

Call for Conference Papers/Book Chapters

Unexplained! Negotiating the Supernatural in the 19th Century Press

The Symposium on the Nineteenth Century Press, the Civil War, and Free Expression invites papers exploring how newspapers and other publications spread news and stories about the unexplained. The press created a forum for ideas concerning reality, and, therein, a stage for imagining the outcomes of relying on either science or the supernatural solely for answers. No doubt both served a purpose in building a society where a sense of belonging empowered citizens to develop their potential. Editors published supernatural news items, comments, poems, fictional narratives, illustrations, ads, reviews, and other things often without judging the material. They empowered readers to think freely about forbidden or perverse subjects.

Papers and panel presentations will be considered, with author permission, for inclusion in *Unexplained! Negotiating the Supernatural in the 19th Century Press*.

Topics include but are not limited to stories about the occult, sightings of fairies and other preternatural beings like angels, and paranormal themes as they appeared in the 19th century press. Because the “supernatural” refers to things visible outside of the physical world or occurring beyond the laws of nature, papers may highlight its many facets. We particularly seek papers that reflect paranormal beliefs from around the world as well as witchcraft, tarot card reading, omens and premonitions, devils (or demons), monsters, and skulls or skeletons. Dreams, nightmares, or bizarre weather phenomenon, like crickets pouring from the sky are also welcome. Writers may pursue earthly manifestations (vampires, werewolves, zombies, gods, and goddesses of all sorts as well as gothic elements) that reveal “the macabre, mysterious, or violent.”

We welcome papers dealing with press coverage of celebrities or journalists involved in uncanny pursuits and. Authors may analyze newspapers, magazines, ads, and cartoons, using any methodology or theoretical approach to study supernatural topics in the 19th century press. Research may also analyze aspects of popular culture (e.g., songs and plays, stereopticon slides, magic lantern shows, or dime novels) covered in the press.

For more information please contact:

Paulette Kilmer
University of Toledo
pkilmer@rockets.utoledo.edu

Debbie van Tuyll
Augusta University
DVANTYULL@augusta.edu

Brian Gabriel
Concordia University
brian.gabrial@concordia.ca