

Record [of Experience of a Psychic Phenomenon]

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Unity Church Study

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The following is a true report of an experience that I had last night while making a call at the home of Mr. James T. Rhodes, 241 East Street in this city.

Conditions.

Mrs. Davis and myself went to make a social call on Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes and Mr. and Mrs. Otto Henckler. Mrs. Henckler is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes. Mr. and Mrs. Henckler live in the same house with Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes. Mrs. Davis had never met any of the people before. I had met them all with the exception of Mrs. Rhodes. Mr. Rhodes had called upon me once in this study about one month ago. He had also been to church one Sunday morning about the same date as the call he made at the study. I have met Mr. Henckler several times in a more or less casual way. About two weeks ago I met Mrs. Henckler at a Sunday afternoon social study class. Last Sunday evening Mr. and Mrs. Henckler came to the evening service, and after the service together with two others came into the study for conversation. Last evening Mrs. Davis and I went to call.

Up to last evening neither Mrs. Davis or myself had ever had any familiarity with psychic phenomena, except such as had come to our attention through reading and casual conversation. I have been familiar for some years with several books relating to these happenings. Aside from other casual conversations upon the subject, I have talked with Rev. Minot J. Savage concerning some of the experiences that he has come in contact with, and of which he speaks in his books.

I knew that Mr. Rhodes was an "impersonating medium," and in a conversation at my study he described some of his experiences. I also know that Mrs. Henckler was a Medium.

She has never made use of her powers except in private circumstances and among friends. She shrinks from the trance state and only with great reluctance does she ever give in to the influences of such conditions.

We had been at the home about one hour when the incidents that I shall describe took place. We were seated in the room as follows. On my left was a center table. On the other side of the table, and seated a little back of the side of the table opposite me sat Mr. Rhodes. He was at a distance of about two or three feet from me. On my right and a little to the rear sat Mr. Henckler at about the same distance from me, three or four feet. On the other side of the room at a distance of about six or seven feet sat Mrs. Davis; at her right about two feet away sat Mrs. Henckler; at the right of Mrs. Henckler at a distance of about three feet sat Mrs. Rhodes.

The room was very brightly lighted by gas.

We had been talking for about an hour. Mrs. Henckler, Mrs. Rhodes, and Mrs. Davis were talking about the Lebanon Shakers, and the possibility of making a visit to the North Family. Mr. Henckler and I were talking about Littlefield's socialist colony at Westboro. Mr. Rhodes, having a defective sense of hearing, was sitting in the chair at my left, while the rest of us were talking. Suddenly he began to feel a sensation in his right hand, and his hand came under the power of some influence. It gave Mr. Rhodes the sense of great physical strength. Took him out of his chair, and twisted his arms and caused him to shake his fist at me, then he pounded the arm of the chair in which I was sitting. After that the control left.

Then I began to say that it reminded me of an incident that happened when I was in the high school. I explained that one day several of us boys were fooling around in the Y.M.C.A. rooms, when the secretary came in and put me out. In as much as I resisted him, he had to use force. The movements of Mr. Rhodes, in obedience to the control, reminded me of that incident.

While I was explaining this incident, the control again took possession of Mr. Rhodes. This time Mr. Rhodes got up

from his chair, walked around the table, stood in front of me. Then he began to go through the signs and motions to show that he was impersonating a person of large frame, very strong, broad shoulders, tall and very straight. Then, still under the influence of the control, Mr. Rhodes took his watch out and loosed the chain, and put it into my hand. Then he began to feel around on his vest at a spot over the heart. Then his hands came down to his waist as if to put an apron on. The strings were passed and tied in a knot. Then hands went to the upper part of the body, where they indicate the outline of the lungs, and tried to show evidence of pain and struggle. Then Mr. Rhodes throat began to grow husky and he struggled for breath, and threw his head back as if he had something down his throat and was very hard pressed for breath.

This ended the experience.

Along toward the last of the impersonating I began to think that the attempt was being made to impersonate a school and college friend. He was a big powerful fellow, who had been one of my closest friends, and who had died while in the Harvard Law School.

The points in the impersonation are as follows. First the shaking of the fist and the evidences of strength in the first instance, viewed in the light of the whole experience suggest the facts of our frequent boxing, wrestling, and squabbling.

In the second case it was apparently an attempt to indicate physical appearance. The removal of the watch and handing it to me, I cannot understand. The picking and the fumbling on the vest at a spot over the heart, suggest the college fraternity to which we belonged, and were devoted, and in which we had our closest relationships. The putting on of the apron is evidently a reference to the Masonic apron, as it indicated in the manner of tying it etc. It was at the suggestion of this fellow that I had applied for admission to the masonic Order, and he was present when I took the third degree.¹

¹ You can see a scan of Earl Clement Davis' Masonic Admission Document on the webpage for "Before -1902."

The suggestion as to the lungs and the throat evidently had to do with the nature of the disease of which he died, pneumonia.

After he had given this impersonation, Mr. Rhodes still under the influence of the control went across the room and shook hands with Mrs. Davis. Then the control left entirely.

During all this time Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Henckler felt the changed atmospheric condition, and Mrs. Henckler had to struggle to keep from coming under the control herself.

Mr. Rhodes is an impersonating medium. He is perfectly conscious all the time, but has no control over his muscles. The influence takes possession of his body completely but does not influence the consciousness.