



# Ghost Hunter's Guide to **Portland** and the **Oregon Coast**

**Jeff Dwyer**



**Ghost Hunter's Guide**  
**to Portland** and the  
**Oregon Coast**



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*To my sons, Sam and Michael, my stalwart companions during my  
travels throughout Oregon*





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## Introduction

In 1843, Portland was nothing more than a canoe-landing site populated by fur traders who lived in log huts or tents. A drifter from Tennessee, William Overton, and lawyer Asa Lovejoy were among the muddy settlement's residents. Both were anxious to get rich from the region's abundant natural resources, but neither owned land. Forming a partnership with 25 cents provided by Overton, the two men filed a claim on 640 acres and began clearing trees and building a road. Overton apparently grew tired of the work and moved on after selling his share of the claim to Francis Pettygrove. As a township took form, Pettygrove and Lovejoy realized the place needed a name. Each proposed to name the settlement after his hometown. Lovejoy suggested Boston while Pettygrove, who was from Maine, offered Portland. The toss of a penny settled the issue, with Pettygrove winning two of three flips of the coin.

Lovejoy and Pettygrove envisioned Portland as a great city built on the wealth of its natural resources. They also anticipated that quick prosperity would bring civilization to the Pacific Northwest. Instead, Portland went through a period of 30 years as a wild frontier town full of brothels, sailor's boardinghouses, gambling dens, and saloons that were fronts for shanghaiing ship workers. It was not until the close of the 19th century that Portland was able to rid itself of detracting monikers such as the "Forbidden City of the West," the "Forbidden City," the "Unheavenly City," "Mudville," and "Log Town" and become the "Rose City."

The 20th century finally brought the civilization envisioned by Lovejoy and Pettygrove, as prosperity turned Portland into the jewel of the Pacific Northwest. Wealth generated by great lumber mills and the shipping industry built skyscrapers in downtown Portland and fine Victorian homes in several neighborhoods, which stand today as monuments to a vision that took several decades to fulfill. All too often, the history of those decades is composed of tragic stories arising from epidemics, great fires, floods, criminal activity, and shipwrecks.

These tragedies are the basis of Portland's reputation as one of the most haunted cities in the Western U.S.

Epidemics of the mid-19th century and the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 brought tragedy to many Oregon families, ending lives at a young age and filling many pioneer cemeteries. The first recorded epidemic to hit the indigenous people of the region occurred in 1775. Fur trappers who arrived in ships brought smallpox, which decimated tribes along the Columbia River and north coast villages. Fur traders arriving in 1782 by overland routes brought a second wave of smallpox. This epidemic spread northward and was credited with wiping out half the Spokane Indian population. Smallpox struck again in 1801, leaving many Indians with pockmarked faces described by the explorers Lewis and Clark, when they arrived in 1805. Based on their report, historians believe that smallpox killed more than half the 1800 Indian population of the western Columbia River region. Smallpox further decimated indigenous and immigrant populations in 1824 and 1853. The latter epidemic led to the opening of several pioneer cemeteries that exist today.

In 1830, malaria was imported into the Portland region. An epidemic of this disease started at Fort Vancouver and lasted four years. Accounts by officials at the fort suggest malaria nearly wiped out the entire Indian population along the lower Columbia River. The decimation caused by smallpox and malaria was so complete that after 1835, American and British immigrants to the area found few Indians. Consequently, place names that are in use today reflect the origins of the immigrants—Portland, Astoria, Salem, for example—not traditional names used by indigenous peoples such as those found in Washington state that include Seattle, Yakima, and Tacoma.

The worldwide Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 caused more deaths in Portland than most other U.S. cities. Portland suffered 505 deaths per 100,000 population compared to Indianapolis, which had only 290 deaths per 100,000. Strict quarantine ordinances were enforced and public safety laws enacted, but thousands died, overloading funeral parlors and grave-digging crews at cemeteries. In many fascinating cemeteries, such as Brainard Cemetery, Gresham Pioneer Cemetery, and the old Jones Cemetery, victims are buried in clusters. Some markers indicate that entire families, comprised of young adults

and infants, occupy a single grave. Their tragic demise seems to have created spirits who have yet to let go and move on.

As with many pioneer towns, catastrophic fires destroyed some coastal settlements and portions of Portland soon after the city was founded. Fast-moving blazes often destroyed crude wooden shacks and tents, catching many residents off guard and killing them. In 1860, most of Fort Vancouver was consumed in a blaze that started in a kitchen. On August 2, 1873, Portland volunteer firefighters responded to alarms that directed them to both wealthy and poor neighborhoods. Despite their efforts, more than 20 square blocks of the city were consumed, including Chinatown and riverfront warehouses. Historical accounts do not clearly state the death toll, but it is believed that it exceeded 100 persons. Fortunately, the elegant St. Charles Hotel, hailed by the *Oregonian* as “the most magnificent structure on the northwest Pacific coast,” was saved.

Large conflagrations are a thing of the past, but small fires occur often in and around Portland, creating fatalities that ultimately lead to paranormal activity. On December 9, 2010, a blaze swept through Lents Village, an apartment complex for senior citizens at 10325 SE Holgate Boulevard, Portland. Eighty residents were evacuated but one fatality occurred. On January 29, 2010, 26-year-old animal rights advocate Daniel Shaull staged a protest against Ungar Furs, a fur retailer, by dowsing himself with gasoline and igniting the vapor as he stood on the sidewalk at 1137 SW Yamhill Street. These tragedies have aroused the interest of ghost hunters, who have reported paranormal activity at the sites.

Devastating fires that resulted in several deaths have also followed airplane crashes in the greater Portland region, cities along the I-5 corridor, and coastal towns, leaving ghosts of victims that wander around towns, cities, and coastal fields. Crashes of small aircraft resulting in numerous fatalities occurred in Sherwood (2009), Hillsboro (2005, 2006), Corvallis (1995, 2000), Astoria (1999), Tillamook (1996, 1997), Oregon City (1991), Seaside (1994), Salem (1990), Eugene (1977), and Portland (1999, 2005). Detailed reports of these incidents, including type of aircraft, fatalities among crew and passengers, fatalities on the ground, and location, can be found through Federal Aviation Administration Web sites or local newspaper

accounts. The most tragic, recent airplane crashes occurred in Oregon City and Gearhart. On July 24, 2010, an experimental airplane crashed at Highway 213 and Kirk Road, in Oregon City, killing the pilot. According to witnesses, the plane was engulfed in flames as it plummeted to earth. Having nearly a minute to comprehend his impending fate, the pilot must have experienced a harrowing death. In coastal Gearhart, a horrific crash occurred on August 4, 2008, in which five people were killed. After taking off from nearby Seaside Municipal Airport, a rented single-engine airplane with two persons aboard circled over a residential area, apparently trying to fly under low overcast. Pilot error resulted in the plane crashing into a small house, killing three children who were asleep. Three others in the house were severely burned. Both persons aboard the plane were also killed.

The worst commercial disaster in Portland occurred December 28, 1978, when a United Airlines DC-8 (N8082U) with 181 passengers and crew ran out of fuel and crashed into a residential area between East Burnside Street and NE 160th Avenue. Miraculously, only 10 persons were killed on impact, while 24 were seriously injured. The neighborhood is densely populated but no houses currently stand at the site of the crash. The ground is covered with a stand of trees that surrounds a parking area.

Portland and several nearby communities have endured criminal activity and social injustice that have led to hauntings and legends of ghosts. The misdeeds of several 19th-century outlaws produced many used, abused, confused, and forlorn spirits who stay with us long after their death. The souls of these victims may still seek lost dreams while they remain attached to what little they gained during their difficult lives. Many ghosts who harbor deep resentment, pain, or a desire to complete their unfinished business still roam courthouses, hotels, theatres, modern buildings, cemeteries, and other public places throughout the region.

Like most metropolitan areas in the U.S., Portland has had several crime sprees linked to organized crime and illegal drugs. Deaths of victims, perpetrators, and occasionally police officers have left intense paranormal activity at several locations around the city. In the 19th century, gang-related crime was rampant, starting in 1836 with the murder of two women. Gang activity was so extreme that a police force was created in 1844. Riots in 1863 were linked to the Civil War



and, in 1870 and 1874, labor unrest. These riots led to several deaths and improvements in the police force.

The greatest criminal activity of the 19th century was created by the shanghai industry. Starting in 1850, unscrupulous saloon operators discovered they could make a lot of money by kidnapping inebriated men and delivering them to waiting ships, where they were pressed into service by captains desperate for a crew. The industry quickly became sophisticated, with trapdoors in the floors of saloons, underground holding areas, and a complex network of tunnels beneath the city's streets that enabled abductors to deliver their captives to the waterfront. Business was so brisk that Portland was known as one of the most dangerous ports in the world and given the moniker "Forbidden City of the West." Many men who fell through trapdoors died upon impact on the concrete floors below. Others died from beatings or illnesses aggravated by their alcoholism. It is unknown how many men died in Portland's famous underground city, but the tunnels are world-renowned for paranormal activity and exciting tours. In the 1920s and 1930s, the tunnels were expanded, reaching into Chinatown and downtown Portland, and became venues for illegal businesses such as gambling, bootlegging, and prostitution. Tours of the tunnels feature holding cells, a former opium den, cells for breaking the will of young women, trapdoors, and other artifacts.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, Portland's violent-crime rate soared due to a crack cocaine epidemic. Several murders were linked to this illegal trade, while numerous drug users were found dead on city streets or in hotels and apartment houses. By 1993, law enforcement and other measures ended the epidemic and the crime rate dropped sharply. In 2005, the city achieved its lowest crime rate since the late 19th century. Extensive surveillance of high-crime areas led to a reduction in homicides in 2007 and in 2009. This still leaves hundreds of crime scenes that have attracted the attention of paranormal investigators, including the Bethany triple-murder site.

On November 2, 2006, Ricardo Serrano entered a house at 2902 NW Telshire Terrace, in Beaverton, and shot to death three occupants. Two of the victims were children. This horrific crime created intense imprints or residuals that have been detected by sensitive psychics standing in front of the house.

An event that seems to have triggered a tragic series of shootings in public places took place at Clackamas Town Center mall on December 11, 2012. Twenty-two-year-old Jacob Tyler Roberts entered the mall with an AR-15 assault rifle and opened fire on shoppers and employees. After seriously wounding a 15-year-old girl and killing two others, Roberts ended the horrific event by killing himself.

Paranormal investigators who are interested in taking a forensic approach to ghost hunting may want to visit crime scenes listed in reports of serial killers who committed crimes in the Portland region. Detailed information about Randall Woodfield, known as the I-5 killer, and the killing spree perpetrated by Jerry Brudos may be found by searching the Internet. In addition to those tragedies, an unidentified serial killer is suspected of committing brutal murders of young women in remote coastal sites near Newport and Moolack Beach.

Historical records dating from the 19th century indicate several maritime disasters on the Columbia and Willamette rivers and hundreds of shipwrecks along the haunted coast. On April 8, 1854, the steamship *Gazelle* suffered a boiler explosion while approaching the docks near Oregon City. Twenty-four passengers and crew were killed, their body parts scattered all over the waterfront. Among the victims were local businessmen Crawford Dobbins and D. P. Fuller, who were among the first to be interred in the new Lone Fir Cemetery in central Portland.

More recently, in 1976, the charter boat *Pearl C* became disabled near the Columbia River bar. While being towed by the Coast Guard, the vessel foundered and sank, killing eight passengers. Similar tragedies occurred when the charter boat *Taki-Too* sank at the entrance to Tillamook Bay in 2003, killing 11, and in 2005 at the Umpqua River sandbar when the *Sydney Mae II* went down with three passengers who were not wearing lifejackets.

Several ships ran aground and were destroyed by the surf near several communities on the Oregon coast. Some of the damaged hulls were incorporated into jetties and sandbars while pieces of wreckage remain scattered along the coast, occasionally found by beachgoers with metal detectors. Some of these tragedies produced bizarre results, such as the *Bawnmore*, which dropped its cargo of cattle into the surf. The

cows swam ashore and later filled the woods with a new generation of calves. In some cases, complete mystery surrounded the wreck. A case in point is the steamer *South Coast*, which broke up in the surf at Port Orford. No survivors or victims were found. Artifacts from many wrecks may be found in museums along the coast. Ghost hunters who use psychometry may want to visit these museums and get in touch with psychic remnants of these maritime tragedies.

On October 25, 1896, the four-mast steel sailing vessel *Peter Iredale* tried to enter the fog-shrouded mouth of the Columbia River. Strong winds and a rising tide drove the ship ashore, where it became imbedded in the sand, making salvage impossible. Today, the remains of the ship rise above the beach at Fort Stevens State Park and attract tourists and paranormal investigators. The 324-foot steel steamer *Sujamenco* met a similar fate on March 1, 1929, while trying to find the fog-bound entrance to Coos Bay. The ship's remains can be seen on Horsfall Beach, eight miles north of Coos Bay. A greater disaster occurred at Coos Bay in January of 1910 when the *Czarina*, a 216-foot steamer, entered the harbor only to be slammed into a jetty by a rogue wave. Rescue operations were unsuccessful as all but one crewman dropped into the sea and drowned. The lone survivor died a year later from his injuries. On November 15, 1915, the *Santa Clara* was lost in a similar tragedy that killed 16 crewmen.

Tragic stories and ghostly wreckage may be found near several communities including Brandon at the Coquille River Bar, Cape Blanco, Tillamook, Nehalem, Pacific City, Reedsport, Lincoln City, Newport, Florence, and Depoe Bay.

Situated at the confluence of two great rivers, the Columbia and Willamette, Portland has endured several floods, some of which resulted in many fatalities and the 19th-century nickname "Mudville." The geology of the Pleistocene era reveals that some of the world's greatest known floods occurred in the Portland area. In the early 19th century, numerous floods were recorded by Hudson's Bay Company officials at Fort Vancouver and others who explored the Columbia River gorge. Until recently, floods were commonplace, resulting from heavy rainfall and melting snowfields to the east. In 1890, the Columbia River overflowed its banks, washing away several houseboats, small boats, barges, docks, and other waterfront facilities. The unofficial death toll

exceeded 30. In June of 1894, the Willamette River rose more than 30 feet above its banks, flooding the entire business district of Portland, including the infamous Shanghai tunnels. Waters receded so slowly that sewage was spread through the city, contaminating wells, cisterns, and other water supplies. After several deaths, the city issued warnings to all citizens advising them to boil drinking water, use disinfectants, and consider spending the summer in the mountains or at the coast.

The greatest flood to hit the city in modern times occurred on May 30, 1948. The Vanport City neighborhood, occupied by more than 20,000 people, mostly African-American shipyard workers, was virtually destroyed when a 200-foot-long dike collapsed. Columbia River waters inundated the enclave, creating a disaster that rivals the flooding of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. The official death toll was only 15, but unofficial accounts place the numbers much higher. The worst flood on the Willamette River in the modern era occurred from December 18, 1964, to January 7, 1965. Killing 17 people and causing hundreds of millions of dollars in damage, floodwaters covered 152,789 acres and destroyed countless businesses and homes. As recently as 1996, the Willamette and Columbia rivers continued their winter rampages, inundating several communities but failing to breach the seawall in downtown Portland. Deaths occurred from drowning, electrocution, and infection.

Situated on the Pacific Rim, Portland and Oregon's coastal towns often experienced earthquakes. Lewis and Clark noted Indian reports of great movements of the earth that occurred decades before their arrival in 1805. On November 23, 1873, an earthquake struck that shook buildings as far away as San Francisco. The Richter scale was not in use at that time, but eyewitness accounts mention the collapse of several chimneys and brick buildings that trapped and killed residents. Large earthquakes occurred in 1877, 1896, 1913, and 1915. The great San Francisco earthquake of April 19, 1906, damaged buildings in Portland and most of Oregon's coastal towns. More recently, a series of earthquakes struck Oregon between May 26 and June 11, 1968. In 1993, a 6.0 earthquake caused millions of dollars in damage and killed three people.

All of these tragic events add to the region's ghost legacy and have left powerful emotional imprints created by spirits of the dearly departed

who felt a need to stay on. A common factor is the loss of life by a sudden, violent event, often at a young age. Unfortunate crewmembers of the many ships sunk off the treacherous coast, shanghaied sailors, firefighters, passengers in airplanes, and Indians who died of imported diseases or from skirmishes with settlers all passed with great emotional anguish, leaving their souls with an inextinguishable desire to achieve their life's objectives, or with a sense of obligation to offer protection to a particular place or person.

Some ghosts remain on the earthly plane for revenge or to provide guidance for someone still alive. Many of those who came to Oregon for the fur trade, free land, or employment in the logging and shipping industries were caught up in their dreams but met only with frustration and failure before dying alone and in poverty. Their restless spirits still roam Oregon's coastal towns and old neighborhoods of Portland.

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book focuses on Portland, some of its suburbs and nearby towns, and portions of Oregon's coast that are well known for ghostly activity. This region was selected as the subject of my ninth book on ghost hunting because it is an integral part of the geographic territory throughout which I've conducted paranormal investigations since the 1990s. In many ways, this book completes a West Coast collection. The northernmost entry, *Ghost Hunter's Guide to Seattle and Puget Sound*, includes numerous stories of ghostly activity derived from the region's pioneer and maritime history. A large portion of the Northern California coast, particularly Sonoma and Mendocino counties, was the focal point of *Ghost Hunter's Guide to California's Wine Country*. My first book, *Ghost Hunter's Guide to the San Francisco Bay Area*, includes reports of ghostly activity in three coastal counties that lie between San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. *Ghost Hunter's Guide to Monterey and California's Central Coast* covers a region nearly 300 miles long, ending in the San Luis Obispo area. *Ghost Hunter's Guide to Los Angeles* takes readers farther south, from Santa Barbara to San Diego.

Chapter 1 of this book will help you, the ghost hunter, to research

and organize your own ghost hunt at locations with a well-defined region. Chapters 2 through 6 describe several locations at which ghostly activity has been reported in the greater Portland area, coastal towns, and cities along the I-5, which conveys travelers to and from Portland. Unlike other collections of ghost stories and descriptions of haunted places, this book emphasizes access. Private homes and other buildings not open to visitors are not included. Addresses of each haunted site are provided along with other information to assist you in finding and entering the location. Several appendixes offer organizational material for your ghost hunts, including a Sighting Report Form to document your adventures, lists of suggested reading and videos, and Internet resources.

## **WHO BELIEVES IN GHOSTS?**

People from every religion, culture, and generation believe that ghosts exist. The popularity of ghosts and haunted places in books, television programs, and movies reflects a belief held by many people that other dimensions and spiritual entities do exist.

In 2000, a Gallup poll discovered a significant increase in the number of Americans who believe in ghosts since the question was first asked in 1978. Thirty-one percent of respondents said they believed ghosts existed. In 1978, only 11 percent admitted to believing in ghosts. Less than a year later, in 2001, Gallup found that 42 percent of the public believed a house could be haunted, but only 28 percent believed that we can hear from or mentally communicate with someone who has died. According to a Harris poll conducted in 2003, an astounding 51 percent of Americans believed in ghosts. As with preceding polls, belief in ghosts was greatest among females. More young people accepted the idea of ghosts than older people. Forty-four percent of people aged 18 to 29 admitted a belief in ghosts, compared with 13 percent of those over 65. In 2005, a CBS News poll reported similar findings. Twenty-two percent of the respondents admitted they had personally seen or felt the presence of a ghost. In this same year, Gallup pollsters reported that 75 percent of Americans believed in at least one paranormal phenomenon, including ESP,

reincarnation, spirit channeling, ghosts, and clairvoyance.

More recently, in 2007, an Associated Press survey reported that 34 percent of Americans believed in ghosts. A similar finding was released by the HuffPost/YouGov Poll in December of 2012. Thirty-three percent of responders claimed they believed in ghosts because they had had an encounter with a spirit. Another 23.5 percent admitted they believed in the existence of ghosts but had never seen or heard one.

Polls and surveys are interesting, but there is no way of knowing how many people have seen or heard a ghost only to feel too embarrassed, foolish, or frightened to admit it. Many ghost hunters and paranormal investigators believe that a vast majority of people have seen or heard something from the other side, or spirit world, but failed to recognize it.

Today, many visitors to Portland and the Oregon coast choose those destinations because they believe that ghostly phenomena can be experienced there. This is evidenced by the increased popularity of tours of cemeteries; the historic districts of Portland, its suburbs, and quaint coastal towns; and the large number of paranormal investigations staged by local organizations.

Broadcast and cable television channels recognize the phenomenal nationwide interest in paranormal occurrences. The Syfy channel airs a weekly, one-hour, primetime program called *Ghost Hunters*. The popularity of this show has been so great that a spinoff, *Ghost Hunters International*, also airs during primetime. Cast members of these documentary programs have achieved celebrity status. In December of 2007, the Arts and Entertainment Channel premiered a series called *Paranormal State* that followed a group of Pennsylvania State University students as they conducted investigations of ghosts and demons.

The Travel Channel offers two documentary programs that feature ghost investigations. *Dead Files* features physical medium Amy Allan and retired New York Police Department homicide detective Steve DiSchiavi, who conduct independent investigations of a paranormal event and then compare their findings to solve problems for troubled clients. One of the longest-running paranormal shows on TV, *Ghost Adventures*, features Zak Bagans and Nick Groff, who, together with videographer Aaron Goodwin, investigate haunted places all over the U.S. and in Europe.

None of the major networks currently offer paranormal programs, but two popular shows are available for viewing on DVD or reruns on cable networks. For five seasons, NBC produced a weekly primetime drama called *Medium* that followed the true-life experiences of psychic detective Allison DuBois. Working with the Phoenix district attorney's office and other law-enforcement agencies, she used her psychic skills to communicate with ghosts in order to solve crimes. For six years, CBS produced one of the most popular shows in this genre, called *Ghost Whisperer*, which portrayed the experiences of sensitive Mary Ann Winkowski of Ohio.

Internet users will find more than 5 million references to ghosts, ghost hunting, haunted places, and related paranormal phenomena. Search engines such as Google can aid ghost hunters in tracking down reports of ghostly activity in almost any city in America, locating paranormal investigative organizations they can join or consult, and purchasing ghost-hunting equipment or books that deal with the art and science of finding ghosts.

The recent worldwide interest in ghosts is not a spinoff of the New Age movement or the manifestation of some new religious process. Recognition that ghosts exist is simply the reemergence of one of mankind's oldest and most basic beliefs: there is a life after death. Ancient writings from many cultures describe apparitions and a variety of spirit manifestations that include tolling bells, chimes, disembodied crying or moaning, and whispered messages. Legends and ancient books include descriptions of ghosts, dwelling places of spirits, and periods of intense spiritual activity related to seasons or community events such as festivals and crop harvests.

Ancient sites of intense spiritual activity in Arizona, New Mexico, and Central and South America are popular destinations for travelers seeking psychic or spiritual experiences and encounters with the paranormal. More modern, local sites, where a variety of paranormal events have been documented, are also popular destinations for adventurous living souls. Amateur and professional ghost hunters seek the spirits of the dearly departed in historic mansions, old theatres, pioneer-era bars and inns, firehouses, stores, and countless other places, including graveyards and ships. Modern buildings, city parks, restaurants and bars, numerous historic sites such as Portland's famous



shanghai tunnels, and seldom-traveled back coastal roads also serve as targets for ghost hunters.

Throughout the past two millennia, the popularity of belief in ghosts has waxed and waned, similar to religious activity. When a rediscovery of ghosts and their role in our lives occurs, skeptics label the notion a fad or an aberration of modern lifestyles. Perhaps people are uncomfortable with the idea that ghosts exist because it involves an examination of our nature and our concepts of life, death, and afterlife. These concepts are most often considered in the context of religion, yet ghost hunters recognize that acceptance of the reality of ghosts, and a life after death, is a personal decision, having nothing to do with religious beliefs or church doctrine. An intellectual approach enables the ghost hunter to explore haunted places without religious bias or fear.

The great frequency of ghost manifestations in Portland and Oregon's coastal towns, as evidenced by documentary reports on TV and other news media, reflects the success of amateur and professional ghost hunters who research and seek paranormal encounters in the region. Ghost hunting has become a popular weekend pastime for many adventurous souls, whether they are serious investigators or only casually interested in the paranormal. Advertisement of haunted inns, restaurants, and historical sites is commonplace. It is always fun, is often very exciting, and may take ghost hunters places they had never dreamed of going.

## **WHAT IS A GHOST?**

A ghost is some aspect of the personality, spirit, consciousness, energy, mind, intelligence, or soul that remains after the body dies. When any these are detected by the living—through sight, sound, odor, tactile sensations, or movement of objects—we may consider the experience to be a paranormal encounter. The encounter may be said to be “ghostly” if there is intelligent interaction with a witness or the environment. This includes interaction by touching, speaking, gestures, facial expressions, movement of objects, and sounds such as tapping in response to questions. It also includes creation of sounds or

other electronic analogs on audio recorders and other instrumentation.

The essential criterion for concluding that a ghostly encounter has occurred is intelligent interaction with a living person or the environment. If this strict criterion cannot be met, it is likely that the experience involves something other than a ghost. I've estimated that more than 80 percent of paranormal experiences have nothing to do with a ghost.

The intelligent events that may differentiate ghosts from other paranormal activity include specific interaction with the living, performance of a purposeful activity, or a response to ongoing changes in the environment. Ghosts may speak to the living to warn of an unforeseen accident or disaster, to give advice, or to express their love, anger, remorse, or disappointment. They may also try to complete some project or duty they failed to finish before death.

Occasionally, paranormal activity is bizarre and frightening, or it appears to be dangerous. Witnesses may see objects fly about, hear ominous sounds, or experience accidents. This kind of activity is sometimes attributed to a "poltergeist" or noisy ghost. Most authorities believe that a living person, not the dead, causes these manifestations. Generally, a person under great emotional stress releases psychic energy that creates subtle or spectacular changes in the environment. Noises commonly associated with a poltergeist include tapping on walls or ceilings, heavy footsteps, shattering glass, ringing telephones, and running water. Objects may move about on tables or floors or fly across a room. Furniture may spin or tip over. Dangerous objects, such as knives, hammers, or pens, may hit people. These poltergeist events may last a few days, a year, or more. Discovery and removal of the emotionally unstable, living person often stops the poltergeist.

Always be aware that many other paranormal phenomena can appear to be ghostly manifestations. Reference to the essential criterion can help you determine if you are dealing with an imprint or other paranormal phenomenon. Keep in mind that ghostly activity is real time; the ghost is present. Imprint phenomena represent something from the past. By definition, imprints lack intelligent interaction with the witness or the environment and occur without the consciousness of a dead person.

## HOW DOES A GHOST MANIFEST ITSELF?

The process by which a ghost manifests itself is not completely understood, but there are many useful theories that help us understand ghostly behavior.

Ghosts interact with our environment in a variety of ways that may have something to do with the strength of their personality and desire to communicate in the context of confusion resulting from their transformation by death. The talents or skills they possessed in life, their personal objectives, or frustrations arising from the end of life may underlie their efforts in getting our attention. A sudden, traumatic death, strong ties to surviving loved ones or a particular place, unfinished business, strong emotions such as hatred and anger, or a desire for revenge may also trigger ghostly activity.

A ghost may create a change in the environment. Movement of objects such as books, a pipe, eyeglasses, tools, weapons, doorknobs, bedding, etc., that cannot be attributed to normal or natural processes often indicates the presence of a ghost. Some ghosts have been known to rearrange furniture or room decorations to suit their preferences. If new objects are placed in a ghost's favorite room, they may be found moved outside the room, broken, or hidden in another location. Common ghostly activities are movement of a rocking chair, turning of doorknobs, activation of light switches and electronic equipment such as TVs, and disheveling bedding. Ghosts like to knock over stacks of cards or coins, scatter matchsticks, and move your keys. It appears easy for many to manipulate light switches and TV remotes, open and close windows and doors, or push chairs around. Some ghosts have the power to throw objects, pull pictures from walls, or move heavy items. As a rule, ghosts cannot tolerate disturbances within the place they haunt. If you tilt a wall-mounted picture, the ghost will set it straight. Obstacles placed in the ghost's path may be pushed aside.

Some ghosts create odors, particularly those associated with their habits, such as cigar smoke or signature perfumes. Many reports from credible witnesses mention the odors of tobacco, oranges, and hemp as most common.

Ghosts can also create impressions that the physical qualities of an environment have changed when, in fact, no physical transformation

has occurred. Ice-cold breezes and unexplained gusts of wind are often the first signs that a ghost is present. Moving or stationary cold spots, with temperatures several degrees below surrounding areas, have been detected. Temperature changes sometimes occur with a feeling that the atmosphere has thickened, as if the room was suddenly filled with unseen people.

In searching for ghosts, some people use devices that detect changes in magnetic, electrical, or radio fields. However, detected changes may be subject to error, interference by other electrical devices, or misinterpretation. Measurements, indicating the presence of a ghost, may be difficult to capture on a permanent record.

Ghosts may create images such as luminous fogs, balls of light called "orbs," streaks of light, or the partial outline of body parts on still cameras (film or digital) and video recorders. In the 19th century, this was called spirit photography. Captured images are sometimes spectacular, but modern digital photographs are easily edited, making it difficult to produce convincing proof of ghostly activity.

The experience of seeing humanoid images is the prized objective of most ghost hunters, but it is rare. When such images are seen, they are often partial, revealing only a head and torso with an arm or two. Feet are seldom seen. Full-body apparitions are extremely rare. Some ghost hunters have seen ethereal, fully translucent forms that are barely discernible. Others report seeing ghosts who appear as solid as a living being.

## **WHY DO GHOSTS REMAIN AT A PARTICULAR PLACE?**

Ghosts remain in a particular place because they are emotionally attached to a room, a building, or special surroundings that profoundly affected them during their lives or to activities or events that played a role in their death. A prime example is the haunted house inhabited by the ghost of a man who hung himself in the master bedroom because his wife left him. It is widely believed that death and sudden transition from the physical world confuses a ghost. He or she remains in familiar or emotionally stabilizing surroundings to ease the strain. A place-

bound ghost is most likely to occur when a violent death occurred with great emotional anguish. Ghosts may linger in a house, barn, cemetery, factory, or store waiting for a loved one or anyone familiar who might help them deal with their new level of existence. Some ghosts wander through buildings or forests, on bridges, or alongside particular sections of roads. Some await enemies, seeking revenge. Others await a friend for a chance to resolve their guilt.

There seems to be a close association between aspects of the entity's life and the modalities it uses to manifest itself on our plane of existence. These include places and objects related to sudden, traumatic death; strong ties to surviving loved ones or a particular place; unfinished business; strong emotions such as hatred and anger; or a desire for revenge.

Ghosts manifest themselves on our plane of existence for many reasons. They may want to:

1. protect a cherished possession such as a book collection, art, weapons, jewelry, money, etc.
2. protect a cherished place such as a house, office, lab, workshop, etc.
3. watch over loved ones.
4. enlist the help of a living person to discover something hidden.
5. learn the fate of friends and family members or a particular place or object.
6. offer guidance to family, friends, or business partners.
7. seek revenge.

There may be other reasons, but these motivations explain most spirit activity. Most spirits are place-bound rather than people-bound. That is, they are attached to, or drawn to, a particular place such as a house, office, airplane, boat, movie theatre, etc. This contention is supported by the idea that most ghosts do not travel. For example, a person who feels that his house is haunted rarely reports the same ghostly activity at his workplace, gym, grocery store, etc. This suggests that the ghost has no interest in following the living person to various locations because it is attached to a particular place. The ghost may be interested in living persons, but the primary basis of the haunting is a place.

## **UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS IS A SIGHTING MOST LIKELY?**

Although ghosts may appear at any time, a sighting may occur on special holidays, anniversaries, birthdays, or during historic periods (July 4, December 7, September 11), or calendar periods pertaining to the personal history of the ghost. Halloween is reputed to be a favorite night for many apparitions, while others seem to prefer their own special day or night, on a weekly or monthly cycle.

Night is a traditional time for ghost activity, yet experienced ghost hunters know that sightings may occur at any time. Despite the tradition of overnight investigations presented in many paranormal TV shows, there seems to be no consistent affinity of ghosts for darkness, but they seldom appear when artificial light is bright. Perhaps this is why ghosts shy away from camera crews and their array of lights. Ghosts seem to prefer peace and quiet, although some of them have been reported to make incessant, loud sounds. Even a small group of ghost hunters may make too much noise to facilitate a sighting. For this reason, it is recommended that you limit your group to four persons and oral communication be kept to a minimum.

## **IS GHOST HUNTING DANGEROUS?**

Ghost hunting can be hazardous, but reports of injuries inflicted by ghosts are rare and their veracity suspect. Movies and children's ghost stories have created a widespread notion that ghosts may harm the living or even cause the death of persons they dislike. In 2006, a popular television program showed a fascinating video of a ghost hunter being struck down by his camera equipment. The man's heavy equipment moved suddenly from a position at his waist and struck him on the side of the face. Video of this event was interpreted as evidence of a ghost attack but no apparition or light anomaly was visible. Decades ago, the Abbot of Trondheim ghost was reputed to have attacked some people, but circumstances and precipitating events are unclear.

Many authorities believe that rare attacks by ghosts are a matter

of mistaken identity, i.e., the ghost misidentified a living person as a figure the ghost knew during his life. It is possible that encounters that appear to be attacks may be nothing more than clumsy efforts by a ghost to achieve recognition. Witnesses of ghost appearances have found themselves in the middle of gunfights, major military battles, and other violent events yet sustained not the slightest injury.

Persons who claim to have been injured by a ghost have, in most cases, precipitated the injury themselves through their own ignorance or fear. Ghost hunters often carry out investigations in the dark or subdued light and may encounter environmental hazards that lead to injury. Fear may trigger an attempt to race from a haunted site, exposing the ghost hunter to injury by tripping over unseen objects or making contact with broken glass, low-hanging tree limbs, exposed wiring, or weakened floorboards, stairways, or doorways.

You, the ghost hunter, will be safe if you keep a wary eye and a calm attitude and set aside tendencies to fear the ghost or the circumstances of its appearance. Safety may be enhanced if you visit a haunted location while it is well illuminated, during daylight hours for instance. Potential hazards in the environment can be identified and, perhaps, cleared or marked with light-reflecting tape.

Most authorities agree that ghosts do not travel. Ghosts will not follow you home, take up residence in your car, or attempt to occupy your body. They are held in a time and space by deep emotional ties to an event or place. Ghosts have been observed on airplanes, trains, buses, and ships; however, it is unlikely that the destination interests them. Something about the journey, some event such as a plane crash or train wreck, accounts for their appearance as travelers. In some cases, it is the conveyance that ties the ghost to the physical plane. A vintage World War II B-17 bomber may be haunted by the ghost of a man who piloted that type of aircraft in the 1940s. A ship, such as the *Queen Mary* in Long Beach, California, may be an irresistible attraction for the ghost of a sailor who once worked on passenger liners.

## **IMPRINTS**

The vast majority of paranormal experiences involve imprint

phenomena. Psychics who search for ghosts need to understand this phenomenon, because it can easily be confused with a ghost. If intelligent interaction has not been demonstrated, we must conclude that we are dealing with something that is not ghostly and we may call it an “imprint phenomenon.” If the principal feature of this phenomenon is an inanimate object, it is called a “phantom.” If it is comprised of a humanoid apparition or vocalization, we may call it an “apparition,” being careful to add whenever possible the distinction that it is not ghostly.

Imprints and ghostly manifestations may appear similar. They have common features in terms of what witnesses see, feel, or smell, but an imprint may occur without the presence of a spiritual entity or the consciousness of a dead person. People have reported seeing pale, translucent images of the deceased walking in hallways, climbing stairs, sitting in rocking chairs, or sitting in airplanes, trains, buses, and even restaurants. Some have been observed sleeping in beds, hanging by ropes from trees, or walking through walls. Most commonly, a partial apparition is seen, but witnesses have reported seeing entire armies engaged in battle. Unlike ghosts, hauntings do not display intelligent action with respect to the location—they do not manipulate your computer—and they do not interact with the living.

Imprints may be environmental recordings of something that happened at a location as a result of the repetition of intense emotion. As such, they tend to be associated with a specific place or object, not a particular person. Ghostly figures tend to perform some kind of repetitive task or activity. Sometimes the haunting is so repetitive that witnesses feel as though they are watching a video loop that plays the same brief scene over and over. A good example is the image of a deceased grandmother who makes appearances seated in her favorite rocking chair. She rocks for a few seconds and then disappears, only to reappear later performing the same action.

There is a lot of evidence that people can trigger and experience these environmental recordings by visiting the particular site, touching an object that was a key element of the event, and psychically connecting with the event. Images of hauntings have been picked up on still and video film as well as on digital recordings. The location of strong environmental imprints may also be discovered through devices such



as electromagnetic field detectors. Higher magnetic readings have been found at locations where psychics frequently experience hauntings.

## TYPES OF IMPRINTS

Imprints may create a variety of experiences in six primary categories:

**1. Olfactory (clairsentient):** This means the perception of odors or fragrances, which may include perfume, flowers, animal odors, fruit such as oranges, hemp, tobacco, rotting meat, sour milk, or smoke.

**2. Auditory (clairaudient):** This refers to sounds such as vocalizations, including spoken words, humming, whistling, yawning, sobbing; and non-vocalizations such as musical instruments, footsteps, gunshots, horse's hooves, slamming doors, and breaking glass. These sounds may be heard normally, psychically, or only through recording equipment.

**3. Visual (clairvoyant):** These may be amorphous shapes, humanoid shadows, partial apparitions, or full-bodied apparitions. They may be seen by one witness but not another, suggesting a psychic process or individual differences in sensitivity.

**4. Photographic:** This means paranormal images (those lacking a "normal" explanation) not seen with the eyes but found in still pictures or video, film or digital, including orbs, streaks of light, unexplained shadows, or humanoid shapes.

**5. Tactile (clairsentient):** In some instances, energy emanates from imprints that may create bizarre impressions of a crowded space or the close presence of an unseen being. Other perceptions include thickened air and even cold spots. It is important to note that imprints do not create the kind of tactile experiences ghosts may produce. Ghosts may leave scratch marks, a handprint, and bruises. Imprints don't leave physical evidence of contact and also do not touch, slap, kick, punch, or scratch. When these occur, it is most likely that a ghost is responsible.

**6. Emotional (empathic):** Pleasant and unpleasant emotions may be imprinted on the environment or an object and perceived by a sensitive person. Emotions may be specific and linked to a particular

place or item such as weapons, jewelry, musical instruments, coins and medallions, and doorknobs.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPRINTS

It is important to understand that imprints are the result of something that happened in the past. As such, they are the foundation of retrocognition. When we detect an imprint, we experience an odor, emotion, sound, or image that was an element of a past event. This distinction becomes especially important when we investigate crime scenes. Imprints can reveal the movement of a victim and perpetrator, weapons and other objects involved in the crime, and other elements that may not be discovered in a police investigation. A good example of the latter is the familiarity of the victim with the perpetrator.

Imprints can also provide valuable clues that lead to an encounter with a ghost. Called “hot spots” by some psychics, intense imprints can be anchoring points that attach ghosts to a particular place.

Olfactory perceptions may range from the engaging fragrance of expensive perfume to the horrible stench of rotted meat. It is often useful to identify the fragrance, such as magnolia or Chanel No. 5 perfume. Linked with background research, this may indicate that a former female occupant of a house loved magnolias or used Chanel perfume. This link can lead to identification of the person whose emotional experience created the imprint. Offensive odors could be the result of illness that preceded death or the process of decomposition that occurred when a dead body was left undiscovered for a long time.

Auditory imprints comprise the majority of non-ghostly paranormal experiences. Sensitive psychics may mentally “hear” a variety of sounds, such as human vocalizations, musical instruments, gunshots, footsteps, the movement of horse-drawn carriages, slamming doors, etc. Auditory imprints are readily captured on recording devices, too. Thousands of high-quality recordings known as electronic voice phenomena (EVP) and electronic audio phenomena (EAP) may be found on the Internet.

The most exciting imprint phenomenon is the sighting of a humanoid apparition. Apparitions may appear as dark shadows,

figures composed of white smoke or fog, translucent partial body parts, translucent whole-body figures, and lifelike bodies. The ability to see imprint apparitions varies greatly among people. The most ardent ghost hunter may never see one, while a casual visitor to a historic site may spot several.

## **HOT SPOTS FOR GHOSTLY ACTIVITY**

Numerous sites of disasters, criminal activity, suicides, devastating fires, and other tragic events abound in Portland and Oregon's coastal towns, providing hundreds of opportunities for ghost hunting. You may visit the locations described in chapters 2-6 to experience ghostly activity discovered by others or discover a hot spot to research and initiate your own original ghost investigation.

Astute ghost hunters often search historical maps, drawings, and other documents to find the sites of military conflicts, buildings that no longer exist, or sites of tragic events now occupied by modern structures. For example, maps and drawings found online or displayed in museums, such as Fort Vancouver, the Oregon Maritime Museum, the Oregon History Museum, and the Pearson Air Museum in nearby Vancouver, Washington, or at historic locations such as the Pittock Mansion, may be a good place to start.

People who died in natural or maritime disasters or train or stagecoach robberies, of epidemics, or from infections that ensued after minor injuries, and those displaced by other tragic events such as fires, may remain with us as active ghosts. In Portland and many of Oregon's coastal communities, ghosts haunt the site of their unmarked graves, favorite bars or restaurants, workplaces, mysterious tunnels, ship wrecks, or cherished homes.

Historic homes of pioneers and early residents are often the focal point for successful ghost investigations. These places typically offer a well-researched history, authentic artifacts, personal belongings of former occupants, and easy accessibility. Among the most famous historic homes in the Portland region, now open as restaurants, inns, or museums, are the 1911-vintage White House, former home of lumber baron Robert Lytle; the Pittock Mansion (1909), center

of a political scandal involving one of its owners, Will H. Daly; the Ermantinger House (1845), built by Francis Ermantinger and site of the famous coin toss in 1845 that gave Portland its name; the Ulysses S. Grant House (1846), used by the general before the Civil War; and the Stevens-Crawford House (1907), home of Mary E. Crawford and Harley Stevens.

Fascinating histories and ghostly atmospheres may also be found in historic commercial buildings and homes that are now modern businesses, such as the legendary White Eagle Saloon, the Crow Bar, Old Town Pizza, Commodore Grocery, the White House restaurant, Yellow Brick Road Antiques store, and the Bagdad Theater.

Portland, nearby cities, and many coastal Oregon communities have established historic districts and other venues that have attracted the attention of professional and amateur ghost hunters. These include the preserved and restored structures of downtown Portland, the former warehouse and industrial area now known as the Pearl District, Old Town Chinatown, the trendy subcultural-oriented Hawthorne District, and Alameda Ridge, which contains some of the oldest homes in the region. Gresham offers tree-lined streets with many historical buildings that now house quaint stores and restaurants.

On the coast, Fort Stevens in Hammond, Newport's Nye Beach district, the old fishing village of Charleston at Coos Bay, and 11 fascinating lighthouses provide ghost hunters with opportunities to get in touch with local history before searching for spirits.

Travelers on I-5 may want to visit Eugene's South University Historic District and the Blair Historic District anchored by Sam Bond's Garage. In Salem, horse-drawn carriages and streetcars preserve the historic atmosphere of the 19th century.

Fort Vancouver offers ghost hunters opportunities to visit some of the most historic structures in the Portland region. Founded in 1824, the rustic fort was nearly destroyed in 1866 by a major fire. It was quickly rebuilt with a Victorian architectural motif modified to serve military needs. Among the buildings targeted for paranormal investigation by local ghost hunters are the houses of Officer's Row, including the Grant House (now a restaurant), the McLoughlin House (1846, home of fort administrator Dr. John McLoughlin), the Barclay House (1850, home of fort physician Forbes Barclay), the George C.

Marshall House (1889, home of the famous general and Nobel Peace Prize winner), and the General O. O. Howard House; the former post hospital; and the 1919-vintage Red Cross building.

Many churches established in the 19th and early 20th centuries exist throughout the Portland area, some standing next to graveyards that contain pioneers and notable historic figures. The cornerstone of the Victorian-style Calvary Presbyterian Church, known as “the Old Church,” was laid on September 11, 1882. Thought to be “too far out in the country” by its earliest members, it is located in what is downtown Portland today. The Old Church, cited as one of the most beautiful buildings in the Pacific Northwest, no longer serves a congregation. It is currently used as a social venue for weddings, lectures, concerts, plays, and meetings. The historic character and spooky atmosphere of the Old Church are accented by its amazing architectural features.

Built in a Gothic Revival style, the Zion Lutheran Church was opened in 1890. A newer church now occupies the site, but architectural remnants remain. The newer church was dedicated in 1950, and several emotional events have occurred in the sanctuary and narthex that have created residual paranormal imprints. The Venetian Gothic-style First Congregational Church on Park Avenue in Portland opened in 1895. Massive stone arches, huge stained-glass windows, brick construction, and the off-center tower give the place a beautiful, eerie appearance. In the Portland suburb of Milwaukie, the Oaks Pioneer Church has been serving its congregation since 1865. The old church has been moved three times, once on a river barge, and underwent major renovations in 1869, 1883, and 1928.

These regionally important churches are accessible to the general public, and ghost hunters, as places of historical interest while most continue to offer worship services.

Ghost hunters who have an interest in old churches should visit nearby Salem, where 14 historic churches may be found. Of particular interest are St. Joseph Catholic Church (1853), First Baptist Church (1859), and First United Methodist Church (1878). Farther south, along the I-5 corridor, the First Christian Church of Eugene (1911) has a massive dome and huge stained-glass windows that create a sacred ambience, but spirits are also attached to the place.

Across the boulevard from Fort Vancouver, the stately French-Carpenter Gothic-style Providence Academy building was opened in 1874 as a young ladies' school. The chapel was dedicated as a religious center in 1883. Once considered the official chapel of Fort Vancouver, the place served as a venue for funerals and memorial services.

Several historic cemeteries in the Portland region provide plenty of opportunities to discover fascinating histories of early residents and experience a paranormal encounter. Many of them date from the mid-19th century and include interesting architecture, intriguing epitaphs, and overgrown foliage that create a spooky atmosphere. These cities of the dead include unusual tombs, peculiar statuary, and unmarked mass graves. Here you will find Portland's pioneers, politicians, prostitutes, civic leaders, cultural icons, and a few criminals.

Established during the homesteading period of 1850 to 1870, many of the metropolitan region's 14 pioneer graveyards are well known by local ghost hunters as good places to experience paranormal phenomena. The oldest graveyards are Powell Grove Cemetery, containing headstones with death dates from 1837, and Lone Fir Cemetery, which was opened in 1846. The Columbian Cemetery contains graves of veterans of the Civil War and every subsequent war including those in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ghost hunters fascinated by military history should visit the Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery in Southwest Portland. Douglass Cemetery contains the grave of its founder, John Douglass, who fought in the War of 1812, traveled west on the Oregon Trail, and subsequently became a prominent Portland shipbuilder.

A few miles from downtown Portland, Gresham Pioneer Cemetery began burials in 1859, offering a final resting place to loggers and train operators who died in the many disasters that occurred in the region's forests. It also contains the remains of locals who served as Union soldiers, sailors, and marines in the Civil War.

Asylums, prisons, and farms for the indigent almost always opened burial grounds for residents who died while detained or incarcerated. Often, these burial grounds contain unmarked or desecrated graves, which retain spirits at the site. The Multnomah County Poor Farm Cemetery is one of those burial sites that have been the target of ghost hunters who seek the spirits of people who were condemned to misery

and hopelessness in life only to suffer the indignity of a disturbed or ignominious grave after death. Located southeast of Mount Calvary Cemetery, the poor-farm graves include a colony of lepers and countless others who were sick, poor, or mentally ill.

Despite its location across the Columbia River in the state of Washington, the city of Vancouver has close geographic, historic, and cultural ties with Portland. The Old City Cemetery in Vancouver contains the remains of some of Portland's pioneers and offers the region's ghost hunters fascinating histories of colorful figures and a few ghosts. The earliest burials were made within the present limits of Vancouver Barracks. In the 1860s, another cemetery was opened near the west boundary of the Post, across Reserve Street from the Academy. As Fort Vancouver and the surrounding community grew, many graves from these early sites were moved. In 1867, the city purchased 10 acres of John Maney's Land Claim and began relocating graves from earlier sites. Despite care, many headstones were misplaced and some were set over the wrong graves. This often leads to ghostly activity. In March of 2011, paranormal activity increased after vandals pushed over 44 monuments along the southwest corner of the cemetery.

Founded in 1882, River View Cemetery contains some peculiar monuments that may have enticed spirits to stay behind in our physical world. Simon Benson, Portland's wealthiest lumberman in 1907, is buried in Section 8. His grave marker is a simple granite block, but monuments to Benson's civic pride remain all over downtown Portland in the form of drinking fountains known as Benson Bubblers. Minnie Merchant Smith's grave is topped with a marble angel that casts fascinating shadows around the burial site. One of the most visited graves in the cemetery is that of frontier gunfighter and lawman Virgil Earp. Brother of famed lawman Wyatt Earp, Virgil died in 1905 in Nevada, but his body was brought to Portland by his daughter, Janie Law.

The most fascinating and spiritually active graveyard in the Portland region may be Lone Fir Cemetery. Founded in 1846 as a burial ground for the Stephens family, the place became a community cemetery in 1854 to accommodate victims of a tragic steamboat explosion on the Willamette River. It covers 30 acres with more than 25,000 graves. Lone Fir Cemetery staff members conduct monthly tours, which

reveal fascinating histories and clues to paranormal activity that occurs there. Visitors have experienced paranormal activity at several sites, including Dr. Hawthorne's plot, which contains the remains of 132 patients from his insane asylum, and Block 14, which contains an unknown number of bodies in unmarked graves.

Most county Web sites list pioneer cemeteries and offer links to local organizations that care for the graves and grounds. The best way to see the cemeteries of the haunted coast, and learn fascinating histories of those entombed, is to tour them with a knowledgeable guide. (See Appendix E: Special Tours and Events.) Some of these places are too spooky and possibly unsafe after dark unless you are accompanied by people who can ensure a pleasant visit.

## LOCAL GHOST HUNTERS

Several local organizations conduct investigations of ghostly activity and other paranormal phenomena in greater Portland and several locations on the Oregon coast. They can help you locate haunted sites, provide information about previous ghost investigations they have conducted, or sharpen your skills as a paranormal investigator. These organizations include the Pacific Paranormal Research Society, Believers of Oregon Spirit Society, Oregon Ghost Hunters, PSI of Oregon, Northwest Paranormal Investigations, Salem Spirit Trackers, Oregon Paranormal Investigations, Oregon Coast Paranormal Investigators, Oregon Paranormal, Oregon State Paranormal, Oregon Ghost Hunters, Bridgetown Paranormal Research, and West Coast Spectre Society. The activities of these organizations have been reported on their respective Web sites and featured in a variety of news media. Some of these groups host special events and offer classes and training seminars. See Appendix D (Internet Resources) for contact information. Tours of haunted places are available in the greater Portland area, cities on the I-5 corridor, and in coastal towns (see Appendix E). If you inquire at a local bookshop or historical society, you may meet a history buff or ghost hunter who can take you to sites not mentioned in published media.



### **THREE SIMPLE RULES**

Three simple rules apply for successful ghost hunting. The first is to be patient. Ghosts are everywhere, but contact may require a considerable investment of time. Second, respect the boundaries of private property and the rights of property owners to restrict or deny access to places you may wish to investigate. The third rule is to have fun. Ghost hunting can be a fascinating and exciting experience. You may report your ghost-hunting experiences or suggest hot spots for ghost hunting to the author via e-mail at [ghosthunter@jeffdwyer.com](mailto:ghosthunter@jeffdwyer.com). Visit the author's Web site at [www.jeffdwyer.com](http://www.jeffdwyer.com).



**Ghost Hunter's Guide**  
**to Portland** and the  
**Oregon Coast**



## CHAPTER 1

# How to Hunt Ghosts

You may want to visit recognized haunted sites, listed in chapters 2 through 6, using some of the ghost-hunting techniques described in this chapter, or search for a new haunted site. If you are looking for a haunted place that has not yet been discovered, start with an old house in your neighborhood or a favorite historic bed-and-breakfast inn. You may get a lead from fascinating stories about ancestors that have been passed down through your family, rumors circulating among your friends and neighbors, or reports posted on the Internet.

Your search for a ghost, or exploration of a haunted place, starts with research. Summaries of obscure and esoteric material about possible haunted sites are available from museums, local historical societies, and bookstores. Brochures and booklets, sold at historical sites under the Oregon State Parks system, can be good resources too.

Guided tours of historical sites such as the famous Shanghai Tunnels in old Portland; old neighborhoods in Eugene, Salem, Oregon City, and Troutdale; the historic grounds of Fort Vancouver; or old churches and pioneer graveyards, are good places to begin your research. Tours can help you develop a feel for places within a building where ghosts might be sighted or an appreciation of relevant history. Ghost, cemetery, and history tours of fascinating towns on the Oregon coast and the I-5 corridor are popular and offer a good way to learn a lot about local paranormal activity in a short time.

By touring haunted buildings, you will have opportunities to speak with guides and docents who may be able to provide you with clues about the dearly departed or tell you ghost stories you can't find in published material. Docents may know people—old-timers in the area or amateur historians—who can give you additional information about a site, its former owners or residents, and its potential for ghostly activity.

Almost every city has a local historical society (see Appendix F). These are good places to find information that may not be published in mainstream print media. This could be histories of local families and buildings; information about tragedies, disasters, criminal activity, or

legends; and myths about places that may be haunted. You will want to take notes about secret scandals or other ghost-producing happenings that occurred at locations now occupied by modern buildings, roads, or parks. In these cases, someone occupying a new house or other structure could hear strange sounds, feel cold spots, or see ghosts or spirit remnants.

Newspapers are an excellent source of historical information as well. You can search for articles about ghosts, haunted places, or paranormal activity by accessing the newspaper's archives via the Internet and entering key words, dates, or names. Newspaper articles about suicides, murders, train wrecks, plane crashes, and suspected or documented paranormal phenomena can provide essential information for your ghost hunt. Stories about authentic haunted sites are common around Halloween.

Bookstores and libraries usually have special-interest sections with books on local and regional history by local writers. A few inquiries may connect you with these local writers, who may be able to help you focus your research.

If these living souls cannot help, try the dead. A visit to a local graveyard is often useful in identifying possible ghosts. Often you can find headstones that indicate the person entombed died of suicide, criminal activity, local disaster, or such. Some epitaphs may indicate that the deceased was survived by a spouse and children or died far from home. Grave markers that have been desecrated or damaged by weather, vegetation, erosion, or earthquakes are good places to look for paranormal phenomena.

Perhaps the best place to start a search for a ghost is within your own family. Oral histories can spark your interest in a particular ancestor, scandal, building, or site relevant to your family. Old photographs, death certificates, letters and wills, anniversary lists in family Bibles, and keepsakes can be great clues. Then you can visit gravesites or homes of your ancestors to check out the vibes as you mentally and emotionally empathize with specific aspects of your family's history.

Almost every family has a departed member who died at an early age, suffered hardships or emotional anguish, or passed away suddenly due to an accident or natural disaster. Once you have focused your research on a deceased person, you need to determine if that person remains on this earthly plane as a ghost. Evaluate the individual's

personal history to see if he had a reason to remain attached to a specific place.

Was his death violent or under tragic circumstances?

Did he die at a young age with unfinished business?

Did the deceased leave behind loved ones who needed his support and protection?

Was this person attached to a specific site or building?

Would the individual be inclined to seek revenge against those responsible for his death?

Would his devotion and sense of loyalty lead him to offer eternal companionship to loved ones?

Revenge, anger, refusal to recognize the reality of transformation by death, and other negative factors prompt many spirits to haunt places and people. However, most ghosts are motivated by positive factors. Spirits may remain at a site to offer protection to a loved one or a particular place.

Also, remember that apparitions can appear as animals. Apparitions of ships, buildings, covered wagons, bridges, and roads by the strictest definitions are phantoms. A phantom is the essence of a structure that no longer exists on the physical plane. Many people have seen houses, cottages, castles, villages, and large ships that were destroyed or sunk years before.

## **BASIC PREPARATION FOR GHOST HUNTING**

If you decide to ghost hunt at night or on a special anniversary, make a trip to the site a few days ahead of time. During daylight hours, familiarize yourself with the place and its surroundings. Many historical sites are closed after sunset or crowded at certain times by organized tours.

## **TWO BASIC METHODS FOR FINDING GHOSTS**

Based partly on the kind of paranormal activity reported at a site, the ghost hunter must decide which method or approach will be used.

Some will feel competent with a collection of cameras, electromagnetic field detectors, digital thermometers, computers, data recorders, and other high-tech gadgets. These ghost hunters prefer to use the Technical Method. Others may discover they have an emotional affinity for a particular historic site, a surprising fascination with an event associated with a haunting, or empathy for a deceased person. These ghost hunters may have success with the Psychic Method. Another consideration is the ghost hunter's goal. Some desire scientific evidence of ghostly presence while others simply want to experience paranormal activity.

## THE TECHNICAL METHOD

Ghost hunters who favor the Technical Method often use an array of detection and recording devices that cover a wide range of the electromagnetic spectrum. Technical methods of ghost hunting can be complicated and expensive and require skilled people to operate the devices. Ghost hunters who want to use the Technical Method yet keep their investigations simple and inexpensive may get satisfying results with common audio and video recording devices and other low-tech approaches.

### Equipment Preparation

A few days before your ghost hunt, clear audio and image media of previous recordings. Test your batteries and bring new backup batteries and freshly charged power packs to the investigation site. You should have two types of flashlights: a broad-beam light for moving around a site and a penlight-type flashlight for narrow-field illumination while you make notes or adjust equipment. A red lens will help you avoid disruption of your night-adapted vision. A candle may be a good way to light the site in a way that is least offensive to a ghost.

### Still-Photography Techniques

Many photographic techniques that work well under normal conditions are inadequate for ghost hunts. That's because ghost hunting is usually conducted under conditions of low ambient light.



This requires the use of long exposures. Some investigators use a strobe or flash device but these can make the photos look unauthentic or create artifacts.

If you use film-based photography, practice taking photos with films of various light sensitivities before you go on your ghost hunt. Standard photographic films of high light sensitivity should be used—ASA of 800 or higher is recommended. At a dark or nearly dark location, mount the camera on a tripod. Try several exposure settings, from one to 30 seconds, and aperture settings under various low-light conditions. Your equipment should include a stable, lightweight tripod. Handheld cameras may produce poorly focused photographs when the exposure duration is greater than 1/60 second.

Make notes about the camera settings that work best under various light conditions. Avoid aiming the camera at a scene where there is a bright light such as a streetlamp or exit sign over a doorway. These light sources may “overflow” throughout your photograph.

Some professional and advanced amateur ghost hunters use infrared film. You should consult a professional photo-lab technician about this type of film and its associated photographic techniques. Infrared photography can yield some amazing pictures of spirits not detected by other means. Infrared film has become scarce and expensive since 2007, when manufacturers such as Kodak encountered a significant decline in the demand for the product.

Because digital cameras are inherently sensitive to infrared light, minor adjustments allow users to take pictures that may reveal entities that would not be seen with conventional photographic techniques. It has been theorized that spiritual entities exist at frequencies of the visual spectrum that lie below those of humans. If you use a camera filter that blocks out visible light while admitting infrared light, images of ghosts may be obtained. In some digital cameras, these adjustments are quite easy, requiring nothing more than selecting a “night vision” mode.

If you use digital photographic methods, practice taking pictures under conditions of low ambient light, with and without artificial lighting. Most digital cameras have default automatic settings that might not work well during a ghost investigation. These settings may not be easily changed as ambient conditions change at the haunted site unless you have practiced the procedures. Many cameras have

features that enable automatic exposures at specific intervals, e.g., once every minute. This allows a hands-off remote photograph record to be made. Repetitive automatic exposures also allow a site to be investigated without the presence of the investigator.

While every ghost hunter armed with a camera wishes to capture the full-bodied image of a ghost, most have to settle for light anomalies. These may be amorphous, luminescent clouds or narrow streaks of light resembling a shooting star. The light anomaly most frequently captured on film and in digital images is the orb. An orb is a symmetrical, white disk that appears most often in photographs and digital images made under low-light conditions. It may appear hovering near a ceiling, over a bed, or inside a car. A photograph may contain a single orb or show so many, of varying size, that they cannot be counted. Impressive pictures of light anomalies may be viewed at several Web sites.

Many ghost hunters claim that orbs are spirit manifestations without explaining why the spirit of a human would appear as a disk of light. Some of these have a humanoid shape but fail to convince critics and skeptics that the image is that of a ghost because the image is so perfectly illuminated it appears fake. Software for processing digital images has reduced the power of proof that was once attributed to photographs. Critics and skeptics point out that orbs may be the result of bugs, dust particles, or water droplets suspended in the air close to the lens or inside the camera. Excited ghost hunters have displayed pictures of light anomalies that turn out to be the result of wisps of hair, a camera strap, a finger, cigarette smoke, light reflected from jewelry, or smudges on the lens.

It is interesting to note that orbs were virtually unheard of in the field of paranormal investigation until digital cameras became available. Consequently, many people suspect that orbs may be the result of the camera's operating characteristics. Under conditions of low light, digital pixels may not fill in completely. This has been called under-pixelation. As a result, no image information or electronic signal is generated. The lack of a signal is detected by the camera's software, which then fills in the missing spot in the picture's signal array with white light. The result is an orb.

Is it possible that a spirit will manifest as an orb? Yes, although many experts suggest that as many as 99 percent of orb pictures do not

represent anything paranormal. I've seen some very impressive orbs, however. Ghost hunter Jackie Ganiy, president of Sonoma SPIRIT, captured a picture of an orb hovering over the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS *Hornet* in Alameda, California. This orb was symmetrically rounded but a skull was visible within it. Books by Melvyn Willin and Troy Taylor present fascinating collections of the best pictures of ghosts and other paranormal light anomalies, including orbs.

Generally, light anomalies should not be readily accepted as evidence of spirit presence unless there is corroborating evidence derived from other technical devices. This includes audio phenomena, changes in electromagnetic field, isolated changes in air temperature, or other still or video images. Corroborating evidence might also be found in psychic impressions experienced at the time and place that the light anomaly was captured. For example, psychic impressions of intense emotions, sobbing, cries for help, or screaming might be obtained while standing in an old hospital room as a photographer captures a picture of an orb hovering over the bed.

### **Audio Recording Techniques**

Digital or tape recorders provide an inexpensive way to obtain audio evidence of ghostly activity. The popular term for this is “electronic voice phenomena” or EVP. The American Association of EVP defines it as any intelligible voice detected on recording media that has no known explanation. Most ghost hunters accept a wider definition that includes the sound of moving objects, such as doors, windows, or glass objects; whistling; sobbing; laughter; screams; humming; gunshots; footsteps; explosions; musical notes; or tapping and knocking. Given this wide variety of sounds, I have proposed that the term EVP be replaced by EAP, electronic audio phenomena, and defined as any audio recording that cannot be attributed to normal phenomena.

EAP are obtained as a ghost hunter investigates an allegedly haunted place. The ghost hunter may record EAP while remaining stationary at a site, such as next to a grave, or while walking around a location. This is called an EAP or EVP sweep. Generally, questions are asked to which spirits may respond. These questions should be simple and follow an invitation for any spirits present to communicate. Typical questions include:

“What is your name?”

“Did you die here?”

“How old are you?”

“Do you want me to leave?”

“Why are you here?”

Your research may indicate specific questions you can use in your EAP investigations. If you seek a ghost of a farm worker who committed suicide by hanging himself in a barn, you may ask, “Did you die in this barn?” and “Did you hang yourself?” The ghost hunter may also ethically provoke a spirit through verbal challenge.

In most cases, spirit responses cannot be heard by the ghost hunter when they occur but they may be discovered on the audio recording during playback. Typically, responses are brief, rarely lasting more than a few seconds. Vocalizations sometimes have amazing clarity but most often they are unintelligible and, as with other sounds, rarely repeated in subsequent recordings. If the spirit's response comprises a clear and reasonable answer to the question, the recording may be called a “specific EAP.” Other responses, whether they are vocalizations or other sounds, must be labeled “random EAP” and scrutinized as the result of processes that may not be paranormal. For example, the sound of a conversation between two living people may be carried a long distance across a body of water. A ghost hunter who is unaware of others in the area may ask, “What is your name?” The response discovered during playback may be “I am cold.” This is a random EAP and likely a non-paranormal recording of words spoken by a living person. Random EAP may be created by natural or normal processes, such as the wind against a window or drafts in an old house, and there is high likelihood that they do not reflect a spirit's intelligent interaction with the investigator. Specific EAP has greater value as evidence of ghostly presence because clear and reasonable responses to specific questions are not likely to be created by living people nearby or natural processes.

Often, EAP consists of nonvocal sounds. Musical instruments, slamming doors, gunshots, footsteps, and tapping sounds may be evoked by the ghost hunter's questions. Ghosts that are unable to generate vocalizations may resort to these sounds as the only means of communication. These may be random EAP but still comprise good

evidence of a ghostly presence. You may ask, “Why are you here?” On playback, the recording may reveal the sound of footsteps moving away from the microphone. In this instance, the ghost may have been troubled by the question and decided to leave.

Before you begin your EAP sweep, test your recorder under conditions you expect to find at the investigation site in order to reduce audio artifact and ensure optimal performance of the device. Does your recorder pick up excessive background noise? This may obscure ghostly sounds. If so, consider upgrading the tape quality or select a high-quality digital audio recorder. Also, consider using a wind guard on the microphone.

Consider using two or more recorders at different locations within the site. This allows you to verify sounds such as wind against a window and reduce the possibility of ambiguous recordings or misinterpretation of an EAP.

Allow time, at least 15 to 60 seconds, for a response. EAP can be heard only during playback, so ghost hunters should review recordings every 5-10 minutes during the investigation, rather than waiting until the investigation is completed. This will enable the identification of hot spots for spirit activity that may be investigated more thoroughly.

You can use sound-activated recorders at a site overnight. They will automatically switch on whenever a sound occurs above a minimum threshold. Be aware that tape recorders may yield recordings that start with an annoying artifact, the result of a slow tape speed at the beginning of each recorded segment. The slow tape speed could obscure the sounds made by a ghost.

Remote microphones and monitor earphones allow you to remain some distance from the site and activate the recorder when ghostly sounds are heard. If this equipment is not available, turn the recorder on and let it run throughout your investigation, whether you remain stationary or walk about the site.

Wear a lapel microphone connected to a small audio recorder carried in your pocket. Operated in the sound-activation mode, this device will also provide you with a means of making audio notes rather than written notes. A headset with a microphone is especially useful with this technique.

Ghost hunters must carefully analyze their audio recordings, and

the environment in which they are obtained, to be certain they are not inadvertent recordings of natural or normal sounds. Sound may carry great distances, particularly over bodies of water and when there is fog or low cloud cover. If a tape recorder is used, a new tape may reduce the chances of artifact. I recommend computer software such as Adobe Audition for editing your EAP recording. With a little practice, you will be able to subdue or eliminate extraneous sounds while enhancing spirit communications.

The American Association of EVP maintains a Web site for general information and advice: [www.aevp.com](http://www.aevp.com). Several Web sites may be accessed to hear examples of EVP. Use the keyword "EVP" to locate them.

### **Video Recording**

Video recorders offer a wide variety of recording features from time-lapse to auto-start/stop and autofocus. These features enable you to make surveillance-type recordings over many hours while you are off-site. Consult your user's manual for low-light recording guidelines and always use a tripod and long-duration battery packs.

If you plan to attempt video recording, consider using two recorders, at equal distance from a specific object such as a chair. Arrange the recorders at different angles, preferably 90 degrees from each other.

Another approach you might try is to use a wide-angle setting on the first camera for a broad view of a room, porch, or courtyard. On the second camera, use a closeup setting to capture ghostly apparitions at a door, chair, or window.

You may have more success with sequential, manual, or timer-actuated recordings than a continuous-run technique. If you try this technique, use recording runs of one to five minutes. Practice using the method that interrupts the automatic setting should you need to manually control the recording process. Always use a tripod that can be moved to a new location in a hurry.

### **High-Tech Equipment**

You can purchase high-tech devices such as electromagnetic field detectors, infrared thermometers, barometers, and motion detectors at your local electronics store or over the Internet. Good sources for high-tech ghost-hunting equipment are the Society for Paranormal

Investigation, the Ghost Hunter Store, and the EMF Safety Superstore.

Inexpensive, battery-operated motion detectors can be placed at several locations within an investigation site. Some of these allow users to select an audio signal or a silent flashing light signal and connect the output to a central monitor. These devices work by measuring optical or acoustical changes in the environment. Therefore, they are most reliable when remote surveillance is performed and investigators are certain that no living beings have entered the site.

Infrared thermometers have been used to search for cold spots that may signal the presence of a ghost. While these devices are widely utilized, and sometimes displayed on paranormal TV shows, they are often used incorrectly. They cannot assess changes in the temperature of clear air because of its very low density and minimal emission of infrared energy. However, infrared thermometers can detect the surface temperature of solid objects, liquids, dense gases, and clouds. With a laser to assist aiming, the device can be used to measure the temperature of objects that cannot be reached due to obstructions such as fences, hazards such bodies of water that cannot be crossed, unsafe structures, or animals.

Night vision goggles can be useful in low-light situations. These devices enhance the intensity of light within the visual spectrum and augment the resulting image with nonvisual sources of electromagnetic radiation such as near-infrared or ultraviolet light. Night vision devices enable you to see doors and other objects move that you might not otherwise see. The resulting scene appears monochromatic but preserves fine details.

The most advanced and expensive piece of equipment used by ghost hunters is the FLIR imaging device. This acronym stands for forward-looking infrared. FLIRs detect thermal energy in the infrared range. The FLIR lens focuses the scene on a vast array of sensors that produce thousands of simultaneous measurements of thermal energy. Software then assembles the thermal measurements into a mosaic or picture that is displayed on a handheld video screen. In the picture, elements of the scene are colored according to the temperature or level of infrared radiation. The result resembles a coloring-book image in which some elements are blue, indicating colder temperatures, while others are yellow, orange, or red, indicating warmer temperatures.

FLIR systems can see through atmospheric obscurants such as smoke or fog and in total darkness. Ghost hunters use them to detect spirits that do not generate an image within the human visual spectrum. Theoretically, when spirits appear on our plane they draw energy from the environment, creating a cold spot. A FLIR will detect subtle changes in temperature and depict the shape of the cold spot on the video screen. When the shape of the cold spot is humanoid, ghost hunters claim they have evidence that a ghost is present.

Despite the technical sophistication and expense of FLIRs, the images they produce may be misinterpreted. FLIRs may detect sources of heat or cold created by normal processes not noticed by the user. A living being who occupied the scene moments before a FLIR-equipped ghost hunter arrived may leave residual heat in a chair or on a doorknob. Finding the scene unoccupied by any living being, the ghost hunter might mistakenly cite the detected thermal anomaly as evidence of a ghostly presence.

Electromagnetic field (EMF) detectors are used by paranormal investigators to detect the presence of ghosts in spite of the lack of scientific evidence that EMF and spirit presence are linked. Ghost hunters who use EMF detectors claim that spikes in a local electromagnetic field are created when a ghost transitions onto our plane of existence. These devices, however, often pick up EMF generated by unseen electrical appliances, faulty wiring in an old house, cell phones, walkie-talkies, video recorders, and numerous other sources including solar flares and geomagnetic storms. EMF detectors may be useful if proper controls are established and all possible sources of natural EMF are identified.

Electronic gadgets can be useful and fun, but unless you have a means of creating a record of the instrument's output or storing images or data in a computer, your reports of light anomalies, apparent paranormal motion of objects, changes in the physical characteristics of the environment, or apparitions will not constitute the kind of hard evidence you need to satisfy skeptics. Keep in mind that even expensive instruments may produce erroneous data or signals if they are incorrectly calibrated, misused, or improperly maintained. Also, data can be easily misinterpreted if the user does not understand the technical or operating limitations of the device. Using expensive high-tech gadgets does not guarantee accurate results, nor do they validate a ghost hunt as a scientific investigation.



### **Very Low Tech Devices**

I have had great success in detecting spirit activity with common household items. Ghosts often become active when they are irritated by changes in their favored environment. If you tilt a picture hanging on the wall, leave an object in the ghost's rocking chair, or leave a book open, a ghost may straighten the picture, remove the object from his chair, or close the book.

Spirits may be attracted to objects they can manipulate easily. Leave four aces at the top of a deck of cards. A ghost may shuffle them throughout the deck. Ghosts are often attracted to water. A glass left full may later be found empty and the contents wetting the floor. A paper and pencil may be used by a ghost to leave bizarre marks or a legible message. Leave two stacks of coins—10 pennies in each stack—on a stable surface and leave the room for an extended period of time. When you return, the coins may be scattered. If both stacks are scattered, a gust of wind or vibration of the building may account for the change. If one stack remains untouched while the other is scattered, that may be the work of a ghost. I used this technique at the Myrtles Plantation in St. Francisville, Louisiana. I found 10 pennies rearranged in a circle around the other stack of coins, which remained standing.

### **Other Equipment**

Various authorities in the field of ghost hunting suggest the following items to help you mark sites, detect paranormal phenomena, and collect evidence of ghostly activity.

White and colored chalk	Small bell
Compass	Plastic bags for collecting evidence
Stop watch	Light-reflecting tape
Steel tape measure	Matches
Magnifying glass	Tape for sealing doors
First-aid kit	String
Thermometer	Cross
Metal detector	Bible
Graph paper for diagrams	Cell phone
Small mirror	

## THE PSYCHIC METHOD

The Psychic Method relies upon your intuition, inner vision, or emotional connection with a deceased person, object, place, or point of time in history. You don't have to be a trained psychic to use this approach. All of us have some capacity to tap into unseen dimensions and use some of the psychic tools described in my book *Psychic: Use Your Psychic Powers to Experience Ghosts*, the parapsychology literature, and popular books by psychics such as Sylvia Browne and Jane Roberts. Your ability to use psychic tools for successful ghost hunting depends upon three factors: your innate ability, receptivity, and sensitivity.

You may have an ability to successfully use psychic tools in a ghost hunt if you are one of those people who can readily identify isolated places within a room that elicit a chilling feeling that there is something bizarre or paranormal about the spot. The ability to identify these places must include a capacity to sort out your impressions, clear your mind of extraneous thoughts and distractions, and focus your attention on the particular point from which a paranormal impression emanates.

You may have sufficient receptivity to effectively use psychic tools if you feel more intensely connected to a place or past era than others or often feel mentally transported to another era. Do you often get that curious feeling that some unseen person is standing behind you, watching you, or touching you? When you touch an artifact, such as a weapon, do you get the impression that you have become aware of information about the object or its user? If so, you are receptive to unseen dimensions and likely to have success hunting ghosts with psychic tools. Highly receptive people often visit a place for the first time yet feel they have been there before. This is called ESP, or extrasensory perception, and reflects a high degree of receptivity.

Your receptivity can provide considerable focus to your ghost hunt if you first obtain information about the key elements and historical context of the entity's death. This includes architectural elements of a home, theatre, airplane, or ship and objects such as furniture, clothing, weapons, or any implement or artifact of the specific time period of the entity's death. Touching or handling pertinent artifacts, sitting in the deceased person's chair, or standing within the historic

site will enable you to get in touch with the historical moment that is most pertinent to the ghost.

You may have exceptional sensitivity if you get vivid impressions of emotions in specific locations within allegedly haunted places. Do you walk into a historic building and get that eerie feeling that something or someone from the past still lingers there? Do you get a sense of “vibes” of fear, anger, pain, or suffering when you visit historic places or places known to be haunted? If so, you may be sensitive to residual energies from past events, emotions that played out in a particular place, or the actions of people who have been gone from the scene for decades. Sensitive people often detect a distant time or a voice, sound, touch, or texture of another dimension often described as a change in atmosphere.

Your sensitivity will pay off in a ghost hunt if your investigation is aimed at strong paranormal imprints or attachments of spirits. Strong imprints and attachments are indicated by the frequency, duration, and consistency of the detected paranormal activity that reportedly occurs at a particular place. The strongest imprints are created by intense emotions such as fear, rage, jealousy, revenge, or loss, especially if they were repetitive over long periods prior to death. Strong attachments are created by love for a person, a place, or an object or a sense of obligation to provide guidance and protection. Biographical research may reveal this kind of information, particularly if personal letters or diaries are examined. Old newspaper articles, suicide notes, and photographs are useful too.

You may enhance your sensitivity by developing and expressing empathy for the ghost’s lingering presence at a haunted site. Empathy can be based on your research, which may reveal information about the entity’s personal history and probable emotions, motivations, problems, or unfinished business at the time of death. You may also learn that a ghost may be trapped, confused, or has chosen to remain at a site to protect someone or guard something precious. Historical sources such as newspaper articles and obituaries, old photographs, or biographies can provide this kind of information.

Your sensitivity to ghostly environmental imprints and spirit manifestations may also be increased by meditation, the relaxing of one’s physical body to eliminate distracting thoughts and tensions

and achieve emotional focus. Meditation allows you to concentrate your spiritual awareness on a single subject—a place, entity, or historic moment in time. Markers of time or season, artifacts or implements, furniture and doorways are a few suggestions of things to focus on. As the subject comes into focus, you can add information obtained from your research, information that relates specifically to the spirit under investigation such as the type of device used for a suicide or murder, favored book, musical instrument, etc. Through this process, you will become aware of unseen dimensions of the world around you, creating a feeling that you have moved through time to a distant era. Meditation gets you in touch with the place, date, and time pertinent to a ghost's imprint or death. It also enables you to disregard personal concerns and distracting thoughts that may interfere with your concentration on the ghost you seek.

Keep in mind that it is possible to be in a meditative state while appearing quite normal. The process is simple and easy to learn. When you arrive at the site of your ghost hunt, find a place a short distance away to meditate. Three essentials for any effective meditation are comfort, quiet, and concentration.

**Comfort:** Sit or stand in a relaxed position. Take free and even breaths at a slow rate. Do not alter your breathing pattern so much that you feel short of breath, winded, or lightheaded. Close your eyes if that enhances your comfort, or focus on a candle, tree, or flower. Do not fall asleep. Proper meditation creates relaxation without decreasing alertness.

**Quiet:** Meditate in a place away from noises generated by traffic, passersby, radios, slammed doors, and the like. If you are with a group, give each other sufficient personal space. Some people use mantras, repetitive words or phrases, or speak only in their mind in order to facilitate inner calmness. Mantras are useful to induce a focused state of relaxation, but they may disrupt the meditation of a companion if spoken aloud. A majority of ghost hunters do not believe that mantras are necessary in this instance. They point out that ghost hunting is not like a séance as depicted in old movies.

**Concentration:** First, clear your mind of everyday thoughts, worries, and concerns. This is the most difficult part of the process. Many of us don't want to let go of our stressful thoughts. To help

release those worries, let the thought turn off its light and fade into darkness. After you clear your mind, some thoughts may reappear. Repeat the process. Slowly turn off the light of each thought until you can rest with a completely cleared mind. This might take some practice. Don't wait until you are on the scene of a ghost hunt before you practice this exercise.

Once your mind is clear, focus on your breathing and imagine your entire being as a single point of energy driving the breathing process. Then, open yourself. Think only of the entity you seek. Starting with the ghost's identity (if known), slowly expand your focus to include its personal history, the historical era of the ghost's death or creation of the emotional imprint, the reported nature and appearance of the haunting, and any specific ghostly activity.

Acknowledge each thought as you continue relaxed breathing. Find a thought that is most attractive to you, and then expand your mind to include your present surroundings. Return slowly to your current place and time. Remain quiet for a minute or two before you resume communication with your companions, then move ahead with the ghost hunt.

### **Psychic Tools**

**Clairaudience:** The perception of sounds generated by paranormal sources is called clairaudience. The term is derived from the French, meaning "clear hearing." People with this ability may hear the voices of spirits who are trying to communicate or the sounds of events that occurred years or decades earlier. The latter are most often environmental imprints created by intense repetitive emotions or events that had a strong emotional component.

**Clairsentience:** Some ghosts manifest by creating impressions of physical sensations in receptive people that may include a feeling of being touched. Others are accompanied by fragrances or odors. The ability to perceive or detect these physical sensations and smells that do not truly exist on this plane is called clairsentience. Signature perfumes or the fragrance of favorite flowers can help you identify a ghost. At the world-renowned haunted Myrtles Plantation in Louisiana, the ghost of Sarah Woodroff creates the fragrance of her favorite flower, the magnolia. Odors such as cigars, oranges, and hemp are common

ghostly manifestations. Sometimes, ghost hunters encounter the noxious odors of rotting meat or burning flesh.

**Clairvoyance:** Information or impressions may be received from objects or spirits without the use of “normal” senses. The process is called clairvoyance and usually refers to visual impressions. People who see ghosts, whether the image is lifelike or merely a human-shaped fragment of a shadow, are clairvoyant. Visual information or impressions may include orbs, amorphous clouds, or objects. Since clairvoyance is limited to “real time” events, any visual experience suggests a ghost is present at the moment.

**Retrocognition:** Perception of visual or audio impressions of events from the past is a form of clairvoyance or clairaudience called retrocognition. Psychic Derek Acorah dramatically portrayed his retrocognition ability during ghost investigations in the popular TV show *Most Haunted*. If you watched my TV shows *Ghosts of the Queen Mary* and *Legends of Alcatraz*, you’ve seen me perform retrocognition.

The most famous case of retrocognition was reported by two teachers, Charlotte Moberly and Eleanor Jourdain, after they visited the Petit Trianon at the Palace of Versailles in France in 1901. In what has become known as the Moberly-Jourdain incident, the women reportedly witnessed people dressed in 18th-century clothing and saw structures that no longer existed. Their detailed descriptions of the experience, published in their 1911 book, *An Adventure*, match obscure historical records, suggesting the retrocognitive experience was genuine. Detailed accounts of the Moberly-Jourdain incident can be found online.

**Psychometry:** Information about an object or one of its users may be obtained by psychically gifted or skilled people through psychometry. First described in 1842 by Joseph R. Buchanan, the process has been used in séances, ghost hunts, and crime scene investigations. After a few minutes of handling an object, practitioners of psychometry get visual impressions or become aware of information that cannot be the result of logical inference (piecing things together from clues you might have). Ghost hunters can use psychometry to gain information about a spirit’s affinity for a chair or a book or why it moves a particular glass or key. Any object that has reportedly been moved by a ghost should be examined by psychometry. Investigators may get clues about the

identity of the ghost or reasons for its haunting activity.

Retrieval of information by psychometry may be possible because of changes in an object's electromagnetic field (EMF) created by repetitive handling. Its owner's use may have altered its EMF and left durable traces of the user's energy, much like a fingerprint, especially if intense emotions were associated with frequent use. A good example is my Civil War cavalry saber, which was used in several battles. Psychometrists who handle the saber become aware of fear, rage, and remorse and perceive the image of a middle-aged Union Army officer.

## **GROUP ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION**

It is not necessary to believe in spirits or paranormal phenomena in order to see a ghost or experience haunting activities. Indeed, most reports of ghost activities are made by unsuspecting people who never gave the matter much thought. But you should not include people in your group who openly express negative attitudes about these things. If you include skeptics, be sure they agree to maintain an open mind and participate in a positive group attitude.

Keep your group small, limited to four members if possible. Ghosts have been seen by large groups of people but small groups are more easily managed and likely to be of one mind in terms of objectives and methods.

Meet an hour or more prior to starting the ghost hunt at a location away from the site. Review the history of the ghost you seek and the previous reports of spirit activity there. Discuss the group's expectations based on known or suspected ghostly activity or specific research goals. Review any available reports of audio phenomena, still or video images, and visual apparitions and decide what methods would be optimal for recording these phenomena during your investigation.

Most importantly, agree to a plan of action if a sighting is made by any member of the group. The first priority for a ghost hunter is to maintain visual or auditory contact without a flurry of activity, such as making notes. Without breaking contact, do the following: activate recording devices; redirect audio, video, or photographic equipment to focus on the ghost; move yourself to the most advantageous position for listening or viewing the ghostly activity; attract the attention of

group members with a code word, hand signal (for example, touch the top of your head), or any action that signals other hunters so they can pick up your focus of attention.

Should you attempt to interact with the ghost? Do so only if the ghost invites you to speak or move. Often, a ghost hunter's movement or noise frightens the ghost or interferes with the perception of the apparition.

## SEARCHING FOR GHOSTS

There are no strict rules or guidelines for successful ghost hunting except be patient! Professional ghost hunters sometimes wait several days, weeks, even months before achieving contact with a ghost. Others have observed full-body apparitions when they least expected it, while concentrating fully on some other activity. Regardless of the depth of your research or preparation, you need to be patient. The serious ghost hunter will anticipate that several trips to a haunted site may be required before some sign of ghostly activity is observed.

If you are ghost hunting with others, it may be advantageous to station members of your group at various places in the ghost's haunting grounds and use a reliable system to alert others to spirit activity. In the event that one member sights a ghost or experiences some evidence of ghostly activity, confirmation by a second person is important in establishing validity and credibility. In the previous section, a hand signal (hand to the top of the head) was recommended as a means of informing others that they should direct their eyes and ears to a site indicated by the person in contact with a ghost. Because of this, ghost hunters will need to keep their companions within visual range at all times and be aware of hand signals.

An audio signal can often reduce the need for monitoring other ghost hunters for hand signals. A distinct audio signal may prove invaluable for alerting other hunters who may be some distance away, as when each member patrols a different portion of the site. Tugging on a length of string can be an incredibly simple yet effective signal. So can beeping devices, mechanical "crickets," and flashing penlight signals, i.e., one flash for a cold spot and two flashes for an apparition.



Handheld radios, or walkie-talkies, can also be effective. Some models can send an audio signal or activate flashing lights. Cell phones can be used but the electromagnetic activity may be uninviting to your ghost.

Remaining stationary within a room, gravesite, courtyard, or other confirmed location is often productive. If a ghost is known to have a favorite chair, bed, or other place within a room, he will manifest. If your ghost is not known to appear at a specific place within a room or an outdoors area, position yourself to gain the broadest view of the site. A corner of a room is optimal because it allows the ghost unobstructed motion while avoiding the impression of a trap set by uninvited people who occupy his favorite space. If you are outdoors at a gravesite, for instance, position yourself at the base of a tree or in the shadows of a monument to conceal your presence while affording a view of your ghost's grave. If your ghost is a mobile spirit, moving throughout a house, over a bridge, or about a courtyard or graveyard, you may have no choice but to move around the area. Search for a place where you feel a change in the thickness of the air or a cold spot or detect a peculiar odor.

Once you are on site, the above-described meditation may help you focus and maintain empathy for your ghost. Investigate sounds, even common sounds, as the ghost attempts to communicate with you. Make mental notes of the room temperature, air movement, and atmospheric sensations as you move about the site. Changes in these factors may indicate the presence of a ghost. Pay attention to your own sensations or perceptions, such as the odd feeling that someone is watching you, standing close by, or touching you. Your ghost may be hunting you!

## **WHAT TO DO WITH A GHOST**

On occasion, professional ghost hunters make contact with a ghost by entering a trance and establishing two-way communications. The ghost hunter's companions hear him or her speak but the ghost's voice can only be heard by the trance communicator. In her book *Adventures of a Psychic*, Sylvia Browne describes several trance communication sessions. Most ghost encounters are brief with little opportunity to

engage the entity in conversation. But the ghost may make gestures or acknowledge your presence through eye contact, a touch on the shoulder, sound, or a movement of an object. The ghost hunter must decide whether or not to follow the gestures or direction of a ghost.

Visitors to historic buildings in Salem and Oregon City, the historic neighborhoods of Portland, and the towns of the Oregon coast often feel the touch or tug of a ghost on their arm or shoulder. In the famous Shanghai Tunnels of historic Portland, ghosts of sailors, prostitutes, gamblers, opium-den patrons, gangsters, victims of kidnapping, or Chinese diggers often give unwary tourists the scare of a lifetime by screaming, touching, slapping, or kicking. Patrons of the legendary White Eagle Saloon may be caught up in the ghostly mayhem of a double murder and suicide.

On the highway near Cannon Beach, the Bandage Man appears alongside the road and in rearview mirrors, causing some drivers to lose control of their cars. Some witnesses report that he has attacked hitchhikers. Near Tillamook, a flannel-clad man named Lazlo is often seen by travelers. He stands in a roadside creek, fishing. Close to Lincoln City, a highway known as the Van Duzer Corridor is haunted by several apparitions. Drivers have reported a scary feeling that control of their car was taken over by an unseen being. This area is also known for strange lights that appear on the road and hover over nearby hilltops.

Lighthouses at Yaquina Head, Newport, Heceta Head, and Cape Blanco are haunted with spirits who often try to get the attention of visitors to help them find something or merely clean up their former home. While roaming coastal haunted sites, ghost hunters may also glimpse phantom ships at sea, which may be on fire or sinking, and hear the cries of doomed crew. The ghost ships of Siletz Bay and Coos Bay sometimes surprise unsuspecting visitors with a replay of horrific maritime disasters.

The idea of a close experience with a ghost is frightening to most of us. More often, the ghost's activities are directed at getting the intruder to leave a room, house, or gravesite. If you sense your ghost wants you to leave, most hunters believe it is best not to push your luck. When you have established the nature of the ghost activity, ascertained that your companions have experienced the activity, taken

a few photographs and run a few minutes of audio tape, it may be time to leave. An experience with an unfriendly ghost can be disturbing.

Residents of haunted houses and employees of haunted business establishments often accept a ghost's telekinetic or audio activities without concern. It is part of the charm of a place and may add some fun to working in a spooky building.

## **AFTER THE GHOST HUNT**

Turn off all recorders and remove them to a safe place. Some ghost hunters suspect that ghosts can erase recording media. Label your media with the date, time, and location of the ghost hunt. Use a code number for each recording. Keep a separate account of where the recording was made, date, time, and contents. Place media in a waterproof bag with your name, address, telephone number, and a note that guarantees postage in case it is misplaced. If you use photographic film, have it developed at a professional color laboratory. Pros at the lab may help you with special processing and image enhancement. Have copies made of the negatives that contain ghostly images.

All members of the group should meet right after the hunt, away from the site, for debriefing. Each hunter who witnessed a ghostly activity or apparition should make a written or audio statement describing the experience. The form presented in Appendix A should be completed by the group leader. Video and audio recordings made at the site should be reviewed and reconciled with witness statements. Then, plans should be made for a follow-up visit in the near future to the site to confirm the apparition, its nature and form, and the impressions of the initial ghost hunt.

Data about the ghost's location within a site may indicate the optimal conditions for future contact. Things to be aware of include the time of day or night, phase of the moon, season, and degree and size of cold spots, as well as form and density of the apparition. Patience and detailed records can help you to achieve the greatest reward for a ghost hunter, unmistakable proof of ghostly activity.