# — "Give me some of that Old Time Religion" — How the Tradition of *Camp Meetings* Influenced Modern Spiritualism: A Study of Historic Camp Chesterfield

# Todd Jay Leonard

Fukuoka University of Education

(Accepted September 21, 2016)

#### Abstract

This paper outlines briefly the history of religious proliferation in the United States and how new religions were founded to fill a spiritual void felt by people before and during the Second Great Awakening (1800-1830) which allowed more non-conventional religious movements to develop and spread. The modern Spiritualist movement, as a way to reach a larger number of adherents more easily, eventually adopted the Protestant concept of "camp meetings," which had helped denominations to evangelize their religions more comprehensively. Brick and mortar churches in the early years of the Spiritualist movement were few and far between, which made growing congregations difficult. Once the concept of "camp meetings" that were so successful amongst the Protestant religions began to infiltrate the Spiritualist movement, what initially began as temporary meeting places (i.e. campgrounds) where adherents brought tents and cooking utensils to use during the camp meeting, began to become more permanent as land was purchased and structures built upon the land to allow more regular gatherings to take place. Adherents to the Spiritualist movement (and eventual religion) supported dozens of such camps around the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Today, there are only a handful of active Spiritualist camps still in use and regularly attended by Spiritualists; the largest camp is "Lily Dale Assembly" in New York; the second largest camp is "Camp Chesterfield" in Indiana; and the third largest camp is "Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp" in Florida. This paper examines in detail the history and functioning of Camp Chesterfield, showing how it was founded and grew into a thriving gathering place for Hoosier Spiritualists.

#### Introduction

The United States, from a time well before it was an independent country, began to be regarded as a spiritual haven for those who were seeking to worship as they pleased and without persecution. Many religious groups initially immigrated to the New World in order to follow and practice a spiritual tradition, belief system, or religion of their choosing; this is in addition to the socio-economic reasons that persuaded many of these early immigrants to leave their home countries to pursue a new life in North America.

These early settlers not only brought with them their belief systems, but they also gave birth to a society that gradually transformed the eventual United States into a country that became rich in religious history through the initial importation, gradual adaptation, eventual creation, and finally, active promotion of a variety of religious traditions and beliefs. With the exception of indigenous belief systems and Native American spirituality, which were already a part of the North American experience when the

Europeans arrived to its shores, the majority of religious practices in the United States were originally imported from outside its borders.

The Puritan ethic, with its stodgy and unforgiving rules, was the cornerstone of much of the religious practices and beliefs throughout the early years of America's growth. Although the idea of religious reformation began in the mid-1600s in Europe, these "reforms" of church doctrine did not offer adequate flexibility to the eventual American adherents who were far removed from their European ancestors and who began to yearn for yet more freedom of religion and who felt a need to follow more unorthodox teachings and beliefs. Slowly, religions that were being firmly established in America began to break away further from their pious roots and began to come into their own.



[Illustration 1: Hydesville Memorial Park, Newark, New York; photo taken June 2015.]

Mid-nineteenth century America witnessed much religious upheaval as the young country was still flexing its spiritual muscles to become even more independent from the stoic belief systems that were formerly a part of the older European traditions. This spiritual unrest made the conditions right for new movements to form, which would eventually attract multitudes of followers: Mormonism, Spiritualism and Christian Science. These three religious movements (and eventual belief systems and religions) can be categorized as being purely "American-made" in that they were eventually exported (rather than imported) to the United States — founded by Americans for those who were tired and bored with the dogma that did not allow for any deviance from the social norm or belief system of the more mainstream and traditional religions.

From the earliest times when Americans first began to move westward as the country began to grow and expand, pioneers settled in remote areas in order to begin new lives in untamed territories. Religion was an important aspect of the American experience, but due to demographics, being able to have communal worship services proved difficult due to geographical considerations that isolated people from one another. The concept of evangelizing and spreading the gospel by means of a "camp meeting" became widespread around the United States in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as a way to bring "religion" to those living rurally on the frontier.

As the United States grew, "camp meetings" quickly gained favor amongst established religions as a way to minister directly to a larger number of souls in the shortest amount of time. Camp meetings grew out of the religious tradition of "revivals" which gained in popularity during the Second Great Awakening (1790s-1840s) — an evangelical movement that was largely advanced by the Protestant

religions of Methodism, Baptism, and Presbyterianism. The Western frontier offered much opportunity economically to early settlers, but it often meant people lived a life isolated from the civilized world. (1Leonard, 2016) Sometime later, Modern Spiritualism would borrow and adapt this idea to offer believers an opportunity to meet and socialize with like-minded people who had difficulty finding a Spiritualist association or church near where they resided.

During the summer of 2015, I traveled all over the United States visiting Spiritualist camps in order to survey the status of the religion and physical conditions of many of the remaining camps in order to obtain a clearer idea of how they have fared over the past 100-plus years.<sup>1</sup> The Spiritualist camps I visited included: Lily Dale Assembly (New York), Camp Chesterfield (Indiana), Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp (Florida), Harmony Grove Spiritualist Association (California), Western Wisconsin Camp Association (Wisconsin), Mississippi Valley Spiritualist Association (Iowa), Cherry Valley Spiritualist Camp (Illinois), and Wooley Park Ashley Spiritualist Camp (Ohio). For the purposes of this paper, however, I will only concentrate on offering a detailed history of Camp Chesterfield, the spiritual and physical home of the *Indiana Association of Spiritualists* (IAOS) located in Chesterfield, Indiana.

## A Brief History of Modern Spiritualism

In order to understand more concretely how the Spiritualist movement began, which eventually led to the adaptation of camp meeting-style services, it is important to revisit briefly its colorful history and unique beginnings. March 31, 1848 marks the founding of the advent of the American-made religion of Modern Spiritualism.<sup>2</sup> More than a date on a calendar, it is a surprising testimonial of endurance and perseverance for a movement that seemingly began as an accident with quite humble, if not obscure, beginnings. (1Leonard, 2016) It was on this date, when two young sisters—Katie and Maggie Fox—began to receive intelligent responses from an unknown entity that had been vexing the Fox family since moving into their new home. The modest, two-story cottage<sup>3</sup> in Hydesville, New York had been plagued by a series of rappings that were especially noticeable at night, causing the family to become quite fatigued and weary from a lack of sleep. (Goldsmith, 28) It was on this night, however, the eve of "April Fool's Day," that the girls decided to test the disincarnate spirit by commanding the entity to mimic their actions.

Ostensibly, with a bit of effort and ingenuity, Katie and Maggie conversed with the entity by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The *University of Teacher Education Fukuoka* (UTEF) granted me a one-year sabbatical to do onsite research in the United States on Modern Spiritualism. In addition to traveling across America to visit Spiritualist camps and churches, I also gathered research and data on Spiritualism and I conducted a large-scale survey of Spiritualist mediums and ministers, the results of this study will be published in the future.

The date of March 31<sup>st</sup> was adopted as the official anniversary of the advent of Modern Spiritualism in 1870 at the national convention for Spiritualism in the form of a resolution which read: "Whereas Spiritualism has become a power in the land and may be deemed the great growing religious idea of the country; and, It is well to revert to the time of small beginnings and hold in remembrance the first pioneers in this Spiritual movement; therefore, 'Resolved, that this convention recommend to all State conventions and local societies to make the time of the appearance of the Hydesville rappings an anniversary day, the services of that day to be conducted in each locality as may be deemed most practical." (History of Spiritualism", *National Spiritualist Association of Churches Official Website*, retrieved on January 7, 2016.) Hence, March 31<sup>st</sup> is generally accepted as the anniversary of the movement, which eventually became the religion, philosophy, and science of Spiritualism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The original cottage no longer exists. The original foundation in Hydesville, New York (now called Newark, New York) is now a shrine dedicated to the birthplace of Modern Spiritualism called "Hydesville Memorial Park." It consists of an outer building featuring large windows to view the stones that made up the cottage's original foundation. In 1915 the cottage was moved from Wayne County (in upstate New York) to Lily Dale (the headquarters for the *National Spiritualist Association of Churches* (NSAC)) where it remained for nearly forty years until it burned down under suspicious circumstances on September 21, 1955. [See Illustrations 1-2.]

developing a simple code using handclapping that corresponded to "yes" and "no" questions and numbers.

Together, Mrs. Fox and her daughters began to ask questions. Mrs. Fox first asked the mystery rapper to count to ten—it did. She then asked the spirit to reveal the ages of her daughters—it gave a rap for each of the girl's age correctly. She asked if it was a human being making these rapping noises—there was no answer. She then asked it to make two raps if it was a spirit—it did. She continued by asking if the spirit had been injured in their home—this question followed with two raps. (2Leonard, 27)

Affectionately, the two sisters began calling the unknown spirit "Mr. Split-foot." (Melton, 94) Not nearly as enamored with this unwanted visitor as her daughters, an alarmed Mrs. Margaret Fox asked her husband to come witness what was transpiring. The always pragmatic and rational Mr. John Fox initially felt that a simple explanation would solve the mystery, but after being taunted by the raps that seemed to originate in all corners of the room, the ceiling, and from the floor, he, too, was bewildered and stumped to find any logical reason for the rappings.

Determined to get to the bottom of the supernatural conundrum plaguing her family, Mrs. Fox then summoned friends and neighbors to enter their home to serve as witnesses to the otherworldly occurrence that had all of them not only nervous wrecks, but bewitched by what it could mean. With the help of their concerned neighbors, the Foxes eventually developed a code that matched the number of raps to letters in the alphabet. Albeit time-consuming, they were able to discern that the spirit's name was Charles B. Rosna and that he had been murdered in that house some years previously and his remains were buried in the cellar.<sup>5</sup> (Jackson, 4)

Several far-reaching features emerged from those initial rappings: 1) it was proven that communication that was intelligible could be made with spirits; 2) certain people, like the Fox sisters, were naturally gifted with the ability to make this communication; and 3) communication could be facilitated by means of a code. The events on this night started a movement of the likes the world had never seen before. Soon, people from all over were flocking to the Fox cottage to witness this supernatural phenomenon. The birth of [modern] psychic mediumship, and some time later, the religion known as Spiritualism, had begun. (2Leonard, 28)

Quickly, word of the "Hydesville Rappings" spread near and far, with the news eventually reaching Katie and Maggie's older sister, Mrs. Leah Fish, in Rochester, New York in May of 1848. She immediately returned to Hydesville upon learning about the manifestations in her parents' home. Leah was very astute and realized that the story and the surrounding publicity it generated had great potential for profit. In short order, Leah turned her sisters' abilities to talk with the dead into a stage act. She soon became a central figure in what would become a new religious movement, managing the girls rigidly (akin to that of a "stage mother" today), forcing them to give non-stop readings, requiring them to hold

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> This nickname most likely is in reference to the Devil, as Satan is often depicted as a creature with "hoofed" or "split" feet. This was a common Victorian reference to the Devil during this time period.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> It was purported, and subsequently became a part of historical record, that when the Fox cottage's cellar was eventually excavated, indeed human teeth, hair, and bones were discovered there. It was not until some fifty-six years later, however, that the further discovery of a complete human skeleton was found in the cellar of the cottage that seemed to prove the story of a peddler being murdered in the house. These collaborating facts were reported in the *Boston Journal* (a non-Spiritualistic newspaper) on November 23, 1904. (Doyle, 73; Stuart, 17)

public demonstrations, and, of course, pressuring them to lead séances. Mrs. Fish soon realized that she, too, had the "gift" and began her career as a "medium" to try the spirits herself.

It is difficult to imagine today, without the benefit of modern technology and social media, how word of mouth was able to spread so quickly regarding the Fox sisters and their spiritual gifts. The interest they generated at the time, and the clamoring people who yearned to see them and know about their every move, can best be compared to the intense interest in the Kardashian sisters today. If paparazzi had been around in the 1850s, they would have been hounded incessantly. As it was, the Fox sisters were the subjects of gossip and news articles appeared detailing their comings and goings. Speculation abounded regarding whom they were seeing — either professionally as mediums or romantically as young women. Wanting to shield her daughters from unflattering rumors and gossip, and in an effort to avoid any potential scandals, Mrs. Fox acted as chaperone and maintained a close eye over them as they became more and more renowned as mediums and famous as celebrities. Due to the nature of their work which often required they sit in darkened rooms for readings and séances, the sisters often found themselves in the company of ogling men who would use as an excuse the desire for a reading or to attend a séance to be in their company as they were both quite beguiling and beautiful young women.

As news of the Fox sisters' mediumship ability became well known, a number of "intuitives" began to claim similar abilities. In a few short years, millions of people claimed to be adherents of the new religion of Spiritualism.

...in 1854, the New England Spiritualists Association estimated the number of spiritualists<sup>6</sup> in the United States as 2 million, and the *North American Review* gave its opinion that that figure was reasonable. *The Spiritual Register*, a popular annual serial compiled by spiritualists, estimated the number of spiritualists in 1860 as 1,600,000 but suggested that the number of nominal believers was 5 million.<sup>7</sup> (Buescher, x)

Spiritualism, unlike most religions that have a prescribed belief system to which their followers adhere and practice faithfully, was more experiential in that one was regarded as a Spiritualist "simply by trying the spirits and being encouraged by the results." (Buescher, xi)

Of course, Spiritualism (as a religion) offered an alternative to the stodgy belief systems that were prevalent at the time. In particular, it advocated the redemption of all souls (no matter how sinful the person was in life); the negation of heaven and hell as locations (maintaining that they are merely conditions, and both can be earthbound); the denial of original sin (children have enough opportunity in life to stray from a moral path, without being tainted from the moment they are born due to the actions of Adam and Eve); the rejection of the belief in vicarious atonement (preferring to believe that each person has a personal responsibility to atone for sins committed, rather than depending upon salvation through the death on the cross of Jesus); the belief that Jesus, The Christ, was a gifted healer, teacher and psychic (but was no more divine or the son of God than any other avatar or living person); the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Some authors and researchers denote Spiritualism and Spiritualists in the lower-case. As a religion, however, similar to Christianity, Judaism, or Islam, it is the opinion of this researcher that these terms should be capitalized; even denominations within a religion (*i.e.* Christianity—such as Presbyterian, Baptist or Episcopalian) consistently regard these as proper nouns and are hence capitalized. For the purposes of this study, unless directly quoted from another source, the words Spiritualism and Spiritualist will be capitalized.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The term "nominal believers" refers to those who may have not fully embraced Spiritualism as a religion, but were quite happy to attend Spiritualist camp meetings, séances, and to receive readings from Spiritualist mediums. Historically, it has been difficult to ascertain an exact number of adherents to Spiritualism at any given time because many people throughout its history have publicly embraced a more mainstream, traditional religion, but practiced Spiritualism as a secondary religion (often secretly) due to the turmoil association to Spiritualism would cause them personally from family, friends, and the community. This bias is still true today among many Spiritualists.

interpretation of the Resurrection of Jesus as being in spirit-form (and not of the physical body); and the belief that women are as capable of doing God's work as men.



[Illustration 2: Original foundation of the Fox Cottage; photo taken June 2015.]

As Spiritualism began to spread among the masses, mainstream Protestant churches became alarmed at how their congregants were either openly flocking to Spiritualist meetings or message services, or who were secretly attending séances to get messages or readings. Interest in this unorthodox religion was gaining rapidly and coordinated efforts were initiated to disparage Spiritualism from the populace, but to no avail. In fact, even more interest was generated, and more and more people began attending Spiritualist services often times in addition to their traditional, Sunday-morning churches—often clandestinely as society was still unsure about Spiritualism and often associated it with the dark forces, which was unfounded and certainly not the case.

As the movement grew larger, however, and it eventually transitioned into a full-fledged religion, the issue of reaching adherents without the benefit of churches forced the early leaders of the religion to think outside of the box. The most logical and easy solution was to adapt a custom that had been perfected by other Protestant denominations and served many Christian churches since the pioneer days: The Camp Meeting. How ironic that Spiritualism was able to model and find great success in spreading its belief system, and to offer people places to worship that were borrowed from the very churches and denominations that wanted Spiritualism eradicated.

### Circuit Riding and Camp Meetings to Evangelize the Masses

The Methodists were the first to create a system of "circuit riding" 8 that enabled people to have

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> It was the first Methodist Bishop in America, Reverend Francis Asbury, who came up with a solution to the perennial problem of getting ministers to the people who were scattered far and wide around the vast frontier. Reverend Asbury personally had travelled hundreds of thousands of miles ministering to people so naturally he developed the system called "circuit riding" where he dispatched men (whom he had ordained) to a predetermined circuit or territory. Often times it took weeks for a minister to make it to all the cabins in his assigned region, but along the way he would do the things that an ordained minister had to do: offer Christian burials to those who died, perform the sacrament of marriage to those who wanted to be married, baptize any recent converts, conduct services, and preach the gospel to families who were socially isolated from having any contact or opportunity to have any religious instruction. (Fleet, 1987)

some sort of religious life, if even fleetingly, when the circuit riding minister would visit their cabin on his normal rounds.

Circuit riders had to be young, in good health, and single (since marriage and a family forced preachers to settle in one area and leave the traveling ministry). Unlike their counterparts in other denominations, Methodist circuit riders did not have to have formal education. Leaders of the new church wanted educated, trained circuit riders, but they wanted even more to spread their ministry to people on the frontier who needed Christian guidance. (Jordan, 1998)

Formal church buildings were quite scarce in the frontier regions with only larger cities with thriving communities being able to establish such churches. In order to combat this deficiency in the rural-religious "churchdom" of the wilderness, gradually a trend developed that incorporated the use of a large tent or crude structure which served as the center of a unique form of worship known as the "camp meeting." Usually held in a central location, camp meetings allowed adherents from miles around to congregate and worship together. This changed the fabric of the American religious landscape profoundly. Suddenly people had an opportunity to attend one of these meetings that not only offered them good, old-fashioned Bible-thumping religion, but also a chance to socialize with others. These revival-like meetings were often emotionally charged affairs with sentimental appeals to God to be saved, resulting in the congregants flailing themselves around and to the ground as if possessed, asking for forgiveness with the promise of living a righteous life from that day forward. Tens of thousands of people would attend these meetings over the period of weeks, with attendees staying anywhere from a few days to a week or more. Dozens of preachers would be moving about the throngs of people gathered, preaching and offering salvation to all those willing souls. (Fleet, 1987)

Not far off women were already beginning to find their places on the rude plank seats in front of the "stage." They were leaving vacant a few seats in front. Those were the "anxious benches." Here the "convicted" [those whom God had chosen for conversion] would come to be prayed for when the preacher issued the invitation for "mourners." The only covering over the arbor sheltered the pulpit. On the stage was a knot of men solemnly shaking hands and conversing. On all sides of the arbor, row after row of vehicles [horse drawn wagons] crowded one another. Men were standing everywhere. The music struck up, quavering; mostly female voices singing two lines at a time as the deacon read them off. After another hymn, a preacher arose and the men came filing in, taking their seats on the opposite side of the arbor if the women had not filled them all; or crowding into the aisles and back of the seats occupied by their women folk. The minister, an ordinary looking man, dragged out an ordinary address while whispered conversations hummed louder and louder. Infants wailed fretfully. A dog fight started somewhere among the wagons.

At length the evangelist arose. At once the congregation was electrified. "And what come ye out into the wilderness for to see?" he asked, fixing his eyes upon the congregation. His voice rose powerfully, "Ayr! Ye are come as a holiday pageant, bedecked in tinsel and costly raiment. I see before me the pride of beauty and youth; the middle-aged…the hoary hairs and decrepit limbs of age; — all trampling — hustling each other in your haste — on the beaten road — the way to death and judgment! Oh! Fools and blind! Slow-worms, battening upon the damps and filth of this vile earth! Hugging your muck rakes while the Glorious One proffers you the Crown of Life!" Women were in tears. "That's preaching!" shouted a gray-haired man. "Lord have mercy!" another besought. (Johnson, 392)

It was from this tradition of Methodist-based camp meetings that the Spiritualist movement borrowed the basic concepts, and adopted certain components, to create its own version of a mass gathering of the faithful in order to experience and share in the belief system. A major and key difference, however, involved the giving of messages from the departed to the living. A Spiritualist camp meeting basically functioned in a similar fashion, but instead of fire and brimstone sermons, people were regaled with short lectures (often based on scripture) and a "message service" where mediums would stand on a raised platform in order to give to those in attendance mediumistic messages from friends and loved ones in Spirit.

In a relatively short amount of time, then, the Spiritualist movement began to attract a large number of adherents and without proper churches or gathering places in those early years, the idea of "camp meetings" took hold and groups of like-minded people began to gather to share Spiritualist ideas and to allow mediums an opportunity to meet and give messages to a larger number of people at one time.

The first 50-year cycle continued bearing the weight of establishing a strong foundation for the new movement. Mediumship as displayed by the Fox Sisters became popular throughout the country. The leaders of the day recognized Spiritualism as a philosophy that could change the world. In fact, it was taken to England just four years after its inception. From there, its journey around the world began. Meanwhile, meetings were held in halls in many major cities of the northeastern United States. The philosophers drew large crowds who listened to their oratories. Soon, they could no longer find halls large enough to house the crowds. The answer to the dilemma was to begin open-air grove meetings. (2 Awtry, p. 7)

[The ex-Methodists] suggested to the Spiritualists that it would be a way to serve the multitude that steadily increased in number. The leadership of Spiritualism [initially] looked at this grove meeting idea with deep suspicion. After much thought, they decided to implement it as an all day camp meeting. They expounded on how this new camp meeting should be different than the old Methodist grove meetings. Apart from the séance or picnics, it was based loosely on the lyceum movement. At first the speakers were quite comfortable with the Bible preaching. They treated Spiritualism as a kind of purified Christianity. At this time, the Spiritualists were religionists, liberals, and rationalists. This camp meeting style gave birth to the first Spiritualist Camp at Pierpont Grove, Malden, Massachusetts, in 1866; named after John Pierpont. In 1870, another camp was founded at Lake Pleasant, Massachusetts. Soon camps began to sprout up throughout New England, New York, Wisconsin, Iowa, Florida and westward to the Pacific coast. (2 Awtry, pp. 23-24)<sup>9</sup>

Initially, many camp meetings were held on the land of people sympathetic to the movement who offered the use of their property. The widespread popularity of these camp meetings eventually necessitated the purchase of land to construct a permanent campground for Spiritualists to use during high season (June through September, usually). As these camps began to take shape around the nation, associations were formed that allowed attendees to become members.

In the very beginning, canvas tents were used at these camp meetings by the mediums and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Three of the earliest Spiritualist camps in the United States were established in Maine: Camp Etna (1876), Madison Camp (1879), and Temple Heights Spiritualist Association (1882).

attendees; hay for horses had to be brought by the people as well as firewood to cook. (Harrison, *et al.* p. 19) As these gatherings became more and more popular, actual land needed to be purchased in order to accommodate the thousands of people who came from far and wide to attend a Spiritualist camp meeting. Mediums sometimes made a wooden floor in their tents to make it sturdier, which eventually led to walls being added, making the structure a rustic shack. Gradually, these crude dwellings became more permanent and the shanty was born which allowed mediums a more permanent place to hold séances and to live during the camp season.

In the ensuing years after the first Spiritualist camp was founded, dozens and dozens of Spiritualist camps sprang up all over the United States. Largely summer gatherings, these camps maintained a vibrant following and were quite active — especially during and after major wars — throughout the twentieth century. A number of these grew to a size where they became year-round camps, sponsoring churches and services throughout the calendar year with many activities and events organized for members and regular attendees. Today, there are roughly only 20 camps around the United States (with a number of these inactive as of the writing of this paper). [See Appendix 1 for a listing of active Spiritualist camps in the US.]

### Historic Camp Chesterfield

Since 1886, Spiritualism has been a visible part of Indiana's rich and varied religious historical landscape through the auspices of the *Indiana Association of Spiritualists* (IAOS), settling permanently on the banks of the White River in the small town of Chesterfield, Indiana officially in 1890. Affectionately called "Camp Chesterfield" by its members, this association has been a "spiritual center of light" for generations of Hoosiers.

A number of religious groups during the 19<sup>th</sup> century took advantage of Indiana's frontier spirit by choosing to settle there.

In the 1830s, most religious organizations in Indiana were imported units filled with new arrivals from somewhere else. Furthermore, probably more churches were founded by the influence of missionaries than grew up spontaneously from woodland cabins. For the year 1836, there were 319 congregations throughout an eighteen county area of Indiana. Most of these met in private homes, barns, schools, or outside; less than half had regular church buildings for worship. Of the 319 churches, 118 were Methodist groups, which evolved from a larger number of informal classes. Baptists had organized 75 congregations, the Disciples of Christ 42, Presbyterians 39, Friends 24, and United Brethren 11; there were 10 other miscellaneous groups. (Vanderstel, 2009)

These congregations set the stage, in essence, for what was about to occur on Indiana's religious vista. After the Spiritualist movement first began, it was not long until the movement spread widely, including its arrival to the borders of Indiana. For a number of years, there was no specific association in the state devoted to the religion of Spiritualism. Hoosier adherents were forced to travel to Ohio, Michigan or Illinois to attend "camp" meetings modeled, as mentioned earlier, on those made popular by Methodist preachers who would travel as itinerant ministers to different parts of the country to preach, convert, marry, baptize, and even bury those in need of "ministering."

Similarly to mainstream denominations, in the beginning years of the Spiritualist movement, regular church meetings were conducted in people's homes, in public spaces, outdoors and eventually centered on a revival-type of tent meeting where people would go to hear messages, receive readings, and attend séances. Gradually, these tent services began to take the form of "camps" where people could go for several days or weeks to "camp out" in order to attend the services. Eventually, these tents began

to take the form of rustic cottages where mediums would reside during the "high" season, from May through September.



[Illustration 3: The Sunflower Hotel, Camp Chesterfield, circa 1914, from the *Hett Art Gallery Archives*.]

This is exactly how Camp Chesterfield began. After attending a Spiritualist camp in Michigan, Hoosiers John and Mary Ellen Bussel-Westerfield of Anderson felt that Indiana needed its very own Spiritualist camp, so they organized the first meeting of the *Indiana Association of Spiritualists* in 1886. Interest in this newfangled religion spread quickly, and in 1890, a permanent home was made after the association purchased a sizeable parcel of wooded land on the banks of the White River in Chesterfield, Indiana. Indiana's own Camp Chesterfield is one of three of the most historically significant centers for Spiritualism in the United States (the other two being Camp Lily Dale in New York and Camp Cassadaga in Florida).

Today, Camp Chesterfield is a thriving Spiritualist community that supports a number of buildings that are historically significant.<sup>10</sup> Upon entering its gates, the visitor to Camp Chesterfield is greeted by a nostalgic old hotel called "The Sunflower." It is reminiscent of something out of a John Steinbeck novel — the front porch, with its wicker rockers, allows one to be easily transported back in time to a bygone era. Another hotel on the grounds, "The Western," built in the style of a 1940s roadhouse, is unique because of its authentic exterior and charming interior. It boasts the distinction of being the first "fireproof" building in the state of Indiana, constructed out of thick concrete and covered with red bricks. (Hattaway, 2010)

Both of these historic hotels offer visitors an opportunity to go back in time, imagining how guests would have sat idly on the shaded porches — most likely escaping the hot Indiana summer sun — chatting to one another about the messages they received from their loved ones through one of the well-known resident mediums who lived in one of the many historic cottages around the perimeter of the camp.

## I) The Early Years: 1886 - 1908

Early Hoosier Spiritualists were quite forward thinking and were involved in the free and progressive thought movements of the day. These people were very attracted to the idea of Spiritualism

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The Western Hotel, on the grounds of Camp Chesterfield, is officially recognized as an historic landmark, listed on the U.S. Park Service's *National Register of Historic Places* [Listed July 26, 2002] (www.nps. gov /history/nr/listings/20020726.htm); See Appendix 3 for a map of Camp Chesterfield's structures, cottages and religious displays.

which advocated equality for women, Abolition, and the general negation of firmly held concepts of mainstream religion such as original sin, hell and damnation of wayward souls, 11 vicarious atonement 12 and the absolute divinity of Jesus, 13 The Christed One.

Dr. J.W. Westerfield, and his wife Mary, of Anderson, Indiana were two such people who actively sought out alternative ideas regarding politics and religion. In 1883, Dr. Westerfield offered a second floor room in the hall he owned (which also housed his drugstore on the first floor) in downtown Anderson to act as a general meeting place for the intellectuals who resided in the area.

According to the book, Chesterfield Lives—1886-1986—Our First Hundred Years, Dr. Westerfield was instrumental in the formation of the "Indiana Association of Spiritualists" and subsequently, Camp Chesterfield. It was during a trip to Michigan that he and his wife came up with the idea of forming an association in Indiana. At that time, Michigan had three functioning Spiritualist camps, but the journey to Michigan was long and arduous. Dr. Westerfield purportedly suggested (while attending Frazer's Grove Spiritualist Camp, near Vicksburg, Michigan) that Indiana should have its own camp. Other Hoosiers who had also travelled to Michigan agreed with his proposal and the seeds that would later become the Indiana Association of Spiritualists were sown.

It was further decided that Dr. Westerfield was the only one in their number in a position to enter into the preliminaries of the plan, as he had already retired from business and had the necessary means, ability and time to carry through on the matter.

In the next three years, he contacted Spiritualists in all parts of the state, reporting his progress concerning an Indiana Camp and also progress within the movement itself, and in the early fall of 1886 he called a mass meeting in his Hall in Anderson.

When all had assembled, and Dr. Westerfield had rapped his gavel for order, there were about two hundred men and women in attendance, many of whom manifested deep interest and took an active part in the deliberations. Dr. George Hilligoss was elected president; his wife, Caroline, secretary; and Carroll Bronnenberg, treasurer. (Harrison, *et al*, 10)

For three years, the association met at Dr. Westerfield's hall in Anderson. "During that time, on November 5, 1887, they drew up the Constitution and By Laws making the society an incorporated body, legally qualified to transact all business pertaining to the organization and the religion of Spiritualism." (Harrison, *et al*, 14) The next order of business was to find a permanent home for the association. Dr. Westerfield, in the meantime, was elected president of the association. He served one term and was succeeded by Dr. L.M. Blackledge, the association's third president.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> As alluded to previously, Spiritualists believe strongly in the concept that all souls are redeemable, no matter how wickedly they behaved during their earthly incarnation. Also, the idea of "heaven" and "hell" being locations is not a belief of Spiritualists; instead, Spiritualists view the concept of "heaven" and "hell" as conditions, with humans creating their own earthly "heavens" and "hells" according to how they live their lives during this particular incarnation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> The Christian belief that Jesus Christ died on the cross for the forgiveness of sins of humankind is contrary to Spiritualist teachings which focus on inculcating the ideology that each person is morally responsible for his or her own transgressions on earth and must make amends for those when on the other side.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Spiritualists view the historical Jesus as a wonderfully gifted Master-Teacher, healer and psychic, who attained the "Christed" state as a result of his good works and teachings while on the earth plane. He is no more divine, however, than any other person before, during or after his earthly existence — all humans equally have the divine spark of God within them.

The annual convention of 1890 saw Dr. Westerfield again elected as the fourth president of the association. The convention was held at a church picnic on the Carroll and Emily Bronnenberg riverside property at Chesterfield. This was an amicable and generous gesture on their part, and was an outgrowth of the original membership of Carroll, Henry and Fred Bronnenberg in 1886. (Harrison, *et al*, 14)



Illustration 4: A group picture of members and mediums from Camp Chesterfield, circa 1900. [Photo Courtesy of Camp Chesterfield's *Hett Art Gallery Archives*]

The Native Americans who had once inhabited the area previously revered the grounds — with rolling hills and valleys, fresh spring water, and ample forest. In fact, not far from this acreage are ten distinct "earthworks" built by a group of prehistoric Indians known as the Adena-Hopewell people. (Werner, 121) Spiritualism, since its earliest beginnings, has had an affinity with Native American culture. Many Spiritualist adherents have a Native American guide within their band of Spirit Guides. The rich Native American history connected to the Bronnenberg property on the banks of the White River made it all the more appropriate and appealing to the membership at the time.

Dr. and Mary Westerfield were greatly instrumental in the ongoing negotiations for the grounds, and on August 12, 1892, the 34 acres of land was purchased from Carroll and Emily Bronnenberg for \$3,325.00. The Westerfields and Carroll Bronnenberg each gave large donations to the association enabling this purchase. (Harrison, *et al*, 18)

The *Indiana Association of Spiritualists* (IAOS) rapidly grew and expanded after finding its permanent home on the grounds of "Camp Chesterfield." Soon, however, problems arose as more and more people began to gravitate to the grounds in search of mediums to receive readings and attend séances, and to seek their own spiritual truth with likeminded people.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Spiritualists generally have five primary spirit guides who assist them: 1) a Doctor-Teacher who maintains a presence on the person's right side; 2) a Master-Teacher who is behind the person; 3) a Chemist (often Asian or Middle-Eastern) who is on the person's left side; 4) a Native American or Indian Protector who stands directly in front of the person; and 5) a Joy Guide (usually a child) who moves around the person but generally stays around the person's legs. (2Leonard, T, 321)



Illustration 5: A View of the mediums' shanties on Broadway Street (now Parkview), Camp Chesterfield [date unknown]. [Photo courtesy of Camp Chesterfield's *Hett Art Gallery Archives*.]

Horses had to be stabled, food served, and lodging facilities had to made to accommodate all the people who were beginning to flock to Indiana's first and only Spiritualist Camp. In the early years of Camp Chesterfield, members and visitors were required to bring their own tents, hay for their horses, and firewood for cooking. The mediums would sit out in the grassy grove on chairs to meet with people wishing to have a reading.

By the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Camp Meeting (the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention) in 1900, the campground was free from debt and many improvements had been added. Fences, wells and natural gas lines had been introduced. More cottages, plus the original two Séance Rooms, the Dining Hall, the Lodging House, the Auditorium, the Bazaar, and the Store with a long watering trough in front of it, were actively in use. (Harrison, *et al*, 18)

It was not long until the tents began to take the form of small two-room shanties with outhouses where the mediums could live and work. One room was for general living; the other used for readings and séances. As more and more people came through the gates of Camp Chesterfield, it became apparent that a more substantial infrastructure was needed to accommodate the throngs of people who were making their way to this "spiritual center of light."

## II) The Growing Years: 1909 - 1970

Singularly, the most important person to walk through the gates of Camp Chesterfield in the early 1900s was an unassuming schoolteacher from nearby Anderson, Indiana. The impact this woman would have on Camp Chesterfield and the *Indiana Association of Spiritualists*, as well as the religion of Spiritualism as a whole, is nothing short of prodigious. From around 1909 until her death in 1961, Reverend Mable Riffle steered Camp Chesterfield with a strong hand as Secretary of the association. Rev. Riffle's resounding mantra during her long years of service to the *IAOS* and Spiritualism was a simple question: Is it good for Camp? (Richey, 2009) This was her response to any proposal, idea or change that the Board of Trustees, mediums, residents or members would endeavor to implement. If the answer were "no" then it would go no further. Her lifelong dedication to the "good" of Camp Chesterfield is evident in the huge growth that occurred under her watchful guidance.

Thanks to the work and dedication of this longtime secretary of the association, Camp Chesterfield expanded its physical composition tremendously during her tenure, replacing dilapidated wooden

buildings with modern structures that would endure into the current era. Under her tutelage, Camp Chesterfield constructed a stone cathedral, a quaint chapel in the woods, a modern cafeteria, hotels, and a museum with an extensive collection of Spiritualist artifacts including the cornerstone of the original Fox Cottage and locks of hair from the Fox Sisters.

Rev. Riffle, however, was not free from ridicule, disparagement and even the occasional piece of bad press. Perhaps being the "face" of Camp Chesterfield for so many years — coupled with her stalwart manner of running the administrative arm of the association — made her an easy target. A number of newspaper accounts throughout her many successive terms as secretary detail numerous charges of humbuggery, fraud and conspiracy regarding her mediumship. Banned from giving readings in parts of Indiana and Ohio, Rev. Riffle defiantly appealed court convictions and paid fines throughout her tumultuous reign as the all-powerful secretary.



Illustration 6: Reverend Mable Riffle, the longtime secretary of the Indiana Association of Spiritualists, circa 1950. [Photo courtesy of Camp Chesterfield's *Hett Art Gallery Archives.*]

# Fake Medium Won't Appeal—Mrs. Mabel [sic] Riffle Pays \$25 Fine for Humbuggery

Mrs. Mabel Riffle, fake medium, who was convicted, fined and sentenced in Police Court for practicing her humbuggery in Cleveland, Friday decided to pay her fine and court costs and get out of the state [of Ohio].

Henry A. Gillis, attorney for the medium, told Judge Charles Selzer that she had decided not to demand a new trial.

When the clairvoyant was convicted it was given out that rather than submit to the 30-day

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> The Hett Art Gallery and Museum at Camp Chesterfield has a plethora of archived documents from a wide variety of sources — some handwritten accounts, others published newspaper stories, as well as hotel registers, official correspondence and documents from the *Indiana Association of Spiritualists* day-to-day operations. Unfortunately, much of the information is not in any order (chronological or otherwise); the majority of newspaper accounts have no date or reference as to which newspaper originally published the article; due to humidity where the historical documents are stored, many documents are disintegrating. Even with these caveats in mind, the archives can still be regarded as a treasure trove of historical record, offering the researcher and scholar of Spiritualism ample clues as to how the Camp functioned and who were the principle participants in Camp Chesterfield's long and colorful history.

How the Tradition of Camp Meetings Influenced Modern Spiritualism: A Study of Historic Camp Chesterfield

workhouse sentence and the \$25 fine, the case would be "appealed to the highest court in the land."

Immediately after Mrs. Riffle received her sentence, her attorneys appealed for a new trial, claiming that "discrepancies" appeared in the testimony of the prosecution witnesses.

Hearing on the new trial motion was set for last Monday, but Mrs. Riffle did not appear.

Her attorney said she would be produced in court Friday. Gillis appeared Friday and paid the fine and court costs.

Mrs. Riffle, secretary of the Indiana State Spiritualists Association [sic], is active head of a camp at Andersonville [sic], and refused to come to Cleveland and make a personal appearance before Judge Selzer.

Payment of the fine and costs precludes an appeal.

Judge Selzer suspended her workhouse sentence on condition that she quit practicing her fakery in the county. (Archived newspaper account, publisher and date unknown.)

Love her or hate her, Mable Riffle was a powerful force who — despite continued attacks from her detractors — did much for the betterment of Camp Chesterfield and the *Indiana Association of Spiritualists*. For every critical article that appeared in newspapers condemning Spiritualism, mediumship, or Camp Chesterfield, she made it a point to have numerous positive articles appear detailing the commendable work being done at Camp Chesterfield on behalf of the religion and its members. Rev. Riffle was (in modern terms) a master at "spin," always counteracting any negative press with a favorable account of the many functions being held at Camp Chesterfield.<sup>16</sup>

Upon Mable Riffle's death in 1961, the association and Camp Chesterfield continued to thrive largely due to her hard work and dedication over the prior half century of service to the IAOS, Camp Chesterfield and Spiritualism. Interestingly, Mable Riffle never became president, preferring to work as secretary, an office that allowed her to not only run the day-to-day functions of the camp, but also to be privy to all that was occurring within its gates.

#### III) The Later Years: 1971 - 2016

After major wars, Spiritualism historically tended to rise in stature and scope, prompting bereaved

While gathering materials for this paper in the archives at Camp Chesterfield, I was amazed at the sheer number of newspaper articles detailing every possible activity that was taking place on the grounds during the time she was secretary. Whether it was Rev. Riffle's mother's birthday (who lived to be 100-years-old — upon her death, a number of newspapers ran her obituary); a workshop or class being offered in its seminary; a visiting lecturer speaking on spiritually-based topics; a guest-medium giving messages; or the dedication of one of the many new structures she had a hand in constructing — all were covered in the newspapers around the central Indiana area. This constant barrage of good press surely counterpoised any negative publicity that occasionally plagued her and the other mediums working closely with her. Fraud and trickery within mediumship are well documented throughout Spiritualism's tumultuous history — and Camp Chesterfield is no exception, having weathered many storms that threatened to force it to close its gates. Today, strict guidelines are enforced at Camp Chesterfield to preclude any fakery by its staff mediums, with swift punishment being applied to any who might attempt such trickery with expulsion from the association and mediumship papers promptly rescinded. Not surprisingly, the IAOS is in its 130<sup>th</sup> year, serving as testimony of its allure and appeal for generations of Hoosiers.

relatives to search for some sort of sign or message from those whom they lost so tragically. These anguished times were actually heady days for the IAOS and Camp Chesterfield, as well, with crowds of people clamoring to get through its gates. The ongoing need for improving and constructing new public facilities to accommodate the hordes of people was an area in which Rev. Mable Riffle had much vision and forethought.<sup>17</sup> She also was very adept at fundraising, which allowed Camp Chesterfield to prosper. After her death, this momentum continued for some time, allowing Camp Chesterfield to continue growing through the 1970s and 1980s.

The seminary arm of the association became well-known and quite renowned, attracting students from all over the United States, and beyond, in the study of Spiritualism, New Age Spirituality, and Metaphysics. Being one of a few Spiritualist organizations that offered formal certification in mediumship, healing, and the ministry set Camp Chesterfield apart from other similar associations, which primarily relied upon affiliated churches to train and develop mediums and offer classes toward ordination. Camp Chesterfield gained a reputation for educating, training and developing Spiritualist mediums that were sought after for their intuitive abilities by not only Spiritualists, but also by non-Spiritualists alike. Camp Chesterfield's mediums were endearingly referred to as "name callers" because when a spirit would come through, it was most often by name, which offered confirmation to the person receiving the message.<sup>18</sup>

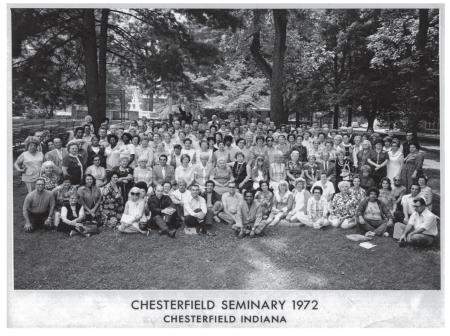


Illustration 7: A group photo of students and teachers attending the 1972 Summer Seminary at Camp Chesterfield. [Photo courtesy of Camp Chesterfield's *Hett Art Gallery Archives*].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> As mentioned earlier, Rev. Mable Riffle was the impetus and catalyst in modernizing Camp Chesterfield's infrastructure. She oversaw the construction of the Cathedral, Chapel, Western Hotel, Maxon Cafeteria, and the Hett Art Gallery while on the Board of Trustees as Secretary.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> This made a huge difference in how Camp Chesterfield was perceived by the general public. Anyone of a certain age could safely be given a message by a medium from a "grandmother" in Spirit, but it was much more authentic and legitimate to receive a message with an actual name (and better to have several associated names the receiver readily recognizes). This ability of Chesterfield mediums to be so specific and confirming, allowed Camp Chesterfield to enjoy a wide and diverse following of adherents.

As with many denominations that experienced a crisis in membership, the 1990s<sup>19</sup> laid witness to a drop in overall church attendance at Camp Chesterfield; a decrease in monetary donations; and fewer students opting to matriculate into the educational programs, which offer certification as healers, mediums and associate ministers, as well as eventual ordination into the Spiritualist ministry.

Often, people initially seek out a Spiritualist medium due to a tragedy with which they need to find solace and closure. Once this occurs, many adherents move on to other spiritual endeavors — or return to their mainstream church from where they initially came. The original problem the person encountered which prompted him/her to seek out a Spiritualist medium is resolved (on some level) and interest in the religion then sometimes wanes. To Spiritualists, this is "divine order" and is as it is supposed to be in the larger spiritual picture. The practical, fiscal side of the religion, however, needs active adherents who do not view the religion or camp only as a spiritual Disneyland where one can get a reading, attend a séance, or take a class on how to see auras, but rather what is needed are dedicated members who will continue to support the church and its activities for the duration.<sup>20</sup> Also, Spiritualism, which was originally the "anti-church" church, is much too "churchified" for people who want a New Age experience without the obligation of belonging to a church (which requires a certain amount of dedication, attendance, and participation). Modern society — through television, books, workshops, and the Internet — offers people quick fixes to their spiritual needs, precluding the need for them to be parishioners in a specific church.

Today, Camp Chesterfield continues to exist due in large part to the original vision of its founding members and the commitment of its longtime secretary, Mable Riffle. The current dilemma facing the IAOS and Camp Chesterfield, and many other churches, too will pass. Historically, Spiritualism has regularly endured times of great prosperity and times of near extinction.

Camp Chesterfield, as it modernizes its appeal to a new generation of spiritual seekers, will continue to offer confirmation of life after death to those who come through its gates. Although the number of visitors and members may not be the same as in its heyday, as interest in the paranormal and communication with the so-called dead heightens, so will interest in this "Old Age" religion. For one-hundred and thirty years, Camp Chesterfield has been a "spiritual center of light" to many generations of Hoosiers, offering comfort and healing to all those who enter upon its grounds.

The failure to embrace quickly modern technology and media (*i.e.* the Internet) may possibly explain why some churches experienced a drop in membership, donations, and participation while others expanded exponentially becoming "mega churches." Churches that are quick to embrace modern trends and initiate technology positively within their spiritual structure often are able to attract parishioners by adapting to the outside world. Spiritualism historically is not a missionary or evangelical-based religion, instead preferring adherents to come to the religion by their own volition (*i.e.* "Those who are meant to come will find it on their own"). Generally, Spiritualism has been very slow and hesitant to accept modern technology in spreading its message, preferring to take a spiritual attitude toward such endeavors. Spiritualism's peer religions, Mormonism and Christian Science, have been much more successful in maintaining their religions by proselytizing and conforming more rapidly to societal changes.

This issue has plagued Spiritualism from its earliest beginnings. Many "Spiritualists" historically were nominal adherents, at best, attending a mainstream Christian church on Sunday mornings, and then attending a Spiritualist service later (and maybe a séance). Many Spiritualist camps, like Camp Chesterfield, have a "high season" (from June-September) in which mediums are in residence to attend to the many people who visit for readings and séances. This seasonal arrangement has further added to people's general attitude and confusion about what the church is and how it functions in a camp setting. Instead of it being a regular church they attend and support, it becomes a vacation where they can just visit a week or two in the summer and many feel there is no further need to offer financial or volunteer support because it is not during "season." In the case of Camp Chesterfield, it is a year-round camp that has regular church services and functions throughout the year and not just during "season."

#### Conclusion

The notion of a camp meeting that was borrowed from other more mainstream religions of the nineteenth century proved very useful and important to the Spiritualist movement. Allowing large groups of like-minded adherents to meet served and prospered the religion well into the current century. During Spiritualism's heady salad days, thousands of curious souls clamored to get to one of several dozen camp meetings that sprang up around the United States from around 1866 through the mid-1920s. The yearning of people to commune with spirits on the other side of the veil at a time when Spiritualist churches were few and far between, allowed adherents to meet other Spiritualists and to learn about the religion, science and philosophy of this American-made religion. Although only around twenty Spiritualist Camps remain today, with only a handful of these truly active, the history and culture of the camps continue on in the same way they did over one hundred years ago.

The necessity of a camp meeting certainly is not the same as it was in the nineteenth century, but the same reasons for meeting and learning have not changed. Lily Dale, Camp Chesterfield, Cassadaga, Harmony Grove and Wonewoc continue to serve those who seek solace and confirmation about loved ones who have passed over to the other side. Even though these camps are remnants from a largely bygone era, they continue to serve an important purpose—to prove the continuity of life after death to the bereaved. Camp Chesterfield is testament and serves as a modern example to this fact and illustrates concretely how the religious movement of Spiritualism began, transformed itself, and flourished over the past century and a half. Although it is not the vibrant and active place of Spiritualist study it once was, it still offers those who adhere to this religious belief system a place to worship and commune with spirit.

Research into Spiritualist camps has revealed that many of the existing camps are either in serious or desperate trouble financially due to a lack of interest, members and finances, or are barely subsisting for the same reasons. Not one of the camps is free of financial strain or trouble — even Lily Dale that has the most attendance of all the camps is in need of funds to preserve the assets and structures they currently have. The strength of any religious organization is only as strong as its members and adherents. Only time will tell what the future holds, but for some of these wonderfully unique camps that are filled with history and religious culture, it may already be too late. The next decade will prove vital to the survival of many of the camps outlined in this paper and it is hoped that a change will occur that will allow these beautiful old camps to thrive once more.

#### **Bibliography**

1 Awtry, M. J. (2014) Cassadaga: Where Spirits Meet. Sanford, FL: Shen-Men Publishing.

<sup>2</sup> Awtry, M.J. (2011) Spiritualism on the Move: A Reality Check for the New Century. Sanford, FL: Shen-Men Publishing.

Buescher, J. (2004) The Other Side of Salvation: Spiritualism and the Nineteenth-Century Experience. (Skinner House Books).

Camp Chesterfield. "Hett Art Gallery and Museum Archives," *Indiana Association of Spiritualists* (IAOS). Chesterfield, Indiana.

Dewey, D.M. (1850) History of the Strange Sounds or Rappings, Heard in Rochester and Western New York, and Usually Called the Mysterious Noises! Which are Supposed by Many to be Communications from the Spirit World, Together with All the Explanation that Can as Yet Be Given of the Matter. Rochester, NY: D.M. Dewey.

Doyle, A.C. (1985) *The History of Spiritualism (Volumes I and II)*. London, GB: Arno Press [originally published by George H. Dornan Company, 1926].

"Fake Medium Won't Appeal — Mrs. Mabel Riffle Pays \$25 Fine for Humbuggery." (Newspaper article. Publisher and date unknown.) [From the Hett Art Gallery and Museum Archival Collection].

Falkenstein, L. (2007) "They See Dead People: The Mediums of Wonewoc Spiritualist Camp Believe in Life After Death, in the Here and Now." Madison, WI: Isthmus.com. Retrieved on February 16, 2016 at http://isthmus.com/news/cover-story/they-see-dead-people/#sthash. 4o7ArIVO.dpuf.

Fleet, J. [writer/instructional designer]. (1987) *America Past Religion*. Denver, Colorado: PBS in conjunction with KRMA TV and the Agency for Instructional Technology. [video]

Goldsmith, B. (1998) Other Powers: The Age of Suffrage, Spiritualism, and the Scandalous Victoria Woodhull. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.

Good News Bible. (2001) (American Bible Society)

Hall, T. (1962) The Spiritualists: The Story of Florence Cook and William Crookes. (Helix Press of Garrett Publications).

Harrison, P. et al. (1986) Chesterfield Lives! Spiritualist Camp—1886-1986—Our First Hundred Years. (Indiana Association of Spiritualists Press).

Hattaway, M. (2008) Personal conversation. Camp Chesterfield, Indiana.

Hazelgrove, J. (2000) Spiritualism and British Society Between the Wars. (Manchester University Press).

Horowitz, M. (2009) Occult America: The Secret History of How Mysticism Shaped Our Nation. (Bantam Books).

Jackson, H. (1972) The Spirit Rappers: The Strange Story of Kate and Maggie Fox, Founders of the American Spiritualist Movement. (Doubleday & Company).

Johnson, G. (1937) *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press); pp. 392-394.

Jordan, N. (1998) "Into the Wilderness: Circuit Riders Take Religion to the People." Tar Heel Junior Historian 37, no. 2 (spring). Raleigh, North Carolina: North Carolina Museum of History.

Leonard, M. (2009) People from the Other Side: The Enigmatic Fox Sisters and the History of Victorian Spiritualism (The History Press).

<sup>1</sup> Leonard, T.J. (2016) A Paper Commissioned by the John Fetzer Trust about Spiritualism, Spiritualist Camps, Camp Chesterfield, and Physical Phenomena. [Unpublished research paper; John Fetzer Trust; Vicksburg, Michigan]

<sup>2</sup> Leonard, T. J. (2005) Talking to the Other Side: A History of Modern Spiritualism and Mediumship— A Study of the Religion, Science, Philosophy and Mediums that Encompass this American-Made Religion. (iUniverse)

<sup>3</sup> Leonard, T.J. (2008) "Women of Substance: *The Fox Sisters* — Influential Voices of the Spiritualist Movement in 19<sup>th</sup> Century America." Houston, TX: The Year 2008 Proceedings of the ASSR-SW (pp. 81-100).

4 Leonard, T.J. (2016) "Spiritualism Revisited: A Research Study on the Status of Spiritualist Camps throughout the United States." Houston, TX: The Year 2016 Proceedings of the ASSR (pp. 81-100).

Melton, J.G. (1978) "Spiritualism." Encyclopedia of American Religions, Volume 2. Wilmington, NC: McGrath Publishing Company.

*National Register of Historic Places.* (2002) (United States Park Service) [See www.nps.gov/history/nr/listings/20020726.htm].

National Spiritualist Association of Churches (NSAC). "History of the Spiritualism [sic]" [Official Website, retrieved on January 7, 2016 at https://www.nsac.org/history.php.]

NonProfitFacts.com. "Wooley Park Ashley Spiritualist Camp." [Retrieved on February 16, 2016]

Rhae, R. (2016) "HGSA History" *Harmony Grove Spiritualist Association Official Website*. Retrieved on February 16, 2016 at http://harmonygrovespiritualist.org/history.html.

Richey, L. (2009) Personal conversation. Camp Chesterfield, Indiana.

Stuart, N.R. (2007) "The Fox Sisters: Spiritualism's Unlikely Founders." *The History Net—Where History Lives on the Web.* http://www.printthis.clickability.com [Retrieved on November 1 2007]

Stuart, N. (2005) The Reluctant Spiritualist: The Life of Maggie Fox. (Harcourt, Inc.).

Sunset Spiritualist Church; "Directory of Spiritualist Camps"; http://sunsetcamp.org/church/spiritualist-camps.html [Retrieved on February 15, 2016]

Vanderstel, D. (2009) "Religion in Indiana: 1830s." *Indiana History, Conner Prairie*. [Retrieved on December 5, 2009 at www.connerprairie.org/Learn-And-Do/Indana-History/America-1800].

Werner, Nicholas (1937). Mysterious Circumstances Of Central Indiana. (Clayton Books).

# Appendix 1: Currently Active Spiritualist Camps

Camp Chesterfield- Chesterfield, IN Northern Lake Michigan Spiritualist Camp-Charlevoix, MI Camp Edgewood- Milton, WA On-I-Set Wigwam Spiritualist Camp- Onset, MA Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp- Cassadaga, FL Pine Grove Spiritualist Camp- Niantic, CT Chain Lakes Spiritualist Camp- South Branch, MI Sun Spiritualist Camp-Tonopah, AZ Cherry Valley Spiritualist Camp- Cherry Valley, IL Sunset Spiritualist Camp- Wells, KS Etna Spiritualist Camp-Etna, ME Snowflake Spiritualist Camp- Central Lake, MI Harmony Grove Spiritualist Association-San Diego, CA Temple Heights Spiritual Camp- Northport, ME Lake Pleasant Camp- Franklin County, MA Western Wisconsin Camp Association- Wonewoc, Lily Dale Assembly- Lily Dale, NY Wooley Park Ashley Spiritualist Camp-Ashley, Madison Spiritualist Camp- Reymond, ME Ohio Mississippi Valley Spiritualist Association-[Partial Source: Sunset Spiritualist Church; Clinton, IA "Directory of Spiritualist Camps"; http://sunsetcamp.org/church/spiritualist-National Spiritual Alliance-Franklin County, MA

camps.html retrieved on February 15, 2016]

# **Appendix 2: Map of Camp Chesterfield**

