

***The Beltsville Ghosts
Guide
To Hunting Ghosts***

By Scott Fowler

Acknowledgements

I have a had a number of people over the years guide me through my life. Many of which helped, but didn't know it, in the creation of this work. Many are my dear friends and encouraged my obsession. The following people deserve my thanks and a drink the next time I see them.

Vince Wilson and the officers of the Maryland Paranormal Investigator's Coalition, Don R. Smith and the team members of Leftfield-PSI.net, Troy Taylor, James Madison, and, of course, my mother, Darlene

I also thank any number of people that I have forgotten to mention here. You still have my sincere appreciation even if my memory fails me.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my loving and caring wife, Katherine, who puts up with my continued obsession with spirits. Thank you, My Love.

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Cover Art by Katherine Fowler

Cover Design by Scott Fowler

Printed and bound in the United States of America

First Printing – September 2004

Published by: Scott Fowler, Beltsville Ghosts Publishing
<http://www.beltsvilleghosts.com>



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Table Of Contents

Introduction • • • • • 1

What Are Ghosts Anyway? • • • • • 5

A Brief History Of Ghost Hunting • • • • • 9

The Modern Ghost Hunter • • • • • 12

The Phenomenon A Ghost Hunter Can Expect To Encounter • • •
• • • • • 15

Stages Of A Ghost Investigation • • • • • 19

The Interview • • • • • 21

The Tools We Use • • • • • 24

Tools On A Budget • • • • • 30

Abstract Tools and Tools For Safety • • • • • 31

Ghost Hunting Tips • • • • • 34

Completing The Investigation • • • • • 36

In Conclusion: Why Do We Hunt Ghosts? • • • • • 37

Appendix I: Suggested Readings • • • • • 38

Appendix II: Suggest Organizations • • • • • 39

Appendix III: Forms And Documents • • • • • 40

Introduction

Oh God! Here we go again. Another ghost hunter who puts out a guidebook. It seems like everyone under the sun is writing ghost-hunting guides. Most say pretty much the same thing. Regurgitating the same concepts, ideas and theories. Many of which I agree with and will discuss in this book. So, why is this one different? What do I have to say that is different from everyone else? What can I offer you, the reader that other books can't give you?

Perhaps a different perspective, one that is individual to my own experiences. Each ghost hunter has their own specific experiences, each one different from everyone else. Every encounter, every skill, every element of knowledge that a ghost hunter carries with them is as individual as personalities on the Earth. Perhaps, just perhaps, where I come from could lend a different perspective to this whole ghost-hunting thing.

My philosophy in life is "learn all you can and teach all you learn." Though I have read many ghost hunting "manuals" and I agree with much of what is said in them, they all share one quality. They all have elements with which I disagree. My objective with this book is to consolidate those elements with which I agree, insert some of my own observations and place them all in a one-stop source that is easy for the layman to understand and engaging to read.

This book also consolidates the tips and rules that I agree with and recommend. All the books out there have this same information but I have noticed that not one book on the market covers everything that I believe and suggest. Thus, I felt it necessary to put all that I think works in one place.

At this point, I would suspect that you are wondering who this Scott Fowler is and why he feels qualified to write a ghost hunter's guide. It's a fair question. If I expect you to trust the information I provide then I should give some information about me to show that I have the knowledge and experience to earn that trust.

I'm a ghost hunter. This is obvious. I've studied the paranormal since I was a child and continue to learn new things about ghosts and the unknown every day of my life. I got into ghost hunting pretty much by accident.

Though I was well read, I tended to stay away from active investigating until I was eighteen or so.

The reason? Yea, it was fear. It takes a lot of guts and courage to touch the unknown. At that time, I wasn't sure if I had that type of bravery. As it turns out, there wasn't much to fear. Ghost hunting is actually rather boring. It includes long periods of waiting and hoping usually punctuated with finding nothing. But every once in a while, on those special rare occasions, something is caught in our "nets." Something that boggles our minds and naturally shouldn't exist. But there it is, in black and white (or color or even that green tint when we use night vision accessories).

Most people get into ghost hunting because of experiences they have had that they can't explain. I suppose I am no different. I, too, have had experiences that drove me to explore the unknown. Many of which, when I look back on them with a more experienced and scientific eye, I have to admit probably had normal natural explanations; that may have only been my half asleep imagination that showed me my grandfather standing at the foot of my bed after he died, the strange sound on the micro-cassette recorder may have been an insect flying by not a ghost trying to communicate, that flash of light in the window of that abandoned building could have been a car's headlights passing on the road behind us, and that shadow in the upper window could have been a trick of the light rather than a phantom image looking down on us from a level that had no floor.

But there was an incident for which, to this day, I have no explanation. An experience that became a turning point in my life toward investigating the supernatural. Allow me to tell you about it so that perhaps you can understand better from where I come and where I may be heading.

Shortly after my graduation from high school in 1988, my friends and I began conducting clandestine "investigations" at a local turn of the century building known as Amendale Institute. I use the term "investigation" very loosely here for as much as we tried to conduct a proper investigation of the site, our naïveté made us quite unscientific in our approach. Oh, we fancied ourselves as amateur scientists but our inexperience gave us no clue as to what that meant. We based our behavior on characters we'd seen on television or in the movies. We had no clue what it took to follow the scientific method. We tended to jump at every



little thing as being a ghost. We did very little analytical thinking to try to rule out natural causes. Very much so, we were falling into the same traps that many fall into today.

Amendale Institute, Beltsville, Maryland



An Anomalous Photograph Taken At Amendale Institute Circa 1990

One particular day we went up to Amendale Institute on one of our impromptu ghost hunts. Our ghost hunts were always impromptu, the result of a couple hours just talking about the unexplained. Very little preparation was followed and usually no plan was thought out ahead of time. We tended to “wing it” which makes for bad investigations. This could become a case of what NOT to do during an investigation and many will say that because the investigation was conducted so poorly than we shouldn’t trust the results we had. Today, I would agree with those people but at the time, and even now, it became mostly a feeling that something significant happened. I have always advocated that experiencing ghosts is a very personal thing and when it comes down to it, no matter what evidence one may produce, those who have touched the other side can not convince those who have not.

I remember the day as being cool and crisp. It was sunny but the air bit into my lungs as winter air in the Washington D.C. area can only do. I don’t remember specifically who was involved. Certainly myself and my good friend at the time, Patrick, were involved but my log of the day does not mention any others and I think there were at least two other people involved. This is another indication of our naïveté, poor and lazy documenting skills.

During the course of the investigation, we placed a tape recorder on the porch of the building and walked away with the expressed intention to watch the tape recorder from a distance very closely to make sure no one went near it.

As my log on this incident states: *“December 10, 1991 - We went to Christian Brothers this afternoon and made recordings. My tape didn't come out with anything in particular. Patrick's, however, has something phenomenal. Patrick took his recorder up the front steps and sat it on the porch. He walked away, leaving the recorder to record what should have been silence but in the middle, clearly (and finally something undeniable) footsteps could be heard walking past the recorder. Heavy heels striking wooden panels. I, myself, had my eye on the porch the entire time the recorder was up there and I saw nothing or no one. Patrick picked up his tape and shortly after that the tape stopped. He also has, shortly before all this, a strange sound that resembles Chinese firecrackers going off. But the most fascinating part is those footsteps. Invisible footsteps. Hard-soled, men's shoes or boots.”*

We had recorded our first Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP). All of us were certain that no one went near the recorder while it was on the porch and no animals were seen near the recorder. It was a true anomaly and many attempts since then to duplicate the sound of heavy, booted footsteps on that porch could not measure up to what we had on tape.

It was at this point, when I realized that Amendale Institute was truly haunted and that my mind wasn't playing tricks on me. This incident, above all, led me down the road toward becoming a paranormal investigator, to the place I am right now, producing this piece for others to learn from my experiences.

Scott Fowler
September, 2004

What Are Ghosts Anyway?

So, what are ghosts anyway? What is it that we as ghost hunters are hunting? At first glance, these seem like easy questions to answer but upon further analysis the answers tend to elude us. For the most part, deciding what ghosts are is a rather personal decision. One that each person needs to decide for themselves. What I can do is list the current theories and allow you the reader to make the decision for yourselves.

Souls of the Dead

The most prominent theory and the one most people subscribe to is that the souls of the dead, for whatever reason, remain on Earth and visit the living. There is some strong evidence to support this theory. Most cases seem to show a communication with loved ones that have passed on and cases of haunting phenomenon seem to be of people who died.

Angels

Angels are beings believed by many to be sent by some higher form such as God to help human beings through life. The Bible uses angels also as a means of God to pass on communications to the living. Though I may not believe in the Biblical angels, I tend to believe that part of the reason that the spirits and ghosts hang around the living is to help us get through life as *Guardian Spirits*. There are many stories of people finding themselves in life and death situations and report being helped by mysterious beings that are there one minute and disappear the next. I don't believe that all these stories are fiction. But are they winged angels from God? My tendency is to say no. They are human spirits, who have stuck around after death as a means of helping out the living.

Demons

If there are angels, some would argue, than wouldn't there also be the evil equivalent? Demons would be the evil version of angels. These are supernatural beings that come to influence the living to negativism. I don't believe in demons any more than I believe in angels. Ghosts are essentially human beings that have lost their bodies to death. And, like living human beings, there are as many personalities for ghosts as there are for the living humans. This includes evil or negative energies as well as good and positive

energies. Remember, in life for every Mother Theresa there is also a Hitler. Seems logical to me that this would go into the afterlife as well.

Environment Recordings

One theory of ghosts is that events and emotions can be recorded on the environment. Much like a video tape recorder records the action on your favorite television program. Then when the conditions are right, usually involving many factors such as the strengths of magnetic fields of the area, the weather conditions, and the receptiveness of the observer, the event can replay itself in front of an audience. In this situation, the "spirit" is not conscious of the observers and ignores them completely, passing directly through them in some cases. This playback can happen over and over and over again whenever the conditions are right.

Fairies

The forest had a fascinating relationship with human beings. Humans have had any number of woodland spirits, among them and probably most famous are the fairies. These tiny creatures are believed by some to be a sign of good luck and are there to watch over humans. Beginning at the time of the Enlightenment, these types of superstitions were fading away.

I do not believe that fairies are real beings. They were conjured up by early humans to help the deal with the fear created by a thick dark forest. I include this here because of several photos that were taken in the 1920s by two girls. They appeared to show actual fairies in a nearby forest. They have since been declared fakes but they are a large part of paranormal history.

Ghost Lights

Usually seen in high geology areas like mountains, ghost lights are similar to orbs in that they are globular balls of light seen rising and bouncing around wooded areas and mountain ranges. The current thinking is that these lights are not ghostly as all but the result of geologic activity. The theory is that as the rocks grind against each other, they release energy that floats away in glowing balls. Before this theory was introduced though, ghost lights were believed to be spirits of the dead making their way to visit the living or posted to guard a particular area from the living. Sometimes they were thought to be the ghost lanterns of dead miners still looking for their vein of riches.

Guardian Spirits

Similar to angels, guardian spirits are supernatural beings sent here to help humans through the struggles of life. Some believe these spirits are with everyone from birth and help each person get through trouble. Rather than being angelic and godly creatures, guardian spirits are usually described as being the souls of ancestors come to guide their living relatives through their lives. This is a concept I subscribe to more than angels. In ghost photos, guardian spirits will usually be seen in pictures of babies and children, mostly on a birthday or a celebration time. They can appear as any of the known anomalies in photos: orbs, ecto mist, shadow ghosts, etc.

Retrocognition (Seeing The Past)

Similar to environment recordings, retrocognition is the belief that an incident wasn't just the replaying of a recording but an event where the observer actually travels through some unknown means to the past for a brief period of time. There is the famous case of two schoolteachers who visited France. In the early morning hours, as they walked in the streets, the buildings seemed to change. People nearby changed into others dressed in period clothing. They came back believing they spent time in the past. To my knowledge, no one has ever had an experience like this and come back with photographs or any physical evidence, which raises my doubts on this type of incident. This may be nothing more than a conscious dream type state.

Fakery

It is clear that many cases of the paranormal are caused by dishonest individuals looking to make money or gain attention. These cases have caused problems that ghost investigators must fight through. That's the reason for the extensive interview before the investigation.

Weather Conditions

The weather conditions in an area can cause effects similar to ghost anomalies. For instance, ball lightning was mistaken for ghosts before science realized that the balls of light held the same properties as storm lightning.

Disease

Dementia, fevers, and psychosis can cause hallucinations and in the past these illusions have been seen as spirits. It wasn't until further medical research showed the nature of the hallucinations.

Mistakes

Human beings are inherently error prone. Mistakes do happen. People's memories are faulty as well. There are cases where someone will see something natural and then over the course of time the memory fades, changes, and morphs into something supernatural.

Myths and Legends

Myths start as semi-truthful stories that over time and retelling becomes something different. These myths and legends are usually better told and touch an aspect of the human condition, becoming engaging and believable. Some people latch on to these legends and spread them as fact. It becomes the ghost hunters job to distinguish between what is legend and what is fact.

It's far more likely that ghostly phenomenon is a result of more than one reason. Each experience should be looked at on a case-by-case basis and may have any one of these explanations.

A Brief History Of Ghost Hunting

By no means, is this going to be an out and out complete history of ghost hunting. In fact, it won't even be close to complete. But part of my philosophy of "learn all you can and teach all you learn" is the idea that nothing comes from a vacuum. There's always a history behind everything that happens and everything we do. I believe that we can't ignore that history. In fact, we should embrace it and learn from it. How else can we even begin to guess what our future is without looking at our past?

Let's begin our little jaunt through our past and see where it takes us.

I envision, the early stages of man involving quite a few ghost stories. Spoken, of course, in that grunted language of the Neanderthal. I imagine a tall, hairy man draped in the furry skin of a mastodon, his arms flailing in the air, his shadow dancing on the cave wall behind him as he enthralled the seated gathering with his tale of death and the beyond. Perhaps, he wasn't making the story up but instead relating a real event that he experienced. A time when he touched the other side and his barely complex mind couldn't fathom what it was.

Whatever his name, whether real or a figment of my imagination, this caveman, in my mind, is the first ghost hunter, struggling to understand the experiences he has had by describing them to others.

The first documented ghost hunter, however, is quite a bit recent but still in our distant past. He is Athenodorus, a Greek philosopher who seemed to have lived sometime during the second century A.D. As the story goes, Athenodorus was visiting a house which some believed was haunted by a spectral apparition wrapped in clanging chains. During the night, the philosopher experienced this apparition and, in an attempt to learn from it, proceeded to follow it into the garden where it faded away. The next morning, Athenodorus had the ground underneath the spot where the spirit disappeared dug up and found the remains of a man bound with heavy metal chains. The body was given a proper burial and it is said the house never experienced another ghostly phenomenon.

Though this story is interesting, it comes to us through a third party, the writings of Pliny the Younger and may not be the most truthful of accounts.



The Fox House – The Origin Of Spiritualism

The age of modern ghost hunting can be said to have begun in the early 1848 when Katie, Margaret and Leah Fox, a trio of sisters, claimed to be able to talk with spirits residing in their home. Using a series of taps and clicking sounds, they appeared to be able to communicate, however rudimentary, with unseen entities in their bedroom. As word got out, people began to flock to the home and to investigate. Unwittingly, these were the first ghost hunters.

These events spawned the birth of Spiritualism, a religion that has since lost favor and died out. Spiritualists were essentially ghost hunters in their own right. Instead of using cameras and other tools that are common with ghost hunters today, they used the séance and the medium. The approach wasn't very scientific and most, if not all, spiritualist mediums were determined to be frauds and tricksters.

But as Spiritualism fell by the wayside, the interest in the paranormal, and ghosts in particular, it created spurred the beginnings of scientific exploration into the unknown. For the first time, scientific minds began to investigate the ghost stories reported through out the ages and those taking place in their own backyards. Using techniques very similar to what many ghost hunters use today, they often had good success.

Among the more famous names of the time was Harry Price. Price was the first person to employ a group of volunteers to help investigate ghosts. He documented the equipment they used (most are used to this day), the experiences they had and the techniques they employed. Price took a very scientific approach to a ghost hunt and publicized his findings as much as he could.



The Borley Rectory

Harry Price's crowning achievement was the Borley Rectory. During the course of a decade, Price conducted a series of investigations at the run down structure in England. The location was the reported sightings of ghostly monks, phantom horses and coaches, and spectral nuns, even though no evidence of a monastery has ever been discovered on the grounds. When poltergeist activities began to occur to the owners, both skeptics of the paranormal, in 1928, Price was called in. At the time, Price was the founder and director of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research in London. During the course of the investigations led by Harry Price, many were convinced that something of a paranormal nature was taking place at the Rectory.

Though recent writings have suggested that Price may have faked the events that took place, the publicity created by Price's publication of the events greatly influenced how ghost investigations were conducted.

Around the same time that Price was working on the investigation of ghosts, J. B. Rhine was working on creating experiments in a controlled condition to test the limits of Extrasensory Perception (ESP). He believed that in order for further investigation into survival of death to continue, the nature of ESP would have to be thoroughly studied. He went on to create the parapsychology department at Duke University and create many of the same tests and experiment still used today, becoming known as the father of modern parapsychology.

During the time these two were working, the dissemination of information was slow. Usually taking several days to reach other parts of the country and up to several weeks to cross the oceans. Add to this a major part of the population being illiterate and you have many people who didn't know about ghosts or took legends and myths as fact.

Today, of course, we have the internet where ideas and theories can be spread with the speed of the highest baud rate. This is a double edge sword. On the one hand, the web is very conducive for the exchange of information

and ideas. This makes it easy for anyone to be a “pseudo-expert” in the paranormal. That many people spending time thinking about and reading about paranormal phenomenon means that many more people are coming up with more and different theories than ever before. On the other hand, the internet is full of hoaxes and rather anti-scientific approaches to paranormal research, a trap in which many uneducated or naïve people may fall. The internet must be treated lightly.

The history of the paranormal has culminated in today’s abundance of amateur paranormal investigators, each with a different approach and each with a different belief system. This is where we, the ghost hunter, come from after years of evolution, through research and investigation, through trial and error, we have learned what works and what doesn’t, what’s a ghost and what isn’t.

The Modern Ghost Hunter

There once was time, not too long ago, that the field of parapsychology was taught in every major university across the country. During the 1960s and 70s, parapsychology was a rather popular field of study. Thanks to cases like the Amityville Horror and the Culver City Entity being popularized and the image of the ghost hunter being portrayed in movies and television as learned scientists on the edge of breakthrough knowledge.

Beginning in the 1980s, however, that began to change. Skeptics began questioning the validity of spending vast amounts of time, energy and money on such questionable endeavors as researching the unknown. Scientists debated whether this was true science or a whimsical fantasy. Colleges, always wanting to avoid controversy, began to drop their parapsychology programs in an attempt to attract more students to their institutions. Before long, parapsychology disappeared from the American higher learning environment. Now a days, if one wants to pursue a parapsychology degree, one must go to Europe or the Far East to obtain such degrees.

As such, the modern ghost hunter is a distinctly amateur endeavor. Unlike medicine, there is no regulating body that determines who or what a ghost hunter is and what elements of the scientific method have to be followed. As a result, many charlatans, frauds and un-professionals have arisen. It is these bad seeds that have given the field of paranormal investigation a bad name and it is this bad reputation that true investigators must fight through.

Each paranormal investigator is self-learned, usually from what they have read. Most have exhausted their local libraries of their paranormal readings and search out the Internet for information. The Internet is packed full of information on the paranormal but much of it is incorrect or erroneous. There are only a certain percentage of groups and individuals out there who even attempt to use the scientific method wherever possible. Most jump at every little indication as being ghostly, never checking for the natural explanation first. As a result, many have the wrong idea about ghost hunters.

Since we, as ghost hunters, are unable to show a degree or doctorate or any type of established higher learning certificates, we have to gain the trust of those experiencing the paranormal through some other means. These people are already on edge, questioning themselves and their own senses. They are experiencing a great deal of fear and, possibly, have lost trust in

others, perhaps due to ridicule when they've tried to discuss it with those around them. The modern ghost hunter must establish a rapport with these people and listen to them. We must entertain any idea, no matter how ludicrous we may find it. The paranormal experiencer is going through frightening things and we don't know what their thought processes were to bring them to believe what they believe about their situation. Our job is to gain their trust via listening to them and sympathizing with them and by researching and investigation to determine the truth.

Thus, the modern day paranormal investigator is part amateur psychologist. Learning through experience and reading how to read people's body language, their voice patterns, and their facial expressions. Also, the modern ghost hunter is part historian, performing vast amounts of research, delving into the records of the past to determine what has happened. The ghost investigator is part scientist, as well, observing, forming hypothesis', experimenting where possible and making conclusions based on the information obtained during the course of an investigation.

The Phenomenon A Ghost Hunter Can Expect To Encounter

Apparitions

Apparitions are the ultimate goal of every ghost photographer. An apparition is the sensory perception of a ghost. The most sensational is, of course, visually, though it is much more rare than sounds and smells. A visual apparition appearing in a photograph is the holy grail of ghost hunting. The



type of apparition we tend to search for is full bodied, looking as the ghost did in life. Classically, these visual apparitions will be foggy or transparent. There are several very intriguing apparition photographs that I have seen, most notably the Brown Lady on Rayham Hall. I, however, have never photographed an apparition though I may have seen one (not really sure about it though.) My search for the Holy Grail continues.

The Brown Lady

Automatic Writing

It is believed by some that a spirit can take over a person when they are in a relaxed state and communicate through them. Most notably through automatic writing. That is a person, while under the influence of a ghost or spirit, can scribble or type a message to the living. The host rarely remembers the incident and will awaken with the message before him to interpret. Sometimes the only way the host even knows that the experience took place is if an observer explains what just happened. Personally, these seem possible and some experiences I have had suggest that it has happened to one of my fellow ghost hunters on several occasions. But I have to wonder though if it is really a ghost doing the writing or the person's subconscious.

Bilocation (or Doubles)

This is the appearance of a living individual at two locations many miles apart at the same moment in time. I put this in here only because I

have seen a couple photographs that claim to be of doubles, or a bilocated individual. The person is alive but reportedly miles away from the photographed location. I am rather skeptical of these situations. They are easily faked and hard to verify. One usually has to take the word of the people involved and I find eyewitness accounts are usually rather faulty, mistaken or otherwise.

Ecto Mists

A common anomaly in ghost photos is a misty or smokey substance that seems to float in the air of a picture. These are called ecto mists and sometimes people can see figures or faces in the mists. This is an instance where I equate it to picking out figures in the clouds, except sometimes, very rarely actually, a figure is so obvious and clear that it makes me think there's something more there. One must be careful with ecto mists, though. If someone is smoking in the area of the camera or the environment is especially cold that a person's breath can steam up in front of them, those are things that will appear looking like ecto mists. That is why a standard rule in ghost hunting today is no smoking and if it's cold out, hold your breath when taking pictures.

Ghost Energies

The electricity created in the human body during a lifetime does not disappear. Physics dictates this. Physics states that matter and energy cannot just disappear but change form. So, when the body dies what happens to all that built up electricity in the brain? It changes form into what we know as ghost energy. Ghost energies can be captured on film looking very similar to lightening bolts (strangely enough, blue bolts) or bright fluorescent lights floating in the sky. This is an anomaly that more often than not is invisible to the naked eye as the picture is being taken but only appears when the film is developed.

Orbs

Orbs are the most photographed ghostly anomaly. They are clear, sometimes colorful, balls that seem to float in the frame. Some say that orbs are the life energy of a spirit taking on the easiest form to maintain, globular or ball shaped. The danger of orbs is that the same figures can be caused on film by floating dust particles or water droplets not immediately noticeable

by the photographer. When I am evaluating a ghost-orb photo, I have to have certain assurances that a moist or dusty atmosphere wasn't present at the time the picture was taken. Most of the time, even then I will not post judgement on the picture. Since orbs are so prevalent in ghost photos, I have been overwhelmed with them and they start to look the same. I am in the pursuit of trying to solve these mysteries and orbs tend not reveal any new information for me, even ones I can comfortably call ghostly.

Orbs on videos tend to be a different matter. I've seen orbs on video moving in erratic ways not consistent with dust or moisture. Orb videos will sometimes make sudden turns and spiral about, flying against the moving currents in a room. These are the orbs that make me wonder if these spherical objects may truly be ghostly and not just dust particles and moisture droplets. Some claim that orbs are actually flying natural animals in the environment that we have yet to discover.

Poltergeists

Translated literally poltergeists means, "noisy ghost". Poltergeists are usually unseen entities that can manipulate their environment. They seem to use this power to annoy and play tricks on the living. But some have been know to become violent as in the Bell Witch legends. Movement of objects is a common poltergeist trait. Hiding objects is another. Poltergeists seem to love to wake people up from a restful sleep by tearing bedclothes off the beds. In most situations, the poltergeist activity can be traced to an adolescent, usually going through puberty, who may be the cause. The theory is that the troubled adolescent mind may send waves of energy into the environment manipulating it unbeknownst to the adolescent. Most of the time, the evidence supports this theory but occasionally there are cases where it is apparent that it is a paranormal phenomenon involving an outside supernatural force.

Rods (Or Moving Orbs)

In some ghost photographs, one can find small bars of light we have come to call rods. There is some belief that rods are a separate anomaly but generally my belief is they are orbs caught in the act of moving quickly. I think that rods give us a better understanding of orbs as conscious beings. Some rods have been seen curving around obstacles. If it was a piece of dust or water droplet, the orb wouldn't be doing such a conscious act. It would hit

the obstacle and change path at that point. Rods are interesting as they appear to react with their environment.

Shadow Ghosts

Shadow ghosts have often been interpreted as evil or negative energy. This is mainly due to the physically dark nature of the spirit. In ghost photographs, they appear as shadows, usually blocking the view of the subject from the camera. The shadows seem to have no origin and are just floating or standing in the frame. These may be representative of the types of human spirits that were very negative in life and are attempting to remain that way in death. Stories I have heard about shadow ghosts are very frightening and some believe shadow ghosts are actually demons trying to drive us in the wrong direction.

Television Ghosts

A very new phenomenon is the anomaly of television ghosts. Lately, it appears that people taking pictures with turned off or unplugged televisions in them are finding faces looking out at them. This is such a new phenomenon that no one is quite sure what to think of it. However, it seems logical to me. Ghosts appear to control their environment and travel via a means of electro-magnetic energy. What is a television set designed for? To channel electro-magnetic energy onto a glass tube to project images. It is conceivable then that television ghosts are spirits using this technology to look in on the living as if through a window. Many of the photos I've seen really do appear as if the individual on the other side of the screen is peering intently out into the room beyond. It's almost unnerving.

Vortexes

How does a spirit get from the afterlife to here? Via a vortex. Vortexes are tornado looking anomalies found in pictures. It is believed that the orbs that are so common travel from the afterlife through the twister type energy tunnels to the world of the living. Vortexes have the distinctive spiral pattern and usually a white foggy type substance. Vortexes, unlike rods, tend to travel through objects and people. More often than not vortexes are caused by camera straps or hair strains in front of the lens.

Stages Of A Ghost Investigation

A ghost investigation involves a series of stages that are important to maintaining the scientific method. Here is a brief description of the stages.

Initial Contact

An investigation usually begins with an initial contact with the site owner. In most cases, the site owner will approach the investigator looking for help. Sometimes, however, usually in the case of locations with an established historical significance, the investigator contacts the site owner for permission. Either way, permission is mandatory for any type of investigation to begin.

Preliminary Interview

During the course of the initial contact phase, the investigator should begin a preliminary interview. This will involve asking probing questions (many of which will be repeated during the onsite interview). The questions asked should be carefully chosen. This is a delicate time in the relationship between the investigator and the site owner. The questions should be general and designed to get the person talking, not necessarily to determine the truthfulness of his experiences.

Onsite Interview

Once the investigative team arrives at the location, an onsite interview should be conducted. The questions involved with this stage will be more probing, designed to determine the truthfulness of the people involved.

Onsite Investigation

Once the interview is complete, the physical investigation can begin. At this point, the investigative team performs a baseline reading of the entire area. Then the vigil begins. The team pays close attention to the location, looking for anomalies from the base line. Each anomaly is weighed against the natural causes and determined if it is paranormal in nature.

Data Analysis

At some point, the onsite investigation has to end. That's when the hard part begins. Detailed analysis of the tape recordings made, the video recorded, and photographs taken. Again, the reason for any anomalies must be determined.

Historical Research

The next stage is the document research. The historical records of the location need to be poured over and the utility records of the location need to be looked at for possible explanations to the phenomenon taking place.

Issuance of Report

Once the investigation is complete, a report needs to be written up detailing the results as the evidence determines. This report needs to be given to the site owner and published in some sort of public forum so that fellow paranormal investigators can comment on the results and the investigative process. Today, most investigators use websites to post their reports but there are some magazines and science journals that properly written reports can be published.

The Interview

At the beginning of any investigation is the interview. This is when you the investigator must determine if the person experiencing the paranormal phenomenon is actually experiencing something unusual and determine if further on site investigation is necessary and warranted.

During the course of the interview, the investigator must pay close attention to body language, vocal tones and any indications that the person answering the questions isn't being truthful. Look for discrepancies in stories. Does the interviewee say one thing at one moment and then contradict himself the next? Does he seem nervous or react to questions in a dubious or unexpected manner? Learn to pay close attention to the detailed reactions of the person. At the same time, the investigator must not let his own ideas and thoughts blind him to the clues conveyed during the interview.

Below are questions that I use during an investigation. They are derived from several different sources and many seem self-evident while others may seem close to rude or insensitive. But these questions must be asked to sort out real experiences from the mundane.

Personal

- Address of Location:
- Owner's Name:
- Telephone Number:
- E-mail Address:
- Occupant's Names and Ages:
- Occupant's Education:
- Occupant's Occupation:
- Occupant's Religious Affiliation And Background:
- Any Occupants on Prescription Medication, especially behavior enhancing drugs:
- Any Occupants using illegal drugs:
- Any Occupants Drink Alcohol Heavily (more than three times a day):
- Any Occupants Under the Influence of Drugs and/or Alcohol During the Experience:
- Any Occupants Interested in the Occult:
- Any Occupants Seen Films Dealing With Similar Phenomenon. If So, What And What --Did They Think About How Such Phenomenon Was Portrayed:
- Any Occupants Have Such Experiences In The Past:

- Any Occupants Currently Under The Care Of A Psychiatrist/Psychologist/Therapist:
- Have Any Clergy Or Other Paranormal Group Been Consulted? If So, Please List Them:
- Has The Media Been Involved:
- Have There Been Any Witnesses Besides The Occupants:
- Are There Any Pets At The Location:

Investigation Site

- Length of Time at Location:
- Age of the Location:
- Number of Previous Owners:
- Names of Previous Owners (if known):
- Number of Rooms at the Location and Brief Description of Each:
- History of Location:
- Has the Location Been Blessed?:
- Has There Been Any Recent Remodeling, If So, What?:

The Phenomenon

- Have There Been Any Odors:
- Have There Been Any Sounds:
- Have There Been Any Voices:
- Has There Been Any Movement Of Objects:
- Have There Been Any Levitations:
- Has An Apparition Been Seen:
- Have There Been Any Cold Or Hot Spots That Could Not Be Explained:
- Have There Been Any Problems With Electrical Appliances:
- Have There Been Any Problems With Plumbing:
- Are There Any Lakes, Streams, Rivers Or Moving Water Near The Location:
- Are There Power Lines Near The Location:
- Any Occupants Having Nightmares Or Trouble Sleeping:
- Have There Been Any Physical Attacks:
- Are Pets Affected:
- When Was The First Occurrence Of The Phenomenon:
- What Were The Witnesses' Reactions During The Phenomenon:
- How Long Was The Duration Of The Phenomena:
- Who First Witnessed The Phenomena And When:

- Were There Any Other Witnesses:
- What Time Was The First Occurrence Of The Phenomena:
- How Often Does The Phenomena Occur:
- Do The Occupants Feel Threatened By The Phenomena:
- What Do The Occupants Believe Is Happening:
- Are All The Occupants In Agreement As To What Is Happening:
- Are Certain People Seemingly More Affected Than Others:
- Has Any One Person Appeared To Be Very Close To The Starting Points Of These Phenomenon:
- Is There Any Reason To Think That Someone At The Location Might Fake Similar Events:

The Tools We Use

A true ghost investigation involves the use of a multitude of equipment, some from the very mundane and found in any household to very complicated and sophisticated equipment used only in technically specific careers. The important thing to keep in mind is that all this equipment must be used in conjunction with each other for the best results. No one piece of equipment will have consistent results by itself. For example, a camera taking pictures by itself will be less likely to catch anything abnormal than a camera used in conjunction with EMF readings.

Keep in mind that none of the equipment that ghost hunters use was developed for ghost hunting. The equipment we use was originally intended for other fields. Because of this, it is very important that we are familiar with the proper way to use our equipment. This means reading in detail the manuals that come with this equipment and gaining knowledge of what the equipment was originally used for. I couldn't tell you how often I've run into groups that use their equipment incorrectly. The results they get are impressive but not ghostly. For instance, EMF meters were originally developed for electricians to use to locate electrical sources in walls. Thus, when you point an EMF meter at an electrical source, you get a reading. Thus, when you get a reading, you must locate all the electrical sources in the area and determine if the EMF meter is registering those sources. If it is not, then it is probably ghostly in origin. Too many groups ignore this and believe that any reading they get on their EMF meter indicates a ghost. This is not true! Thus, the importance of knowing your equipment.

Now my expertise is certainly not on the technical side of an investigation so what follows won't go into a great amount of detail on the equipment that we use. It will only touch the surface and give general descriptions of their purpose and use during a ghost hunt. Also, since this book is aimed at those burgeoning, financially strapped, ghost hunters, the tools I will detail will be fairly inexpensive and easy to use.

Cameras

The mainstay of any ghost hunter is a camera. The tendency today is for people to carry digital cameras on ghost hunts. Digital cameras are convenient and easy to use. You get to see the picture on the screen almost immediately with no waiting period for development. Digital cameras also make it easier to transmit the photos to the internet where they can be observed and analyzed by a large group of people.



A Digital Camera

The problem with digital cameras arrives from the processor inside the camera. All digital cameras, by their very nature, have computers within them that translate the image coming through the lens into a digital format. It is during that translation that problems can and do occur. Usually this happens when pictures are being taken in a dark area and the darkness becomes hard for the processor to translate. So, the result is anomalies in the digital images that closely resemble orbs. They are not ghosts as many would claim but defects in the images.

To limit the problem, but you can never fully get rid of the problem, you must have a camera with a high pixel rate. A rate of 4 mega pixels would serve you well but the anomalies could still show up. The higher the pixel rate, the less your chance of problems but also the higher the pixel rate, the more expensive the camera. You would have to decide how important a digital camera is to you during an investigation.

Also, digital cameras create images that can be very easily manipulated by today's graphic software. Without a negative, it becomes hard to prove that an image hasn't been changed or altered in any way.

Besides the digital camera, ghost hunters will tend to use 35 mm cameras. Now when it comes down to it, any 35 mm camera will do just as long as you use 800 speed film or higher. 800-speed film is specifically designed for high-speed photography taken in dark conditions. It is imperative that this type of film be used. Like the digital camera, the more advanced the camera, the more expensive it becomes. You would have to decide what your budget will allow. I would not recommend using disposable cameras as they tend to be of very poor, prohibitively poor, quality.



A 35 MM Camera

Of course, the advantages of the digital camera are the weaknesses of the 35 mm. However, with the 35 mm, you have a negative that can be analyzed and it is far harder to manipulate an image on 35 mm film.

Since both types of photography have their pros and cons, the best way to use them is in conjunction with one another. Remember what I said in the beginning. Equipment must be used in conjunction with each other for the best results.

So, on investigations, I tend to use the digital camera with it's immediate results to determine where activity is taking place and then concentrate my 35 mm on that area. I increase my chances of catching something and if I do, it could appear on film as well as on digital. This strategy uses both camera types to their fullest strengths and eliminates their weaknesses.

Audio Recorder

Back in the 1950s, an Austrian birdwatcher put out a tape recorder in his garden to record the songs being sung by the birds in the trees. He left the recorder running and went away from the house for a time. When he returned, he sat down to listen to the birds. What he got instead were ghosts. Male and female voices overlapped each other, spoke different languages, making clear, if not mundane, statements. Some he recognized as being long dead, others he didn't recognize at all. Electronic Voice Phenomenon (or EVP) was born.

Before too long, someone had the idea of putting out a tape recorder and asking questions of the air. Sometimes, this brought forth answers on the tape that could not be heard at the time it was recorded.



Tape Recorder

Today, an audio recorder is a standard ghost-hunting device. With the advent of the digital age, digital recorders are gaining fame among ghost hunters. The use of digital recorders is so new that no one is quite sure what to make of them. I've never used them so I can't comment on their performance but I would think that the same problems with processing issues that digital cameras have could occur with digital recorders. Sounds that the microphone doesn't recognize could be interpreted by the processor as something different, perhaps coming out sounding like anomalies heard quite often in EVP.

Most ghost hunters, due to the expense of digital recorders, tend to use cassette tape recorders. It doesn't matter what type of tape recorder you use, what matters is that you use an external microphone and not the one built into the machine. The internal microphone will tend to pick up the sounds of the internal mechanisms of the recorders as they move. An external microphone can eliminate that, catching only the sounds coming through the air. However, recent experiences of mine have shown that the cheaper microphones still pick up the inner workings of the machine. So, once again, it appears that the more expensive the equipment the better your chances of getting good EVP.

During an investigation, I tend to do two things with a recorder. (If I have only one, I usually try to have as many as possible.) I will set up the machine to record in a location that has the best opportunity for EVP. Usually this is determined from how a spot "feels" or if others have had success recording EVP at that location. Then I leave the machine running, on it's own, with no one around. I'll walk away, being sure that I keep track of who goes in and who goes out of the area, preferably keeping people away from the recorder as best as possible.

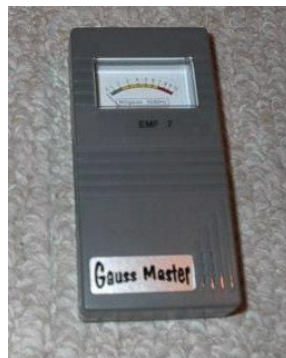
Then I'll return, when the cassette is about to run out of tape and stop it. I will then, either at the same place or at another predetermined location, put in a new cassette and do a "question and answer" session. Essentially, I'll ask questions of the air. Really just chit chatting questions like "what's your name?", "how do you feel?", etc. Now in most cases, my voice and those of other investigators will be the only voices on the tape. But sometimes, just occasionally really, we get soft voices in the background that seem to answer the questions. This is the technique I would recommend every ghost hunter follow.

Video Camera

Yes, sometimes we even get moving anomalies on video. Use of video during an investigation is another standard piece of equipment. Video cameras should be mounted on a tripod and not hand held, and should be equipped with night vision capability. The video camera should be left in a location covering an area that is suspected of haunted activity. If possible, it should be attached to a monitor that can be viewed outside of the suspected area.

EMF Detectors

At some point, it was noticed that electromagnetic fields (EMF) seem to change dramatically just before a ghost makes an appearance. It was theorized that spirits use electromagnetic energy to travel and manifest themselves. This energy, it seems, is taken from the environment, thus the frequent cold spots and chilled areas when the event is taking place. Ghost hunters began to use compasses to see when a change in the magnetic field takes place.



A Gauss Master EMF Meter

Though compasses are still used quite often, most ghost hunters tend to use electromagnetic field meters to track the changes, believing they follow ghosts. EMF detectors have a meter that shows how much EMF is being produced. The problem with EMF detectors is that these units were originally designed for electricians to find electrical lines behind walls and in areas they couldn't easily reach. Thus, a ghost hunter must take into account the electrical sources in the area and factor that into the reading that one gets on the EMF meter. Too often, ghost hunters will point an EMF meter in the direction of a light bulb or a power outlet and jump at the reading they get as being a ghost. In fact, it is not. Only when you have ruled out all the electrical sources in the area can we then say an EMF reading is paranormal.

There are EMF detectors out there that filter out the ambient electromagnetic fields in the environment but these are extremely expensive. It is much cheaper to get a cost effect EMF meter like the Guassmaster and learn how to properly use it.

During an investigation, the EMF detector is used to determine a baseline reading for the location. At the beginning, before the investigation actually begins, we will walk around and make note of what the EMF readings are normally in a location. We will take notice of all electrical sources and note them down. Through the rest of the investigation, any changes from the norm will be noted down. Those areas where changes are significant will be targeted for further study and evaluation.

Plenty of film, tapes and batteries

You want to make sure that you can keep your equipment running. It might also be a good idea to carry a small tool kit with you for on the spot repairs.

Motion Sensor Devices

These are particularly helpful during long investigations in a large area. By setting up motion sensors, one can leave a room and return if the sensors are set off. When using motion sensors, it is important that once they are set up that no one go near the sensors until the investigation is over or the sensors are activated and investigation is required.

Walkie Talkies

This is particularly helpful when working in a very large area with a rather large group of people. Using the walkie-talkies, communication can be kept up between investigators over distances.

Tools On A Budget

Before the advent of the EMF meters, digital cameras, tape recorders and video equipment, ghost hunters used more mundane tools. These tried and true tools are still being used today. They are inexpensive and easy to use, the type of tools perfect for the investigator on a budget.

Notebook, Paper, Pen

You need to make sure that you have a means of documenting any events that take place as they happen. Waiting until after the investigation could create faulty or misleading information. We want to make sure that things are recorded as soon as possible before pieces are lost to memory.

Flashlight or other light source

Ghost hunters usually work under dark conditions. A flashlight helps keep us safe and allows us to see any notes we may write.

Measuring Tape

If something occurs, it is important to be able to calculate distances between objects.

String or Thread

By hanging string in an investigated area, one can watch for slight breezes which may herald the arrival of an entity.

Powder

By spreading baby powder or flour on the floor of an area, footprints can be seen if someone goes into an area being observed.

Abstract Tools And Tools For Safety

An Open But Critical Mind

This is among the most important for any ghost hunter to have. One must go into the investigation with no preconceived notions or objectives. Let the evidence fall where it may. Investigate every piece of evidence as if there is a natural explanation. Once every natural explanation has been rule out, then perhaps a paranormal explanation can be made.

Knowledge About The Site

There are those that say one should not go into an investigation with foreknowledge of the investigated site. Others would say you should know as much as possible about the site. I see advantages to either tactic so I leave it up to the individual to decide what amount of pre-knowledge they wish to have.

Whenever you plan to do your research (and research is among the most important things in an investigation), use the local libraries and historical societies to learn as much as possible about the location.

Knowledge About Your Subject

Any ghost hunter should know their subject matter. Ghosts are what we deal in. To not know the theories and history of the paranormal phenomenon makes for a bad ghost hunter. You have to know what to look for in a supernatural occurrence. You can only learn that by learning your subject. Visit local libraries, bookstores and the internet and read anything and everything you can.

A Photograph Log

We do not want to take photographs randomly. A photograph log should be maintained during an investigation. Every photo taken should have a reason for being taken. That and the location, time, weather conditions, as well type of camera and person taking the picture should all be recorded as it happens.

Food and drink

Especially during a long investigation, food and drink should be available. During overnight investigations, it is likely that drowsiness will be a factor. To maintain alert investigators during overnight investigations, drinks like coffee and soda should be taken. I would not recommend the use of drugs like Viverian on an investigation and certainly absolutely no alcohol, illegal drugs or smoking on investigations!

Comfortable, professional clothing and shoes

Be sure to dress for the location and weather. Outdoor investigations involve weather that could be dangerous. Also, ghost hunting involves standing on your feet for great lengths of time. Comfortable footwear would come in handy in those situations. This clothing should look professional. No t-shirts (unless they are advertising your group), no jeans (khaki pants would be acceptable). The clothing should be clean and well kept, no torn shirts or pants. Remember, when you are on an investigation you are a representative of your group. You want to put your best foot forward to the public.

Proper Legal And Investigative Forms

There are any number of forms that most paranormal organizations use as part of their investigations. These forms are used to protect the organization's members and the owner of the investigated property as well as to document needed information and to determine if further investigation is necessary.

Picture Identification and Business Cards

Be sure to have a driver's license or some other picture identification with you in case local authorities stop you. If your group has some (and I would suggest any group create some) be sure to have business cards detailing the objectives of your organization. Not only does this allow for promotion of your group but also is something you can give to the authorities to explain your intentions. **This does not mean that you should enter property without permission! ALWAYS get permission from the owner before entering a site!** No amount of identification or cards can prevent prosecution due to an illegal entry.

A Cell Phone or Some Other Means of Communication

You always want to have a means of contacting the police, fire department or ambulances in case of emergencies. Be sure to carry a cell phone or if a cell phone is not available be sure to locate where in the area the telephones are located and plan for quick access to these telephones. Remember, ghost hunters do a lot of their work in dark, some times run down, areas, which can be dangerous. Even when we are careful, accidents can happen. Emergency services should be readily available at all times.

First Aid Kit

It would be a good idea to have a small first aid kit on hand in case of emergencies. In the event of an accident, early care to wounds could make a difference.

A Healthy Body and Mind

Ghost hunting is hard on the body and mind. It's important that your mental and physical health be at a 100% level during an investigation. Illnesses could spread to others in your group and cloud your judgement. Not to mention that going into a stressful situation with a weak constitution can result in your health getting worse instead of better. No ghost hunt is worth jeopardizing your health for.

Ghost Hunting Tips

In our quest for proof of the paranormal, there are many things that ghost hunters can do to increase the chances of getting something convincing on film or tape. In the interest of creating better ghost hunters, here are some tips to help boost your chances by eliminating errors and playing things safe.

Safety is the biggest concern of any ghost hunter. After all ghost hunters frequent places like cemeteries and abandoned buildings in the middle of the night. Dangers include: decaying foundations making buildings unsafe, weather conditions like lightening or quickly forming dangerous storms, the chance of injury in dark places especially in buildings that are falling apart and riddled with debris, and vagrants or mentally ill individuals who use abandoned buildings and cemeteries as places to sleep. The safety of the individual is of paramount importance. It is better to walk away unscathed from a ghost hunt than to risk your life for some possible proof. So, don't take any unnecessary risks. Many of these tips will reflect this safety conscious thinking.

That said, let's begin.

1. First and foremost, do not go on a ghost hunt by yourself. Always take one or more friends with you. There is always safety in numbers. An investigation group shouldn't be any larger than 5 to 10 people, depending on the investigation site.
2. Make sure that you have new batteries. You should also always have spares. Ghosts have a strange tendency to drain the power out of batteries and you may need more in order to continue taking pictures or recording EVP. It is believed that ghosts need to draw the energy out of others in order to manifest themselves.
3. Always think of ghosts as people. When you enter area, ask permission of the ghosts to take their picture or record their voices before turning anything on. It has been shown that if permission is not asked, more often than not, you won't get anything. Besides, it's common courtesy. How would you like it if someone came into your home unannounced and began taking pictures of you without permission?
4. Always be aware of your surroundings. You'll want to know where the dangers are so you can avoid them.
5. A ghost hunt is serious business. There should be no horse playing. This creates an atmosphere of increased danger and appears unprofessional.

6. Always enter the hunt with a positive mindset. Positivism breeds positive ghost experiences. Negativity breeds negative ghost experiences.

7. DO NOT ENTER A PROPERTY WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE OWNER

8. Be sure to bring walkie-talkies and/or cell phones for communication with others in the group and easy communication with authorities.

9. Any ghost hunting group should establish a standards of practice to be utilized during a ghost hunt. Standards of practices are a set of agreed upon rules of ethics and etiquette. They should then put into practice and follow these rules.

10. It is up to the individual, but you may want to say a brief prayer of protection before going into the hunt and another one of cleansing as you leave. Some believe this would be a way protecting oneself from evil spirits and to prevent spirits from attaching themselves to an individual when they leave.

11. Pay attention to the atmosphere around you. Cold weather (as we all know) creates a misty breath. This breath can be picked up on film as ecto mist. So, if it is cold be sure not to breathe when taking pictures. Also, do not take pictures in rainy, foggy, dusty or snowy conditions. Rain, snow and dust appear as orbs in photos and fog appear as mists on film.

12. For the same reason, No smoking on ghost hunts!

13. Avoid taking pictures near reflective surfaces. These could reflect the flash back to the camera creating anomalies.

14. Be as scientific as possible. Rule out all rational explanations before embracing the paranormal explanation.

15. It would be suggested that everyone bring notebooks on the ghost hunt to jot down notes and the feelings the ghost hunter is experiencing at the time for later comparison. Also, after the hunt, it would be suggested that everyone separate and write down their experience while it is fresh in their minds before getting together to relate their stories to each other. This will document the freshest information and the story will not be diluted by what others relate.

16. Make sure that all long hair is pulled back and camera straps are out of the view of the lens. These objects can create images that can be mistaken for vortexes.

Completing The Investigation

Once the on site investigation is done, the investigation itself is far from completed. Among the most important parts of the investigation is the research phase. This involves analyzing the data received at the on site investigation, looking over the photographs taken for abnormalities, watching any videos taken closely for anomalies, and listening to tape recordings for EVP. During this stage, the investigator must use the scientific method wherever possible and rule out any natural causes for any anomalies one may receive. Once the investigator has ruled out any natural causes, he can begin to entertain the paranormal explanation.

Once the data has been analyzed and further research is required, the investigator must begin the historical investigation. The first step would be an online search using search engines such as Google, Yahoo! and Alta Vista. In many cases, however, the information being looked for is out dated and can't be found online. That means going to the next source. This involves visiting the local library and searching for information on the location in question.

The area library is usually a good start for this research. Local libraries tend to have general published information about a location. The information at libraries, however, can be very generalized and not go into great details, specifically about particular buildings and their history.

That is when the investigator can go to a number of other organizations for help. Among them are historical societies and genealogy groups. These types of groups can be very advantageous in determining what has happened at a sight and why it might be haunted. It is highly suggested that you build a good relationship with your local historical society.

Once all the data is analyzed and the research complete, the ghost investigator must write the report detailing the results found and the thinking behind the conclusions. These reports should be published somewhere if possible. Many groups today have websites on which they publish their investigative reports. It is very important that reports be published so that others can read and analyze the results themselves, making their own conclusions, and perhaps fostering further discussion and investigation in such matters.

In Conclusion: Why Do We Hunt Ghosts?

The reasons why we hunt ghosts are as plentiful and as abundant as there are people investigating the paranormal. Each reason is very individual and personal. For the most part there is a drive in each one of us, reaching out and trying to solve certain mysteries that have affected our lives. We are each trying to find out for ourselves if there is a life after this one and whether those who have crossed can communicate with those left behind. We are searching for the answers that go back as far the caveman, answers to questions so profound they affect the very nature of mankind. We continue to struggle with these questions and, in our own way, search for the truth.

Appendix I: Suggested Readings

As mentioned at the beginning of this book, my motto is “learn all you can and teach all you learn.” This book is made up of a multitude of ideas and theories from books published over the years. I would recommend that the burgeoning ghost hunter read any one or all of them. They include:

- *ESP, Hauntings and Poltergeists: A Parapsychologist's Handbook* by Loyd Auerbach
- *Ghost Hunting: How to Investigate The Paranormal* by Loyd Auerbach
- *The Encyclopedia Of Ghosts And Spirits* by Rosemary Ellen Guiley
- *Field Guide To Spirit Photography* by Dale Kaczmarek
- *The Complete Idiots Guide To Ghosts And Hauntings* by Tom Ogden
- *How To Be A Ghost Hunter* by Richard Southall
- *Confessions Of A Ghost Hunter* by Troy Taylor
- *The Ghost Hunters Guidebook* by Troy Taylor
- *How To Hunt Ghosts* by Joshua P. Warren

Appendix II: Suggested Organizations

It has been mentioned before that there are a whole slew of organizations dedicated to the investigation of the paranormal, each one with their own beliefs and theories. With all this diversity in thinking, what groups should the new ghost hunter go to learn and gain experience or someone looking for help with a haunting? I would recommend the following organizations as good sources for information.

- American Ghost Society (<http://www.prairieghosts.com/ags>)
- Maryland Paranormal Investigator's Coalition (<http://www.marylandparanormal.com>)
- Paranormal Research Organization (<http://paranormal-research.org>)
- Leftfield-Paranormal Study and Investigation (<http://www.leftfield-psi.net>)
- The Parapsychology Foundation (<http://www.parapsychology.org>)
- International Society for Paranormal Research (<http://www.ispr.net>)
- American Society of Psychical Research (<http://www.aspr.com>)
- American Association of Electronic Voice Phenomenon (<http://aaevp.com>)
- And, of course, my site Beltsville Ghosts (<http://www.beltsvilleghosts.com>)

Appendix III: Forms and Documents

Ghost hunters use any number of select forms and documents to not only document the course of an investigation but also to maintain documentation on the permissions and confidentiality between participants. Below you will find any number of forms that I use to accomplish these goals.

The Event Log: Used to capture the details of a paranormal event as it happens.

Beltsville Ghosts Event Log

Date of the investigation: _____ Time of Day Started: _____

Name and Location of Site:

Investigators & Team Members Present:

Weather Conditions:

Temperature: _____ Relative Humidity: _____ Barometer: _____

High Pressure: _____ Low Pressure: _____ Wind Speed: _____

Investigator's Log Sheet:

Equipment Being Used By Investigator:

Film Speed Loaded In Camera: _____ Number of Exposures: _____

Phenomena Personally Witnessed By Investigator:

Confidentiality Agreement

The purpose of this contract is to stress that any information obtained during the course of an investigation conducted by Beltsville Ghosts must be kept in the strictest confidence between the investigators and the owner of the property. By signing this agreement, all parties acknowledge they understand that this contract prevents them from voicing any information to the press, to those not involved in the investigation and to any outsiders without the expressed written permission from each individual whose name and signature appears below. Any violation of this agreement can be subject to legal action.

Property Name: _____

Property Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Owner of Property)

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Investigator Team Leader)

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Investigator)

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Investigator)

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Investigator)

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Investigator)

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Witness)

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Witness)

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(Witness)

Investigation Permission Form: Used to document that permission is granted to conduct an investigation at a particular site.

***Beltsville Ghosts
Investigation Permission Form***

I, _____ have the authority to allow investigators from Beltsville Ghosts to conduct research at the location detailed below:

Name of Property: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Permission is being granted to Beltsville Ghosts to conduct research into the history of the location and into possible paranormal occurrences. All aspects of the investigation have been explained to those responsible for the property and these parties have given permission for this research to be conducted.

Beltsville Ghosts releases the owner of the location from any liability for injuries to investigators or damage to investigator equipment that may occur during the investigation. Beltsville Ghosts, also, assumes full responsibility for any damages to the property that investigators may commit by accident or intention during the course of the investigation.

Beltsville Ghosts also assumes the responsibility for the privacy of any information obtained during the investigation. No information concerning this property, the investigations or the owners will be released to any interested parties without the owner's expressed written permission through the Beltsville Ghosts current information release form or other written documentation from the owner.

Any conditions or caveats to this contract will noted below:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Property Owner/Responsible Individual)

Printed Name: _____

Owner Release Form: Used to gain permission from the owner of an investigated site for release of information to appropriate media or study outlets.

***Beltsville Ghosts
Information Release Form
(Owner/Trustee)***

This form is intended to insure the privacy of all individuals associated with the investigation of the property named _____ located at the address of _____ and owned by _____. All personal information connected to this investigation will be kept confidential by researchers from Beltsville Ghosts. By signing this form, the person responsible for the above named property gives permission for any information pertaining to the investigation to be released to the following requesting agent and for the following reason:

Organization: _____ Reason: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Owner/Trustee)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Investigation Team Leader)

Witness Release Form: Used to gain the permission from an investigator or witness of events during an investigation for release of information to appropriate media or study outlets.

***Beltsville Ghosts
Information Release Form
(Witness/Investigator)***

This form is intended to insure the privacy of all individuals associated with the investigation of the property named _____ located at the address of _____ and owned by _____. All personal information connected to this investigation will be kept confidential by researchers from Beltsville Ghosts. By signing this form, the witness giving testimony or the investigator gives permission for any information pertaining to their part in the investigation to be released to the following requesting agent and for the following reason:

Organization: _____ Reason: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Witness/Investigator)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Investigation Team Leader)