should be known to most Spiritualists. First-hand
descriptions of the Koons spirit room and their
séances gives a real sense of what it was like to be a
Spiritualist in the early years of Spiritualism. It also
details the issues and controversies both surrounding
and within Spiritualism. For those who want to know
more about the first decade of Spiritualism, I do rec-
ommend this book.

I recommend this book to those interested in early
Spiritualist history and local Ohioan or Midwestern
history with the end note caveat above.

Séances

contributed by Frank Kotowski

Here are some books on séances that you might
want to read:

Raymond Buckland: Solitary Seance: How You Can
Talk with Spirits on Your Own, Llewellyn Publica-
tions, 2011.

Robin P. Foy: In Pursuit of Physical Mediumship,

Katie Halliwell: Experiences of Trance, Physical
Mediumship and Associated Phenomena with the
Stewart Alexander Circle, part 1: Evidence of Sur-
vival After Death, 2008; part 2: Home Circles and
Public Sittings, 2008; part 3: The Etheric Conne-

Tom Harrison: Visits by Our Friends from the Other
Side, Saturday Night Press Publications, reprint

Elaine M. Kuzmeskus: Séance 101: Physical Me-
diumship: Table Tipping, Psychic Photography,
Trumpet Séances, and Other Important Phenomena,

Shannon Taggart: Séance, due out Fall 2019 by
Fulgur Press, UK.

I can call spirits from the vastly deep.
Why, so can I, or so can any man;
But will they come when you do call
for them?

William Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I

Portrait of Helen Duncan, from Harry Price, Regurgitation and
the Duncan Mediumship (Bulletin I of the National Laboratory
of Psychical Research), 1931. Image in the public domain.
Enchanted Ground: The Spirit Room of Jonathan Koons by Sharon Hatfield is a good overview of the first decade (1850s) of Spiritualism. It is more than a spiritual biography of one man; it is an history of early Spiritualism in the Midwest.

The book begins as a biography of the early life of Jonathan Koons. Born in 1818 in Pennsylvania, Koons as a young man migrates to Ohio, buys a plot of land, marries, begins a family, and starts to farm. His story is not the unusual. In 1852, Koons begins experimenting with Spiritualism. Soon, an ancient spirit known as King instructs Koons to build a spirit room with a unique spirit device. As in the movie, Field of Dreams, he is instructed to “build it, and they will come.” Build it he did, and people came from all over the country to visit his spirit room. Charging nothing for an evening in the spirit room and housing and feeding those who came were taxing on the family. In addition, the family faced persecution from those who felt his activities were devil worship. This included the burning of his barn after harvest. Koons refused to cave and continued his practice. His relatives, the Tippies, also set up a spirit room. Next came claims of fraud from within the Spiritualism community. By 1859, financially burned out, physically exhausted, emotionally stressed with his reputation is shreds, Koons closed his spirit room, sold his land, and moved west. Ever the controversial figure, Koons continued championing Spiritualism, but now in the press. Koons died in 1891.

The above is the basic story of the book, however, it is only the bare bones. Each chapter is filled with what is going on in the country, in the press, and especially key events in Spiritualism. From the people who visited his spirit room, debated his veracity, or simply paraded through the pages of Spiritualist history, the book is an early history and who’s who of Spiritualism. It would be hard to come away from reading this book without having a deeper understanding of this critical first decade of Spiritualism. The book does have some negative factors. The author’s style of end noting is unusual. The text has no end note numbers. The end note section simply lists the page to which the note refers. Scholars will find this frustrating. In addition, I looked forward to reading this book and wanted to enjoy it, yet I found reading it challenging. I cannot put my finger on whether it was the text font, amount of text per page, or the author’s writing style, it took me an unusually long time to finish this book.

Sharon Hatfield is a professor of writing at Hocking University (OH). She is a former reporter for the Coalfield Press (VA). She graduated from Lincoln Memorial University. She is the author of Never Seen the Moon: The Trials of Edith Maxwell and coeditor of An American Vein: Critical Readings in Appalachian Literature. She lives in Athens, Ohio the location of the Koons’s spirit room.

For Spiritualists, this book illuminates the first decade of Spiritualist history. It fleshes out the story of the Koons and Tippie families with names that