



Greater Pittsburgh Paranormal Society™

www.pittsburghparanormal.com

Greater Pittsburgh Paranormal Society **Investigation Tips** *“Things that go bump in the night”*

As we continue to explore the unknown it is important that we identify and catalog as much as we can. This enables us to quickly weed out known variables, which in turn gives us more time to study the unknown.

The following sections will consist of known conditions that have been found and identified as possible connections to paranormal phenomenon.

- Cold Spots
- Doors moving by themselves
- New House Hauntings
- Paranormal or Nature
- Ghost and Geology
- Analyzing the Evidence

Cold Spots:

Feeling a cold spot? Before you start to blame Casper, here are a few things you should consider first.

Air is almost always on the move in a room, even with the doors and windows closed. This is because the surfaces of some objects are at different temperatures to others. Heat will be exchanged between the objects in an attempt to equalize the temperature. This is done mainly through convection. This is an airflow whereby warm air (which is less dense) rises towards the ceiling; cools and drops back towards the floor.

When moving air is in contact with human skin it will generally feel cool (wind-chill). This is because the moving air removes heat from the skin. It also cools by causing evaporation from the skin. This cooling will NOT show up as a temperature drop with a conventional thermometer.

Never underestimate the power of suggestion. Tell someone that they are standing in the 'cold spot' and they may start feeling it! It is best not to tell anyone where the cold spots are supposed to be and then see if anyone reports one.

Doors opening by themselves:

Another aspect that has become part of the paranormal scene is a door that opens on its own. In some cases doors are found open having been left shut, though no one actually saw them open. In other cases, witnesses have claimed to hear the door opening (in the dark or from afar) or even caught sight of it moving. There are even reports of door handles being seen to move prior to a door being opened.

With today's older homes it becomes important for us to look for ways that air can enter or exit homes. (Air vents, chimney's etc.) If there is a flow of air (wind) across the top of a chimney or furnace vent, it will induce a reduction in pressure in the room below. This applies even if there is no fire in the fireplace. Thus on windy days there will be lower air pressure in rooms with fireplaces and this could open doors that are not properly closed. If there IS a fire in the fireplace, there will be an even bigger updraft caused by the hot gases from the fire, which have a lower density than the surrounding air (and so float upwards).

You should note what the weather was doing when such incidents of door opening were reported. Are they mostly on windy days or cold days (when the fire might have been lit)?

New House Hauntings:

Many cases of hauntings come from people that have just moved into a new home, even though the previous tenants had no problems at all. On a similar level people that visit a place for the first time that first report strange happenings. That's because the tenants are used to all the creaks and groans that any building inevitably produces.

The most commonly reported odd occurrences in buildings are sounds. Many of the sounds originate in places you can't see; behind walls and under floorboards. This makes them difficult to explain. It is common for metal objects (such as pipes) to make knocking sounds as they contract while cooling down at the end of the day when there has been heating on. Floorboards can creak as people walk across them. Doors can even open by themselves if they are not secured properly. On windy days windows can rattle and tree branches might knock on walls or even doors. The wind in chimneys can often make spooky groaning noises.

It is less common to see things that puzzle newcomers to a building. That's because it's easier to investigate and explain what you can see. But there can be puzzling unfamiliar shadows and lights that can seem weird in the middle of the night. Lights from headlights in a road outside can send strange pools of light moving across walls and ceilings. Trees outside can cast spooky shadows with the help of streetlights, sometimes animated by the wind.

When people first notice something odd going on in their homes, they are usually reluctant to consider the possibility that it could be paranormal. However, once they have decided that it IS paranormal (for whatever reason), everything becomes paranormal! Not only are unexplained knocks blamed on ghosts but also so are apparently normal chance incidents. Anything that goes missing is now the ghost. Any malfunction of a household appliance becomes suspicious. Unusual pet behavior is attributed to supernatural causes.

Nature or Paranormal:

Often times we find ourselves living within the very aspects of nature without even being aware of it. Even though we live in cities and towns nature has a way of becoming a part of our lifestyle. Hearing scratching sounds in a house is more often rodents, insects, bats, mice, nesting birds or even squirrels than paranormal activity. It can sound much louder at night and often reacts to knocking on walls where the sound is loudest.

Ghosts and Geology:

Given that many different factors can contribute to a paranormal event, geology is an area that should not be overlooked. Some researchers have suggested there could be a link between paranormal reports and geology given the repeating factor of hauntings within a given location.

In an Article written by Maurice Townsend we start to see a trend between geology and the paranormal. In the article He looks closely at paranormal phenomena and geomagnetic fields.

“There is now so much laboratory evidence in favor of magnetically induced hallucinations that some paranormal researchers are taking it as read that they are the source of certain anomalous experiences, notably some kinds of ghost. However, the field evidence for such magnetic fields is slight at present. But that could soon change as equipment capable of detecting them is now being deployed at haunted locations. If these magnetic fields exist outside the laboratory, what exactly is causing them? A natural source of EIFs that has been suggested is tectonic strain. Essentially, the Tectonic Strain Theory (TST) states that stresses within the Earth’s crust, less than those required to produce an earthquake, may result in highly localized surface electromagnetic disturbances through piezoelectricity in sub-surface rocks. Piezoelectricity is the phenomenon whereby certain crystals, notably quartz, produce an electric charge across opposite crystal faces when under physical pressure or strain.”

Analyzing the Evidence:

Evidence is the glue that holds together all scientific theories. Theories by their very nature are only our attempts of explaining what we see and observe. The final say in our quest to understand the unknown is the evidence we gather. In the end, any new theory however strong it may appear, must be tested against the evidence.

As paranormal investigators we cannot stop as soon as we come up with evidence that appears to support the “Cause and Effect”. It might seem at that time to be the correct thing to do, but if we stopped there we would be wrong.

It is important that we not jump at what appears to be the correct answer without first looking for other possibilities. The critical factor to remember is not to just come up with any answer but to come up with the correct answer.