greater World and other groups, but with little success. In 1988 the Union withdrew 'liberty of interpretation'.[7] In '100 Years of National Spiritualism', by Jean Bassett, published 1990, Jean stated that liberty of interpretation was not part of the Memorandum or the Articles of Association; below is quoted from pages 86-87:

[7] Charles Coulston, SNU Consultant, notes: "Liberty of interpretation issue: the Council of the Union, which was at that time the policy-making body of the Union, agreed to accept this [legal] advice from the Union's solicitors and the Council's acceptance of it was relayed to members at the Union's 1988 Annual General Meeting. The reference to liberty of interpretation was accordingly deleted from the Union's Articles of Association and elsewhere from that point in time."

Information sheet 1:

HYDESVILLE

Changes from the *original* recorded documentation:

Below is my early research into the Hydesville phenomena which was aroused in 1995 while taking the Spiritualists' National Union Advanced 'History of Spiritualism' educational course. Later, I came across the *original* report recording of the actual events of Hydesville, *noting that substantial changes had been made to the report*, e.g. names had been added, sections had been omitted, etc., from the original 1848 report by Ebenezer E. Lewis, "Mysterious Noises".

My ongoing research from that period was echoed by the historian, Leslie Price, in Psypioneer, of which he was the founder editor; below is mostly taken from the now defunct Psypioneer, but all issues are still available for downloading. [1]

In 1885 Ann Leah Underhill, the eldest Fox sister, published "The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism"; this publication is available as a free download.

Chapter One of this book starts with the 1848 Lewis report:

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

The first statement is her mother's:

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

Leah claimed that the Lewis certificate of her mother's testimony as published in her book is authentic; so it remained since 1885 as a point of reference. No doubt due to the rarity of the Lewis report, it was unchallenged, as no comparison report was readily available until the original Lewis report was published in Psypioneer (April 2005).

However, the reader of this statement, published in full in Leah's book, which is signed April 11th 1848 by Margaret Fox, was *not* informed that the original statement of her mother had been *substantially changed*.

Many writers and Spiritualist organisations are still, today, using the Ann Leah Underhill statement as to the early beginnings of Modern Spiritualism at Hydesville, believing that it is the authentic version as produced by Mr E. E. Lewis in 1848.

Much of the wording has been changed and exaggerated by Leah throughout the Lewis report extracts, although Mrs Fox's question and answers session with the alleged spirit does generally remain the same as the original.

In addition, Leah's account was substantially sensationalised, e.g. from a singular phenomenon to a collective. Mrs Fox stated in the original Lewis report:

> … it sounded if the chair moved on the floor…

[1] Please see page 32.

Leah's version read:

... it sounded as if the furniture was moved….

Below is more of what Leah has added to Mrs Fox's original signed statement as recorded in the Lewis report:

> My husband stationed himself outside of the door while I stood inside, and the knocks came on the door between us. We heard footsteps in the pantry, and walking downstairs; we could not rest, and I then concluded that the house must be haunted by some unhappy, restless spirit. I had often heard of such things, but never witnessed anything of the kind that I could not account for before.
>
> "My youngest child (Cathie) said: "Mr Splitfoot, do as I do,'
>
> …. Then Cathie said, in her childish simplicity: 'O mother, I know what it is: tomorrow is April-fool day, and it's somebody trying to fool us'
>
> I then said: 'If it was an injured spirit, make two raps,' which were instantly made, causing the house to tremble….

We may also note that the two girls' names have been added to the statement; they were not named in the original report. In contrast, we find the ages of the two girls:

> …. The youngest girl is about 12 years old; …. The other girl, who is in her 15th year… have been removed!

Underhill also republishes other statements in her book which were taken by Lewis and included in his original 1848 report.

Her father's statement (April 11th 1848) remains basically the same, but edited without notation.

However, in the important William Duesler statement (April 12th 1848) Underhill slightly modifies or makes an error by involving Mr Fox more. In the questioning of the alleged peddler spirit she changes Mrs to Mr Fox.

She again makes no notation for the changes in Duesler's statement. Finally, she curtails the statement, explaining:

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

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

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Some other early errors

There is sometimes confusion in references to various early Hydesville booklets. E.E. Lewis, 1848, D.M. Dewey, 1850, [2] Henry D. Baron and Eliab W. Capron, 1850. All had long titles but collectively were often referred to in short as "Mysterious Noises".

One further error was pointed out by Barbara Weisberg. Dewey in his 1850 booklet wrongly stated that Maggie, not Kate, had originally accompanied Leah to Rochester, an assertion that was often repeated. [3]

Another error appeared in the Baron and Capron booklet, 1850: [4]

> "**....** At the time these occurrences first took place in the family, there were living with the parents three daughters, the youngest about twelve years of age."

This error may have come into being as Mrs Fox stated in her original Lewis statement:

> "*There was four of our family, and sometimes five*"

It is likely that Mrs Fox was referring to Leah's daughter, Lizzie.

Robert Dale Owen published in 1860 "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World"; while referring to the Hydesville events as recorded by Lewis, Capron, etc., Owen also adds his *own new* narrative, bringing in a different verbal version of the evening of March 31st 1848. It is at this point, for example, that we now have added to the story "Here, old Splitfoot, do as I do".

Charles B. Rosma or Charles Rayn?

In my earlier enquiry, "What is known of the Hydesville Peddler?", [5] my intention was chiefly to record how the peddler's name came to be. It was early claimed by Capron and by later reports that the peddler's name was given to David Fox, who called the alphabet at the Fox house in Hydesville sometime during the summer (or later) of 1848.

Charles B. Rosma or Rosna [6] is synonymous with the Hydesville hauntings; in fact, he is the central pivot of the whole story, and this name is considered in most literature and major Spiritualist organisations as the first spirit to communicate through a code, resulting in the beginnings of what became known as Modern Spiritualism.

Although the peddler's name is regarded generally as a *fact* in Spiritualism, there is no actual evidence to substantiate this. His name was not communicated at the time of the Hydesville hauntings, as claimed by the various authors and by major Spiritualist organisations worldwide. Spiritualists and their organisations generally assert that Margaret (Maggie) and Catherine (Kate) devised a code, but this is an error.

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[2] Full Title: "History of the strange sounds or rappings, heard in Rochester and western New-York, and usually called the mysterious noises! Which are supposed by many to be communications from the spirit world, together with all the explanation that can as yet be given of the matter." Rochester, D.M. Dewey, 1850.

[3] "Talking to the Dead", published by Harper, San Francisco, 2004, page 95.

[4] 1850, second edition, revised and enlarged, with additional proof.

[5] Psypioneer, Vol. 1, No. 9, January 2005.

[6] The name 'Rosna' came in after 'Rosma'. It may seem that the name 'Charles B Rosna' came into being in 1870 by Emma Hardinge in her "Modern American Spiritualism", pages 36 and 39. It would appear that this is possibly a spelling/publisher's error; I would doubt that Hardinge would bring in another name for the peddler without some explanation in contradicting Owen's 'Rosma'.

It may seem, as in the case of the term 'Old Splitfoot', that the name 'Charles B. Rosma' also came from Robert Dale Owen's verbal exchanges with the Fox family, whom he met at the house of David Fox in August 1859. The earliest works that use the name 'Charles B. Rosma' are referenced directly or indirectly to Owen's "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World", 1860 rather than 1848!

However, the earliest recorders of the Hydesville manifestations included E. E. Lewis, 1848, D.M. Dewey, 1850, Henry Baron and E. W. Capron, 1850, Capron's "Modern Spiritualism", 1855, and Stanley Grimes, 1857. All these early original reports did not give the name 'Charles B. Rosma' (or similar); in fact, they did not give any name. [7]

Was Henry Spicer right after all?

In my original article previously referred to, "What is known of the Hydesville Peddler?", I suggested that Capron [Eliab Wilkinson], made an error while reprinting an extract from William Duesler's statement contained within the E.E. Lewis report. In that statement (April 12th, 1848) the initials of the communicator, the alleged peddler, were given as 'C.B.' Capron recorded these as 'C.R.' I claimed this as perhaps the first historical error in the Hydesville case!

Now, as previously stated, early authors did not give the peddler's name, that is, except Henry Spicer, and later works become confused with variations of 'Rosma'.

Henry Spicer's peddler's name has been overlooked by historians, as recorded in his pre-Capron book, "Sights and Sounds: The Mystery of the Day", pages 59-60, published in 1853: [8]

> Hence it appears that up to this time, [9] sounds were only made when either an affirmative reply was intended, or numbers were designated. Subsequently, however, a more general attention having been awakened, and various means canvassed, with a view to improve the mode of communication, a person present conceived the idea of interrogating the sound-maker by means of the alphabet. Accordingly, the spirit was asked whether, if the alphabet were called over, it would rap for the letters composing its name. The reply was in the affirmative, and the name of "Charles Rayn," was spelled out.
>
> A series of five raps, in quick succession, having been frequently noticed, it was ascertained, by question and experiment, that this was a signal for the alphabet.
>
> Thus we arrive at the conclusion that, in this spirit-language, an affirmative is conveyed by a single rap (though, perhaps, emphasized by more), a negative by silence. Five raps demand the alphabet, and that may be called over, *vivâ voce*, or else, in a printed form, laid upon a table, and the finger, or a pencil, slowly passed along it when, on arriving at the required letter, a rap is heard; the querist then recommences, until and sentences are spelled out, upon the accuracy or intelligence displayed in which, depends, in a great degree, the amount of faith popularly accorded to these manifestations.

[7] It is interesting to note also that Leah did not give the peddler's name either.

[8] "Sight and Sounds: The Mystery of the Day Comprising an Entire History of the America "Spirit" Manifestations", by Henry Spicer, Esq, Thomas Bosworth, London, 1853.

[9] Spicer is referring to Mrs Fox's statement (April 11th, 1848).

It is quite astonishing that no serious attention has ever been given to this statement. I recall no reference in *any* other work to the name 'Charles Rayn'. Yet the name 'Rayn' is so different from the other names given that it cannot be put down to spelling error:

What if Capron did not actually make an error as I previously suggested? And that the initials of the communicator, the alleged peddler, were in fact 'C.R.', as stated by Capron? Perhaps Lewis had misprinted the initials as 'C.B.'; 'R' and 'B' could be very easily mistaken by the writer or printer.

We are told that the peddler was never traced, but we have always assumed that the name was, is or was similar to, 'Charles B. Rosma'.

What if the peddler's full name was, in fact, that which was first recorded – **'Charles Rayn'**? Has anyone ever checked?

Modern books on Hydesville

Below I have looked at some more recent books dealing in part with Hydesville. Today, with so much available information and original documentation online, e.g. the Lewis report, Kessinger Publishing Legacy Reprints, Google books, etc., authors can obtain almost the entire original documentation of the Hydesville hauntings. However, the authors below appear at times to have copied from other works with the kind of *continuing errors* I have discussed.

Robert S. Cox: — "Body and Soul", University of Virginia Press, 2003.

David Fontana: — "Is there an Afterlife?", O Books, 2005.[10]

Todd Jay Leonard, Ph.D.: — "Talking to the Other Side", Universe Inc., 2005.

Stephen Chism: — "The Afterlife of Leslie Stringfellow", Fullcourte Press, 2005.

Maurice Leonard: — "People from the Other Side: The Enigmatic Fox Sisters", The History Press, 2008.

Deborah Blum: — "Ghost Hunters", Arrow Books, 2007.

Arthur Conan Doyle's "History of Spiritualism", published in 1926, is still regarded by many as a standard textbook; for example, it is used by some of the authors cited above. Doyle republished Mrs Margaret Fox's *signed* statement (April 11th, 1848) as altered by Ann Leah in 1885; as previously detailed, Doyle informed the reader that he had been presented with a facsimile of the original 1848 Lewis report, *but apparently did not note* that Ann Leah had substantially altered this!

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[10] Fontana brings in another name for the peddler: 'Charles Rosa', page 95.

Psypioneer, Vol. 8, No. 1, January 2012, published "Hydesville—Fox Special"; this is printed below, albeit edited, removing some of the material already mentioned above. Please refer to the full issue for all the references, etc. The reference to the volumes can be found at the bottom:

SINGULAR REVELATIONS

Communications with Spirits in Western New-York

Jeffersonian Republican: [11]

For some time the Rochester and other papers in western N.Y. have made occasional references to mysterious noises, that were producing considerable excitement in that quarter: and the following grave history of the affair was published in the Tribune of the 1st instant, by which it would appear that intelligent and prominent citizens have thought it worthy of serious attention. The case furnishes another illustration of the effect of mystery on human mind, on which account alone we copy it.

From The New-York Tribune

Knowing that the public mind, in various locations in Western New-York, has been somewhat agitated on account of certain sounds, called by some "mysterious," we shall offer no apology for making the following plain statement of facts in regard to our knowledge of the matter.

The sounds were first heard about two years since, and have not yet ceased, but seem to be spreading from one place to another and gradually claiming the attention of the public mind. When first heard, they were manifested by a simple hollow sounding rap upon the floor of a house. This rapping was continued every night, for a long time and finally commenced in the day-time. It was at first entirely unintelligible to the inhabitants of the house.

At length a little girl said "Now do as I do," and snapped her finger three times. [12] She was answered by three raps. On repeating it she found that it invariably repeated the number she made herself. Another person said, "Now count ten," and it was done. "Now count the age of"—(one of the children.) It was done correctly.—Another was tried with like success. As it began to display signs of intelligence the family became alarmed and the females all left the house at night. The neighbours were called in but there was no cessation of the sounds. The excitement became intense, and at one time, it is said, nearly or quite 300 persons assembled to discover from whence the sounds proceeded. The house was thoroughly examined from garret to cellar, but, while the sounds continued, no one ever discovered the operator. At length it was discovered that every time a question was put that required an affirmative, a rap was heard—for a negative—no sound.

The question was put, "Are you a spirit?" The answer was by rapping—three raps. By this means they found that it purported to be the spirit of a man. Many expedients were resorted to by which to find out the name of the man whose spirit was making

[11] Jeffersonian Republican, Stroudsburg, Monroe County, PA., Thursday, December 13, 1849.

[12] It is interesting to note how the identification of the children appears to be unimportant or maybe uncertain, e.g. "a little girl said".

these manifestations. At length a stranger asked "If I will call the Alphabet, beginning with A. will you rap when I come to the first letter of his name." The answer was affirmative. He then commenced "A, B, C," when he came to C, there was a rap. Again he went on, and it rapped at H, and in that way he spelled out the name of Charles Rasme. As before stated, these sounds have, from that time been heard in various families in that place and the cities of Auburn and Rochester and various places in the country. Although confined to this rapping sound, the mode of communication has gradually improved so that many very curious and astonishing sentences have been spelled by the use of the Alphabet. It no longer purports to be the spirit of one man or person, but when an individual makes the inquiry "who is it that wishes to communicate with me," they will generally get the name of some friend or relative a—Mother, Father, Sister or Brother who has passed from visible existence.—Many persons have made the trial and have had name spelled out to them of their friends, unknown to any person present. Strangers have tried the experiment and had their names spelled out before any person present knew it or where they came from.

In each family where the sounds appear, there seems to be some *one* or *two*, whose presence is necessary to insure communications freely. *Generally* we find that these persons are susceptible to magnetic influences and Clairvoyant, although we have heard it where there were none that had ever been magnetized or were known to be Clairvoyant. In the family of Mr. Granger of Rochester—a citizen well known there—the communications could be had with any two of the family previous to any of them being placed under the magnetic influence, but after a daughter was magnetized and became Clairvoyant, no communication could be had without her presence. No person had ever been magnetized in the family where it first appeared.

We first became acquainted with these manifestations about one year since, and we have taken every opportunity to discover, if possible what it is. We have become convinced that these three facts there is no disputing. Viz: The sounds,—the intelligence and the absence of any collusion or deception in the matter.

Some two weeks since, we were in company with some persons who were getting communications from this invisible communicator when a message was spelled out to us to the import that the matter should be made more public—that the time had arrived for the people to investigate the whole affair—that it was a thing which will ultimately become known to all men, and that we should immediately take measures to have it investigated. The directions were then minutely given by these spirits, as they purport to be, and which we are willing to believe, are until we have as much proof to the contrary as it required to bring us to this conclusion. These directions will appear in the following history, as they were fully and strictly followed. The great object was to start investigation and clear those who had been hearing it for the last two years from the imputation of fraud and deception. [13]

[13] Capron records in his book, "Modern Spiritualism", 1855, page 90: "The first message on this subject was given through the alphabet thus: "You all have a duty to perform. We want you to make this matter more public." We urged the awkwardness of the position we should be placed in, the ridicule that would be heaped upon us or any one who should attempt to lecture on this subject. The answer to this was: "That will be so much the better,—your triumph will be so much the greater."

"The plan proposed by the spirits was as follows: Corinthian Hall should be hired; Mrs. Fish and Margaretta should go there; E. W. Capron should deliver the lecture, explaining the commencement of the sounds at Hydesville, and their progress up to that time, and George Willets should act as the business man, doorkeeper, &c. At each meeting there must be a committee of five persons, appointed by the audience, to investigate the matter and report at the next meeting. The spirits promised to make sounds so loud as to be heard in all parts of the hall. The names of several persons were given to accompany Mrs. Fish and her sister on the platform. Among these were Amy Post, and one or two other ladies, Rev. A. H. Jervis, N. Draper, Esq., Lyman Granger,

Accordingly on the evening of November 14, a lecture was delivered in Corinthian Hall in the City of Rochester, and a full history of the rise and progress of these strange manifestations given. During the relation of these facts the sounds were distinctly heard by the persons in the hall.

After the lecture, a Committee was chosen by the audience, composed of the following persons—A. J. Combs, Daniel Marsh, Nathaniel Clark, Esq., A. Judson and Edwin Jones.

On the following evening the Committee reported in substance, as follows: That without the knowledge of the persons in whose presence the manifestations are made, the Committee selected the Hall of the Sons of Temperance for the investigation—that the sound on the floor near where the two ladies stood was heard as distinctly as at other places, and that part of the Committee heard the rapping on the wall behind them—that a number of questions were asked which were answered not altogether right nor altogether wrong—that in the afternoon they went to the house of a private citizen, and while there, the sounds were heard on the outside (apparently) of the front door, after they had entered and on the door of a closet. By placing the hand upon the door, there, was a sensible jar felt when the rapping was heard. One of the Committee placed one of his hands upon the feet of the ladies and the other on the floor, and though the feet were not moved, there was a distinct jar on the floor. On the pavement and on the ground the same sound was heard;——a kind of double rap as if a stroke and a rebound were distinguishable. When the ladies were separated at a distance no sound, was heard; but when third person was interposed between them the sounds were heard. The ladies seemed ready to give every opportunity to the Committee to investigate the cause fully, and would submit to a thorough investigation by a committee of ladies if desired. They all agreed that the sounds were heard, *but they entirely failed to discover any means by which it could be done*.[14]

After this report and some discussion on the subject, the audience selected another Committee composed of the following persons Doctor H. H. Langworthy, Hon. Frederick Whittlesey, D. C. McCallum, William Fisher, of Rochester, and Hon. A. P. Hascall, of Leroy. At the next lecture this Committee reported that they went into the investigation at the office of Chancellor Whittlesey, and they heard the sound on the floor, on the wall and door,—that the ladies were placed in different positions and, like the other Committee, they were wholly unable to tell from what the sounds proceeded or how it was made,—that Dr. Langworthy made observations with a stethoscope to ascertain whether there was any movement of the lungs, and found not the least difference when the sounds were made; and that there was no kind of probability or possibility of their being made by ventriloquism as some had supposed—and they could not have been made by machinery.

Again, after this report, another Committee was formed, from persons who had opposed in the meeting all pretentions to there being anything but a trick.

This Committee was composed of Dr. E. P. Langworthy, Dr. J. Gales, Wm. Fitzhugh. Esq., W. L. Burtis and L. Kenyon. This Committee met at the rooms of Dr. Gates at the Rochester House, and appointed a Committee of Ladies who took the

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and other well-known citizens. The charge for admission was to be twenty-five cents. All these directions were given by using the alphabet, without a suggestion on our parts."

[14] Note the claim of fraud made against Kate in particular by Mrs Norman Culver: *The raps are produced with the toes*. See "Mrs. Norman Culver, and Kate Fox" (Psypioneer, Vol. 7, No. 9).

young women into a room, disrobed them and examined their persons and clothing to be sure that there was no fixtures about them that could produce the sounds. When satisfied on this point the Committee of Ladies tried some other experiments, and gave the young ladies following certificate:

"When they were standing on pillows with a handkerchief tied around the bottom of their dress, tight to the ankles we all heard the rapping on the wall and floor distinctly." (Signed)

MRS. STONE, MRS. J. GATES,

MISS M. P. LAWRENCE

In the evening the Committee, through their Chairman, Dr. Langworthy, made a very full report of their examination during the day. They reported that they had excluded all friends of the two ladies from the Committee room and had the examination only in presence of the Committee of gentlemen, and ladies chosen by them. Notwithstanding all this precaution, these sounds were heard when the ladies stood on large feather pillows, without shoes, and in various other positions, both on the floor and on the wall,—that a number of questions were asked which, when answered, were generally correct. Each member of the Committee reported separately agreeing with and corroborating the first statements.

Thus, by three days of the strictest scrutiny by means of intelligence, candor and science, were the persons in whose presence these sounds are heard, acquitted of all fraud.

On Friday evening, after the lecture, three of the Committee, viz: Hon. A. P. Hascall, D. C. McCallum and William Fisher, repaired to the house of a citizen and pursued their investigations still farther. There were nearly a score of persons present. The members of the committee wrote many questions on paper, which no person present knew the purport of, and they were answered correctly. At times they would ask *mentally* and would receive the answers with equal correctness and they were fully satisfied that there was *something* present manifesting an intelligence beyond the persons *visible*.

One of the committee tried the experiment of standing the ladies on glass and failed to get any sounds; but the same was subsequently tried in presence of a large number of persons, and the sounds were as loud and distinct as before, on the floor as usual.

Such are the facts so far as the public proceedings are concerned, (which is but a small part of these strange occurrences) with the Committee's reports greatly condensed.

Thus the matter stands at present, and whether it is only a remarkable phenomena which will pass away with the present generation, or with the persons who seem now to be the medium of this extraordinary communication; or whether it be the commencement of a new era of spiritual influx into the world; it is certainly something worthy the attention of men of candor and philosophy.

E. W. CAPRON, Auburn.
GEORGE WILLETS, Rochester.

Rochester, Nov. 22, 1849.

—*s*—

We note the title of the above article, "Singular Revelations", dated December 13th, 1849. This title would shortly be used for the first substantive publication since the Lewis report, its full title being "Singular Revelations: Explanation and History of the Mysterious Communication with Spirits: Comprehending the Rise and Progress of the Mysterious Noises". [15] We also note that a substantial part of this article is republished in "Singular Revelations", for example Chapter VI, "The Public Investigation at Corinthian Hall in the City of Rochester", page 45.

In Barbara Weisberg's "Talking to the Dead", 2004 (1.2), page 91, we have February 1850 given as the first printing; this is referenced to Horace Greeley's review for the "New York Tribune", published January 26th, 1850.

Possibly the first printing may have included the communicator's name, 'Charles Rasme'. If not, one can only speculate as to why Barron/Capron used only the Lewis report as reference, showing that no name was given at Hydesville during the height of the phenomena, only the initials which Capron also used (Lewis initials 'CB', Capron gives 'CR') in his book, "Modern Spiritualism", five years later. However, in Chapter V of "Singular Revelations", page 37, we may have an important clue as to why historians like Capron later omitted any names, if the names rapped out were in fact *inconclusive* and *unreliable*:

> "WE have heretofore spoken only of the progress of the sounds at Hydesville, in Arcadia. We left them after they had just learned enough of the matter to converse, by getting raps for an affirmative, and no sound for a negative, and a name or two spelled out by the use of the alphabet.
>
> "Like all new discoveries, this has become more perfect as it has been investigated and studied into. The mode of communication has gradually improved, until those who are most familiar with it, can without difficulty get long, and *correct* communications spelled out by the alphabet."

One could consider that, as the new Spiritualist movement progressed, the peddler's name was never fully established and not even deemed important. [16] It is only in more recent times that the peddler's name has come to the forefront and been sought.

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[15] Available for a free on-line download.

[16] We can note in the above Capron/Willets article that when the name 'Charles Rasme' was rapped out, there was no reference to a murdered peddler, just a *Spirit of a man*.

On the 31st anniversary of Hydesville in 1879 we come across yet another peddler's name:

MODERN SPIRITUALISM

Oswego Daily Times, Tuesday Evening, *April 1 1879*

Celebrations of the Thirty-first Anniversary

A large number of the Spiritualists of this city gathered at the residence of A. M. Richards, East 6th street, last evening, to commemorate in a suitable manner the thirty-first anniversary of modern Spiritualism.

After a time spent in social intercourse Mr. J. L. Pool was introduced and made an address, giving a brief history of modern spiritualism, which dates from the Hydesville rappings. It may be interesting at this time to give the history as it is understood by Spiritualists, some of the incidents of which were given in Mr. Pool's address:

Thirty-one years ago a man named Weekman lived in a house at Hydesville, Wayne County. He heard rappings about the house, which he could not account for. He moved away and a family named Fox took possession. On the night of March 31, 1848, the rapping noises occurred in the bedroom where the Fox sisters, Katie and Margaret, aged respectively seven and ten years, slept. At the request of the girls the invisible power rapped a certain number of times in succession. The family assembled, and the spirit rapped the ages of each, rapping once for each year. It was told to rap twice if it was a spirit, and immediately it rapped twice. A week after the spirit by rapping the letters of the alphabet, gave its name as Charles B Rosemond, the spirit of a peddler who had been murdered in the house. The family were Methodists, and they moved to Rochester to escape the annoyance of the rappings, but the spirit followed them. In November, 1849 a meeting was called at Corinthian Hall, Rochester, at which the manifestations were fully tested. After several days the committee reported that they were unable to trace the rappings to any earthly power.

Mr. Pool referred to the wonderful spread and growth of Spiritualism, which from a small and feeble beginning had grown to be a sect of commanding proportions, whose adherents number tens of thousands and even millions in all parts of the world. He also gave an interesting account of the growth of Spiritualism in Oswego, with all the various stages of which the speaker was familiar, having taken a leading part in many of the movements connected with it. There were several persons present who attended the first "circles" and the first meetings ever held by Spiritualists in Oswego County.

Dr. Lester followed Mr. Pool, giving a clear and succinct statement of the philosophy of Spiritualism. Remarks were also made by J. P. M. Peck and others. The exercises were interspersed with music, readings and recitations. An elegant vase and a handsome bouquet were presented to Mrs. Richards. During the evening a substantial collation was served.

The following was composed and read by Mrs. Oliver Peek:

... followed by a poem

IN OTHER CITIES

There were celebrations in Utica, Rochester and other cities yesterday.

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We can now reference five names; some modern writers have introduced more names but their origin is unreferenced:

1849: Charles Rasme (Capron)
1853: Charles Rayn (Spicer)
1860: Charles B. Rosma (Owen)
1870: Charles B. Rosna (Britten)
1879: Charles B. Rosemond (Pool)

No references to date have shown or indicated that the Fox sisters ever gave any name for the peddler, although it is *generally* claimed today that Katie and Margaret Fox devised a code whereby a peddler named Charles B. Rosma/Rosna communicated on the celebrated night! The reason for this was that it did not actually happen! This part of the story has developed without foundation. As stated in the first Hydesville article:

> "Taking a step back from the 1848 Hydesville phenomena, one could almost remove the Fox sisters! In reality Katie and Margaret had very little participation in the unfolding events, and their names rarely appear in the original story."

It is in what happens a year or so later that the real foundations of modern Spiritualism are more firmly placed, and the Fox sisters, including the eldest, Ann Leah, become the pioneers, the "Rochester Rappers": for example, the demonstration at Corinthian Hall in November 1849, with the subsequent investigations, and the establishment of public séances, etc. (7.3, 5.4).

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Just prior to the 1879 article published above, Katie Fox-Jencken writes to James Burns, editor of "The Medium and Daybreak":

THE ROCHESTER KNOCKINGS

The Medium and Daybreak: [17]

To the Editor.—Dear Sir,—Will you allow me to contradict in your paper, a statement made in the *Spiritualist*, of Jan. 24, in an article headed "Haunting and Apparitions," by Mr. William H. Harrison?

In this article is stated as follows:—"The little known documentary evidence that the house at Hydesville was haunted long before the Fox family took it, thus the phenomena which now follow Katie Fox (Mrs. Jencken) everywhere in London began in a haunted house in America before she went to live in it."

Spiritualism had its origin in 1848, through my sitter Margaret and myself, then scarcely five and seven years old, in the little village of Hydesville, where my father rented a small house during the completion of a house he was building. There was no such thing ever heard of as the house being haunted before my father took possession of it. During the great public excitement, my dear father and mother removed with their two young children, to the farm of my brother, two miles from Hydesville, still retaining the former house. Thousands flocked to hear the knockings, and crowded the house to overflowing. Many leading people of Rochester would go in little groups to the house, and patiently wait for hours in the hopes of obtaining rappings, but *not one* sound was ever heard in that house, without either my sister Margaret or myself. From the time my dear parents left Hydesville, to the present day, there

[17] "The Medium and Daybreak", February 7, 1879, page 89.

has never been a rap or echo heard within the walls of that dwelling, although repeated efforts have been made from time to time to call them forth.

The historical fact that Spiritualism commenced with my sister Margaret and myself, in the little village of Hydesville, should silence such erroneous statements.

At the time the manifestations first made their appearance in our family, all sorts of rumours were circulated. Everyone who had occupied the house before had heard or seen something mysterious.

I hope to publish my autobiography very soon, when all these facts will be laid before the public. I send your paper every week to an editor of one of the most popular papers in New York, and he expresses himself highly pleased with the straightforward way you conduct it.

I hope you will pardon me for trespassing so long on your time, but let me add that which you already know, that these "Rochester knockings" have stood the test of thirty of years careful, and often hostile, investigation, without question or doubt as to their reality, when all other manifestations have been questioned, and in many instances, I fear, not without reason.

For my part, I have always objected to dark seances, so also has Mrs. Kane (Margaret Fox), and I am glad to say that consequently she has for some time past refused to give dark sittings.

London, W. KATIE FOX JENCKEN.

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Firstly, it should be noted that Kate Fox-Jencken had on several occasions alluded to her forthcoming autobiography ("*about to publish her autobiography*"); this was in July 1878 but it was never published, to our knowledge (1.17).

This statement brings into dispute other issues which would go further to disrupt the surrounding story:

> "… but *not one* sound was ever heard in that house, without either my sister Margaret or myself."

Capron states in "Singular Revelations", page 37:

> "For some time the rapping was confined to that house, although, as stated in a former chapter, the family of Mr. Fox all left the house at times. While the neighbors were testing the floor and the walls of the house, and the family entirely away from it, the sounds were heard as distinctly as ever. We wish this to be distinctly remembered, as it has often been asserted by persons ignorant of the facts, or willfully malicious, that the sounds were never heard, unless in the presence of two of the daughters of Mr. Fox. *The facts already stated and proved, show that they commenced before that family occupied the house or lived in the neighborhood.*

Mrs Fox's statement says (1.12, p. 5):

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

As previously pointed out, the Fox sisters appear only briefly and unnamed in the Lewis report. The statements that make up the Lewis report are in part the ghostly claims of a murdered peddler and his return, which predates the eventful evening of March 31st. It is this alleged history that helped to formulate the story of the peddler's murder and possible return to previous tenants/staff, as given, for example, in Miss Lucretia Pulver's and Jane C. Lape's statements. Below are a few quotes but the full statements should be read to place this in the correct and full context.

Quotes from Lucretia Pulver's statement, April 11th, 1848, start page 29 (1.12):

> … "It sounded as if the person walked through the buttery, down cellar, and part way across the cellar bottom, and there the noise ceased."
>
> … "A few days before the time when I first heard these noises, or any thing of this kind had ever occurred, a foot pedler called there, about two o'clock in the afternoon."
>
> …"I should think this pedler, of whom I have spoken, was about 30 years old. I heard him conversing with Mrs.—[Bell] about his family: he told how many children he had, in answer to her inquiries. I do not recollect now how many he said he had."
>
> …"This pedler carried a trunk, and a basket, I think, with vials of essence in it. He wore a black frock coat, and light colored pants. I am willing to swear to the above statement, if it is necessary."

Quote from Jane C. Lap's statement, April 17th, 1848, page 28 (1.12):

> …"One day, about two o'clock P. M., while I was doing my work in the kitchen, I saw a man in the bed-room joining the kitchen. [18] The bed-room door was open, and I saw the man distinctly. I was much frightened. I had been in the kitchen some time at work, and knew that no one had gone into that room. There was only one door to the bed-room, and that opened into the kitchen. The man stood facing me when I saw him. He did not speak, nor did I hear any noise at any time, like a person walking or moving about in the room. He had on grey pants, black frock coat and black cap. He was about middling size, I should think. I knew of no person in that vicinity who wore a similar dress."

It was just a year earlier, at the thirtieth anniversary, that we are told by the two sisters this rather astonishing claim, as previously published (6.3):

> "Maggie and Kate, as named, were only four and six years old respectively on the 31st March, 1848, and at that time resided with their parents in a small wooden house temporarily occupied by the Fox family until the dwelling on the old family estate of Mrs. Fox's father had been completed. A granddaughter of Mrs. Fox (Elizabeth Fish, aged eleven years) was at that time staying with the grandparents. This older niece was the questioner with whom the early conversations were carried on with the unseen communicants, little Katie merely responding by clasping her tiny fingers together.
>
> "The error of the ages of these children arose no doubt by confounding the age of the niece, Elizabeth Fish, with that of either Maggie or Katie."

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[18] Layout of Fox house: see 1.18, *The Mystery of Fox Cottage*.

Psypioneer authors were not the first historians to tackle the complex problem of the various ages which all three sisters used throughout their lives. We have previously noted that former Spiritualists' National Union President (1950-1953) Percy Wilson had attempted to understand the formation of the Seven Principles. [19] Below, Percy attempts his hand on the question of the Fox sisters' ages. The discussion had started with an article by Leonard Hodson, which was found by my colleague Leslie Price:

THE FOX SISTERS: SOME UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

Light: [20]

By LEONARD J. HODSON, LL.B. (Lond.)

THE fact that in less than five years' time spiritualists will be celebrating the centenary of the historic events of March 31, 1848, prompts the reflection that it is surely time some attempt should be made to clear up the discrepancies in the early accounts of the Hydesville phenomena and to fill in the *lacunae* of such narratives.

It is curious, when one considers the flood of Spiritualist literature which has come from the Press since 1848, that there appears to be no really comprehensive and authoritative "Life" of the Fox sisters to which the judicially minded student can turn with any prospect of finding an impartial and properly documented review of the part which the two sisters played in the chequered history of the Movement. Those writers on the beginnings of Spiritualism who regard the sisters as the harbingers of a "New Revelation" have too often displayed an extraordinary indifference to the importance of dates and details concerning their careers, while those who take the view that they were merely two naughty little girls whose successful "leg-pulling" of a their parents and neighbours led them into a career of fraud have, for the most part, been content to support their case by quoting, with little or no attempt to investigate their truth, statements of no higher historical value than those of contemporary newspapers of the baser sort.

This is the more regrettable on account of the wide and interesting field which the lives of the sisters offer to a biographer prepared to embark on the arduous task of ascertaining, so far as may be possible at this distance of time, the actual facts concerning controverted points in their career.

AGE DISCREPANCIES

One of the many points as to which there is a singular of unanimity is that of the age of the two girls at the time of the events at Hydesville—a matter by no means without interest and significance from a psychological standpoint. For instance, T. O. Todd (*Hydesville:—The Story of the Rochester Rappings*) gives the respective ages of Margaret and Kate as 12 and 9. This accords with Appleton's *Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, which states that Margaret was born in 1836 (at Bath, Canada), and Kate in 1839. Emma Hardinge Britten (*Modern American Spiritualism*), on the other hand, quotes a statement said to have been made by Mrs. Fox herself as authority for giving their ages as 15 and 12. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle describes them as being 14 and 11; while according to J. B. Campbell's account "at the time these occurrences first took place in the family, there were living with the parents three daughters, the youngest

[19] Psypioneer, Volume 2, No. 5: *The error that changed history.*

[20] "Light*",* Thursday, June 24, 1943, front page.

about 12." (Here, incidentally, is another discrepancy, as other accounts imply that only Margaret and Kate were living at home.)

To make confusion worse confounded one finds in The Love Life of Dr. Kane (1866) a reference to Margaret being "scarcely thirteen years of age" in the late autumn of 1852 when she first met Elisha K. Kane, the Arctic explorer. This would mean, if correct, that, the *elder* of the two girls was only nine in March, 1848.

One may presume that there was no general system of registration of births at the time the Fox girls were born, but it would be of interest to learn from some American or Canadian reader of LIGHT whether there is any likelihood of any other records being in existence that might elucidate these discrepancies.

In view of the possible influence of heredity on the development of psychic gifts, spiritualists with a taste for genealogical pursuits might also usefully employ their talents in trying to amplify the tantalizingly vague statements of Todd as to the ancestry of the Fox family. "In Mrs. Fox's family," he writes, "French by origin and Rutan by name, several individuals had evinced the power of second sight—her maternal grandmother (Margaret Ackerman) who resided at Long Island, had frequent perception of coming events. . . . Mrs. Fox's sister also, Mrs. Elizabeth Higgins, had similar powers." *The Love Life of Dr. Kane* provides a few more crumbs of genealogical interest with a view, apparently, to showing that the family was formerly in less humble circumstances than in 1848. "Her (Margaret Fox) father," we are told, "was a reputable and well-to-do farmer who owned a fine estate in Canada, where Margaret was born, and considerable property in the western part of the State of New York. His ancestors were highly respectable Germans, the name being originally Voss. Mrs. Fox was of the Rutan family, of French origin, and of ancient and honourable lineage. Some of her relations of that name still reside near Montreal, possessors of a magnificent estate, and esteemed among the wealthy aristocracy of the country. Mr. Fox, unfortunately, lost his excellent Canadian property but retained a small farm in New York."

FURTHER QUESTIONS

Another problem which seems never to have been definitely settled is as to whether Margaret was ever actually married, as she subsequently maintained, to Kane before he left for England only four months before his death on February 16, 1857.

We lack, moreover, any consecutive and detailed account (though there are numerous references to her in the Press and in contemporary memoirs) of the period Kate spent in England. Her marriage to H. D. Jencken, a member of the Chancery Bar, in 1872, was followed by the birth of a child who was reported more or less credibly to have displayed astounding psychic powers at a very tender age. If *The Death Blow to Spiritualism* (1888), by Reuben Briggs Davenport, is to be credited, she must have had at least one other child; for it is alleged that shortly before she returned to America in October, 1888, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children had endeavoured to deprive her of the custody of "her two boys." (H. D. Jencken died at 16 St. James's Street, [21] Notting Hill, on November 26, 1881, but *Boase's Modern Biography* makes no mention of his wife or children.)

It seems clear that both sisters succumbed during their later years to over-indulgence in drink and that they quarrelled violently with their elder sister, Mrs. Underhill. The Latter's husband is quoted in the *Death Blow* as being of the opinion that Margaret, at

[21] The date of his death depends on which account is consulted – 20th or 26th November, 1881; see (5.9).

least, was not in her right mind in 1888, or accountable for what she said. Whether she was or not is a matter which is obviously of the first importance in estimating what—weight should be attached to the statements which both sisters are alleged to have made in October, 1988, as to the manifestations at Hydesville having been "All humbuggery from beginning to end" and "an absolute falsehood."

Spiritualism does not, of course, stand or fall by the genuineness or otherwise of the Hydesville phenomena, but it cannot be denied that the cloud of uncertainty which veils the closing years of the Fox sisters tends to create scepticism in the minds of inquirers into the Movement as too much else in its history. For this reason, as well as in the interests of historical accuracy, it is clearly desirable that all possible light should be—shed on the disputed facts in the lives of two women who—whatever view one takes of them—have admittedly influenced profoundly the beliefs of thousands.

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Spiritualists' National Union former President Percy Wilson takes up the challenge:

THE FOX SISTERS

Light: [22]

SOME FURTHER COMPARISONS
By PERCY WILSON

I AM not surprised that Mr. Hodson is puzzled about some of the matters to which he refers in his article of 24th June. There has indeed been much confusion in various published accounts, largely due to the fact that in their later years neither Margaret nor Katie could be relied upon to tell the truth. It is necessary therefore to give greater weight to earlier records and to contemporary writers, like Mrs. Britten, who knew the family intimately.

At the risk of making confusion worse confounded, may I draw your attention to the following references to the ages of the children on that fateful 31st March, 1848.

Nandor Fodor: *Encyclopedia*.

There is a reference to a letter stated to have been sent by Mrs. Fox to the President of the anniversary meeting held in New York in 1868. According to this, the ages of the children were incorrectly rendered in the first printed report, Kate being 7 and Margaret 10 years old at the time.

One would like to know more about this letter; since according, to Mrs. Leah Underhill, "our dear mother passed from this life to the next on the 3rd August, 1865."

2. Hudson Tuttle: *Arcana of Spiritualism* (1867).

Amplifies Mrs. Fox's own certified statement of April 11th, 1848, indicating that when Mrs Fox tested the peddler who gave the first raps by asking the ages of her daughters, the reply was 12 raps for Margaret and 9 raps for Katie. [23]

[22] "Light", July 29, 1943, page 238.

[23] This appears to be a made-up version; it does not state that it was Mrs Fox's signed statement, and assumed by Wilson:—"In March, 1848, they assumed a new character. The children's bed had been moved into the room of their parents; but scarcely had Mrs. Fox lain down when the noises became as violent as before. The children shouted, "Here they are again." [a new version!] Their father shook the sashes to see if they were not moved by the wind, when the lively Kate observed that the sounds were imitated. She then snapped her fingers, and asked it to repeat, which was done. She then simply made motions with her thumb and finger, and the rap followed.

3. *Medium and Daybreak*, May 3rd, 1878.

In the account of the 30th anniversary meeting in London, at which both Margaret and Katie were present on the platform, it is stated, "At that period the two young Mediums were aged 4 and 6 years and not 9 and 11, as usually reported." This correction was the subject of editorial comment the following week.

4. *Medium and Daybreak*; February 7th, 1879.

Letter from Katie Fox-Jencken states; "Spiritualism had its origin in 1848 through my sister Margaret and myself then scarcely 5 and 7 years old . . ."

5. *Two Worlds*; November 23rd, 1888.

The Editor, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, comments on the "confession" of Margaret Fox, as reported in the *Chicago Herald* of October 24th, 1888, and lifts the veil from some of the later history. "This wretched woman states herself to have been 8 years old and her sister 6 at the time of the Rochester knockings. Both the mother and father of these girls in their published statements again and again repeat, that Margaret was 15 and Kate 12 years of age at the time of the knockings." Mrs. Britten also says that contemporary records, copies of which she had before her at the time, show that nearly every statement made in the confession was false: and that the whole affair of the confessions, as well as the earlier dipsomania of the two sisters in the years round 1870, had been deliberately engineered by *Jesuitical* influences.

Mrs. Britten's account is supported by the account in the (American) *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, dated October 20th, 1888. This also says that "Kate was only 12 and Maggie 15 when the knockings first began."

6. Mrs. Leah (Fox) Underhill: *The Missing Link* (1885).

The most fully documented account of the early years is contained in this somewhat rare book. Leah, of course, was the eldest sister, who was not actually with the family at Hydesville on the 31st March, 1848, but joined up early in May, and became the greatest Medium of them all. Unfortunately, Leah does not give the actual ages of Katie and Maggie, but letters are quoted verbatim which seem to confirm Mrs. Britten's statement, and are certainly inconsistent with the 1879 statement of Katie and with that of 1888 by Maggie.

Thus, George Willets, relating his experiences with the sisters, in a letter sent to E. W. Capron at the end of 1848, refers to "a little girl (presumably Katie) thirteen years old," as the Medium for the raps.

The invisible power, whatever it was, could see and hear. Mrs. Fox's attention was arrested. She asked it to count ten, which it did. "How old is my daughter Margaret?" Twelve raps. "And Kate?" Nine. "How many children have I?" Seven. "Ah ! you blunder," she thought: "try again." Seven. Then she suddenly thought. "Are they all alive?" No answer. "How many are living?" Six raps. "How many dead?" One rap. She had lost one child. [Emily] She then asked if it was a man. No answer. Was it a spirit? Raps." (pages 18-19, "Two Worlds" edition, 1900).

TIRED OF LIFE

Moreover, Katie herself, writing from Washington in 1850, says:

"I am tired of my life. . . . Only imagine Maggie and me, and dear mother, before a crowd of drunken Senators. One very fine-looking man stood up before the crowd and addressed them thus: I wish to be heard, gentlemen. This is all a humbug, but it is worth a dollar to sit in the sunlight of Miss Kate's eyes."

Is this the language of a girl of 6 or 7? It might be of a girl of 15.

Again, the testimonial to Katie, dated July 9th, 1851, from a number of New York people, which is quoted in full on page 227, could hardly have been addressed to a child of under 10.

Summing up, we have the following discrepancies:

ANSWERS GIVEN

The other problems mentioned by Mr. Hodson are, fortunately less difficult. There are two chapters in *The Missing Link* about the ancestry of the Foxes. Moreover, answers to the "further questions" are provided by the accounts in the spiritualist journals (including LIGHT) of the seventies and eighties.

The one thing that stands out of all these accounts is a sense of tragedy. No wonder Mrs. Britten commented in 1888 that the young children, for whom many spiritualists would have given all they had, were dead.

Spiritualism survived that dread testing-time, as it survived the spate of alleged exposures of physical Mediums in the seventies, and as it will survive, and indeed thrive upon, any other persecution that may come upon us.

Postscript: Since the above was in type it has occurred to me to look up Robert Dale Owen's *Footfalls* (1860). I find that the account there (pp. 204-210) confirms and amplifies that of Hudson Tuttle. Reference is also made to E. W. Capron's *Modern Spiritualism: Facts and Fanaticisms* (1855) but this I have not been able to consult as yet.

P. W.

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We have previously published an overview of the tragic demise and downfall of Margaret Fox-Kane in James Burns' Memorial Lecture in his reception address at the Spiritual Institution, 15 Southampton Row, London, April 24, 1893: "The last of the celebrated "Fox girls" " (2.6). Margaret died on March 8th, 1893.

Just eight months prior to Margaret's death, the youngest sister, Catherine Fox-Jencken, died on July 2nd, 1892. Later that year Stainton Moses, then editor of "Light", died on September 5th. Burns gave a joint Memorial Lecture.

Below is the full account of Kate Fox Jencken:

IN MEMORIAM

The Medium and Daybreak: [24]

KATE FOX JENCKEN

Address by J. Burns, at 15, Southampton Row, Sep. 11, 1892

It has been reported that on July 2, 1892, Mrs. Kate Fox Jencken relinquished that body, through the instrumentality of which such remarkable manifestations of spirit power were given for over forty years. She was the primary medium through whom communication with the spirit-world was instituted through rappings, on March, 31, 1848. Mr. Fox's family lived in a haunted cottage, and were greatly disturbed by nocturnal noises, which occurred with greatest force in proximity to the bed occupied by little Kate (the youngest) and her sister. On the night in question, this child in a playful way asked "it" to imitate her by giving the same number of raps as the sounds she made by slapping her hands together. The experiment proved successful, and the child exclaimed, "It can hear: it did as I bade it." From this small beginning it was established that "it" could hear, that it could understand, that it could respond; in short, that it was an intelligent being, possessing powers similar to those characteristic of the human mind. This is really the only genuine discovery that has been made during the whole career of Spiritualism.

Then "spirit-rapping" took a methodical form, and began to spread. Little Kate and her family had to withstand much persecution. They were regarded by many as impostors. They were most cruelly tested and tried in public meetings, but with the result that the facts claimed were triumphantly established. The children then were not only pestered with sitters, but the "power" followed them everywhere, so that they were literally haunted. Thus they were led into the work of public mediumship. These steps in their history here so briefly summarised, are fully given the "Missing Link," a goodly volume by Mrs. Underhill, the elder sister, who pathetically states that many who came from the very first, did not do so for spiritual purposes at all, but to see if the spirits could help them out in their worldly affairs. Is it any wonder that mediums and mediumship have suffered so terribly from the abuses to which they have been subject?

It is not the purpose at present to give an outline of this remarkable woman's life. For many years she gave sittings to the most distinguished investigators in America, and then she came to this country. Her most permanent work here resulted from the experiments with Mr. Crookes, so interestingly recorded in his work entitled "Experiences in Spiritualism." But she did not appear to make great headwall as a professional medium, and became the wife of Mr. H. D. Jencken, a barrister-at-law.

[24] "The Medium and Daybreak", September 16, 1892, front page and page 596.

Mr. Jencken was a friend of Mr. D. D. Home. His first writings on Spiritualism appeared in *Human Nature* under the signature of "Honestus," near the end of the "sixties." His father, Dr. Jencken, was a profound spiritual philosopher, and had gone far deeper into spiritual science, long before the advent of Modern Spiritualism, than any one has done since, showing that a true Spiritualism is not dependent on phenomena. Mr. Jencken represented the intellectual side of the subject, and his wife the phenomenal; a remarkable conjunction it must be admitted, but it produced nothing to the individuals involved or to humanity at large.

Soon after their marriage, [25] I was present at a private seance given by Mrs. Jencken in their apartments in York Street, Portman Square. The rappings were very loud, and took place freely in the light, but other manifestations occurred in darkness. Mrs. Burns, clairvoyant, sat beside me, opposite to the medium and her husband, and saw all that the spirits were doing. To her spiritual vision was given a view of the spiritual powers attendant upon Mrs. Jencken; they appeared in distinct planes, group above group, those of more human characteristics nearest the medium, while reaching upward those of angelic light and glory were so dazzling as to be unbearable to the clairvoyant's sight. Close to Mrs. Jencken sat a medical gentleman, who had some affection in one of his ears that medical skill could not remove. Mrs. Burns saw a spirit of an intellectual character, like some distinguished surgeon, stand behind the doctor who had the afflicted ear. In the hands of this spirit was a bright, sharp instrument, which shone like polished metal; with this instrument the doctor's ear was operated on. He declared that he felt the prick, and that he was benefited thereby. Some account of this sitting may be found in *Human Nature*.

Dr. Jencken was a gentleman, with the genuine instincts of a distinguished family. He said to me that seeing the unprotected state of Miss Kate Fox he married her out of pure chivalric sympathy. Whether he thought he might be able to turn her mediumship to account or not, did not transpire, but if he did so, an insurmountable barrier stood in the way. There was something extremely unworkable in Mrs. Jencken's constitution. Mr. Jencken does not seem to have been successful in his profession, but after his marriage, he was even less so. It was a life of difficulty and struggle, and with retrogression as a reward. He became feverish, debilitated, and his health completely broke down; his gentlemanly elasticity of spirit left him. He was a true Spiritualist, and we were very intimate. Last time I saw him he was a prematurely old man, limping sadly along by the aid of a stick; I soon after heard of his death. Why are these facts introduced? To illustrate that which I have observed in so many instances, namely, that those who marry physical mediums either lose health or leave their partners, be they of either sex. In some instances the other partner may have the constitution to bear up; but the cases are numerous of separations and deaths. The late Mrs. Herne saw four husbands in the grave, and she even separated from Mr. Herne before his death. Why is this? Because the drain of vitality made upon the resources of a physical medium in full work, so exhausts the system that such a medium robs the partner in life, husband or wife as the case may be. A medium can give far more sittings if thus supplied than if left entirely to his or her own resources.

[25] Kate married Henry Jencken in London on December 14th, 1872 (Vol. 5, No. 9). Her obituary, published in *The New York Times*, July 3rd, 1892, suggests a rather grand wedding:—"In 1873 Kate was married to Henry D Jencken, an English barrister. The ceremony took place in St Paul's Cathedral, London, Canon Irons officiating. Mr Jencken died eight years ago." Wrong year and church: her husband died (November 1881) just over ten years previously, not eight.

This drain upon the psychoplasm of the medium, so lowers the vital spirits, and creates such a void in the animal nature, that there is great temptation to resort to intoxicants. And as "refreshment," the "drunkard's drink" is too frequently exhibited after seances in private houses. The unfortunate medium is forced into the habit, and it becomes a most tyrannical and relentless master. Such was the sad case with poor Mrs. Jencken, and also with her sister Margaret. These things are not named in the accents of reproach, but as lessons of warning, which no honest Spiritualist dares to overlook; for, alas! We are making drunkards amongst mediums daily, and the habit of intemperance is one of the most scandalous things that can be thrown at our movement. Here is room for reform. Let all Spiritualists obey the divine law of nutrition, and abstain from narcotics of all sorts. "Touch not, taste not, handle not," that accursed thing that "controls" mediums to disgrace, to disease, and to death!

From first to last, Kate Fox was a powerful medium. At one period recently, she got driven to such desperation with her state, that she turned round in bitterness, and for a short time affected to "recant," and say that her mediumship was all trickery. But none except fools would believe her, and as she did not mend her conditions by the attempt; she soon returned to her old allegiance. But her word for or against the phenomena would not count in either direction. These manifestations are not accepted on the word of any medium. The records of them are the work of independent observers. Genuine spiritual phenomena are of such a character that no medium can affect them in any way. Kate Fox's forty years' record rests on the testimony of thousands of most competent observers, who can or could testify that she of herself could take no fraudulent part in the matter.

Kate Fox, that first medium, the apostle of the phenomenal, has gone from earth; and in looking over her career most valuable lessons can be gathered from the shadows as well as the lights of her life. She died a martyr; for as surely was she a victim of the evil methods of human society, as any martyr ever was of that church which led him or her to the stake or the gibbet. There are many ways of doing human beings to death besides actual violence; and those mistaken kindnesses and false social methods are far more degrading, much more insidious, and serve their purpose too certainly.

Let us lay the lesson to heart; learn to live aright, and how to treat mediums properly. A kindly thought, and sincere aspiration on behalf of the gifted sister who did such a wide-spread work in the world. May she be enabled to over come all her spiritual impediments, and be attracted towards those bright ones who never can cease their yearning love for mankind, however thickly the dark clouds of earth-life may entervene between their brightness and their wandering loved ones in mortality.

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The last public act of the Fox sisters was the falling out of the younger sisters with their older sister, Ann Leah, who had married well and had not followed her younger sisters into alcoholism. This was followed by their confessions that they were total frauds; some would say they did this to destroy the reputation of Leah, who by many was regarded as the best medium. It was said that Leah reported her sister Kate for child abuse, [26] which resulted in the removal of her children. [27] Some would say that it was because they desperately needed

[26] *The New York Times*, May 5th, 1888. The eldest son is refered to as Purdy; he was called Ferdie, short for Ferdinand.

[27] Ferdinand Dietrich Lowenstein Jencken, born September 19th, 1873 ("The Spiritualist", October 1st, 1873, page 346):—Last Survivor of Famous Spiritualist Family Is Dead:—"Reno Evening Gazette", Reno, Nevada, Wednesday evening, April 22, 1908. NEW YORK. April 22.— Fifty members of the First Spiritualist Society of New York gathered last evening to attend the funeral services of Ferdinand Fox Jencken, who died Sunday. Mr Jencken, who was 38 years old, died of consumption. He was the last surviving member of the Fox family,

the money, and of course perhaps they were, in fact, frauds. Throughout our researches over the years, as listed at the end of this issue, we can note for and against. What is apparent and must be considered is the fact that Margaret in particular could demonstrate fraud so easily, as will be noted in previous and the following articles. It can be noted in the previous issues listed the improbability and difficulties which would face Margaret to learn, when young, the technique of being able to snap her toes or other limbs to fraudulently produce the raps which she did so well in 1888!

In October 1888 the two youngest Fox sisters, primarily led by Margaretta (Maggie or Margaret) Fox-Kane and her younger sister, Catherine (Cathie or Kate) Fox-Jencken, publicly confessed they were frauds. They claimed, and Maggie demonstrated at the Academy of Music, New York on October 21st, [28] that the raps were not made by the spirit world:

Quote taken from "Talking to the Dead": [29]

> "At last Maggie ascended the stage, described by one reporter "as a little compact woman, dark-eyed and dark-haired." Kate was seated in a box in the audience, lending silent approval to what her sister was about to do.
>
> "Maggie was wearing a black dress and flowered hat. She was far more nervous even than Dr. Richmond [30] and kept taking her eyeglasses on and off as she alternately read from her statement, then glanced up at the audience to repeat each sentence. Different contingents cheered and booed her as she spoke in an excited voice, denouncing Spiritualism.
>
> "When she (Maggie) finished her statement Dr. Richmond called several physicians onto the stage. Maggie slipped off one of her shoes and placed her stocking-clad foot on a small pine table. Sharp raps were heard resounding throughout the theater. The reporter for the *New York Tribune* wrote that the noises increased from faint to loud, "traveling up the wall and along the roof of the Academy."
>
> "While the raps continued, the doctors solemnly examined Maggie's feet, a procedure that the audience met with suggestive laughter and ribald remarks. Then Maggie stood on the table for another examination, after which the doctors pronounced that the raps were indeed made by her big toe.
>
> "Nobody seemed to question whether the raps produced by Maggie's toe were supplemented by other means: whether Dr. Richmond himself might have had confederates in the audience willing to mount the kind of symphony for which the spirits had become famous."

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who founded Spiritualism in Rochester about sixty years ago. We can note that his age of 38 years does not fit with the given dates! The younger son, Henry Jr, was born at Leah's home in 1875; his life was short and he died in his teens.

[28] Various paper headlines:— "Spiritualism Exposed by the Fox Sisters": *Daily Democratic Times*, Lima. Ohio, Monday, October 22, 1888: "By the Big Toe Joint": *The Galveston Daily News*, Tuesday, October 23, 1888 (Margaret was called 'Mrs Mary Gertha Fox Kane' and Kate as 'Miss Kate Fox'): "Exposing Spiritualism": *Syracuse Daily Standard*, Syracuse, N.Y., Monday, October 22, 1888, "Spiritualism Exposed by the Fox Sisters": *Newark Daily Advocate*, Monday, October 22, 1888, "Exposing Spiritualism": *The Fort Wayne Sentinel*, Monday, October 22, 1888.

[29] "Talking to the Dead", by Barbara Weisberg, pages 244-245 (Vol. 1, No. 2).

[30] One of the event's promoters, Dr C.M. Richmond, a portly dentist whose avocation was magic, also served as the evening's lecturer, assigned to speak on Spiritualism's evils, to expose common tricks of the trade and to introduce Maggie.

In our article, "Mrs Norman Culver, and Kate Fox*"* (7.9), Culver claims that both the younger sisters, including Leah's daughter Lizzie, were able to produce raps. [31] Quotes below from the article:

> …"Elizabeth Fish (Mrs. Fish's daughter), who now lives with her father, was the first one who produced these raps. She accidentally discovered the way to make them by playing with her toes against the foot-board while in bed."
>
> …"The raps are produced with the toes. All the toes are used. After nearly a week's practice, with Catharine showing me how, I could produce them perfectly myself. At first it was very hard work to do it. Catharine told me to warm my feet, or put them in warm water, and it would then be easier work to rap; she said that she sometimes had to warm her feet three or four times in the course of an evening. I found that heating my feet did enable me to rap a great deal easier."
>
> "… last January, Margaretta told me that when people insisted on seeing her feet and toes, she could produce a few raps with her knees and ankles."

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[31] As previously stated and published in this issue, in 1878 Kate and Maggie claimed:—"This older niece was the questioner with whom the early conversations were carried on with the unseen communicants, little Katie merely responding by clasping her tiny fingers together" (Vol. 6, No. 3).

Below is a sequence of newspaper articles in order of the final events:

THE BIRTHPLACE OF SPIRITUALISM

The Decatur Daily Republican, Decatur, Illinois, Wednesday, May 12, 1886:

The Little House Wherein the Rochester Rappings Originated

[*Special Correspondence*]

NEW YORK, May 10.—I met Mrs. Margaret Fox Kane recently. She is the widow of Dr. Kane, the Arctic explorer, and was one of the Fox sisters, so much talked of nearly forty years ago in connection with what was called the "Rochester rappings." She lives in New York, and is still a professional medium, though one who apparently takes little pride in her profession. Indeed, she doesn't hesitate to say that she has found it an almost intolerable life. After the death of her husband she became a member of the church of Rome, and gave up all professional work for years. Necessity drove her to it again, and she spends her summers in filling engagements in the smaller towns and her winters in giving private and public seances in New York.

Her sister, Katie, who also grew famous when she was an infant on account of the rappings, is married and resides in this city, [32] and is still a professional medium. The house where the rappings originated, and which is now honored by Spiritualists as the "birthplace of modern Spiritualism," is still standing, though unoccupied. Its owner, Artemas W. Hyde, a respected and wealthy citizen and stanch believer in the spiritual faith, keeps it as a historic treasure. It bears this inscription: "Here Spiritualism originated in 1848." It is not, as is generally supposed, in Rochester, but in Hydesville, a small village, thirty miles from Rochester, this state. The accompanying picture is an accurate representation of this famous house.

A humble place, surely, to have been the starting point of all spiritual phenomena the world has been treated to for the last thirty-eight years. Perhaps nothing ever tore up simple-minded people more than the "Rochester Knockings." There were more simple-minded people then than now, too, and newspapers, though neither so numerous or exciting, were more closely read and more firmly believed in. The news of the "Rochester Knockings" traveled and was much discussed. Newspapers containing accounts of those strange noises, supposed to come from denizens of a fleshless world, were borrowed and thumbed until completely worn out. Country folk talked wonderingly of them in their quiet homes, and men with a reputation for learning took them up as a subject to hang some of their conversational and presumably logical acquirements on.

Mrs. Kane talked of the days when the rappings began, somewhat reluctantly. The whole subject seems to be distasteful to her, and doubtless she has suffered much from curiosity and impudence of the public.

"We were mere babies," she said, "Katey and I, when the raps began to be heard near us. One of our neighbors who was much interested in them, used to carry me in his arms until I went to sleep and the raps would go on all the same. They made numerous experiments with us to find out whether we made the noises. When they took us both out of a room no more raps were heard there; but when they took one of us only raps would be heard near each of us."

[32] Widow.

Mrs. Kane is a good looking, intelligent lady, who speaks in a voice indicative of great nervousness. She is short in stature, dresses modestly in black, and spends her time giving séances. Her mediumship still consists in raps, which she doesn't care for, considering them rudimentary, and in writing. Very emphatic raps they are, too. The writing is done by means of a pencil held in her hand, and written backward in an exaggerate and angular hand. It can only be read by the aid of a mirror, or by turning the under side of the paper toward one and the written side toward the light All sorts of names are signed to the communications, Epictetus or Socrates quite as likely as John and Harry.

Mrs. Kane spent eight years in England, the pleasantest part of her professional life, she said. Once she said, when she accompanied an aristocratic lady to church, the raps began to be heard around her, much to her mortification. The minister, who had heard them in the house of her hostess, and been much interested, called the attention of his congregation to "angelic presences." She impresses me as a woman who has found life difficult and unsatisfactory, and who will not regret the leaving of it.

MAX ELTON. [33]

A FOE TO SPIRITUALISM

Chicago Daily Tribune, Oct 10th, 1888

NEW YORK, Oct. 9.—[Special]. Katy Fox Jencken arrived today from England on the Persian Monarch, and she intends to cooperate with her sister—Margaretta Fox Kane—in her proposed exposé of the fraudulent methods of so-called Spiritualism. Mrs. Jencken's coming was unexpected to her sister, and it will surprise the enemies of both of them.

"I care nothing for Spiritualism itself," she said. "So far as I am concerned I am done with it. I will say this, I regard it as one of the greatest curses that the world has ever known. Spiritualism is a humbug from beginning to end. It is the biggest humbug of the century. I don't know whether she has told you this, but Maggie and I started it as little children, too young, too innocent to know just what we were about. Our sister Leah was twenty-three years older than either of us. We got started in the way of deception and were encouraged in it. We went on, of course. Others old enough to have been ashamed of the infamy took us out into the world. My sister Leah has published a book called 'The Missing Link of Spiritualism.' It professes to give the true history of the movement, so far as it originated with us. Now, there's nothing but falsehood in that book from beginning to end, except the fact that Horace Greeley educated me. The rest is a string of lies"

SPIRITUALISM EXPOSED BY THE FOX SISTERS

Daily Democratic Times, Lima Ohio Monday Oct 22, 1888

NEW YORK, Oct. 22.—The once celebrated Fox Sisters, who are the patentees of medium spiritualism, appeared last night before a large audience at the academy of music to expose the frauds of spiritualism. Both Miss Kate Fox and Mrs. Margeretta Fox-Kane appeared on the stage. Mrs. Kane read a lecture in a faltering voice, almost inaudible to the audience. She produced the famous rappings so that they were plainly

[33] Also published: *Decatur Weekly Republican*, Thursday May 13, 1886.

audible by the movement of the big toe joint. Mrs. Kane said she thanked God that she was able to expose spiritualism.

LEAH FOX UNDERHILL AND HER TRADUCERS

New York.—*Religio*, Dec. 15 1888[34]

I have just had a long and interesting interview with Mrs. Leah Fox Underhill, [35] and will state very briefly but fully, her feelings in regard to her erring sisters. She regards it of very little consequence, what they say concerning her to any who know the history of Spiritualism and the connection of their family with it. She fully recognises the fact that there are others besides herself in the family, who are as much interested as she is, who do not wish to be brought before the public by a controversy. She feels, too, and that very deeply, that she cannot be brought into any public controversy with her own mother's children, that mother who guarded them all so carefully, and who was, as all who know her recognised, a guardian to them all.

She has, as I very well know, tried in vain to redeem them, and they have made most solemn promises to reform, but all her efforts were as vain as their promises. She has, to my own knowledge, paid largely for their support; has furnished their rooms, under their promise to reform, at great expense. I have, many and many a night, carried Margaret supplies of the best her sister's house afforded, which she could not, or did not, provide for herself. She has spent a small fortune in trying to keep them up, but all in vain. Since they have chosen, from whatever cause, to behave as they have, she has concluded to take no further notice of them; nor will she interest herself further in their behalf. She and all her friends here feel that it is worth all that it has cost her and all good Spiritualists, to be rid of them, so long as they continue on their downward and irredeemable course. Their reputation is such that Spiritualists cannot afford to harbour them at all, and she believes that it would be no benefit to Spiritualism to get up a controversy with them in their present state of living.

Old Spiritualists are in no way disturbed by the present position of the two sisters. They, of course, regret their downfall, but every one of them who has read the history of the transactions, from the first pamphlet published by Capron and Barron, at Auburn, N.Y., immediately after the first investigation at Rochester, or the old history by E. W. Capron, published in 1853, [36] or the still more complete work by Mrs. A. Leah Underhill, in 1885, have abundance of proof of the honesty of all the then girls, and there is no question on that point whatever with them. It is, you are aware, stated in those early histories, that the rappings were frequently heard while all the family were out of the house, staying with neighbours through the night to avoid the crowd and excitement.

It was the same at the early manifestations in the house of Dr. Phelps, at Stratford, Conn. There was no person in the house when they came home from church and found the outside doors all open, although the Doctor had locked them and had the key in his pocket. The manifestations were also frequent in the rooms of the house, distant from any person.

[34] Published in "The Medium and Daybreak", December 28, 1888, page 820.

[35] Ann Leah died on November 1st, 1890 at her home in New York; Daniel followed her the following summer. They were buried in the Underhill plot at Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York.

[36] This is presumably his book, "Modern Spiritualism", published in 1855, not 1853.

When the Buffalo Doctors held the feet of Margaret and Leah, they declared that the sounds were not made by the feet, but must be made by the displacement of bones of the legs. In Rochester, when we had the great investigation, the ladies stood the girls on pillows, on a table, with their dresses tied tight about their feet, and they certified to hearing the rappings on the table, the floor and the walls distinctly. Besides these rapping sounds, the sounds of carpenter work and of shipwrecks, so real as to remind Charles Partridge, then a sceptic, of his wreck on Fire Island, and the loss of a niece who made the manifestation. An abundance of such demonstrations were certified to by the best people of the country.

Who told J. Fennimore Cooper the exact facts about the death of his sister fifty years before, from a fall from a horse? At this interview, Mrs. Fox and her three daughters were present. The remarkable things recorded on that evening were certified to by such names as the following: Mr. Cooper, Mr. George Bancroft (the historian), Rev. Dr. Hawkes, Dr. J. W. Francis, Dr. Marcy, N. P. Willis, Wm. Cullen Bryant, and several others. Hon. H. P. Haskell, member of Congress, certified to being present after the investigating committee, of which he was a member at Rochester, with a number of legal gentlemen from Le Roy, all strangers, when a band of music was called for, and of hearing the most exquisite music, together with the firing of cannon, so real as hardly to be doubted as a reality. Did Margaret and Kate make all these demonstrations, and hundreds of others, with their toes?

One thing more: the two unfortunates have tried to deceive the public in regard to their ages. Their mother certifies in the original history of the rappings, published in 1848: "The youngest girl is about twelve years old; ..... the other girl is in her fifteenth year." It is probable that no one better remembered the events of these girls' appearance in the world than the mother.

E. W. CAPRON.

New York.—*Religio*, Dec. 15.

—§—

We have previously published Emma Hardinge Britten's summing-up of 1888 in her journal, "The Two Worlds", December 28th, page 78 (3.12):

"We may not pretend even to present a retrospect of the past eventful year without once more alluding to the unhappy pit of evil into which the two first well-known mediums of the spiritual cause have fallen, and into which, with the insanity of vice, they hoped to have dragged their cause. We allude, of course, to the unfortunate Fox sisters. We have already in three previous numbers shown first—that their pretended confession is the worst fraud of their lives, and that the only question to be addressed to them now is, "Which was your greatest lie? That, which for forty years, you uttered when you claimed that your manifestations were all the work of spirits, or, that which you now say when you declare them to have been the work of fraud?" To judge these hapless women truly, we must remind our readers that they are besotted drunkards, hence insane, and unworthy of credit; Roman Catholics by profession, [37] hence taught

[37] This is partly incorrect, as only Maggie was involved at this point in Catholicism. Taken from "Talking to the Dead", by Barbara Weisberg, page 256: "Asked whether her motive for recanting was to take revenge on those who had promised her a profit for exposing Spiritualism, Maggie insisted that she only wanted to set the record straight. She vaguely attributed part of the blame for the original expose to powerful Catholics who had pressured her into rejecting Spiritualism. It's likely that, since she claimed to have converted to Catholicism, the church indeed frowned on her continued practice of holding seances. Talking to the dead in the Catholic Church was considered a matter more suited to exorcism than to celebration."

by *profession,* to "lie for the honour and glory of their church," the worst enemy of which is SPIRITUALISM. As far as the cause of spiritualism is now, or has been, connected with these women, it is enough to say there have been and are, at least, a hundred thousand better and more forcible spirit mediums in the world than them; the cause can therefore well afford to let them go."

Stainton Moses also reacted harshly against them in numerous statements in "Light", whereas James Burns was more sympathetic. The Fox confessions did not at the time make the desired impact that might have been expected by the sisters and anti-Spiritualists generally.

Later in 1889 both sisters recanted their confessions.

—§—

SUMMING UP:

Just after the confessions Reuben Briggs Davenport published "The Death-Blow To Spiritualism" (G.W. Dillingham, New York 1888). Professing to "absolute truthfulness and a reverent regard for justice", it contains a signed statement:

"We hereby approve of Mr. Reuben B. Davenport's design to write a true account of the origin of spiritualism and of our connection therewith, and we authorize him to make proper use of the data and material that we furnish him.

New York, 15th Oct., 1888.

[Signed] Margaret Fox Kane & Catherine Fox Jencken

This book, published around late October/November 1888, sharply attacks their sister Leah, calling her 'the old woman', claiming that Leah used them in her exhibitions and they made her money; the book can be read online. It is interesting to note on page 82 that their sister Elizabeth, who was possibly still living in Canada, is missed out of the family tree. They give their ages at the Hydesville disturbances as eight years and six and a half, the elder being Margaret.

It is interesting and possibly significant that Leah's daughter Elizabeth (Lizzie) is, again, part of the story, as related on pages 84-85, as quoted below:

… "One of their frequent amusements was to plague their niece, Elizabeth, who slept in the same bed with them, by kicking and tickling her, and by frightening her at almost any hour of the night out of sound sleep.

"Their riotous fancy soon hit upon the plan of bobbing apples up and down on the floor in their bedchamber, as a means of scaring Elizabeth and of puzzling their mother without much risk of detection. They tied strings to the stems of the apples, and thus let them hang down beside the bed. The noise of dropping them more or less quickly upon the floor resembled almost anything that the imagination chose to liken it to, from raps on the front door to slippered foot-falls on the narrow stairway. Whenever a search was made for the cause of the noises, the apples were easily hauled up into the bed and hidden in the bedclothes, where no one would think of looking for them, at least at that stage of the investigation.

"The plan had everything in it to charm a juvenile mischief-maker. It succeeded admirably. It was not till the wonder which was caused by these strange "knockings" had extended beyond the humble Fox household, that the suggestion of any other

means of affording to that growing feeling its daily food of seeming evidence came to the roguish youngsters."

It is this apple example that has been frequently used in books and anti-Spiritualist TV programmes, for example featuring Ruth Brandon, author of "The Spiritualists" (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1983). As the Reuben B. Davenport book is available online and owing to space I will quote just Margaret's comments on the E.E. Lewis report, page 90-91:

> … "Of course, I was so young then that many incidents have escaped my memory. I assert positive, however, that much of the effect of the 'rappings' is greatly exaggerated in this statement which my mother was made to write. I say that she was *made* to write it, because the wording of the statement, if not largely dictated by others in the first place—men who desired to make public the details of the 'rappings' and to make money by the sale of a pamphlet describing them—was afterwards grossly garbled, that it might be used to suit the dishonest purposes of professional spiritualists. I am not even certain that mother ever signed the document, of which Mrs. Underhill makes such great parade. …"

Only by new research can the story be retold and put into a better perspective. We can note how, throughout the various articles, they continually show contradictions, even by those who knew them best and of course by the sisters themselves. With the rediscovery of the E.E. Lewis report, published again for the first time in April 2005 (1.12), we can clearly see how the *original* story has become distorted, added to and misrepresented. [38] It is clear that early writers like Burns, or more recent historians like Percy Wilson, had no reason to suspect that the eldest Fox sister had changed some of the original key information contained in the signed statements taken in 1848 by Lewis. It must also be considered that the Lewis report may not also be correct; it was produced on commercial lines with monetary benefits. It would be unwise to dismiss all that is published in the Davenport book. Our research over the years in Psypioneer has gone some way in so much as the various quotes and claims can be identified and traced to their origins, for example the apple dropping, "Here, Old Splitfoot, do as I do,", etc.

Nothing in the Hydesville story appears to be as it seems. Caution and responsibility should be uppermost before relating this as a factual record for the foundation of Modern Spiritualism. The positive *factual* quotes used by major Spiritualist organisations, some that head this article, have, as the evidence shows, no firm standing or consistency. We can, however, clearly see that there is a solid baseline story, told at different times by different persons.

Lewis is the only writer who was actually on the scene just after the time the events were unfolding.[39] Capron later was in close contact with the family but only after they had moved from Hydesville, via David Fox's farm, then on to Rochester, meeting in late November 1848. Capron had moved from Auburn to Rochester. George Willets became involved with the Fox family via his friend and relative, Isaac Post, resulting in sitting with the three sisters in the summer of 1848. Isaac and Amy Post were acquainted with the Fox family prior to Hydesville but, like Capron and Willets, met the Fox family again in Rochester in 1848. Henry D. Barron appears to have come into contact with the sisters in January 1849. All had

[38] We should like to call attention to Alan Gauld's classic work, "The Founders of Psychical Research" (1968). Dr Gauld obtained and studied a copy of the Lewis pamphlet and his discussion of the Hydesville events was the first to take account of Lewis for many years; he noted that the Underhill version was different. Unfortunately, later historians did not (like Dr Gauld) make Lewis their starting-point, and it was left to Barbara Weisberg in her 2004 biography to remind believers and sceptics alike of the significance of Lewis.

[39] E.E. Lewis, who took statements by those persons present and/or who had previous history with the house, but himself made no independent report or further inquiry into the phenomena that were witnessed.

received and witnessed remarkable evidence from the Rochester Rappers. Mary and Horace Greeley, editor of *The New York Tribune*, were soon to follow. These were the early custodians of the founding of Modern Spiritualism.

With so much material now freely available online, there is little excuse for major Spiritualist organisations, writers and speakers representing the Spiritualist movement to continually make unfounded claims of a *factual* nature regarding Hydesville.

Paul J. Gaunt.

——§——

Psypioneer Fox References, all available for downloading:

1.2: Justice for the Fox Sisters

1.9: What is known of the Hydesville peddler?

1.9: Did the peddler exist?

1.10: Peddler News

1.12: Peddler: E.E Lewis, "Mysterious Noises"

1.17: What Happened to the Autobiography by Kate Fox Jencken?

1.18: The Mystery of Fox Cottage

2.6: In memoriam – Margaret Fox-Kane

2.6: Margaret Fox's Poverty

3.12: 1888 – 1889!!! - Emma Hardinge Britten

4.8: Are the ages of the Fox Sisters important?

4.9: The Fox Sisters: Riddle of the records

4.9: Hydesville text reprinted

5.4: James Stanley Grimes: Fox séance

5.6: How old Splitfoot infiltrated Spiritualism

5.9: Fox News

5.9: Marriage of Miss Kate Fox

5.9: Henry Diedrich Jencken

6.3: The wrong Fox sister?

7.3: Hydesville 106 Years Ago

7.3: Miss Fox's Seances Twenty Years Ago

7.9: Mrs Norman Culver, and Kate Fox

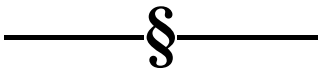
8.1: Hydesville—Fox Special

Psypioneer is archived at "The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals"

http://www.iapsop.com/psypioneer/

This site is an important opportunity for anyone wishing to research Spiritualism; check out the home page:

http://www.iapsop.com/



the PIONEER

Volume.2 No.1 January 2015

WHEN DID MODERN SPIRITUALISM BEGIN? 1848?

In the nineteenth century questions were asked as to when Modern Spiritualism actually began; some prominent Spiritualists considered it started earlier than Hydesville!





Some of these questions were asked by: Emma Hardinge Britten, and William Stainton Moses (M.A. Oxon) in 1888

Editors of "The Two Worlds" & "Light" respectively

Pre-Hydesville Manifestations: Birth of Modern Spiritualism

EMMA HARDINGE WROTE:



Shakers Dancing

"… spiritual manifestations had been prevalent amongst them long in advance of the Hydesville disturbances; that the Shakers in general claimed, upon unquestionable authority, to have been the

John Baptists of the modern spiritual movement; …"

EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN WARNED:

What is termed as the beginnings of Modern Spiritualism cannot be precisely dated

"should be carefully considered"

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

1688 - 1772



In 1741 aged 53 he entered into a spiritual phase



Thursday July 19th 1759 a fire broke out in Stockholm – consuming about 300 houses making around 2000 people homeless

Franz Anton Mesmer

1734 – 1815

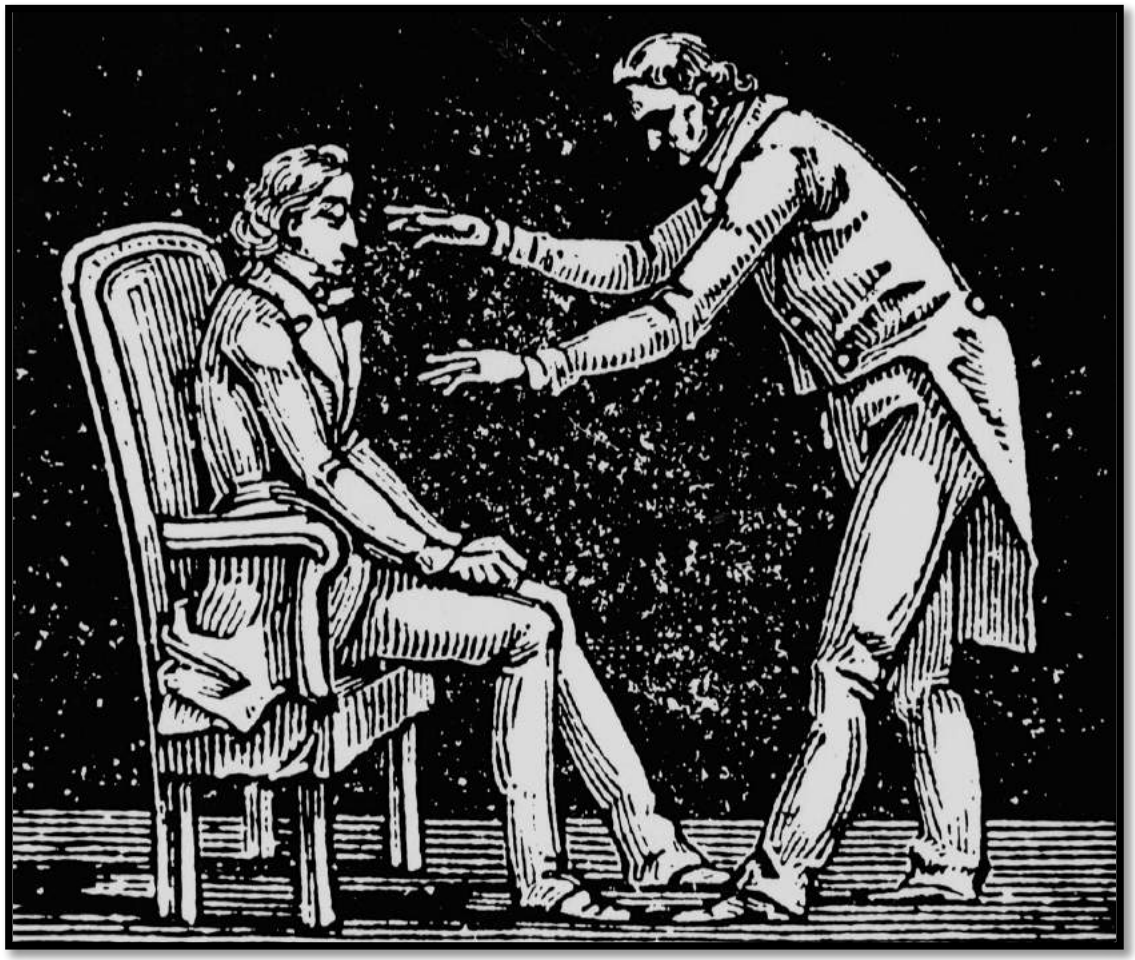
He believed there was a natural energetic transference that occurred between objects he named this

Animal Magnetism

Mesmerism



Healers known as mesmerists accomplished their work by placing a patient into a trance – magnetic sleep.





Marquis de Puységur
(1751– 1825)

Three separate schools of magnetism arose:

Anton Mesmer principally located in Paris

Chevalier de Barbarin at Lyon

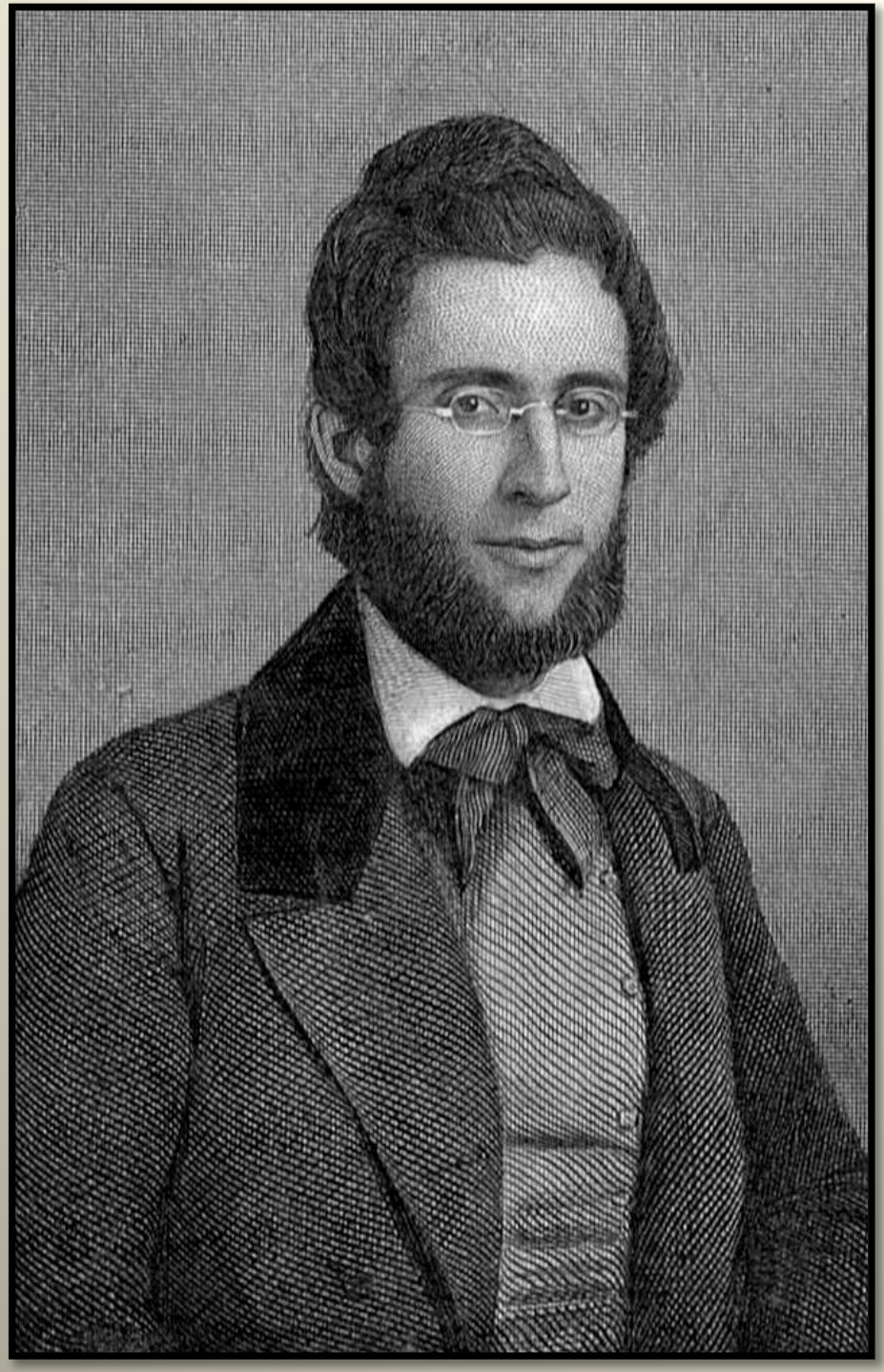
Marquis de Puységur at Strasburg

The entranced subjects were called "Somnambulists" or "Lucids"



MEDIUMS

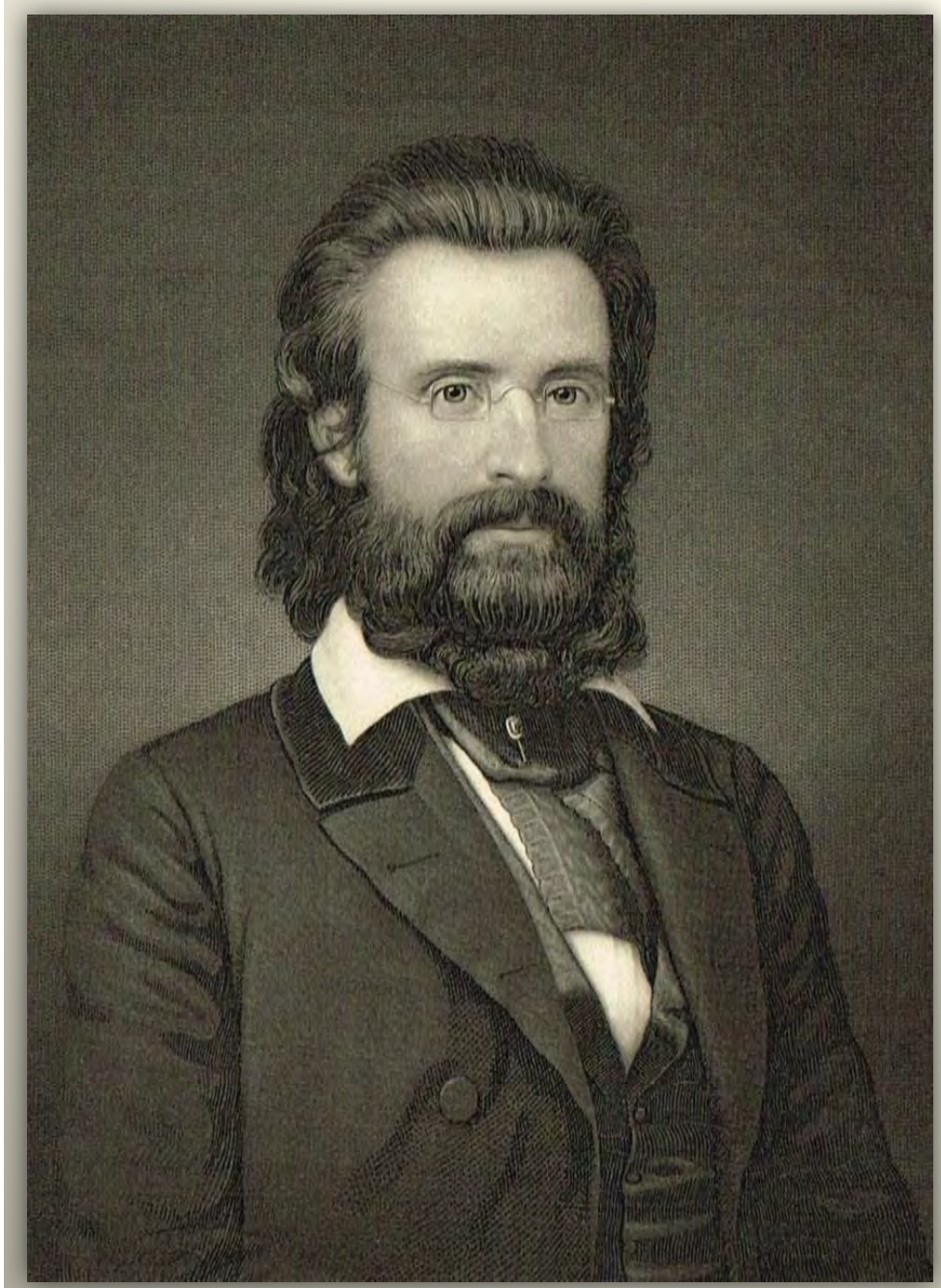
"Anton Mesmer, may well be regarded as the human founder of the New Spiritual Dispensation; …"



Andrew Jackson Davis

1826 - 1910

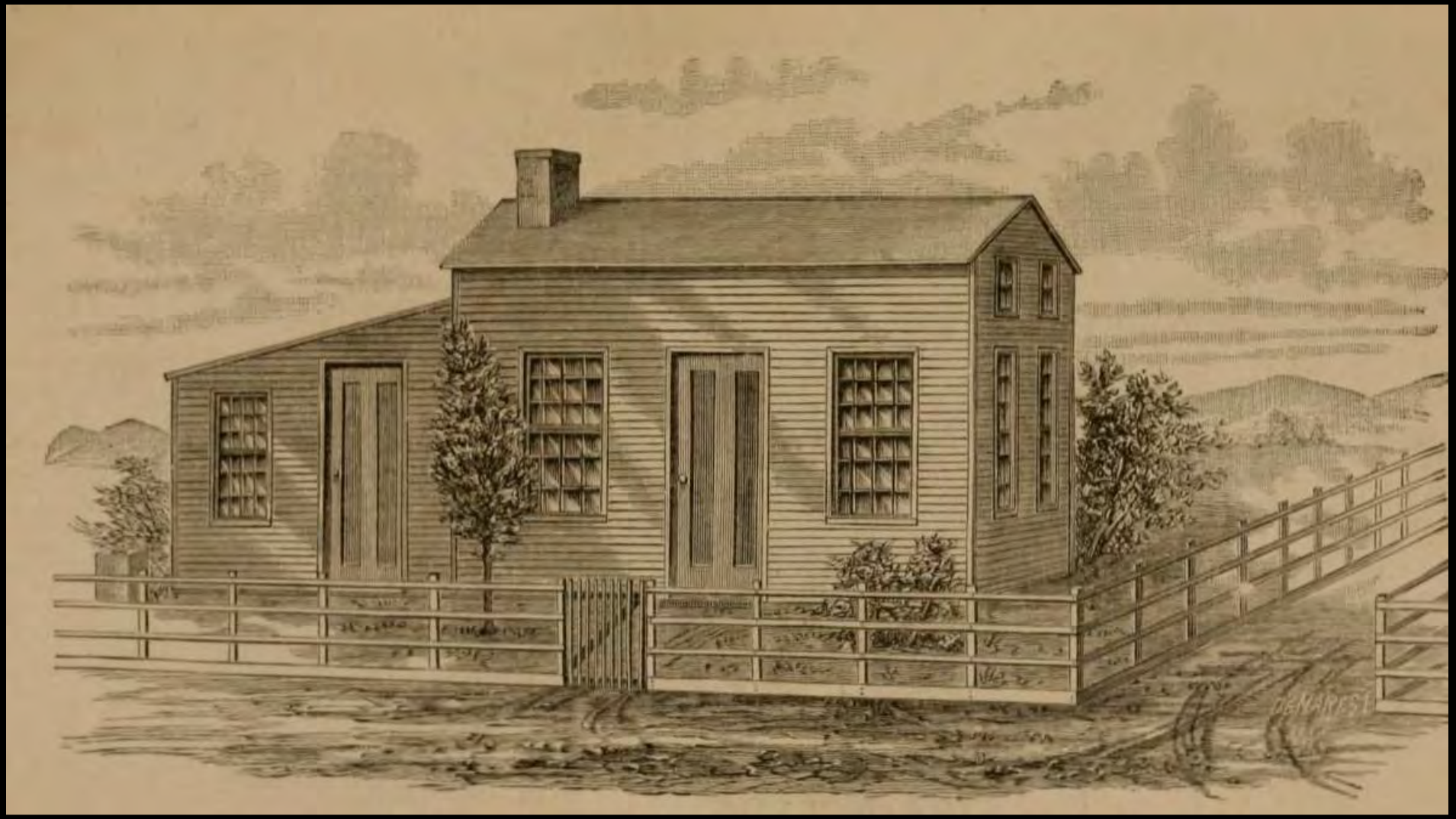
In 1843 he started to attend lectures on Mesmerism



On March 31st 1848 at Williamsburgh, Davis wrote:

"Brother! The good work has begun —behold,

a living demonstration is born!" . . . .



So why mark the birth of Modern Spiritualism with the events of Hydesville in 1848?

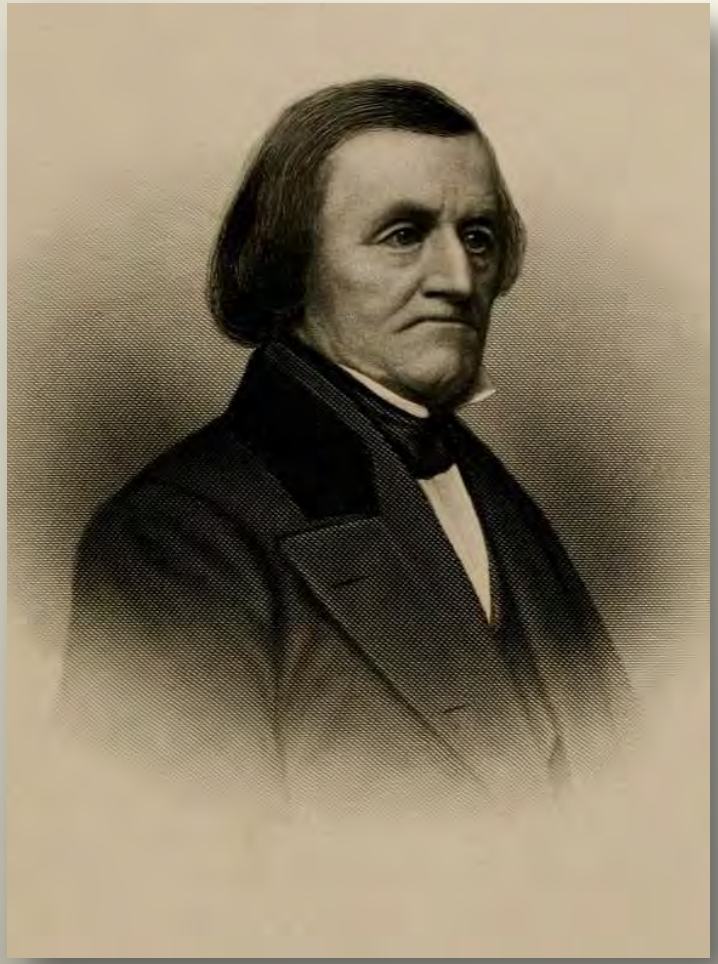
HYDESVILLE

Arcadia is a town in Wayne County, New York.

Arcadia is on the southern border of the county and is east of Rochester, New York.

Hydesville was a hamlet in the town of Arcadia

ON DECEMBER 11TH 1847 THE FOX FAMILY MOVED INTO THE ONE AND A HALF STOREY FRAME HOUSE AT HYDESVILLE



JOHN DAVID FOX
Late 1780's - 1865

Married March
7th 1812



MARGARET (NEE SMITH)
FOX
1796 -1865

FOX FAMILY

Emily: Died in infancy

Ann Leah – called Leah married names: Fish – Brown – Underhill lived at Rochester
Daughter: Elizabeth called Lizzie

Maria: lived in the area and married one of her cousins Stephen Smith

Elizabeth was married and lived in Canada as Mrs Osterout

David: lived in Arcadia with his wife Elizabeth and family – the house once belonged to his maternal uncle John Smith

Margaretta: Known as Maggie
Married name Kane

Catherine: Known as Katie or Kate
Married name Jencken
Children: Ferdinand and Henry.

Hydesville is the most well-known story in the Spiritualist movement worldwide

The story underpins the foundation of our movement

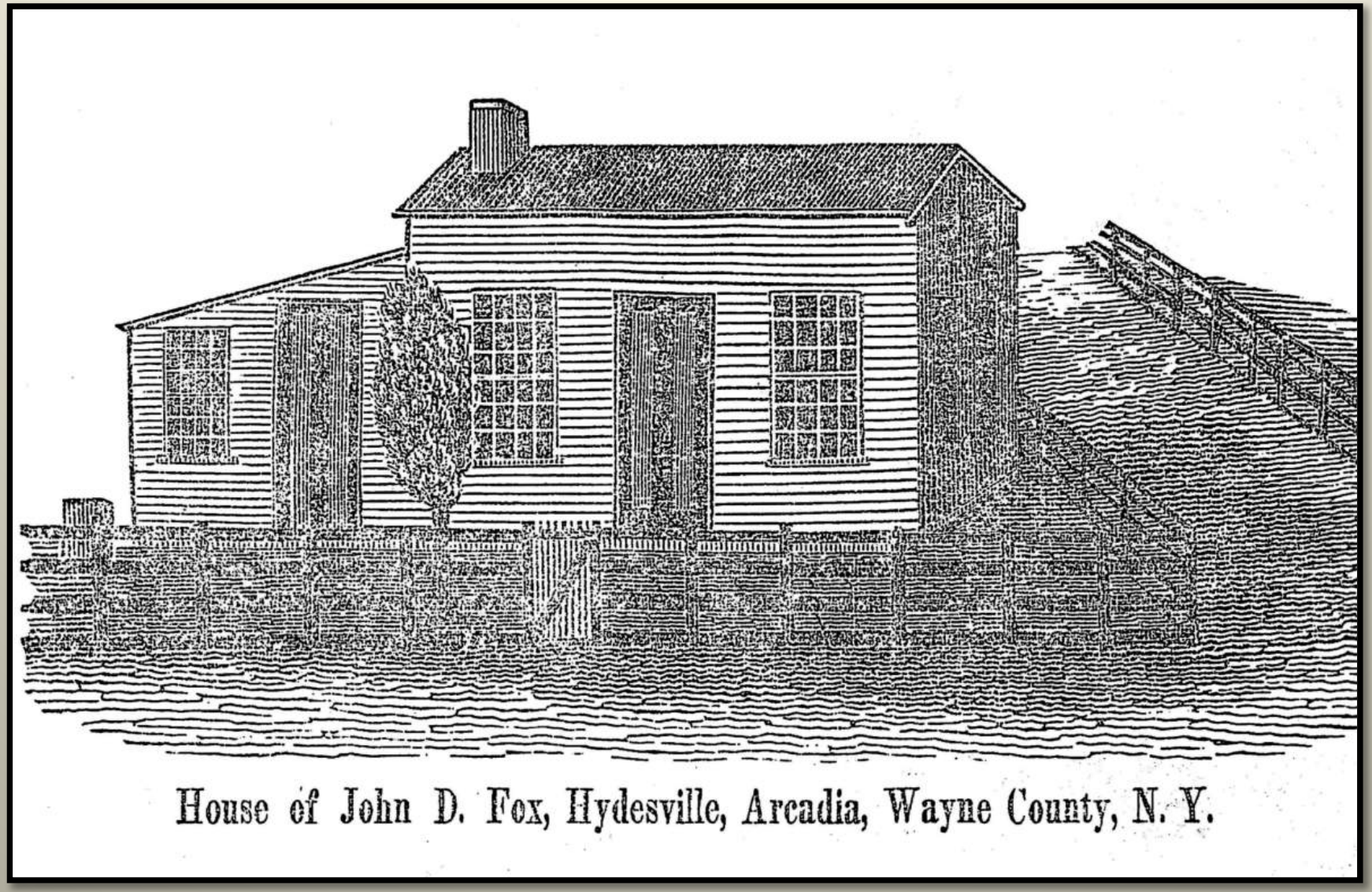
Katie and Margaret March 31st 1848:

“Come on Mr Splitfoot, do as I do”

They devised an alphabetical code whereby questions could be answered

The spirit a peddler was able to tell them his name was “Charles Rosna”

The first known image of the Hydesville House published in April 1848 by Ebenezer E. Lewis with a report on the "Mysterious Noises" heard in the house

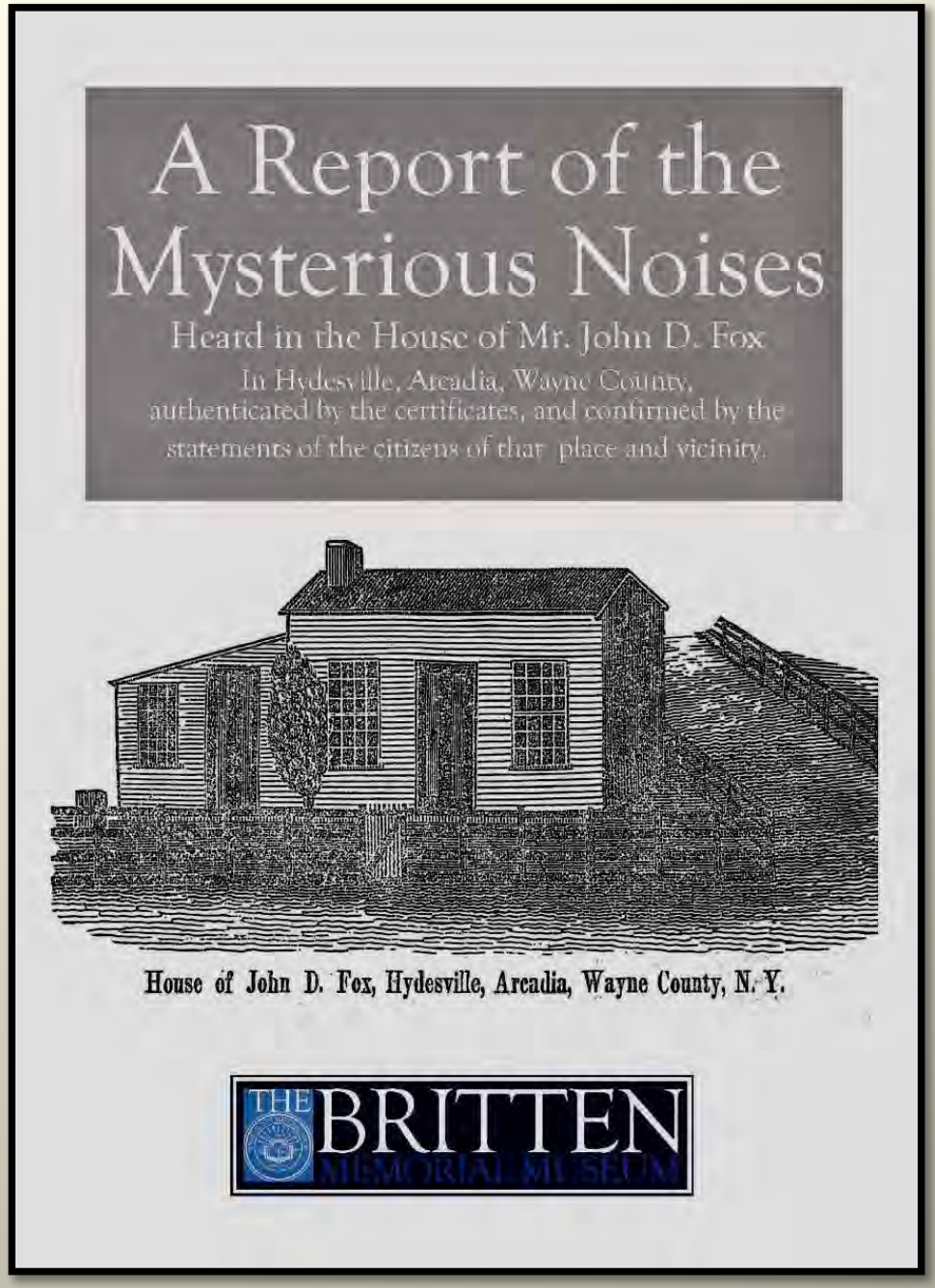


House of John D. Fox, Hydesville, Arcadia, Wayne County, N. Y.

Lewis obtained twenty-two signed statements from those who witnessed the disturbances at the house

The report shows:

Remarkable testimonial consistency, without contradiction



But today's story of this historical event bears little resemblance of what is actually recorded by the numerous witnesses who were there at the time!

Over the last 100 years authors have generally took the Hydesville story from



“Hydesville in History: Testimony of Eye-Witnesses” published in 1917 by M. E. Cadwallader

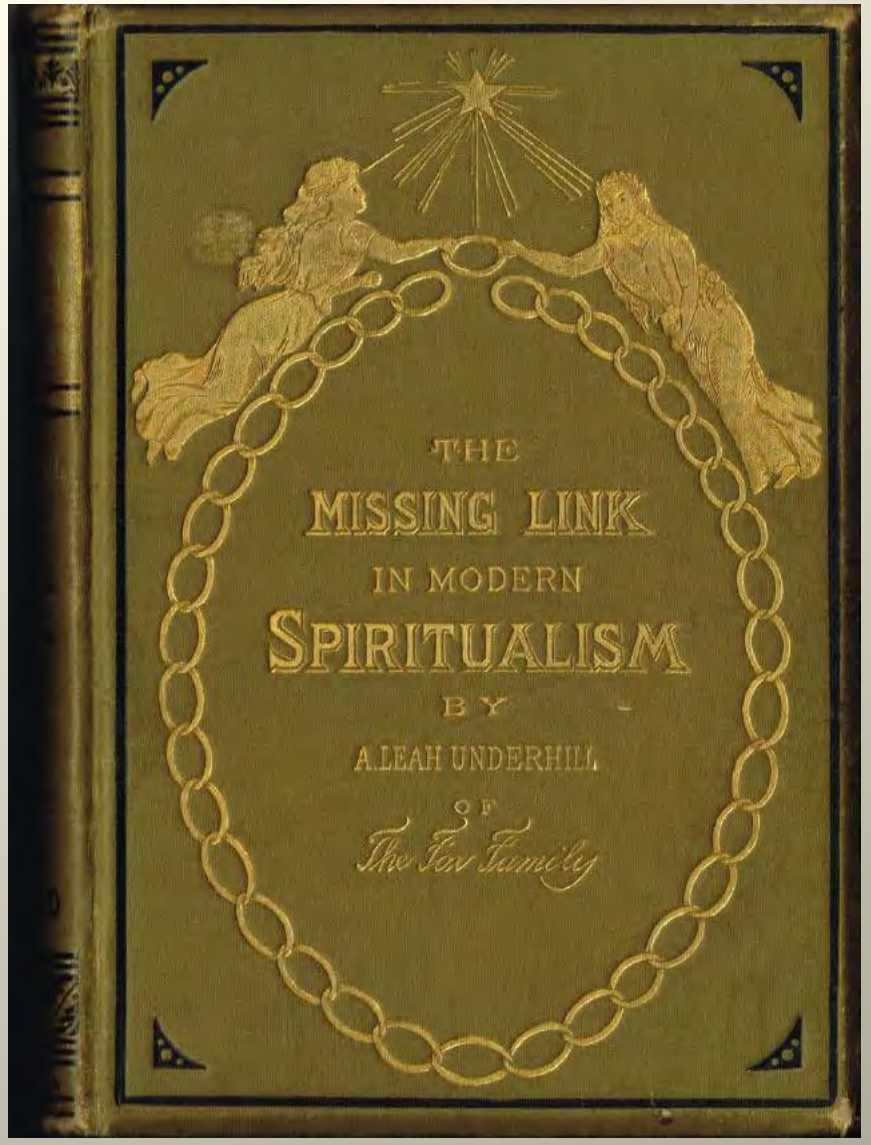


Mercy Cadwallader in turn takes her “Testimony of Eye-Witnesses” from “The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism,” by Ann Leah Underhill published in 1885

Modern Story

original source material remain unchecked!





So what's the problem?

Leah had changed & deleted some of the signed statements taken at the time by Lewis !

The two most important signed statements were Mrs Margaret Fox and William Duesler



Ann Leah (Leah) Fish, Brown, Fox Underhill ?- 1890

One example:

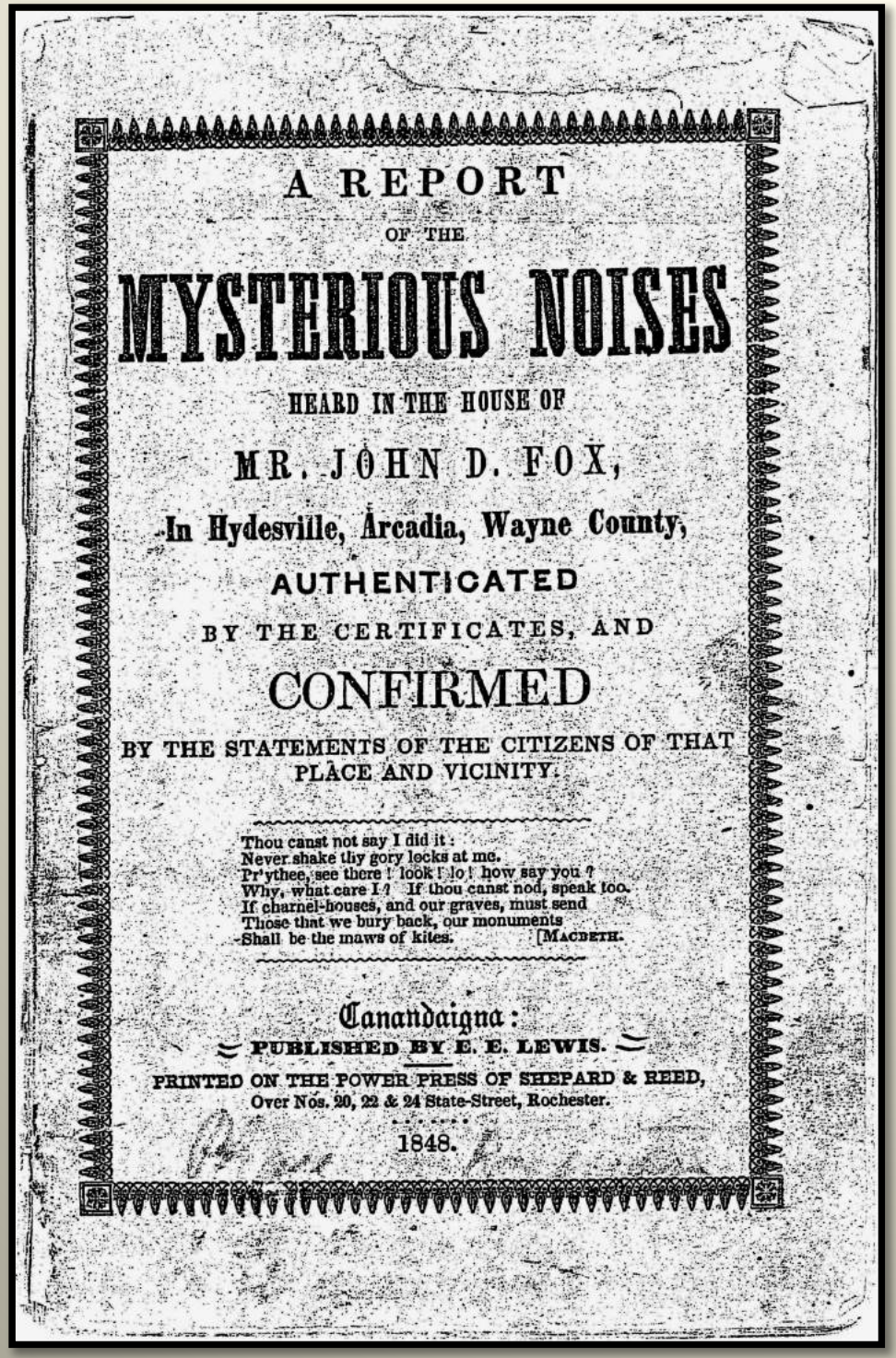
The alphabet code was established on the evening of March 31st 1848

~~~~~~~~~~~

But not by Kate or Maggie Fox as usually stated, but by William Duesler.

This code would make the "Fox Sisters" famous

So the path of the story is greatly changed; the originator of the alphabet code is excluded by Leah and in time the code is credited to Katie and Maggie as we can read today!



A REPORT

OF THE

MYSTERIOUS NOISES

HEARD IN THE HOUSE OF

MR. JOHN D. FOX,

In Hydesville, Arcadia, Wayne County,

AUTHENTICATED

BY THE CERTIFICATES, AND

CONFIRMED

BY THE STATEMENTS OF THE CITIZENS OF THAT PLACE AND VICINITY.

Thou canst not say I did it:
Never shake thy gory locks at me.
Pr'ythee, see there! look! lo! how say you?
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel-houses, and our graves, must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites. [MACBETH.

Canandaigna:

PUBLISHED BY E. E. LEWIS.

PRINTED ON THE POWER PRESS OF SHEPARD & REED,
Over Nos. 20, 22 & 24 State-Street, Rochester.

1848.

Given our claim spiritualism is built in fact

it's reasonable to say the actual story of our foundation should be equally so!



Spiritualism originated Mar. 31st, 1848, in this House, Newark, N. Y.

What Happened at HYDESVILLE?

THE STORY BEGINS SOME YEARS EARLIER WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PEDLER

Lucretia Pulver, a school girl, worked for the Bell's and sometimes lived at the house.

She recalls: "…a foot pedler

AFTER THE PEDLARS DISAPPEARANCE

Lucretia Pulver, further recalls:

“During the latter part of the time that I was there, I heard this knocking frequently, …

DOWN THE CELLAR — CENTER APPEARED TO BE UNEVEN AND LOOSE

Lucretia Pulver, continued:

"One evening about a week after this, Mrs.— sent me down cellar to shut the outside door. In going across the cellar, …

AROUND THE AUTUMN OF 1845 AND SPRING 1847 THE WEEKMAN FAMILY OCCUPIED THE HYDESVILLE HOUSE

In their signed statements, they revealed:

"… while we were living there, we heard some one, as we supposed, rapping on the outside door. …

THE WEEKMAN'S CONTINUED:

"We heard a good deal of noise during that night; we could hardly tell where it was; it sounded sometimes as if some one was walking about in the cellar."

"A few nights afterwards …

THE WEEKMAN'S "HIRED GIRL" JANE LAPE AROUND 17 YEARS OF AGE

Did Jane see the alleged dead Pedler?

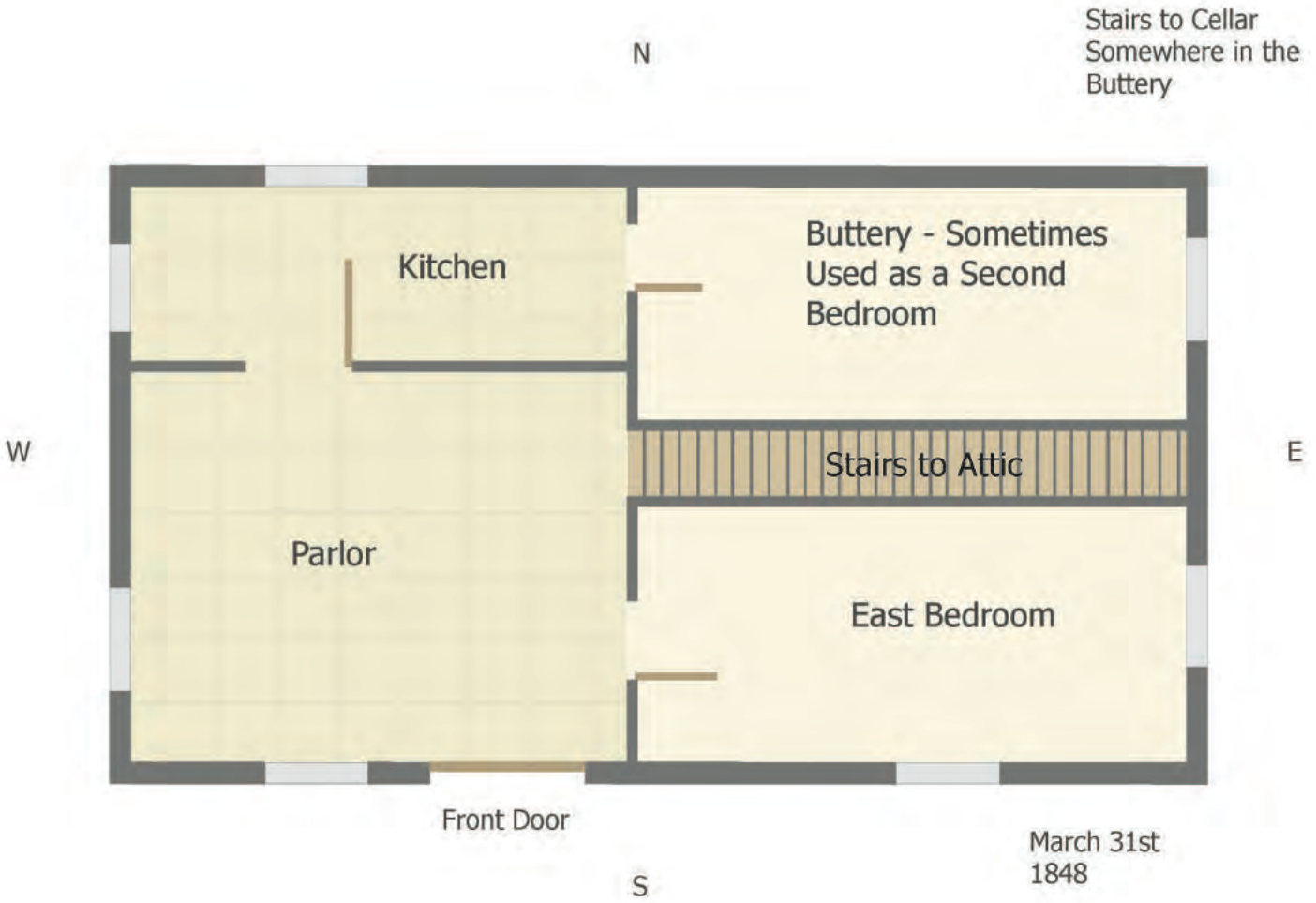
"The man stood facing me when I saw him. He did not speak, nor did I hear any noise at any time, like a person walking or moving about in the room. He had on grey pants, black frock coat and black cap. …

INSIDE THE ORIGINAL FOX HOUSE



Interior View of the Fox House at Hydesville, New York
Photograph taken by Mr. Adelbert Cronise, 1905

FOX HOUSE


N
Stairs to Cellar
Somewhere in the
Buttery
Kitchen
Buttery - Sometimes
Used as a Second
Bedroom
W
Stairs to Attic
E
Parlor
East Bedroom
Front Door
March 31st
1848
S



FOX HOUSE – 1898

CIRCA 1895





MARGARET FOX'S ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS LEADING TO MARCH 31ST

"We first heard this noise about a fortnight ago. It sounded like some one knocking in the east bed-room, on the floor; sometimes it sounded as if the chair moved on the floor; we could hardly tell where it was. This was in the evening, just after we had gone to bed. The whole family slept in that room together, and all heard the noise. There was four of our family, and sometimes five."

MARGARET FOX CONTINUES HER ACCOUNT …



"On Friday night, the 31st of March, it was heard as usual, … Up to this time we had never heard it in the day time, or at least did not notice it at all."

PHYSICAL TWO WAY SPIRIT COMMUNICATION IS ESTABLISHED



“The girls, who slept in the other bed in the room, heard the noise, and tried to make a similar noise by snapping their fingers. The youngest girl is about 12 years old;—she is the one who made her hand go.

“As fast as she made the noise with her hands or fingers, the sound was followed up in the room. It did not sound any different at that time, only it made the same number of noises that the girl did. When she stopped, the sound itself stopped for a short time.

“The other girl, who is in her 15th year, then spoke in sport and said, “Now do this just as I do. Count one, two, three, four;” &c., striking one hand in the other at the same time. The blows which she made were repeated as before.

“It appeared to answer her by repeating every blow that she made. She only did so once. She then began to be startled; …”

WITH THE GIRLS STARTLED — MRS. FOX ESTABLISHES COMMUNICATION



"… then I spoke and said to the noise, "Count ten," and it made ten strokes or noises. Then I asked the ages of my different children successively, and it gave a number of raps, corresponding to the ages of my children."

MARGARET FOX established by raps:

It was a spirit making the noise

It was injured in this house

How long it had been injured – the sound was repeated four times and then, after a short pause, one more

THE STORY BEGINS TO BE ESTABLISHED …

MARY REDFIELD WAS THE FIRST TO BE CALLED BY JOHN FOX AROUND 8.00PM:

She was already aware of strange noises from the children

Mrs Fox met her at the bed-room door she records:

Mrs Fox "and the girls appeared to be much agitated"

"They looked very pale" "what shall we do?" asked Mrs Fox."

WILLIAM DUESLER

“I went into the room and sat down on the bed.

Mr. Fox asked a question, and I heard the rapping which they had spoken of, distinctly.

I felt the bedstead jar when the sound was produced.”

DUESLER HAD PREVIOUSLY LIVED IN THE HOUSE CIRCA 1841 – HE ESTABLISHED:

I then inquired if it was murdered for money – Yes – Five hundred dollars

His throat was cut – butcher knife – asleep at the time – awakened as the knife entered his throat

SEARCH FOR THE BURIAL SITE

Duesler "asked if the body was put in the cellar?

And it rapped?"

He ascertained it was near the centre

William Duesler continued his questioning setting into operation the "Calling of the Alphabet" code which would later launch the

"ROCHESTER RAPPERS"

Were you a peddler – Yes

DUESLER THEN INTRODUCED THE ALPHABET CODE:

"I then tried to ascertain the first letters of its name, by calling over the different letters of the alphabet. I commenced with A, and asked if that was the initial of its first name? there was no rapping. When I came to C, the rapping was heard, and at no other letter in the alphabet.

I then asked in the same way, in regard to the initial of its sir-name; and when I asked if it was B? the rapping commenced.."

RAPPING CONTINUED FOR AROUND TWO WEEKS

Saturday night April 1st:

Duesler "There were as many as 300 people in and around the house at this time, I should think."

Elizabeth Fox stated: "There were committees appointed by those present, and stationed, some in the cellar and some about the house in different places, in order to ascertain the cause of this rapping"

DIGGING FOR THE BODY

Digging started in the cellar on Saturday night April 1st.

They dug until they came to water, and then gave it up

WE CAN CLEARLY NOTE:
THE CHILDREN WERE UNNAMED!

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

WHO WERE THE GIRLS?

Tradition tells us they were Margaretta and Catherine,
later known as Maggie & Kate

However, history suggests and the Fox sisters would later state:

There were three “girls” at Hydesville

The third girl suggested was the daughter of the eldest sister Ann Leah called Elizabeth known as "Lizzie" who spent some of her time with her aunties Maggie & Kate at Hydesville



Ann Leah Brown
1857



Left to right Maggie – Katie – Leah

THIS IS THE FIRST KNOWN IMAGE OF THE FOX GIRLS

Little is known about this image which was taken in New York circa 1852

SISTERS c1852



MAGGIE

KATIE





LEAH

In January 2010 I was researching Professor Fowler in the AFC library

Fowler was somewhat connected with Spiritualism and in the early life of James Burns



In 1888 Burns published this image





MARGARET. CATHERINE. LEAH, or LIZZIE?

The Fox Girls.



MISS MARGARETTA FOX. MISS CATHARINE FOX. Mrs FISH.

Mrs FISH AND THE MISSES FOX,

THE ORIGINAL MEDIUMS OF THE MYSTERIOUS NOISES AT ROCHESTER WESTERN, N. Y.



Another image published on June 14th 1856

WHAT CAN WE CONCLUDE ABOUT THE PEDLER?

Lucretia Pulver recalls:

The pedler was about 30 years old – he had a family and children – she did not recollect the details

This pedler carried a trunk,—and a basket - he wore a black frock coat - and light coloured pants, (trousers)

LATER:

The Weekman family were disturbed by the rapping on the outside door – sounded sometimes as if some one was walking about in the cellar

A few nights afterwards, one of our little girls who slept in the east bedroom – woke the family by screaming – the girl said that something had been moving around over her head and face – it was cold – she felt it all over her

Jane Lape their hired help stated:

While she was working in the kitchen – she saw a man in the bed-room joining the kitchen - no one had gone into that room - there was only one door to the bed-room, and that opened into the kitchen

The man stood facing me when I saw him – he did not speak – he had on grey pants – black frock coat and black cap - I knew of no person in that vicinity who wore a similar dress

ON THE NIGHT OF MARCH 31st AND AFTER

Mrs. Fox in her questioning uncovered the grizzly details of murder – their neighbour William Duesler re-affirmed all this – adding further information:

There is only one brief casual mention the spirit was a pedler

No pedler's name was given, only the initials "C" and "B"

SO: WHAT CAN BE CONCLUDED?

We do not know for sure how many girls participated in the communications – unnamed

The girls did not instigate a communicational code – as usually suggested

The alphabet code was introduced by William Duesler on March 31st

No communicators name was given at this time only the initials “C” & “B” (Capron “C” & “R”)

SOME OF THE PEDLARS NAMES GIVEN BY DIFFERENT REPORTS ARE:

1849: Charles Rasme (Capron)

1853: Charles Rayn (Spicer)

1860: Charles B Rosma (Owen)

1870: Charles B. Rosna (Britten)

1879: Charles B Rosemond (Pool)

THE ACCUSED MAN JOHN BELL WAS NOT INVESTIGATED OR CHARGED WITH MURDER

The information given by the communicator was never confirmed

IF OR NOT THE SPIRIT'S IDENTITY WAS CONFIRMED – AND WHO COMMITTED THE ACT IS UNIMPORTANT

The phenomena – sounds were heard and answered freely – not dependant on certain people being present

It would not be until after the phenomena subsided and the family moved from the Hydesville house that the mediumship of Kate and shortly after Maggie would begin

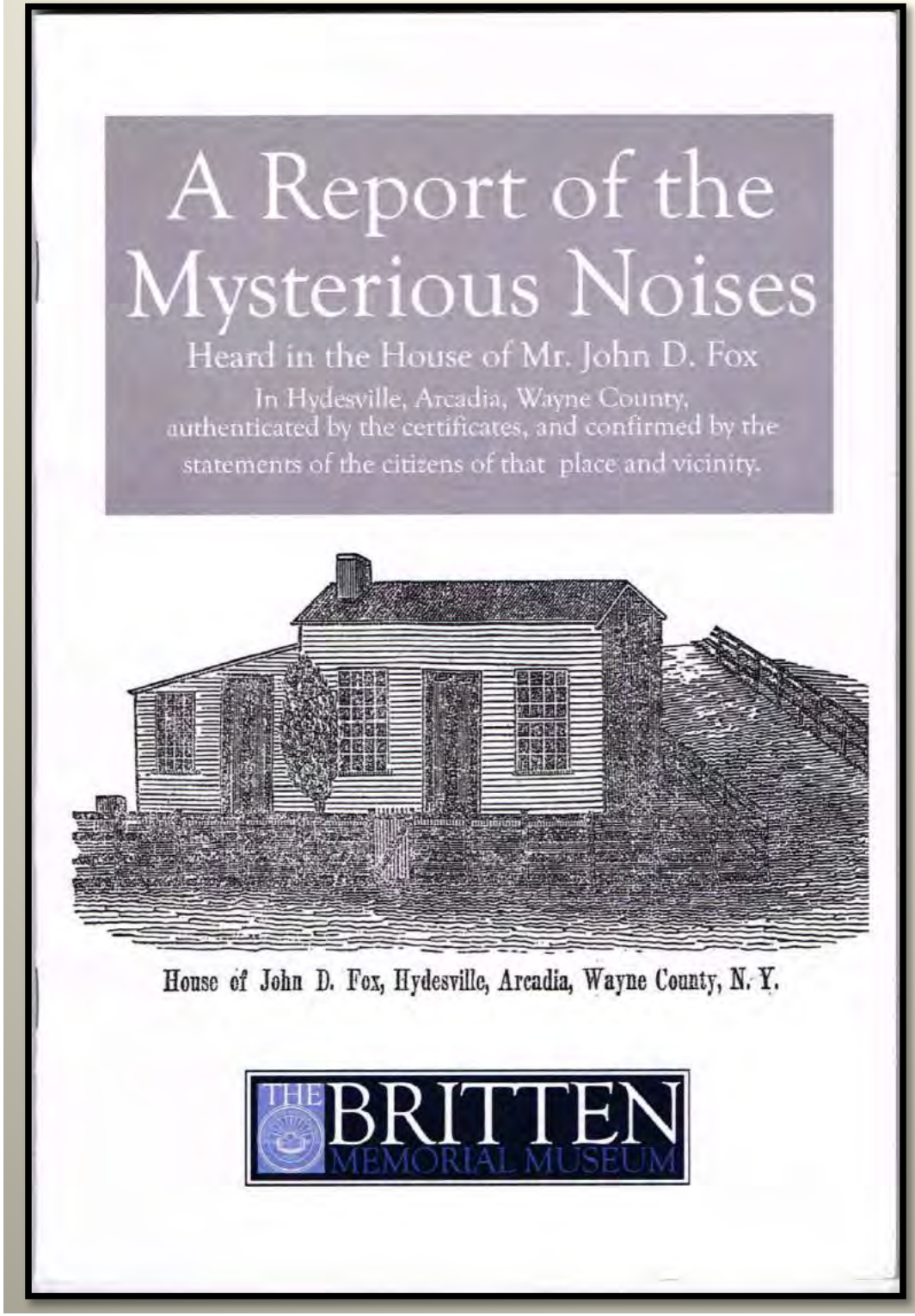
EBENEZER E. LEWIS OFFERED A $50 REWARD IF ANYBODY COULD SHOW HOW THIS WAS DONE BY ANY *HUMAN BEING*

HE PLEDGED NOT TO REVEAL THE SECRET

"… let those who ridicule the excitement that has been created, and laugh at those who, after a thorough investigation, have been to the conclusion that this is a supernatural appearance,–let them step forward and solve this mystery, if they can"

Lewis remarks in his report:

If the spirit of Swedenborg could thus "shuffle off its mortal coil," and reveal the coming of future events, and be cognizant of things that were taking place at a great distance, and then resume its ordinary avocation,—why cannot the spirits of the dead come back and reveal to us that which would otherwise be unknown?



The Spiritualists' National Union has re-published the original report of what actually took place at Hydesville

A Report of the Mysterious Noises

$6.00

AFTER FOX HOUSE:

The eldest daughter known as Leah Fish knew nothing of the activities at Hydesville until around late April – early May 1848

The Fox family had moved to David Fox's house



HOWEVER, THE RAPS NO LONGER APPEARED RANDOM AND APPEARED TO FOLLOW KATE AND MAGGIE, KATE IN PARTICULAR



Leah returned to Rochester with Kate

But the rapping's accompanied Kate to Rochester

BACK AT DAVID'S FARMHOUSE OTHER SPIRITS CONTINUED THUMPING, CRACKING, SNAPPING, AND KNOCKING IN MAGGIE'S PRESENCE

Unlike the Hydesville report there is "No independent testimony"

To these events which were recorded by Leah



IF WE ARE TO FULLY ACCEPT LEAH'S REPORT OF THE PHENOMENA ENCOUNTERED AT ROCHESTER:

Mrs. Fox and Maggie soon joined Leah, Lizzie, and Kate at Rochester

The spirits were out of control

What we would call today Poltergeist Phenomena

VIOLENCE WAS NEXT AS THE SPIRITS TOOK TO SLAPPING THOSE PRESENT

Leah states:

Kate was slapped a second time and fell

Kate recited "twenty or thirty verses of poetry, ending with the line:

To be with Christ is better far."

It could be considered Kate was in a trance state

IN THE JULY THE FOX GIRLS RETURNED TO HYDESVILLE TO JOIN THEIR BROTHER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW STEPHEN TO RESUME DIGGING IN THE CELLAR

On digging further they found several human teeth, and a few bones, and some hair, which evidently came from a human head, although no connected bones or skull were found

FAMILY FRIEND ISAAC POST: REINSTATED WILLIAM DUESLER'S ALPHABET CODE

The sisters including Leah, during the summer of 1848 refined and developed spirit communication through the alphabet code which would earn them the title:

“The Rochester Rappers”

Three raps indicated yes, five signaled the use of the alphabet or a single knock meant no

“Ordered by the Spirits”

The newly constructed Corinthian Hall in Rochester was rented for the night of November 14th 1849



The first public demonstration of mediumship

Eliab W. Capron was selected to deliver the opening address

Leah and Maggie filled the Hall with raps which continued during the entire demonstration

As a result of the demonstration at the Corinthian Hall

Committees were imminently set up and investigations began into the "Spiritual Manifestations"

Spirit circles were soon started, mediums developed which spread across America, reaching London in October 1852 with Maria Haydon

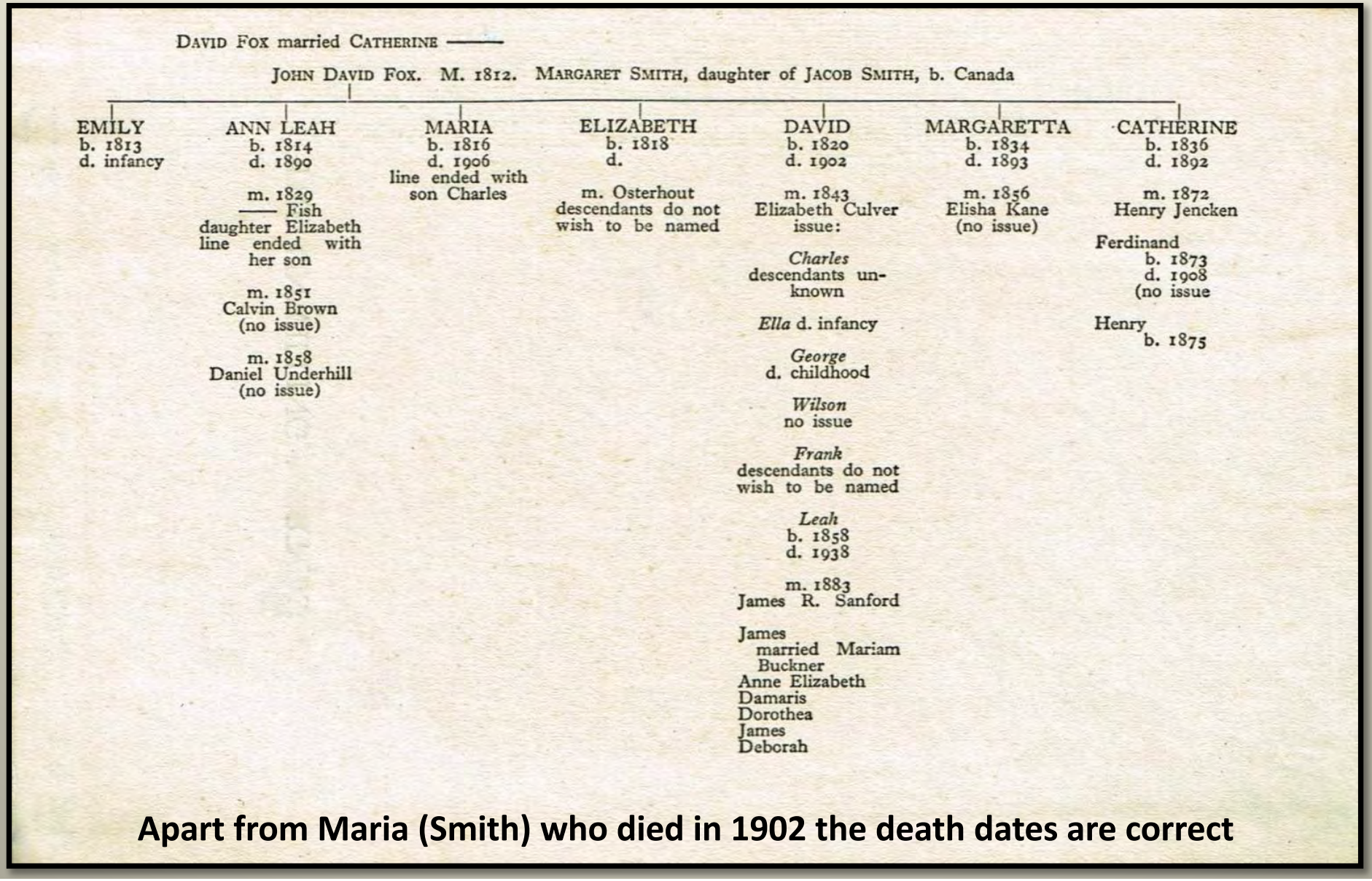
The name "Modern Spiritualism" appeared around the 1850's

Popularised by the publication of of Eliab W. Capron's 1855 book:

Modern Spiritualism

PSYPIONEER IN SEPTEMBER 2008 PUBLISHED A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT:

THE FOX SISTERS: RIDDLE OF THE RECORDS



DAVID FOX married CATHERINE ——

JOHN DAVID FOX. M. 1812. MARGARET SMITH, daughter of JACOB SMITH, b. Canada

EMILY
b. 1813
d. infancy

ANN LEAH
b. 1814
d. 1890

m. 1829
—— Fish
daughter Elizabeth
line ended with
her son

m. 1851
Calvin Brown
(no issue)

m. 1858
Daniel Underhill
(no issue)

MARIA
b. 1816
d. 1906
line ended with
son Charles

ELIZABETH
b. 1818
d.

m. Osterhout
descendants do not
wish to be named

DAVID
b. 1820
d. 1902

m. 1843
Elizabeth Culver
issue:

Charles
descendants un-
known

Ella d. infancy

George
d. childhood

Wilson
no issue

Frank
descendants do not
wish to be named

Leah
b. 1858
d. 1938

m. 1883
James R. Sanford

James
married Mariam
Buckner
Anne Elizabeth
Damaris
Dorothea
James
Deborah

MARGARETTA
b. 1834
d. 1893

m. 1856
Elisha Kane
(no issue)

CATHERINE
b. 1836
d. 1892

m. 1872
Henry Jencken

Ferdinand
b. 1873
d. 1908
(no issue

Henry
b. 1875

Apart from Maria (Smith) who died in 1902 the death dates are correct

The Formation of Modern Spiritualism "Should be Carefully Considered" - Emma Hardinge Britten

Emanuel Swedenborg

Extraordinary Clairvoyance.

Life was much the same in the Spirit World as on Earth.

→

Franz Anton Mesmer

Healing.

Natural energetic transference between objects.

"regarded as the human founder of the New Spiritual Dispensation" – Emma Hardinge Britten

Mesmerism

Trance, diagnosis, clairvoyance, and the intercourse with spirits.

They were therefore termed spiritualists.

Shakers

Remarkable evidence of clairvoyance, seership, trance and impressional mediumship were displayed.

John the Baptists of the modern movement.

Andrew Jackson Davis

In 1843 he started to attend lectures on Mesmerism.

He elaborated on and modified Swedenborg's vivid description of the after life.

Which he would later term "The Summerland".

Hydesville

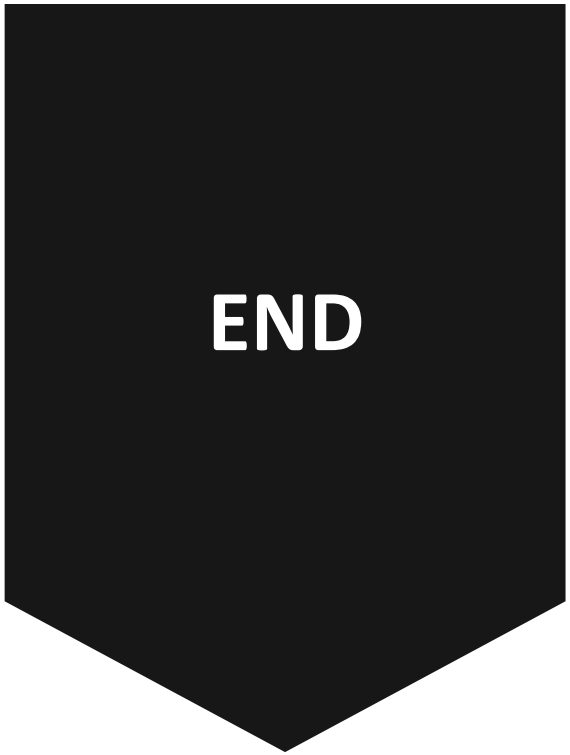
The good work has begun - behold, a living demonstration is born!"

Andrew Jackson Davis had established a *defined status* through philosophical thought as to a foundation and explanation of *Modern Spiritualism* through Mesmerism.

Hydesville demonstrated physically two-way communication between the spirit world and the physical world.

The Fox sisters were the first mediums to publicly demonstrate the communication between the two worlds.

The Birth of Modern Spiritualism.


END

Margaret Fox Kane

From a portrait taken 1862









Elisha Kent Kane


KATE FOX




KATE FOX

Katie Fox



HENRY DIEDRICH JENCKEN





Leah and Daniel Underhill



The picture above was taken at The Fox Cottage, Lily Dale, N. Y. It shows a reporter from a Chicago newspaper, Ann Marsters, inspecting the basement

In 1888 Maggie and Kate would state their mediumship from the start was all a “fraud”

- They claimed their frequent amusement was to plague and frighten Elizabeth – who slept in the same bed in the east room.
- Hit upon a plan of bobbing apples up and down on the floor – as a means to frighten Elizabeth – which puzzled their mother.
- They tied strings to the stems of the apples and hung them down beside the bed – the noise of dropping them on the floor quickly resembled anything the imagination chose – e.g., raps on the front door.
- Whenever a search was made for the noise the apples were hidden in the bedclothes, this was early discarded – and developed into the manipulation of the fingers, – and then the toe-joints – practising firstly with one foot then the other – finally this could be done with little effort.
- Soon it went too far – we could not confess the wrong without exciting much anger on those we deceived.
- Distorted testimony – built up from their raps – all the raps needed to do was to affirm – or – deny! What was suggested to the spirit/girls built up the story – the story became consistent and established e.g., are you a man (no raps) are you a spirit (raps) Yes.
- No peddler’s name was given or claimed by the spirit/girls he was a pedler – It was suggested.