

SNU

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TODAY



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Year of the environment

LIGHT, NATURE, TRUTH:
WHY THE MESSAGE ON
OUR EMBLEM IS SO
RELEVANT NOW

THIS ISSUE:

NATURE HAS ALWAYS
BEEN AN ASPECT OF
OUR PHILOSOPHY, WE
MUST ALL PLAY OUR
PART

INTERFAITH IN ACTION!

WE LOOK AT 3 CASES
OF INTERFAITH
WORKING TO UNITE
FAITHS TOGETHER

Green Summit

A CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS TO
JOIN OUR SNU GREEN SUMMIT
IN SPRING 2020: READ MORE
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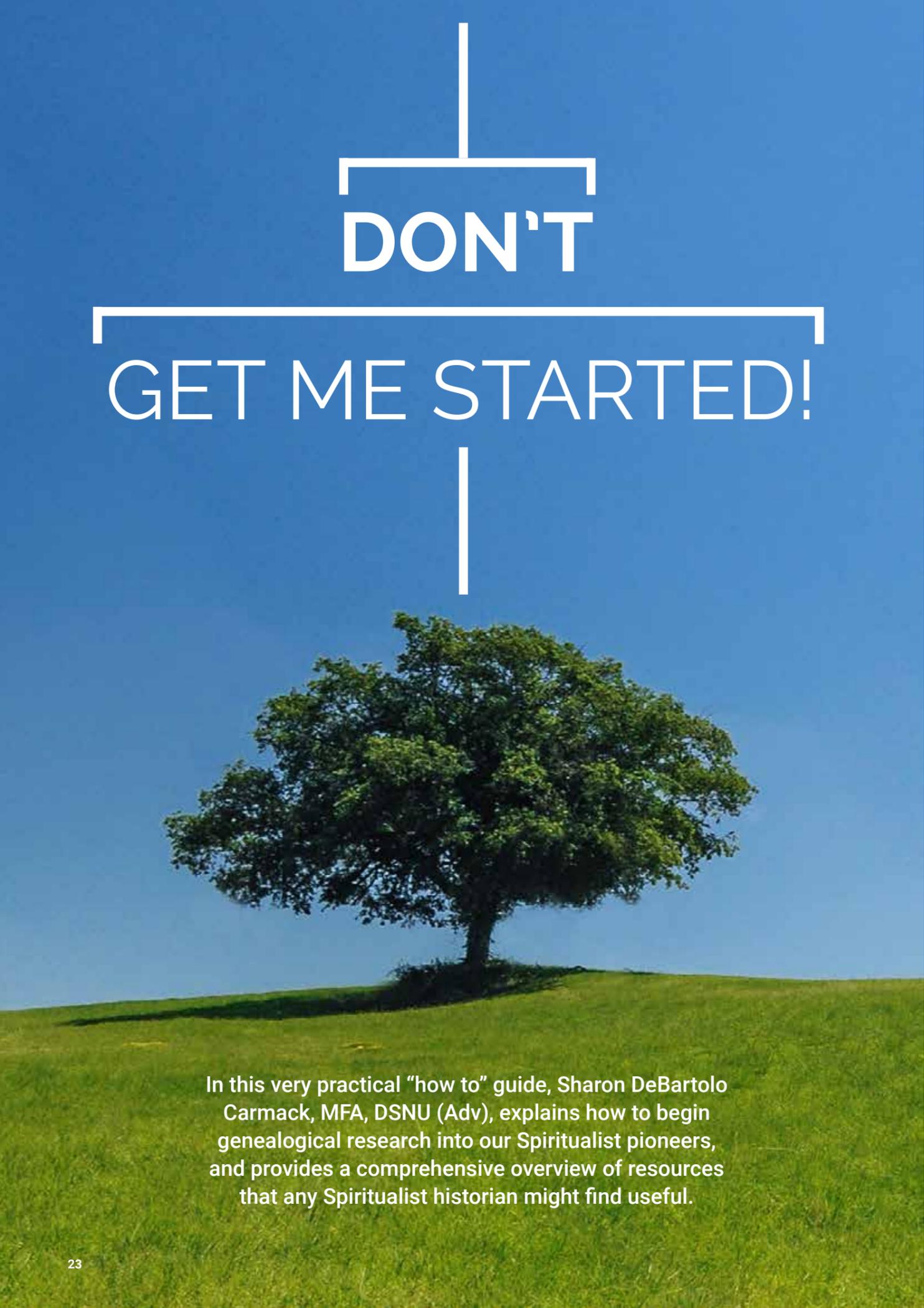
**DON'T GET ME
STARTED!**
SEARCHING FOR
SPIRITUALIST
ANCESTORS: WE
SHOW YOU HOW

Your regular Union update

News, reviews and comments from around the Union,
keeping you informed of the what, where and how of
your SNU – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow



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DON'T

GET ME STARTED!

In this very practical “how to” guide, Sharon DeBartolo Carmack, MFA, DSNU (Adv), explains how to begin genealogical research into our Spiritualist pioneers, and provides a comprehensive overview of resources that any Spiritualist historian might find useful.

PAVING THE WAY...

We do love our Spiritualist pioneers! They paved the way for Spiritualism in the United States, the United Kingdom, and worldwide. If you've taken SNU's course SD1 Foundation in Speaking and Demonstrating or sat for any awards, you know that one of the customary questions is about Spiritualist pioneers. It was through SD1 that I came to research and write a thesis for the A1 History of Spiritualism course, which I'm now expanding into my forthcoming biography of Maria B. Hayden. As a 30-year veteran professional genealogist, researching her, like anyone of the past, has had some challenges. I discovered, however, there is a plethora of information available about many Spiritualist pioneers if you know where to look. Many of the sources for researching pioneers are online; some are even free to use.

If you think or know you have a Spiritualist ancestor, your starting point might be a little different than if you are researching a pioneer unrelated to you:

IDENTIFYING SPIRITUALIST ANCESTORS

- 1 Oral history is a good starting place. Clues are aunts or grandmothers remembered as having “the gift,” “second sight,” “visitations,” or who were said to be “a little off.”
- 2 Look for women active in women's rights movements, especially in the U.S., as they might also be Spiritualists. Their obituaries might list clubs or organisations known for activism.
- 3 On U.S. headstones, watch for wording such as “Entered Summerland” (a term some Spiritualists use for heaven), epitaphs such as “There is no death,” and a “transition” date rather than a death date.
- 4 Pay particular attention to ancestors who resided in or near a Spiritualist community in the U.S., such as Lily Dale, New York; Lake Pleasant, Massachusetts; Cassadaga, Florida; or Chesterfield, Indiana. Lists of camps and churches are available here: National Spiritualist Association of Churches (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYnasc), Sunset Spiritualist Church and Camp (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYsunset), and this wiki list of Spiritualist organisations (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYlist).

FINDING RECORDS ON PIONEERS AND ANCESTORS

If you've done any genealogical research, you know that census records are a starting point for tracking down people of the past. For the U.S., federal census records are online from 1790 to 1940; for the U.K., they are online from 1841-1911, and for Canada, from 1851-1916. You can find these records on Ancestry.com. A few census collections are available to search for free, but mostly you need a subscription to access these records. Another helpful site for U.K. and Irish researchers is FindMyPast.com. It's also a subscription site, but there is some free content.

It's beyond the scope of this article to detail the ins and outs of genealogical research, but for help in finding and using records from all over the world, see the FamilySearch Wiki (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYfsw). Because many pioneer Spiritualists, like Emma Hardinge Britten and Maria B. Hayden, worked on both sides of the Atlantic in their quest to spread Spiritualism, it's best to check both U.S. and U.K. sources.

(Continued overleaf)

Please Note: Most of the links given here have been shortened on tinyurl.com for your convenience, but please be aware these links are mainly independent of the SNU and may become unavailable or change over time. If you would like an electronic copy of this article with hyperlinks, head to the SNU Today download page in the snu.org.uk members' area - Editor.

YOUR SEARCH...

ONE Look for pioneers advertising-services as mediums or clairvoyants in city directories. Many city directories are online through Ancestry.com, but also Google the name of the city or town plus city directory. Some may be digitized through public libraries and repositories. The New York City Directories, for example, are here and free to use: tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYnycd

TWO Boston City Directories are here and free to use: tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYboston. London city directories are on Ancestry.co.uk and require a subscription: tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYlondon

THREE Newspapers may report on visiting mediums from all parts of the world; gatherings and conventions; names of local churches and sponsors; and show advertisements for mediums. Check the following newspaper databases: GenealogyBank.com and Newspapers.com for U.S. papers, and FindMyPast.com and British Newspaper Archive (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYbna) for U.K. papers. All require a subscriber fee, but some public and university libraries may have these databases available for free to library patrons.

FOUR Check newspapers and city directories for Spiritualist churches and camps in the areas where pioneers resided. Because Spiritualism lacked uniformity in the nineteenth century, records and recordkeeping vary on both sides of the ocean, but Spiritualist churches typically perform admissions to fellowship, naming services, marriages, and funerals. Spiritualist church registers might still be with the church. If defunct, check with local, state, or county historical societies and archives, as well as university library collections. In the U.S. check the American Antiquarian Society (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYaas), the Library of Congress, and the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYnuc), searching on the keyword "Spiritualism."

FIVE The website Ephemera (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYeph) collects Spiritualist records. See Listings of 19th Century

Spiritualists (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYeph1) for directories, registers, almanacs, newspapers, society membership lists, and convention proceedings.

SIX The International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals (IAPSOP.COM) has a large collection of digitized Spiritualist publications, including The Banner of Light, 1857-1907 (U.S.), The Medium and Daybreak, 1870-1895 (U.K.), and the Spiritual Telegraph, 1852-1857 (U.S.). Many of these periodicals publish items of Spiritualist interest from around the world, so don't let the publication place limit your search. Although the periodicals are not indexed, you can do a search through Adobe when the PDF of the issue opens



after you click on it. This requires you to search every issue individually, however. Keep in mind that the search feature is only as good as the clarity of the digitized copy. Most of the newspapers are only four to eight pages, so searching page by page, while time consuming, is not difficult as long as the images are clear. Some of the newspaper sites mentioned in #2 above, however, have fully searchable issues. For example, Spiritual Telegraph is also digitized on GenealogyBank.com, and you can search the entire span of issues by entering names or keywords.

SEVEN See past and current issues of the Spiritualists' National Union scholarly publication Pioneer (2013-pres-

ent tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYpj) edited by Paul Gaunt, Curator of Britten Museum and Library at the Arthur Findlay College. The journal covers the history of the SNU, SNUi, the Vagrancy Act, its pioneers, and more. It's also the only current publication with the correct Hydesville research. Back issues are available for free online.

EIGHT The PsyPioneer (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYpsy) (2004-2016) is another noteworthy journal. It contains articles on the personalities and organizations of Spiritualism in bygone days, but its scope is much broader than just Spiritualism. Much of its material is reprinted in full from old books, journals, letters, and newspapers. Back issues are available for free online.

NINE Review Ann Braude's News from the Spirit World: A Checklist of American Spiritualist Periodicals, 1848-1900, pdf edition (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYannb) (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1990). This manuscript covers the dates of publication, location, and where extant newspaper originals are housed.

TEN My Facebook page called Spiritualist Ancestors (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYsa) is a place where members can share research and ask for research help.

ELEVEN Karen Heasley writes a blog about Spiritualist history and pioneers: Go to Spiritual Path Church (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYspc), and look at the sidebar on the right for links.

TWELVE Marc Demarest also writes a blog, which he began in Jan. 2009 as Chasing Down Emma: Resolving the contradictions of, and filling in the gaps in, the life work and world of Emma Hardinge Britten (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYmd). But he also makes posts about many other Spiritualist pioneers and topics.

THIRTEEN Spiritualism Link (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYsl) is a message forum for "Spiritualists and those interested in learning more about the Religion, Philosophy, Science and Truth of the Spiritualist Movement."

FOURTEEN Preserving the Historical Collections of Parapsychology (phcp.nl) is a site to provide a forum for an informal group of archivists, librarians, curators, researchers, and others passionate about preserving these collections.

REPOSITORIES

Some of the following repositories have digitized parts of their collections and made them available online for free, but many of the repositories have to be visited in person to gain full access. I have found, however, that if you have a specific research request, the librarians and archivists are generally happy to assist you by email, sometimes scanning and digitizing documents in their collection for you at little to no cost.

U.S.

Marion H. Skidmore Library (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYmhs), Lily Dale, N.Y.

Camp Chesterfield, Indiana, Digitization Project (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYcc)

Brigham Young University Library (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYbyu), Provo, Utah. While this is a Mormon university, it has a surprisingly large collection of books on Spiritualism. (At one time in Utah history, Spiritualism and Mormonism almost merged.)

UMassAmherst (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYuma), Special Collections, Amherst, Mass.

American Society for Psychical Research Library (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYaspr), New York, N.Y.

U.K.

Britten Museum and Library (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYafc) Arthur Findlay College, Stansted, England

The College of Psychic Studies Archives (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYcps), London

British Society for Psychical Research Library and Archives (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYSpr), London

British Library (bl.uk), London. While their collection contains many books and articles, there are also journals and unpublished theses.

Remember, the papers of Spiritualist pioneers, especially world-famous pioneers, could end up anywhere: in a local library; a college or university library in the U.S., the U.K., or elsewhere; an archive; or in a descendant's hands. In Google or another

search engine, type in the name of the pioneer plus "papers." This is the catch-all phrase libraries and archives use for a collection of someone's correspondence, journals, diaries, etc. But for large collections, the papers could be spread among several repositories. For example, you can find the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Papers divided among the Murray Archive in the National Library of Scotland, The British Library in London, the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and at several other repositories. See The Sub-Librarians Scion of the Baker Street Irregulars (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYacd) for all the repositories throughout the world with Doyle Papers in their collection.

GOING ONE STEP FURTHER

One of the best ways to discover what resources are available for researching Spiritualist pioneers and ancestors is to read the more-recent Spiritualist histories and examine the sources these historians used. Many will also list the repositories in which they located original papers and records. I recommend the following histories:

Braude, Ann. Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America. 2nd edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008.

Carroll, Bret E. Spiritualism in Antebellum America. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

Natale, Simone. Supernatural Entertainments: Victorian Spiritualism and the Rise of Modern Media Culture. University Park, Penn.: Penn State University Press, 2016.

Oppenheim, Janet. The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850-1914. London: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

If you find a book or article cited in one of these histories, and you want to get your hands on it, search WorldCat.org to find it in a repository near you. WorldCat is "the world's largest network of library content and services." Or check with your local public library to see if you can borrow any books or articles you find on Interlibrary Loan. If it's a specific article you want, a lending library might send you a free digitized copy.

If a book you need is out of copyright, you may find free, digitized, and downloadable versions online through sites like archive.

org, books.google.com, gutengerg.org, and openlibrary.org

Happy Searching! As you embark on your search, be cautious of two things:

1. As I found when researching Maria B. Hayden, there is a lot of misinformation out there. Not everything you find online or in print is accurate. Online and published biographical accounts may merely regurgitate what another source says without being fact checked. Even historical records, such as newspaper articles, can have biases and misinformation. Compare and evaluate what you find with actual records (censuses, vital records, city directories, etc.). See "Evaluate the Evidence" (tinyurl.com/SNUTODAYee) on the FamilySearch Wiki.

2. Finally, be forewarned: Researching Spiritualist pioneers can be addictive! Once you start researching a pioneer, like I've discovered with my research on Maria, you may not be able to stop!

Sharon DeBartolo Carmack, DSNU, is the USA Representative for SNUi. She can be reached through her website, www.PathwaysUp.com. The author wishes to thank Paul Gaunt, Britten Museum Curator, for reviewing this article.

MRS. SCOTT

Weds a Spiritualist Medium at Toledo Tuesday.

The friends of Mrs. Eva Scott, relict of the late Voltaire Scott, may be somewhat surprised to learn of her marriage. Her wedding to Mr. Frank McKinley occurred at Toledo last Tuesday, the nuptial vows being pronounced at St. John's Episcopal church at high noon of that day, the Rev. Mr. Clapp officiating. After the wedding an elaborate reception was held at the groom's residence, the happy couple being the recipients of many costly gifts.

The groom is a well known spiritualist medium of the Centennial city and under his tutelage, his bride became a convert to this faith some months ago. It seems that he also understood the language of love as well as that of the inhabitants of the Great Unknown, and wooed and won his fair convert.

Mr. and Mrs. McKinley will for the present reside at the bride's residence at the corner of Wayne and Water streets.