

# Research Tips and Resources



Slide deck created by Elaine Davison

There is not one place to find information about places and people when preparing for a Paranormal Investigation.

Research often requires time, travel, good communication skills.

# General Tips

- Start with your client interview then work to make a research plan.
- Give your self plenty of time
- Research and copy fees vary
- Take a pencil and leave pens at home!
- Take a digital camera
- Be friendly and appreciative
- Keep track of your resources
- Confirm the resource and confirm with an alternate source when possible
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Remember no resource is perfect! Learn who provided the information and how they obtained it before you use it.

# Types of Information Available

- Property Deeds
- Abstract of titles
- Maps
- Photographs
- Newspapers and Periodicals
- Diaries, Journals and Letters
- Census Records
- Obituaries
- Criminal Records
- Tax Records
- Directories
- Estate and Probate Records
- Trade Journals
- Church Records
- Oral Histories
- Military Records

# Where to find Information

- State Archives
- Historical Societies
- College, State and Local Libraries
- Museums
- City, County & State Government Offices
- Genealogical Societies
- Federal Offices:
  - Bureau of Land Management
  - Library of Congress
  - USFS
  - National Archives
- Historical Databases

# Case Story...

A young child was often seen holding long conversations and playing with “imaginary” friends. The family was not concerned until one night...

The child was sitting on the couch with family members and the child looked behind her and said, “I am too tired to play right now.” Almost immediately her hair was raised in the air and tugged as if another child was pulling her hair. The child turned to the unseen hair puller and yelled, “Go home, now or I will never play with you again!”

Shocked and worried, the family called a paranormal team to investigate.

\* Note this is a fictional case based off the situations encountered during many investigations

# Case Story Research

Information acquired from interviews:

- The home had been built in the 1970's in a rural area
- Everyone who had ever resided in the home was still alive and was interviewed
- The previous owners built the house when they moved to the property with their teenage children
- Other than with the child there had been no paranormal occurrences
- The previous owners were told that at one time before there had been another home on the property but did not know where on the property it had been
- When interviewed the child gave the investigators specific names of the unseen playmates

\* Note this is a fictional case based off the situations encountered during many investigations

# Case Story Research

The interview provided:

- current address – there is an issue here, most addresses went from route to street addresses in the late 1970's, the previous owners could not remember it
- possibility of another house
- the names of the unseen playmates.

1<sup>st</sup> Stop: The county tax assessor's website

Information obtained:

The home was remodeled in 1936 and again in 1939 but the home was built in early 1970's... but no old address

2<sup>nd</sup> Stop: Call to the family Did they know if any neighbors who had lived in the neighborhood prior to the mid-1970's?

Information obtained: Yes, they knew one neighbor on both sides of them who had lived in their homes since the mid-1970's.

# Case Story Research

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Stop: Old telephone/City Directories

Information obtained: Previous address found!

## 4<sup>th</sup> Stop... Even older telephone/City Directories...

Information obtained: No address listed from 1942 and 1970, prior to 1942 a similar address existed instead of Route 1 Box 419, it was Route 1 Box 417. Also a list of former residents of the “mystery house”

## 5<sup>th</sup> Stop... University Libraries Aerial Photo collections

Information obtained: The mystery and current homes were found in different photos. Based on other structures in both photos, the homes were estimated to be 150 feet apart.

# Case Story Research

## 6<sup>th</sup> Stop... Genealogy Rooms

Information obtained: Obituaries, death information of known former owners/children.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Stop... Newspapers Archives

Information obtained: The previous home burnt in 1941 from unknown cause and the family abandoned the property.

# Case Story Research

## Conclusions drawn from research

- The current home had two owners and no deaths occurred in the current home
- There was a home formerly located on the property, about 150 feet from the current residence
- The names the child gave during her interview matched names of children that died while living in the former home in 1918

The formal investigation did not come up with any viable evidence. The research gave antidotal evidence the child was possibly playing with spirit children who had lived in a separate home on the property some 90 years earlier.

# Research Conclusions

- Document what you find in a summary report
  - What was at the location now and before
  - Who owned/lived/worked there
  - What was the property used for residence/mill
- Do not try to interpret – stay with facts

## Other Research Tips

- Try <http://heritagedata.prd.state.or.us/historic/> database
- Get a local library card
- Use the libraries online catalog before you go anywhere
- Don't assume anything
- Keep a notebook with all your notes in one place
- Do not assume no matter how insistent the interviewee is all the information is correct

# Research Pitfalls

The best historical researcher will make mistakes, due to misleading data.

## Case Point - Cormier Building Lebanon, Oregon:

The Oregon Historic Sites Database now has two listings for the Cormier Building in Lebanon, Oregon as shown below. The original researcher learned the Palm Restaurant was in the Cormier Building when it opened, then learned the Palm Restaurant opened in 1906, the researcher assumed the Palm opened with the building. It really existed 5 years before the Cormier Building and moved when the building opened.

Ken's Keg Tavern	45 W Sherman St	Lebanon	Linn	c.1905	EC	<a href="#">form</a>	<a href="#">map</a>
Cormier Building	45 W Sherman	Lebanon	Linn	c.1911	EC	<a href="#">form</a>	<a href="#">map</a>

To confuse this matter more the Linn County Tax Assessor has the date this building was built as 1925.

# Other Tips

- After all the former owners/business (& owners) of a location have been found using directories/deed then go to Google (or other search engine) and see what can be found.
- Google Books will pull up snippets sometimes which are great finds.

A home was being investigated. The last two owners both had mentioned an apparition of an elderly lady with a cane.

The Google search of the previous owners brought up a lawsuit involving one former owner was involved in regarding the property. The final judgment was on line, but at the courthouse the full transcript of the trial was located.

The former owner made one eerie statement during the proceedings. She stated she would never leave the property or relinquish any part of ownership and she intended to haunt the location after death.

The family now talks to the spirit in their home calling her by name, the home is now peaceful.