

A Poltergeist Case Without an Identifiable Living Agent¹

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ABSTRACT: Ostensible poltergeist phenomena are reported which occurred in an old house in southern New Jersey; the house was converted into a gift shop in 1978. The recurrent, inexplicable malfunctioning or operation of electrical equipment, movement of objects, various auditory phenomena, and occasional apparitions are said to have taken place over a period of approximately 10 years and three sets of owners. The phenomena were experienced by at least 24 individuals with varying degrees of knowledge about prior incidents; some observations were collective. Attempts to explore alternative explanations revealed no normal physical cause for most of the incidents. Moreover, no likely candidates for a living poltergeist agent or group of agents were discovered during the investigation. The phenomena are discussed in the light of criteria proposed by Stevenson and by Gault and Cornell for conformity to the deceased agent hypothesis.

INTRODUCTION

Kinetic activities of the poltergeist variety have been extensively studied in the last decades, notably by Bender (1974), Gault and Cornell (1979), Owen (1964), Roll (1976), and others. While such activity is often attributable to the agency of a living focal person or agent, Stevenson (1972) has pointed out that in a minority of cases this explanation does not seem to apply. The hypothesis of a deceased person as agent may be better able to accommodate the data in cases where no living agent can be identified. Stevenson suggests that there are different patterns to the phenomena in cases ostensibly involving a deceased agent as opposed to a living agent, and he outlined these patterns in a table of items which would permit pattern analyses of future cases. Subsequent to this, Bender (1974) described a case with no known living agent, and Roll (1977) found in a comprehensive survey of the literature from 1612 to 1974 that, among 116 cases he had selected according to certain standards of evidence, there were 24 in which there was no identifiable focal person. Similarly, in a sampling of cases taken mostly from the *Journal* and *Proceedings* of the SPR from 1850 onward, Cox

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(1961) discovered that of the 38 classifiable cases he had found, 26% were without a "central party." In a comprehensive historical survey and reanalysis of 500 poltergeist cases, Gauld and Cornell (1979) present reasons for concluding that concepts about psychokinesis (PK) developed from laboratory studies may not be generalizable to spontaneous poltergeist activity, regardless of the presence of an agent. Stevenson (1972) suggests that premature theories may have biased researchers' observations and case selections. He urged investigators to keep their minds open to a wider scope of explanatory concepts when gathering new data; we have tried to do this in the present case.

This case aroused our interest because no living focal person seemed to be associated with the poltergeist phenomena. It presented the hope of furnishing data suitable for a new look at the types of analyses suggested by Stevenson and by Gauld and Cornell.

HISTORY OF THE CASE

We first heard of the case on July 25, 1979, from Ted Sinclair² who (with his wife, brother, and sister-in-law) is the current owner of the gift shop in which the phenomena were taking place. He had called the Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man, and someone there suggested that he get in touch with K.O.

The gift shop is located in an old farmhouse in a southern New Jersey resort area. According to records, this farmhouse was originally built in 1772; it had survived a fire, and had been rebuilt and enlarged several times. At the turn of the century, the building was "rolled" down a hill about 300 feet to its present location.

The original family had come with whalers from New England to establish a fishing and farming community. The house had remained in family hands for almost 200 years. The last inhabitants who bore the family name were two unmarried sisters: Hester (b. 1859, d. 1949) and Lucille (b. 1863, d. 1954). The house was then inherited by their nephew, Arthur Maxwell, who began extensive renovations, but died in 1970 before they were finished. His widow, Aileen Maxwell, completed the work and kept the house as her summer home and weekend retreat, while her main residence was in another community in southern New Jersey. In 1976, Mrs. Maxwell sold the house to Richard Barker, a businessman and amateur sensitive, who lived there with his mother for two years.

² Pseudonyms are used for all informants.

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The Sinclairs bought the place from the Barkers in 1978. They extensively enlarged and modernized the house, converting it into a gift shop which now consists of 11 display rooms, a storage room, a workshop, and an office (see Figure 1). A family graveyard, with the graves of occupants from 1787-1856, is situated on the property, but is not visible from the house.

The poltergeist phenomena seem to have started in the early 1970s, during the period of Mrs. Maxwell's occupancy, and were continuing at the time this article was being prepared at an average frequency of once or twice a month.

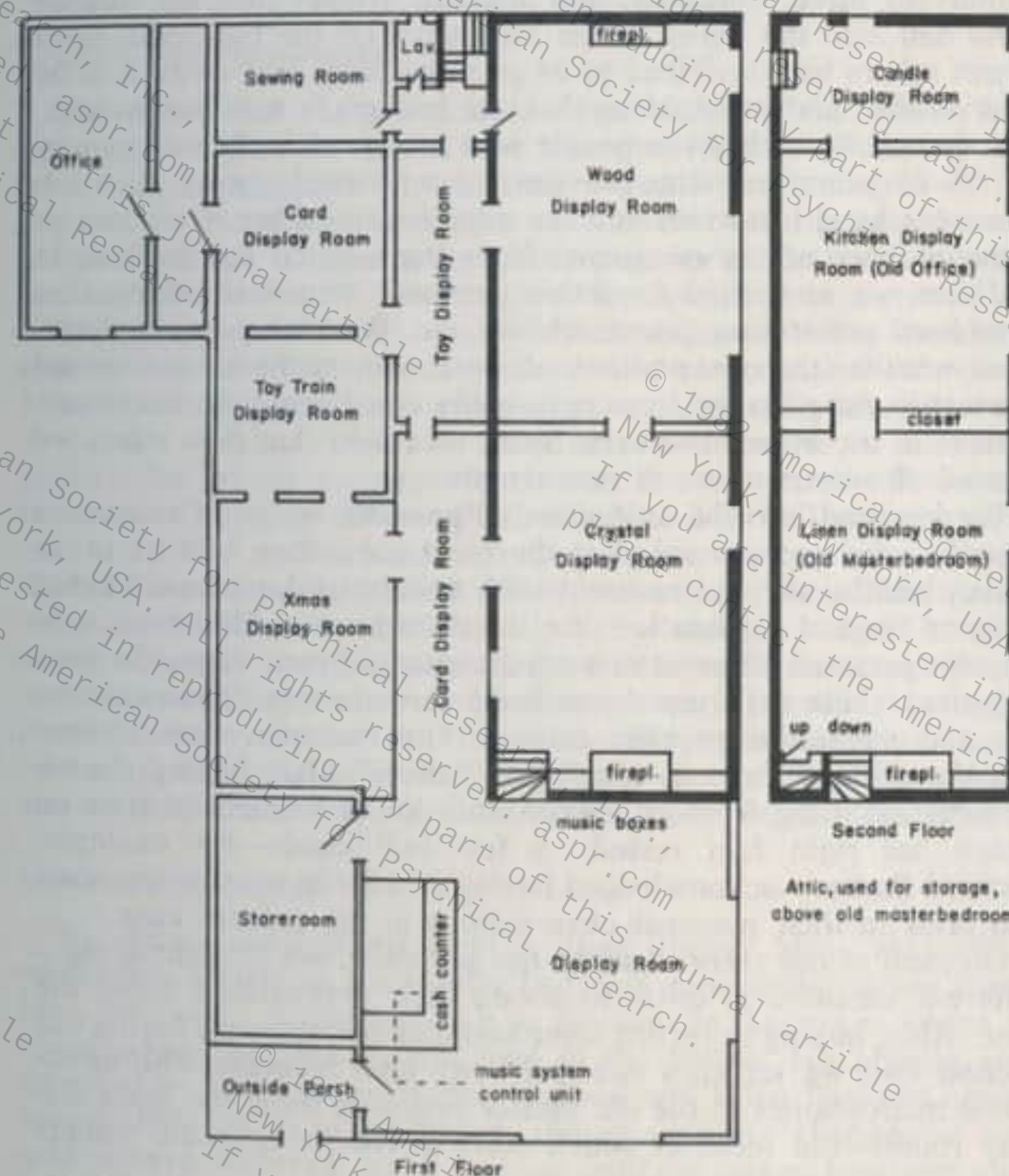


Fig. 1. Floor plan of gift shop. (Original structure contained within bold lines.)

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

We made three trips to the gift shop, October 26, December 3-4, and December 27, 1979. Altogether 36 individuals were approached; 31 of them cooperated and were interviewed, mostly over the telephone and also during our visits.

Twenty-four of the persons we interviewed reported observations of phenomena. Among these were the following: the present owners (Ted, Chris, Joe, and Sally Sinclair), four members of their family (two of whom had worked in the shop), three of the present employees and seven former employees, the husband of a former employee, three workmen, and Richard Barker and his mother (who had sold the house to the Sinclairs). Of the five individuals whom others had described to us as experiencers, four refused to be interviewed, and one told us that she had made no observations. We also spoke with seven people who had lived in the community for 50-85 years and who provided us with background material; two were local historians and the others were either neighbors or acquaintances of the occupants from the original family line. In addition, we attempted to obtain pertinent historical information from local cemeteries, town archives, etc. We took pains to determine whether the observations of those who might have a vested interest in the gift shop were reasonably consistent with the observations of the other observers. Since we found that they were, we treated all observations as one sample.

We inquired into the attitudes and possible biases of observers regarding the paranormal. For the most part, they told us of an initial, healthy skepticism about such matters and expressed belief in some "logical explanation" for the disturbances. However, subsequent personal observations usually changed their views. In their judgment, these experiences rendered normal explanations untenable and suggested psychic causes. For example, one witness quickly changed from a "goat" to a "sheep" after feeling the vibrations resulting from an inexplicable knock under the stair on which her right foot rested. A few individuals—for example, Richard Barker—acknowledged having a belief in psychic phenomena prior to their personal observations in the present case.

On each of our three visits to the gift shop, we brought along a different sensitive in order to obtain their impressions about the case. Also, hoping to record some auditory phenomena, during our second visit we set up a two-reel Sony tape recorder with directional microphones in the old master bedroom (now the linen display room)—the room in which most of the inexplicable sounds

See Appendix A for a list of the 36 individuals contacted during our investigation.

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seemed to be concentrated. With Mr. and Mrs. Ted Sinclair and an assistant we had brought along (Marlene Verlich), we remained in or near this room from 9:30 P.M. until 3:00 A.M., but no phenomena occurred.

THE REPORTED PHENOMENA

The most frequently reported phenomena were the movement of objects, including ostensible manipulation of electrical systems, and the sound of footsteps. Less frequently reported phenomena included apparitions and the sound of whistling and human voices.

Onset of the Phenomena

The time when the phenomena began is uncertain. There had been rumors that the house was "haunted" and "evil" during the latter years when Hester and Lucille lived there, but none of the persons we questioned (neighbors and relatives of the inhabitants) could recall talk of observed phenomena prior to the last five to 10 years. (It has, however, become common for gift shop personnel to refer jokingly to Hester as the "resident ghost.") We therefore estimate that the disturbances did not start earlier than 1970, when Mrs. Maxwell began to live in the house. Unfortunately, she told us on the telephone that she flatly refused to cooperate with our inquiry, for which she gave no reason. But we do have four witnesses who say they either talked with Mrs. Maxwell about experiences she had in the house, or that they had experiences there themselves during the period of her ownership. These informants were Joe Sinclair, Warren Nelson, chief electrician at Joe's burglar alarm company, Jack Lawrence, Mrs. Maxwell's former gardener, and Clarence Chapman, a next-door neighbor. While this is second-hand testimony as far as Mrs. Maxwell's experiences are concerned, it is helpful in indicating that the onset of the phenomena was not later than 1973, when the burglar alarm was first installed.

Movement of Objects

We have secondhand reports that during Mrs. Maxwell's ownership a table in the master bedroom repeatedly moved from Mrs. Maxwell's placement of it to the area in that room where it stood when the two sisters lived in the house. No objects are reported to have moved during Richard and Ellen Barker's occupancy (1976-1978) of the house, though auditory phenomena are said to have occurred, and it was not until the master bedroom was being converted into a display room by the Sinclairs in the spring of 1978 that movement of objects began to take place in the gift shop.

Scattered tools. This disturbance was reported by Jake Alexander, an electrician at Joe Sinclair's alarm company, who had been working overtime alone in the building. The incident took place in the spring of 1978 between 11:00 and 11:30 P.M.:

J.A.: I was installing receptacles. I needed more receptacles and went out to my truck to get them. When I came back, the tools I had left on the table were scattered over the floor. I have a leather bag on my belt that weighs about 15 pounds with the tools, that I put on the table. It was not put on the edge so it could fall over, but it was not in the middle either.

K.O.: Did they all fall in one heap or [were they] scattered?

J.A.: They were scattered, as if somebody had thrown them on the floor.

K.O.: Did you hear about the troubles in the house before this happened?

J.A.: No, they told me afterwards when I told them of the disturbance.

Filing cabinet drawer. This occurrence was witnessed by a former part-time bookkeeper, Jenny Nelson, who knew about the earlier phenomena. In the summer of 1978, between 8:00 and 9 P.M., while she was alone in the second floor center room (where the office had been at that time) working on payroll accounts, the bottom drawer of a filing cabinet kept sliding open by itself. According to Mrs. Nelson, the drawer was heavily loaded with catalogues and it held securely in place when closed. Each time it slid open she would close it. Later she described the incident to the manager, Marge Byron, who chalked it up to an unlevel floor. However, Mrs. Nelson remarked to us that she "could not see any way it could slide [on its own] because the bottom drawer did stick when it closed."

Ceiling light and door. In May 1978, Mrs. Byron and another former employee, Carmen Stills, were locking up the shop at about 6:00 P.M. When they entered the workroom to switch off the lights with the circuit breaker, a fluorescent ceiling light fell from its socket and hit Mrs. Byron. Within a few seconds, the bathroom door, about eight feet away, slammed shut. There were no open windows nor was it windy outside. After this, both women left the shop quickly. Each was interviewed separately and their accounts were consistent with one another. We examined the fluorescent light and found that the bulb fit tight into its socket. The bathroom door was not reported to have a tendency to shut by itself. The close coincidence in time between these two occurrences suggests that they had a common cause.

This and all other quotations are taken from the verbatim transcripts of the tape recordings made during interviews with the witnesses.

Fireplace tile. On October 31, 1979, a few days after our first visit (on October 26th), Ted Sinclair staged a night vigil in the second floor master bedroom of the gift shop. With him were his sister and brother-in-law, Toni and Larry Mead, and Larry's cousin, Shirley Wheeling. At the time of the incident, Mr. Mead was lying down about two feet from the fireplace; sitting tailor-fashion next to him was Shirley, then Mrs. Mead, and finally Mr. Sinclair, who was lying on the floor about eight feet from the fireplace. According to their statements, obtained in separate interviews, it was between 2:00 and 3:00 A.M.; they were tired and on the verge of giving up hope of observing something, when they all heard a noise that sounded like an object sliding on the floor by the fireplace. Mr. Mead then felt something lightly hit his back. On the floor, near his back, he found a piece of tile which he was later able to fit into an empty spot at the base of the tiled fireplace. We explored the possibility of trickery: the area was far beyond the reach of the two women; the tile could not have been thrown because it apparently slid toward, rather than away from all present; and no noise was heard that would indicate that it had first been thrown at the wall, then rebounded in the opposite direction, hitting Mr. Mead's back. While he was close enough to the area to have manipulated the tile, his wife and Shirley reported that his hands were in full view. He was lying on his side with his back to the fireplace, and his arms were motionless in front of him. Shirley said that she had been looking in his direction because a few seconds prior to this incident she had heard five footsteps on the nearby stairway leading up to the master bedroom. According to Shirley, the sliding noise was followed by the sound of the tile bouncing off her cousin's back onto the floor. (No one saw the tile in motion.) The two women reported that when this occurred, Mr. Mead exhibited an obvious startle or fear reaction; he jumped up and "his eyes were popping out."

Clock and music boxes. Before the shop opened for business, while the interior of the house was being remodeled early in 1978, Mr. Mead reported that a grandfather clock in the Wood Room repeatedly started up and chimed, though no one had wound it. This stopped only after it had been removed from the shop. In the summer of the same year, Marge Byron reported that two music boxes which were on display started to play for no apparent reason. She said that on one occasion this startled a nearby customer. We thought that vibrations caused by walking in the area might have released the play mechanism. To test this possibility, we jumped up and down on the floor (which is concrete and carpeted), but this failed to cause noticeable vibrations or triggering of the music boxes still on display.

Phenomena Involving Electrical Equipment

Psi influence on electrical events has become the mainstay of modern PK experiments and a pastime for poltergeists as well. In the Rosenheim case, Bender (1974) reported evidence that a telephone was psychically operated. Pierce (1973) described a case in which a radio and electric lights turned on without any known cause. In the present case, we have had numerous reports of electrical equipment starting or stopping without an identifiable cause: music and burglar alarm systems, sewing machine, adding machine, and ceiling lights. Disturbances involving a video surveillance camera in the old master bedroom have been very frequent, while the other cameras in the system are said to function flawlessly.

Music system. The gift shop is equipped with a "3M" music system which has speakers throughout the display rooms. The control unit rests on a low shelf under the long display and cash counter placed on a concrete floor. The unit is accessible only from behind this enclosed counter. It is operated by two push buttons—one to turn it on, the other to switch it off. As one button is depressed, the other pops out with a click. Nine of the witnesses we interviewed reported what appeared to be paranormal operation of the system: it turned itself on and off. This occurred most frequently at closing time. The following is a typical incident, reported by Connie Cleese, an employee in 1978:

It happened four or five times when I was there. . . . We turned it [the music system] off one night and the girl [a former employee] went over to talk to her friend who was near [the counter], and I was standing right in front of it [the control unit]. And it clicked back on—right there!

Cindy Sinclair, Joe and Sally Sinclair's daughter, had a similar experience when the shop first opened in the summer of 1978. She was with two former employees, Diane Simon and Carol Freud, when the following occurred at 10:30 P.M.: "We heard a click, like when the button is being pushed in, and the music just started coming over the speakers."

The system also shut down by itself. Marge Byron reported that one night when she was about to turn off the music before leaving the shop, it did so before she reached the controls. Her intentions also seemed to be anticipated on another occasion when, one morning, she was going to turn the music on and it did so by itself.

Sewing machine. In June 1979, at about 7:00 P.M., Marge Byron and her daughter, Denise Howards, were alone in the shop. They heard a loud noise in the workroom and when they entered the

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room to check it out, they found the sewing machine operating by itself. Going over to turn it off, they discovered that the switch was already in the "off" position; yet the machine continued to operate. They had to pull out the plug to stop it. Mrs. Byron told us that "it was very strange—we left right away." We inspected the sewing machine, which has a triple switching safety mechanism: before it will operate it has first to be switched on, then the appropriate button pushed for stitch density, and finally the foot pedal depressed. The machine will not function if any one of these three switches is not activated. We were told that the machine had not been in use just prior to the incident, and no customer has ever been known to enter the workroom. Denise remarked: "Even if someone did go in there, how would they start [the machine] without using the switches?" There have been no reports of the machine malfunctioning since this incident.

Adding machine. In September 1979, between 10:00 A.M. and noon, Chris Sinclair was alone in the office working on merchandise orders. An electrical adding machine (Adler type 120P), which was about six feet to her right and had been left turned on, began to print out zeros. At first she thought someone had entered the room without her noticing, but when she looked up, she was alone. We spoke to persons who operate that machine, but they reported no irregularities with it either before or after this incident.

Electric lights. On several occasions Marge Byron and her husband were driving by the shop late at night, and noticed that the lights in the master bedroom were on when they should not have been. On these occasions Mrs. Byron herself had turned off the lights when closing the shop, and upon inquiry the next day she would find that no one had re-entered the building.

On October 12, 1979, Roberta Graham, the present manager of the shop, and her assistant, Cathy Davids, were working late on the accounting books to locate an explanation for a discrepancy. They worked until 11:00 P.M., without success but with much frustration. Suddenly two fluorescent ceiling light units (two tubes per unit) directly above them went off while the three other units continued to function. Mrs. Graham tried the (toggle) switch, which operates all five units simultaneously, but could not get the two units to come on. The next morning all five units lit up when the switch was turned on. Fluorescent lights can go off if the voltage drops, but this would be an unlikely occurrence at that hour. Moreover, such a voltage drop should have affected all the other lights in the shop, which was not the case.

Burglar alarm system. A Napco burglar alarm system was installed on September 14, 1973, during Mrs. Maxwell's ownership of

the house, by Joe Sinclair's alarm company which maintains between 400 and 500 burglar alarm units in the county. Only the one in the gift shop demanded continuous attention.

The first alarm system consisted of a central unit with sensors at the doors and windows. If doors or windows were opened when the system was on, a radio signal would be sent to the central unit, triggering a siren and notifying the police. The radio frequency was reportedly outside the frequencies used by truckers, police, and radio stations.

During Mrs. Maxwell's occupancy of the house, the system false alarmed on occasions when no one was at home. Neither police, neighbors, nor the alarm company's technician could ever find evidence that someone had tried to enter the house, and nothing was ever reported missing after these incidents. A neighbor, Clarence Chapman, often rushed over with a rifle to investigate when he heard the alarm, but never found any signs of an intruder. Once, during the summer of 1975 the system was switched off for testing purposes. Within a few days, however, it sounded again; it had been switched back on, although apparently no one had done so. An engineer from the manufacturer of the unit was called in, but could not find anything wrong. The system continued to false alarm.

The alarm system has been replaced entirely three times, and Warren Nelson, the chief electrician at Joe Sinclair's company, has replaced its individual components hoping that this might do the trick and end the enigma. For obvious reasons, he takes the malfunctioning quite personally: "It drives me crazy." The present system no longer operates on radio signals; it has wires connecting the sensors to the central unit. Moreover, instead of being at the doors and windows, the sensors are now placed to detect pressure (40 ounces or more) upon the floors of the house. The wiring is well insulated and all connectors have been placed indoors to avoid moisture. But the system continued to give false alarms regardless of the hour—sometimes at night when the system was on, and sometimes during the day when it was off. Frequent service calls revealed no reason for the malfunctioning. Joe Sinclair was completely baffled. He stated that if there were a physical cause, there would be a detectable pattern, but there was none; the malfunctioning happened too often and under no regular set of circumstances. It was impossible to predict future occurrences. He said that the system simply "cleared itself" and went on when it "felt like it." Both Joe Sinclair and Warren Nelson finally ruled out normal causes since all their efforts, all the testing and replacements, failed to alter or elucidate the situation. Apparently the matter was painful and embarrassing for them, for Mr. Nelson took care not to

discuss the events with us when other company employees could overhear.

Auditory Phenomena

Non-human noises. Several witnesses reported having heard sounds of a non-human nature—i.e., sounds other than human verbalization. As mentioned above, in the summer of 1975 the malfunctioning burglar alarm system was shut down. Three or four days later, around midnight, the alarm sounded and sent the usual signal to the alarm company and police headquarters. Warren Nelson refused to enter the house alone and requested that a police officer meet him there. When they arrived at the unoccupied house they found no signs of forced entry but, according to Mr. Nelson, they "heard all kinds of noises coming from the chimney" in the Crystal Room. These were soft, "flapping" noises that lasted for 10 to 15 seconds. At first they thought that birds were stuck in the chimney, but found that it had been sealed with concrete. They then searched for an intruder in the attic, but there was no opening which could serve as a passage for birds or anything else. We were only able to interview Mr. Nelson, but he told us that both he and the police officer heard the flapping noises—which made the latter reluctant to search the attic. He did so only after Mr. Nelson's prodding: "You have the gun, you go first!"

"Flapping" sounds were again heard in May 1978 by Jenny Nelson (Warren's wife), who witnessed the file drawer slide open. She was doing the payroll in the second floor center room when, between 6:30 and 7:00 P.M., she heard noises which seemed to come from behind the sliding doors of the closet. She described the sounds as "fluttering, like when a bird gets caught in a room." She did not have courage enough to open the closet to investigate, and left the room. There were no traces of a bird or other animal in the shop at the time. On one of our visits, D.M. inspected the closet and found no areas from which a bird or rodent could have entered.

Cathy Davids reported that once she heard a "crash" in the attic. She investigated immediately, but could find no apparent cause; nothing had been disturbed. Single sounds, however, could easily be attributed to the settling of the old structure.

Another auditory incident in the attic was reported by Toni Mead. She stated that late at night on October 31, 1979, she heard a knock under a step in the attic stairway, on which she was standing. She also felt the impact of this knock with her right foot, which rested on the step. (The attic stairway is enclosed and therefore inaccessible from underneath.) Ted Sinclair, Larry Mead, and Shirley Wheeling were there when this event occurred, but Shirley was the only one who reported hearing the knock.

In July 1978, at about 9:30 P.M., Cindy Sinclair and a summer employee were alone in the gift shop, standing at the cash counter, when they decided to challenge the "ghost" to prove that it was real. They had heard stories about Hester as the "resident ghost" and the unusual events that took place in the house, which they did not believe, and on this particular evening they were joking about it all. However, Cindy told us that immediately after they challenged the "ghost," they had the following experience:

Upstairs, it sounded like it was on the roof, there was pounding: one, two, three, four; one, two, three, four—it kept pounding. And we just looked at each other, and I yelled out, "I believe you!" It stopped. It had gone on for 30 to 45 seconds and as I said that, it stopped and never came back.

This is another incident in which phenomena seemed to have stopped as if in response to a request. (The first incident was reported by Ellen Barker, who was awakened one night in 1976, when she lived in the house with her son, by noises in her bedroom; they stopped after she warned "the spirits" to shut up and let her sleep.) However, it appears to be the only occasion where a verbal request for phenomena to occur (many such requests were made) produced results. Obviously, there is no way of knowing whether the pounding would have occurred without the challenge or, for that matter, whether it would have stopped without the request for it to do so. Nevertheless, the very close coincidence in time between the observers' behavior and the phenomena is interesting.

Footsteps. Twelve of the individuals we interviewed reported hearing footsteps; this occurred almost exclusively in the old part of the house—primarily in the second floor master bedroom and/or the stairway leading up to that room. The electrical disturbances, on the other hand, usually took place in the new additions to the house. It is also interesting to note that while the other phenomena occurred at any time of day, the footsteps were always heard at night.

The footsteps were often heard collectively (once by as many as four persons), and generally four to five unhurried steps occurred in succession. Richard and Ellen Barker reported hearing footsteps followed by a sound resembling the sound of someone sitting down, then the "thump of a boot dropped on the floor." On one occasion, Mrs. Barker was able to compare the length of the footsteps with those of her son, who returned home and walked across the same bedroom that the "ghost" had walked across a half hour earlier. She said that the two sets of steps were similar in length of stride and concluded that "It is a man."

With one exception, the steps were always heard in a room in which no one was present. In the exceptional case, which occurred shortly before 10:00 P.M., Cindy Sinclair was cleaning up the Crystal Room (directly under the master bedroom) when she heard footsteps behind her. The glasses on the display shelves in the room rattled, as if shaken by heavy footsteps. She told us that she "felt" someone behind her, looked around, and saw no one. She then spoke to "Hester" and nothing more happened.

Human sounds. Gauld and Cornell (1979) reported that human sounds occurred in 26% of their poltergeist cases; such incidents were relatively rare in the present case: only three occurrences. In November 1979, Chris Sinclair was alone in the stock room when she heard a scream coming from one of the display rooms; no one else in the shop heard anything. Also in 1979, Grace Norton, a current employee, heard someone whistling an old tune for several seconds in a display room where no one was present. Two other persons in the office, behind closed doors, heard nothing.

The most striking incident of this sort was collectively experienced in the fall of 1978 by Connie Cleese and Dana Kiburis, both former employees of the gift shop. Connie described it as follows:

The last customer left around 9:00 P.M.; we still had an hour before closing. We then heard people mumbling—you know, you hear people talking, but you cannot understand what they are saying. We also heard people walking around the room upstairs—it was not where we were. . . . So I walked through the whole building and there was no one there, but you could still hear people like a party was going on. . . . It sounded as though they were enjoying themselves.

Dana Kiburis also gave us an account of the incident.

It sounded like both sexes, everybody talking at the same time. . . . It did not sound like a party—I did not hear people laughing or anything like that. It sounded like people talking about a more serious matter. . . . We did not hear any singing. . . . When I came home I told my husband it was more like a ritual was going on.

The two women turned on the video surveillance system to find the intruders, but "all the rooms flashed back blank." They then searched the house and found no one else there. Connie Cleese reported that the sounds lasted for five to 10 minutes, on and off, while Dana Kiburis remembered them extending over only 45 seconds. However, Dana left the shop abruptly while Connie stayed on, which might explain this discrepancy. An interesting aspect of this incident is that both women heard the voices. We thought about the possibility of a party or loud television in a neighboring

house, but dismissed it because the shop is too isolated for such sound transmissions. Moreover, no cars were parked outside, which rules out customers' conversations or car radios as sources. Another interesting aspect of this occurrence is that it was followed by an apparition experienced by Connie Cleese after Dana Kiburis had left the shop (see next section).

Apparitions

Gauld and Cornell (1979) report that in 31% of their poltergeist sample visual apparitions were experienced. We have three firsthand accounts of apparitional phenomena and one secondhand report that Mrs. Maxwell saw an apparition standing at the foot of her bed when she awoke one morning.

The last incident described in the previous section concerned the auditory phenomena experienced by Connie Cleese and Dana Kiburis when they were alone in the shop. After Dana had left and the voices had stopped, Connie resumed vacuuming the new wing of the gift shop, at which time she had the following experience:

While vacuuming I looked up at the doorway to the second . . . [display] room. There I saw a black shadow or figure go across the doorway. I became petrified. I closed up and left. . . I didn't believe in ghosts before; I do now.

Two years prior to this, in 1977, Richard Barker reported having seen apparitions out of the corner of his eye. While he admitted not having gotten a very clear look at them, he described one apparition as that of "a motherly lady with gray hair piled on top of her head and wearing a plain housedress." This figure was seen downstairs in what was then Mr. Barker's living room, directly below the master bedroom. He also mentioned having several impressions of men wearing clothes of an "early historical period." None of his descriptions were detailed enough to permit identification with any person or persons who had lived in the house in an earlier period of its history.

An apparition was seen in the fall of 1978 by Dana Kiburis. She told us that at about 9:30 P.M.—as she was walking to her car, which was parked in an area adjacent to an open field and near the old family cemetery—she saw a white, indistinct figure glide across the field. The figure did not approach her, but simply passed by parallel to the back edge of the parking area.

Tactile Phenomena

Sensing or "feeling" the presence of an otherwise imperceptible entity was frequently reported to have occurred in the house.

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Sometimes these experiences were accompanied by the physical sensation of cold, "cold spots," or breezes. Other than this, there has been only one account of tactile phenomena.

Ellen Barker reported that sometime in 1976, when she was alone in the house, the following incident took place:

It happened in the morning, between 8:00 and 9:00. I had just taken a shower and was coming down the stairway [from the master bedroom]. A hand pushed me and I fell down one step and struck my back on the corner of the stairs. I was hit by a hand that knocked me off my feet. I couldn't move, I was in such pain. They threw me on the floor and I lay on the floor. It happened away from the telephone so I couldn't get at it. I couldn't move. . . I had to go to the hospital. Three or four vertebrae were knocked out of place.

In answer to questions, Mrs. Barker said that she did not see the "man" who pushed her, or his hand. But the impact of the shove was forceful enough to cause her to interpret it as coming from the hand of a man rather than that of a woman. This incident certainly had an impact on her in more than one way, while several previous incidents of sounds of footsteps had left her unimpressed.

I listened, I heard it [sound of walking] several times, [but] did not pay too much attention to it. I thought, "Oh, well, imagination." But when they gave me a push, it was much more than imagination. They wanted us out of the house.

There were no other witnesses to this incident, but Richard Barker remembered his mother's story and the subsequent medical treatment for her back injuries.

This was the only ostensibly paranormal occurrence over the years when the "ghost" seemed to act with malice. We should note, however, that the employees were often "petrified" by fear, although the phenomena themselves sometimes seemed rather playful in nature.

SENSITIVES' IMPRESSIONS OF THE CASE

Gauld and Cornell (1979) have stressed that motivational factors underlying the phenomena of poltergeist cases can often provide useful clues about the agency. For example, if the phenomena are alien to the motivations of any possible living agent, but conform to those of a deceased one, then the deceased-agent hypothesis would be strengthened. In the hope of identifying a deceased agent, on each of our three visits to the gift shop we brought along a different sensitive. The impressions they received in the house were tape

recorded before they had any contact with gift shop personnel. We evaluated these impressions by submitting them to persons who had knowledge of the history of the house and its former occupants. Only one of the sensitives, Ingrid Beckman (I.B.), reported impressions about a possible deceased agent which tallied with verifiable history.

K.O. asked I.B. to try to "see" someone of this century during her tour of the house. She described two persons: a man, who was not seen as a dominant figure, but was in some way associated with the house, and a woman, whom I.B. considered a prominent figure. From the rather sketchy description of the man's personality, four long-time residents of the community identified him as a cousin of Hester and Lucille; because he had not lived in the house (though he had a home nearby), we assume that he would be an unlikely agent. The description of the woman was more elaborate and she was identified with greater certainty by our informants as Hester, the more active of the two sisters who lived in the house all their lives. As already mentioned, Hester was born in 1859 and died in 1949.

I.B. gave a fairly detailed and accurate description of Hester's physical appearance, and also of her personality and life style: "She was proud of her family heritage, they were leading citizens and she feels that they sank very, very low. She was left very much to herself . . . she was very degraded at the end. She had to go for subsidies. . . . Her family doesn't have a bad name, she says. . . . Just because they ran out of money doesn't mean a thing. Luck went the wrong way." We found out from those who had known Hester that she was indeed quite proud, especially of her family name; they had in fact been "leading citizens in the community—one of the oldest families, and many of its members had held public office. Two neighbors who knew her (Ernie Bates and Bob Chapman) told us that toward the end of her life she was forced to accept financial help, which was quite embarrassing for her.

I.B. was also rather accurate about Hester's primary interest. She described her as having been an active member of a prestigious organization, "more than the community, it's like a state group or a national group, and it has something to do with history." Hester was an official "Master" of the local chapter of the Grange—a state-wide farmers' organization. She also worked for a time proof-reading wills at the local courthouse.

Of more importance are I.B.'s impressions of Hester's motives: defending her family's name and the integrity of the house. This is why, according to I.B., Hester was "lingering" at the house and acting as a poltergeist agent. I.B. stated that in their later years Hester and Lucille "lived very much alone," were reclusive, and

because of their financial plight, the house became run down. Slandorous stories began to spread, which Hester is supposedly determined to have corrected: "She [Hester] says there is no curse here, and there's no insanity. . . . No one got hurt here; it was remote, but no one was hurt in this house in her time." According to one neighbor (Jerry Hart), cruel rumors were spread during his childhood about the "spinster sisters," and people crossed to the other side of the road when passing the house. Other children even asked him if he had ever been hurt or locked up in the attic when he went into the house, but the worst the sisters did was to treat him with kindness, milk, and cookies.

I.B. also "saw" a beacon light through a window which, we first thought, was a geographical impossibility. Nevertheless, we later found out that such a light had been a prominent landmark during the early part of the sisters' occupancy of the house. Our oldest informant, Ernie Bates (age 84), spontaneously showed us a huge oak tree near the house where a beacon light was once hung to guide oyster fishermen through the creeks of the swamplands to an "oyster house" where the catches were stored. Mr. Bates also confirmed another of I.B.'s impressions: "Something about plates; I don't know why I want to say plates." According to Mr. Bates, a cousin of Hester and Lucille collected literally truckloads of plates and stored them in a shed behind the house.

DISCUSSION

The first question which must be asked about the phenomena in cases such as this is whether there are any clear-cut normal explanations such as fraud, misperceptions, or misinterpretations of events by percipients.

The attempted perpetration of a hoax is always a possibility in poltergeist cases, especially when those who initially notify the investigators of the disturbances are in business and likely to gain financially if public attention is drawn to the case. This was our first concern when Ted Sinclair called us about the phenomena. The county telephone directory lists 84 gift shops in that area of New Jersey, so a "house ghost" might indeed serve as a tourist attraction when competition is so strong. Because of this possibility, we were circumspect and did not begin our investigation until several months after Ted Sinclair's telephone call. However, we found that neither newspaper nor media publicity was sought, and in any case the phenomena had begun before the house was used for commercial purposes. A number of the witnesses are former employees and workmen no longer involved with the business;

some had left employment with negative feelings and had no interest in helping the gift shop. Moreover, the present employees seemed free to decide for themselves whether or not to speak with us; for example, one refused to cooperate on the grounds that the phenomena were contrary to her religious beliefs. We concluded that the reports of 24 witnesses were too numerous and too consistent, and the witnesses themselves too diverse, for an organized hoax. Further, if the owners were trying to contrive a publicity gimmick, they defeated their own purpose: the "ghostly" phenomena served both to frighten the employees and to make the owners seem "strange" to the rest of the community. On these grounds, we regarded the fraud hypothesis as unlikely.

Healthy skepticism, rather than a wish to believe, seemed to have been the initial attitude of the majority of the witnesses. During our interviews we found that alternative explanations had more or less been explored by most of them; in fact, the possibility of a psychic cause did not even occur to them at first. Of the 24 witnesses, Richard Barker was the only active "believer" and the only person who seemed to enjoy every moment of what was taking place.

Paranormal explanations for the frequent malfunctioning of the burglar alarm system were accepted only after possible normal explanations had been thoroughly explored. Was the system itself faulty? It was completely replaced three times, introducing radically different types of detection sensors and connecting devices, and individual parts were repeatedly checked, but the problem continued. Or was Joe Sinclair's company, which installed and serviced the system, to blame? This seems unlikely since it made every effort to discover the source of the trouble, including arranging for consultations with outside technicians and an engineer from the manufacturer of the system. Moreover, if either faulty equipment or incompetent management of the system had been the cause, one would expect to find that the other alarm systems installed and maintained by the company also frequently malfunctioned. But this was not the case. Warren Nelson, chief electrician at Joe Sinclair's company, told us that over the past four years the company serviced more than 400 clients in the community and that no inexplicable malfunctioning of their systems occurred.

Isolated occurrences involving the music system could be attributed to normal causes such as electrical or mechanical failures. However, no such causes were detected by Joe Sinclair and Warren Nelson. Their findings were negative on two counts: no technical defects were discovered, and extensive manipulation of the switches failed to duplicate the phenomena. Moreover, the occur-

rences were not random, but usually were closely correlated with the behavior of certain employees: when they were either preparing to leave the shop or ready to turn the system on when they arrived in the morning. Mechanical movements near the "3M" system, such as working the cash register located on the counter directly above the control unit, never affected it.

The incident of the sewing machine that started to operate while all three control switches were in the "off" position, is incomprehensible to us provided the reports are accurate. Neither of the two witnesses to this event were employed at the gift shop at the time of our inquiry and, according to the present manager, one of them (Marge Byron) "departed with hard feelings"; this would scarcely motivate her to intentionally embellish her story or cooperate if a hoax had been going on.

We consulted with an electronics expert working on research and development in one of the largest companies in that field. He considered two possible normal explanations for the electrical disturbances in the gift shop:

1. Static field potential (such as the type which develops before lightning strikes) which, he thought, would equalize itself over the area and would not cause the highly selective effects observed;
2. A power surge, which would not pass the regulatory mechanisms of the devices.

The occasions involving the spontaneous movement of objects (or inexplicable action upon them) are of varied degrees of plausibility. A weak case for the paranormal would be the music boxes that started to play. On the other hand, the scattering of tools from the belt of the workman, who did not know about the prior poltergeist activity and consequently did not expect any, is rather hard to explain in a normal way. Similarly, it would be difficult to find a normal explanation for the fluorescent light falling out of its socket seconds before the bathroom door slammed shut.

Some of the noises heard were no doubt merely of the sort that can be expected to occur in old houses. It would be difficult, however, to find a normal explanation for the frequent sounds of footsteps, which were so clear that in one instance the length of the stride could be estimated from them. Moreover, these sounds were interpreted as "walking" not just by a few individuals, but by 12 persons from varied backgrounds.

The phenomena focusing around electrical devices were mostly observed in the new wing of the house, while the footsteps were heard nearly exclusively as coming from the old original structure. The movement of objects was reported in both the old and new areas of the house. These observations suggest that there might be two basic categories of phenomena in this case:

1. *Here-and-now related occurrences*, which involved action upon such modern apparatus as the burglar alarm and music systems, and phenomena seemingly responsive to the presence of inhabitants and shop personnel. Characteristic of the latter would be the music system coming on just before employees who intended to leave the shop. Also, if they occurred as described, the tile sliding, the light falling, doors slamming, the adding machine printing numbers, and the push Ellen Barker felt on the stairs were all here-and-now related occurrences.

2. *Retrocognitive awareness of past events*, which intruded upon the experient's perceptions of the present environment. The following incidents are suggestive of such retrocognitive awareness: The voices of "a gathering of people" heard by two former employees, the sound of someone whistling a tune, and the frequent sounds of footsteps that occurred in the same location in a stereotypical fashion.

Some of the auditory phenomena, however, seemed to relate to the here-and-now, not to the retrocognitive category—for example, the following: the footsteps on the stairs which Shirley Wheeling heard just before the sliding of the fireplace tile; the "pounding" noises on the roof after frivolous remarks about the "ghost" and a request for it to perform; and the knock that Toni Mead heard and felt under the stair on which her foot was placed.

Clear-cut examples of retrocognitive awareness of past events are exceedingly rare (see Murphy, 1967) as compared with other forms of psi that occur in reportedly "haunted" places. We are faced with the question why such time displacements seem to happen recurrently in some locations while others are seldom affected. In the past, the search for answers mainly concentrated on the experients and their states, but no uniform characteristics seem to be apparent (Gauld and Cornell, 1979). The causes of retrocognition might be independent of and external to the individual, since such instances usually recur at certainly narrowly defined space-time loci and are often collectively experienced. The hypothesis that their likelihood is determined by a dramatic event such as a murder having occurred at the location does not, to our knowledge, apply in the present case. Nor does the content of the retrocognitive experiences reported to us suggest a violent or dramatic source.

Are such "there-and-then" types of phenomena frequently connected to places at which "here-and-now" phenomena also occur, as in the present case? This is a basic question which needs further study. There is a definite need to refocus research objectives,

considering not only the experient, but also the locus of the phenomena and their interactions.

The Source of the Phenomena: Who Was the Poltergeist Agent?

Most of the persons we interviewed seemed to pin the blame for the disturbances on a "ghost," especially that of Hester, but no one offered evidence that would support the notion or clearly identify this hypothetical entity. None of the observers attributed the phenomena to one or more living persons. The events were distributed over at least a five-year period (six and a half years if we consider the onset of the burglar alarm disturbances) and three sets of owners. Of the 24 witnesses, we could not single out any one individual whose presence was necessary as a catalyst for the phenomena; some disturbances (e.g., malfunctioning of the burglar alarm) occurred when no one was in the house.

Since a single living agent seems to be ruled out, we considered the remote possibility of a multiplicity of living agents whose psi happened to be activated in the house—perhaps because of expectations and fears aroused by the rumors that it was haunted. However, several incidents occurred in the presence of persons who were, at the time, unaware of these rumors.

Could there have been a "collective agency" as was reported to have occurred in the semi-experimental case of "Philip" (Owen, with Sparrow, 1976)? In the present case, phenomena were observed twice by different groups of four persons, and in at least seven incidents there were two observers present. However, the single-observer disturbances were the most frequent. Furthermore, no one group reported experiencing numerous occurrences.

Did the phenomena correlate with periods of high tension in the witnesses? As far as we could ascertain, the incidents were experienced by both tense and relaxed observers.

We asked witnesses whether they had a history of similar psi experiences. Only eight of the 24 claimed prior psi experiences: three reported having had apparitional experiences; two jointly heard sounds of footsteps on the floor above them (but said there were unobserved children up there at the time, thus making the incident highly questionable); one had premonitions; and another watched a music box start to play in her home. The eighth employee (Cathy Davids) said, "The ghost came home with me." While alone in her living room at home, she saw a candle slide off a shelf. She told us that at the time she was tense because her "life was a rocky road." If we disqualify the incident where footsteps were heard near the location of unobserved children, we are left

with 18 witnesses who claimed to have had no paranormal experiences outside the gift shop. Thus, most of the poltergeist incidents occurring there cannot be linked to any psychically gifted individual. The only common denominator seems to be the house itself, not one or more living persons.

In considering possible agents, we reviewed the deceased persons who had some connection with the house during the present century. The onset of the phenomena in the 1970s and the poltergeist's preoccupation with electrical equipment seem to suggest a relatively modern agent. The family members who died reasonably close in time to the onset of the disturbances were: Carlton (d. 1934), cousin of Hester and Lucille, who lived next door, but owned the property on which the house stood; Hester (d. 1949); Lucille (d. 1954); and Arthur Maxwell (d. 1970), the sisters' nephew who cared for them at the end of their lives and inherited the house. Mr. Maxwell's death was much closer to the onset of the phenomena than Hester's; however, we found no indications that either he or Carlton were particularly attached to the house, which should exclude them as haunting agents. Regarding the two sisters, while some aspects of the disturbances would scarcely seem to fit the meek character of Lucille, they do make sense in terms of Hester's dynamic and self-assertive personality. The impressions of the sensitive (Ingrid Beckman) only relate well to Hester, not to Lucille. Subsequent investigation revealed circumstances during Hester's lifetime (unfounded rumors of evil doings in the house, humiliating financial hardships, incorrect beliefs that she had a "spinster-like" character, her involvement in the Grange) which support the sensitive's statements, but which were unknown to anyone we had interviewed up to that point. Hester seems to be the only candidate for the role of agent.

Stevenson (1972) and Gault and Cornell (1979) cited criteria suggestive of a deceased agent in poltergeist cases. We will now try to apply them to the present case.

Stevenson proposed that the characteristics of the kinetic disturbances should differ in five respects when a deceased rather than a living agent is involved: (a) movement of heavier objects (e.g., a brick), (b) for longer distances (30-50 feet), (c) with complicated trajectories, (d) resulting in little or no breakage, and (e) gentle motions/landing. The fourth and fifth criteria seem to apply to our data, though one should keep in mind that the movement of objects was infrequent: nothing was broken as a result of the disturbances, and the motion of objects (e.g., fireplace tile, fluorescent light) could perhaps be described as "gentle." Regarding the weight of objects moved, the file drawer and the scattered tools might be considered as in the "heavier" category. The criteria involving distance and trajectories were not met in this case.

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Gault and Cornell's criterion for deceased agency proposes that the phenomena should occur regardless of the presence or absence of anyone, and is met in this case. For example, incidents involving the alarm system and the electric lights occurred when no one was in the building. And, as mentioned earlier, no particular person or group of persons needed to be present in order for the phenomena to take place.

According to Gault and Cornell, the implied purpose of poltergeist actions should be characteristic of the deceased and alien to the persons present. Many of our witnesses considered the phenomena to be "scary" or otherwise unpleasant, while the disturbances as such could be interpreted as attempts by a deceased agent to attract attention or vent anger. The phenomena seem rather characteristic of a strong-minded person like Hester, but none of them can be said to be unmistakably identified with her.

Stevenson and also Gault and Cornell postulated that purposive movement of objects would occur when a deceased agent is involved. While the scarcity of incidents of this sort in the present cases makes judgment difficult, one might say that suggestive evidence for purposive movement is provided by the switching on and off of the "3M" music system just as employees were about to do so themselves.

Collectively seen apparitions is another criterion cited by both Stevenson and Gault and Cornell. While this does not apply to the present case, there were three, or possibly four, independent sightings by persons who had no prior knowledge of earlier appearances. Gault and Cornell posit this as the next best alternative to collective perception. On the other hand, voices and footsteps were collectively heard, though neither the voices nor the apparitions were clear enough to be identifiable.

Communications by the deceased agent through the phenomena themselves—e.g., rapping according to a code—is a criterion which our case does not meet. But disturbances on several occasions stopped or started immediately after requests or challenges from someone present.

In conclusion, we can say that our investigation of the various explanations for the individual events and our analysis of the data obtained in interviews with witnesses failed to reveal any living poltergeist agent. But the data do seem to suggest—though they do not definitely identify—a deceased agent.

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APPENDIX A

List of Persons Interviewed and Their Relationship to the Case

ALEXANDER, JAKE. Electrician at Joe Sinclair's burglar alarm company. Spring 1978, 11-11:30 P.M.: Tools in master bedroom were found scattered when he returned to the room minutes after he had left it; no one else present. Had no prior knowledge of disturbances.

BARKER, ELLEN. Mother of previous owner, Richard Barker; occupant, 1976-1978. 1976, 8-9:00 A.M.: Was pushed down a step of the front staircase when alone in the house. Often heard footsteps in master bedroom, usually between 11:00 P.M. and midnight; also heard knocking and other noises in master bedroom. Has had previous psi experiences, including apparitions.

BARKER, RICHARD. Owner and occupant, 1976-1978; son of Ellen Barker. Has seen several vague apparitions in the house and

heard footsteps in the master bedroom. Was present on various occasions when burglar alarm system malfunctioned. Has had previous psi experiences and is an amateur psychic.

BATES, ERNIE. Next-door neighbor, and knew all previous owners and occupants. Informant on original family and history of locale.

BYRON, MARGE. Former gift shop manager; mother of Denise Howards; wife of Mike Byron. May 1978, 6:00 P.M.: With Carmen Stills when fluorescent light in workroom fell moments before bathroom door slammed shut. Summer 1978: Music boxes on display started to play inexplicably. June 1979, 7:00 P.M.: With Denise Howards when sewing machine in workroom started to operate by itself. Winter 1979: Music system switched on while she was standing near the control unit; several other times the system turned on or off just as she was about to do this herself. On several occasions, late at night, she and her husband noticed light in master bedroom was turned on when nobody had done so. Heard stomping sounds on floor of master bedroom. Has had previous psi experiences.

BYRON, MIKE. Husband of Marge Byron. Several times, late at night, he and his wife noticed light in master bedroom although no one had turned it on.

CHAPMAN, BOB. Neighbor; uncle of Clarence Chapman. Knew Hester and Lucille; was informant on them and the locale. Does not recall hearing rumors that the house was "haunted" until recently.

CHAPMAN, CLARENCE. Neighbor; nephew of Bob Chapman. Was informant on Hester and Lucille, and the locale. Witnessed false triggering of burglar alarm system during and after the time Mrs. Maxwell lived in the house; he would check the premises immediately, but found no explanation. Does not recall hearing rumors that the house was "haunted" until recently.

CLEESE, CONNIE. Former gift shop employee. Fall 1978, about 9:00 P.M.: With Dana Kiburis when they heard mumbling voices and footsteps in the master bedroom; no one else was in house. Later that evening when alone in the shop she saw an apparition in a display room. 1978: Was with other employees when they all heard the music system click on as they were leaving.

DAMIEN, KIEL. Local historian; informant on history of house and locale. Does not recall hearing rumors that the house was "haunted" until recently.

DAVIDS, CATHY. Current gift shop employee. October 12, 1979, 11:00 P.M.: With Roberta Graham when two light units in the office went out above the area they were working in. Also has witnessed

disturbances with the music system and heard crash in attic with no discernable cause. No other unusual experiences, except one observation of a candle falling off a shelf in her home.

FREUD, CAROL. Former gift shop employee. Summer 1978, 10:30 P.M.: With Cindy Sinclair and Diane Simon when they all heard the music system switch on as they were leaving the shop. This happened again another night in 1978 when she was with two other employees.

GRAHAM, ROBERTA. Current gift shop manager. October 12, 1979, 11:00 P.M.: With Cathy Davids when two light units in the office went out above the area they were working in. Several times has witnessed the malfunctioning of the burglar alarm and the music system; heard doors slamming and sound of footsteps in the old part of the house.

HART, AMY. Neighbor; aunt of Jerry Hart. Friend of Hester and Lucille; informant on their personalities and life styles. Does not recall hearing rumors that the house was "haunted" until recently.

HART, JERRY. Neighbor; nephew of Amy Hart. Knew Hester and Lucille when he was a child; had heard stories about the house being "haunted" and the sisters being "evil" while they were living there.

HOWARDS, DENISE. Former gift shop employee; daughter of Marge and Mike Byron. June 1979, 7:00 P.M.: With Marge Byron when the sewing machine in the workroom started to operate by itself. February 1979: Music box (bought at the shop) started to play when it was in her house.

JONES, BONNIE. Current gift shop employee. Refused to be interviewed. Grace Norton claims that Bonnie was present and heard footsteps in the master bedroom when they were alone in the shop in December 1979.

KIBURIS, DANA. Former gift shop employee. Fall 1978, about 9:00 P.M.: With Connie Cleese when they heard mumbling voices and footsteps in the master bedroom. Fall 1978, 9:30 P.M.: Was alone when she saw a white figure (apparition) go across the field behind the gift shop parking lot. 1978, at night: With other employees when they heard the music system click on as they were leaving the shop. Has had no previous psi experiences.

LAWRENCE, JACK. Mrs. Maxwell's gardener, 1971-1976. Witnessed the malfunctioning of the burglar alarm during Mrs. Maxwell's ownership.

MAXWELL, AILEEN. Owner and occupant of house, approximately 1970-1976. Refused to be interviewed; gave no reason. Warren Nelson and Joe Sinclair claimed that she had told them about seeing apparitions in the house, the movement of objects,

lights going on and off, and hearing footsteps. They reported that she disliked staying in the house alone.

MEAD, LARRY. Brother-in-law of Ted and Joe Sinclair; husband of Toni Mead; cousin of Shirley Wheeling. Has worked in the gift shop as a contractor. Early 1978: Several times heard the grandfather clock in the Wood Room chime although it had not been wound. October 31, 1979, between 2-3:00 A.M.: In master bedroom with Ted Sinclair, Toni Mead, and Shirley Wheeling when he heard the sliding of the fireplace tile and felt its impact as it hit him on the back. Has had some apparently paranormal dreams.

MEAD, TONI. Sister of Ted and Joe Sinclair; wife of Larry Mead. October 31, 1979, late evening: Heard and felt a knock on the attic stairs; knock also heard by Shirley Wheeling. Later, between 2-3:00 A.M.: With Ted Sinclair, Shirley, and her husband Larry Mead when they heard the sliding of the fireplace tile which hit Larry in the back.

NELSON, JENNY. Former gift shop bookkeeper; wife of Warren Nelson. May 1978, between 6:30-7:00 P.M.: When alone in upstairs office heard fluttering noises in closet. Summer 1978, between 8-9:00 P.M.: Alone in upstairs office when bottom drawer of filing cabinet kept sliding open.

NELSON, WARREN. Chief electrician at Joe Sinclair's burglar alarm company; husband of Jenny Nelson. 1973 to present: Witness to repeated malfunctioning of burglar alarm system. Summer 1975, around midnight: After burglar alarm went off, he and a police officer investigated the unoccupied house and heard inexplicable flapping noises in the chimney of the Crystal Room. 1979 to present: Witness to repeated malfunctioning of the surveillance camera in the master bedroom.

NORTON, GRACE. Current gift shop employee. December 1979, 10:00 A.M.: With Bonnie Jones in front downstairs room when they heard footsteps in the master bedroom. 1979: Alone in the front of the shop when she heard whistling.

READE, KAREN. Former gift shop employee. Told interviewers that she had not observed anything unusual; other informants claimed that she had.

SIMON, DIANE. Former gift shop employee. Told interviewers that she did not want to talk about the phenomena because they were contrary to her religious beliefs. She does not believe in the paranormal, and is emotionally uncomfortable with the disturbances. However, she did say that the music system would come on when she was leaving the shop, and that she heard noises in the master bedroom. Chris Sinclair said that Diane was present on an occasion in the summer of 1978 when the music came on, and

Cindy Sinclair said she was also there on another occasion that summer when the music again came on. Marge Byron claimed Diane had told her about an apparition she had seen in the shop in 1978.

SINCLAIR, CHRIS. Co-owner of house, 1978 to present; wife of Ted Sinclair. Spring 1978, 11:30 P.M.: With Cathy Davids and Sally Sinclair when they heard footsteps on the stairs leading up to the master bedroom. Summer 1978, between 9:30-10:00 P.M.: With Diane Simon when they heard the music system come on by itself. September 1979, between 10:00 A.M. and noon: Alone in office when the adding machine started printing by itself. November 1979: Heard a scream while alone in the stock room.

SINCLAIR, CINDY. Daughter of Joe and Sally Sinclair. July 1978, approximately 9:30 P.M.: With another employee when they heard pounding on roof of gift shop after they had joked about the phenomena and requested a "performance." Summer 1978, 10:30 P.M.: With Carol Freud and Diane Simon when they heard the music system come on with a click as they were about to leave the shop. Summer 1978: With Roberta Graham when they witnessed the burglar alarm go off for no apparent reason. She observed malfunctioning of surveillance camera. One night when alone in Crystal Room, felt a presence and then heard footsteps behind her which rattled the merchandise on the display shelves.

SINCLAIR, JOE. Co-owner of house, 1978 to present; owner of the burglar alarm company; brother of Ted Sinclair and Toni Mead; husband of Sally and father of Cindy Sinclair. Has observed the malfunctioning of the burglar alarm and music systems; heard footsteps in master bedroom. Has seen an apparition in his home.

SINCLAIR, SALLY. Co-owner of house, 1978 to present; wife of Joe and mother of Cindy Sinclair. Spring 1978, between 10:00 P.M. and midnight: With Chris Sinclair and Cathy Davids when they heard footsteps on the stairs leading up to master bedroom. November 1979, at night: Observed malfunction of surveillance camera in master bedroom. Has occasionally heard footsteps in her own home.

SINCLAIR, TED. Co-owner of house, 1978 to present; brother of Joe Sinclair and Toni Mead; husband of Chris Sinclair. 1978: Heard footsteps on stairs to master bedroom when alone in the building. October 31, 1979, between 2-3:00 A.M.: Heard the sliding of the fireplace tile which hit Larry Mead in the back. Has observed the malfunctioning of the burglar and music systems; found light on in attic when no one had turned it on.

SMITH, VICKIE. Former gift shop employee. Told interviewers that she had experienced things in the gift shop, but did not want to be bothered describing them.

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STILLS, CARMEN. Former gift shop employee. May 1978, 6:00 P.M.: With Marge Byron when a fluorescent light in the workroom fell moments before bathroom door slammed shut.

SWANN, FIONA. Local historian. Knew Hester and Lucille; informant about them, the history of the house, and locale. Did not recall hearing any rumors that the house was "haunted" until recently.

WHEELING, SHIRLEY. Cousin of Larry Mead. October 31, 1979, late evening: Heard knock on attic stair; also heard by Toni Mead. Later, between 2-3:00 A.M.: With Larry and Toni Mead and Ted Sinclair when they heard the sliding of the fireplace tile which hit Larry Mead in the back; a few moments prior to this, she had heard five footsteps on the stairs to master bedroom. Has had no previous psi experiences.