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THE MINIATURE HAUNTED HOUSE

AS INVENTED, ROUTINED AND PRESENTED

By The Great Leon

Exclusive publishing rights granted to the Ireland Magic Company by arrangement with Mr. Leon M. Leon (son of the late illusionist, The Great Leon). Performing rights have not been restricted. Individuals may build the Miniature Haunted House for their own use; but the commercial manufacturing rights have been reserved.

Mr. Leon M. Leon performed the entire routine, posed for pictures, provided copies of the manuscript, and furnished snapshots of The Great Leon performing this trophy winning routine. The entire text has been edited, illustrated and augmented by Dr. Eugene Glove, who also took the pictures of Leon M. Leon and the Haunted House.

INTRODUCTION

Leon's famous Haunted House is a rare thing in magic. It represents the weaving together of a number of separate tricks and effects into a complete act with a dramatic plot. Those fortunate enough to have seen Leon himself present the act before he passed away will already appreciate the value of this material. In terms of entertainment, the Haunted House goes far beyond the usual series of tricks and makes an impression which is difficult to equal with anything in magic. As for practicability, the act has everything in its favor. It is strictly a one man act and it can be successfully presented under almost any conditions (from living room to full stage). The properties are not particularly difficult to gather together and construct (the house itself may be a modified version of a ready-made doll house sold in toy shops). The act is suitable for all types of audiences. Children find it fascinating and it holds their attention very well. Adults appreciate the whimsical ghost story plot and it will not offend their adult intelligence. The act may be altered in length to fit particular occasions without difficulty. Alternate effects can be used on different occasions or for different types of audiences. Finally, the basic idea allows for individual originality both in style of presentation and story theme.

The original Miniature Haunted House was sold complete with all necessary equipment and full presentation at a fairly high price: \$ 298.00 (and was accepted as well worth the price asked). The material has remained somewhat exclusive because of this, and since manufacture was discontinued with Leon's death. Thru arrangement with Leon M. Leon, (the great Leon's son) the full presentation of the Haunted House act along with complete building plans is now made available so that the magician who is willing to spend the time and energy to use information provided and build the necessary equipment will be able to add this masterpiece to his repertoire. This publication will also preserve Leon's genius for future generations of magicians.

This newly revised manuscript reproduces in full and accurate detail much of the original material as it was marketed. In addition building plans are added to make information complete. In the spirit of complete co-operation, Leon M. Leon has also provided some new ideas which he has worked out and posed for the series of photos which help illustrate the manuscript. (The younger Leon has worked out a charming version of the act which he frequently performs). Finally, in the course of re-working available information and thru some experimentation under audience conditions, the present author will add some notes to extend the treatment. Here then is this rare thing, an ingenious idea, made real and practical in every way.

Dr. Eugene Gloye

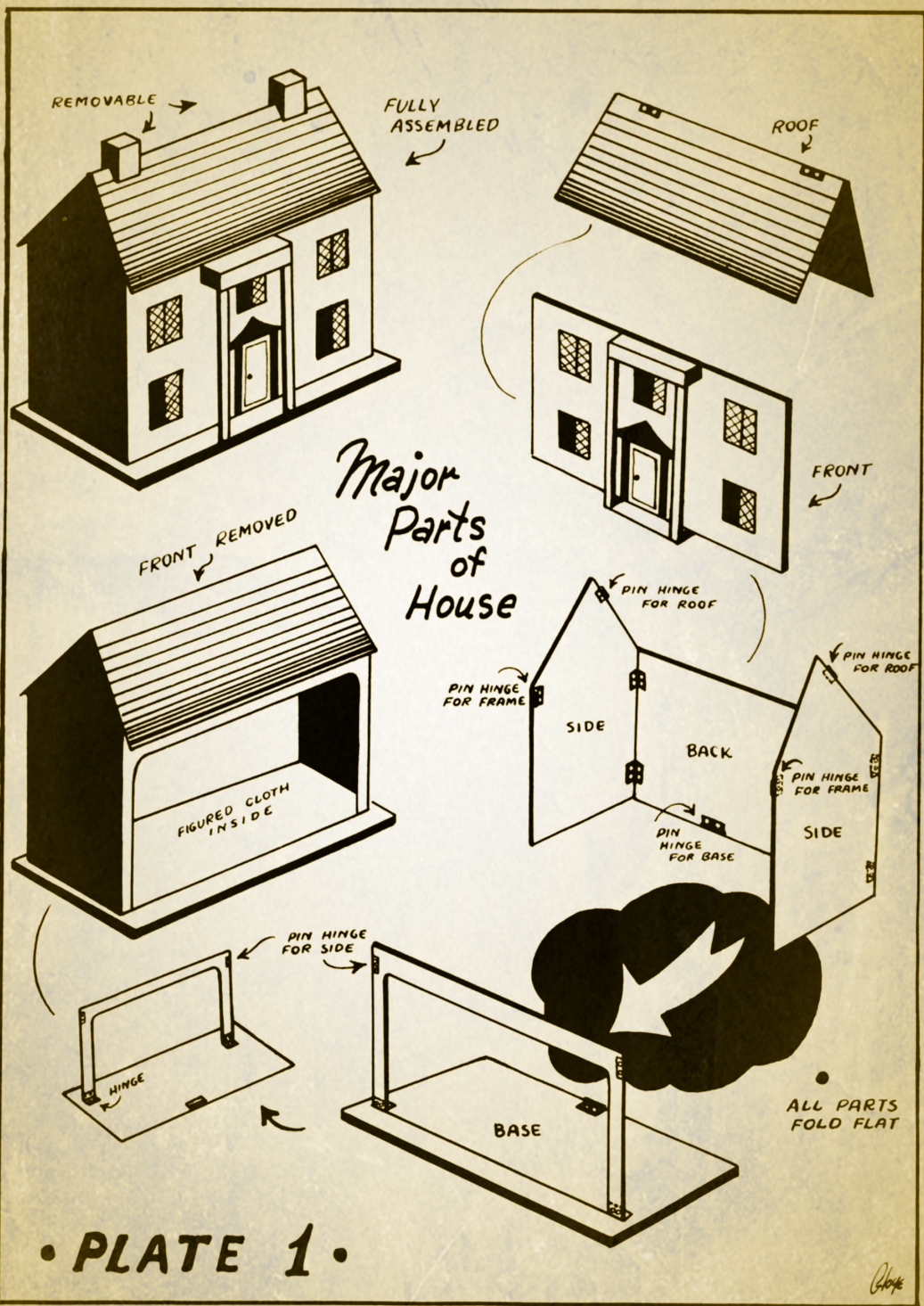
EFFECT

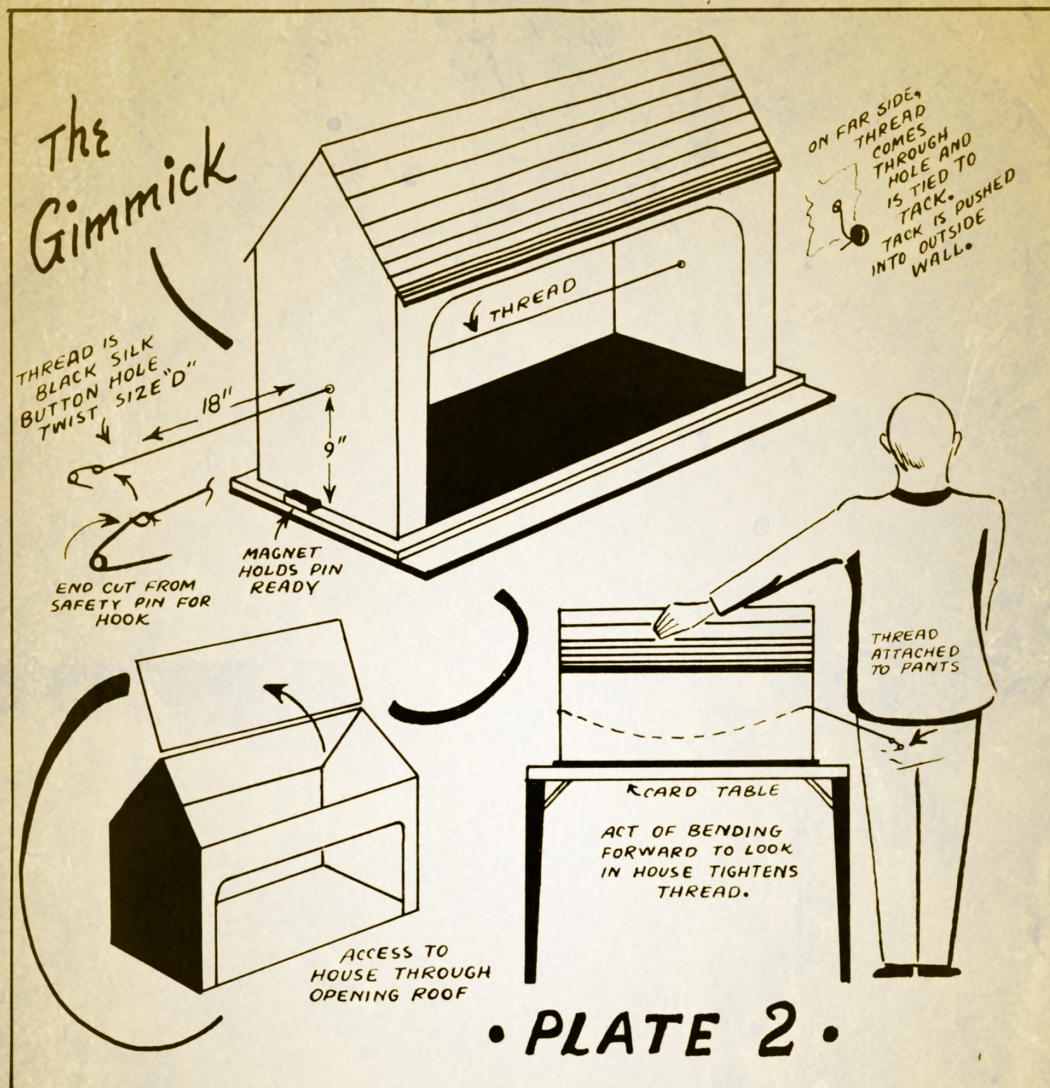
A charming little doll house is displayed and the performer explains that it is a miniature replica of a genuine haunted house. Even as he talks, the front door of the house opens and closes several times. Soon an upstairs window opens and an apparition of a woman is seen. Next the front of the house is removed and the interior is shown completely empty. There follows a series of visible phenomena as various objects are placed into the house. A small bell rings and jumps around. Milk slowly vanishes from a glass, as if being consumed by an invisible spirit. A small table floats about as a hoop is passed all around it. A cut rope seems to come alive and is discovered fully restored. A small hammer moves as if held by an invisible hand and raps answers to questions. A number of separate links of chain crawl from a glass welded into a continuous length. A selected card leaves a pack and floats around the house. A blank slate becomes animated and a message appears written on it. A small gun is raised and fired as if held by a ghost hand. A candle floats above its candle-holder and makes several revolutions in mid air. A spirit apparently lifts a carton of milk and pours some into a bowl. A handkerchief crawls from a small box. Finally, in pursuit of the spook, the performer takes the house apart a piece at a time and no clue to the manifestation is discovered.

THE HOUSE

As was mentioned, in the introduction above, the house used in this act may be made by remodeling a commercially produced toy doll-house. The house Leon supplied was constructed in this way. The structure measured about 2 1/2 feet long and 2 feet high. The major alterations necessary for the ready-made house are concerned with fixing it to fold up for packing. It is also important that the front of the house be easily removed to give access to the empty interior. Certainly the elaborate appointments of the commercially constructed doll house are difficult to duplicate in a home-made article and many people will find that starting with such is the best answer to their needs.

Plate 1, illustrates the major features of the house and gives details about how the house is assembled. Careful study of the positioning of various hinges will make the overall design clear. Note the structure is reduced to four parts; the base with a hinged frame or arch, the hinged sides and back, the hinged roof (with two chimneys) and the front panel with doors and windows. The entire interior of the house is covered with a dark, figured cloth. Some care should be taken to selecting this material as it must be a background which will camouflage the thread that is the source of the phenomena which occur inside the house. The best masking is provided by the type of design Leon selected, a small figured cloth with a black background. Cotton is better than silky materials because its dull finish gives better results. Also it lies flat readily, is easy to cut and shape, does not ravel, and glues easily. The cloth is applied carefully on the floor, the sides and back, and the inside of the roof with white glue (as for example, Carter's Nu-Glu which is widely available.)





For better understanding of the operation of the illusion refer to Plate 2. A heavy black thread extends straight across the interior of the house.

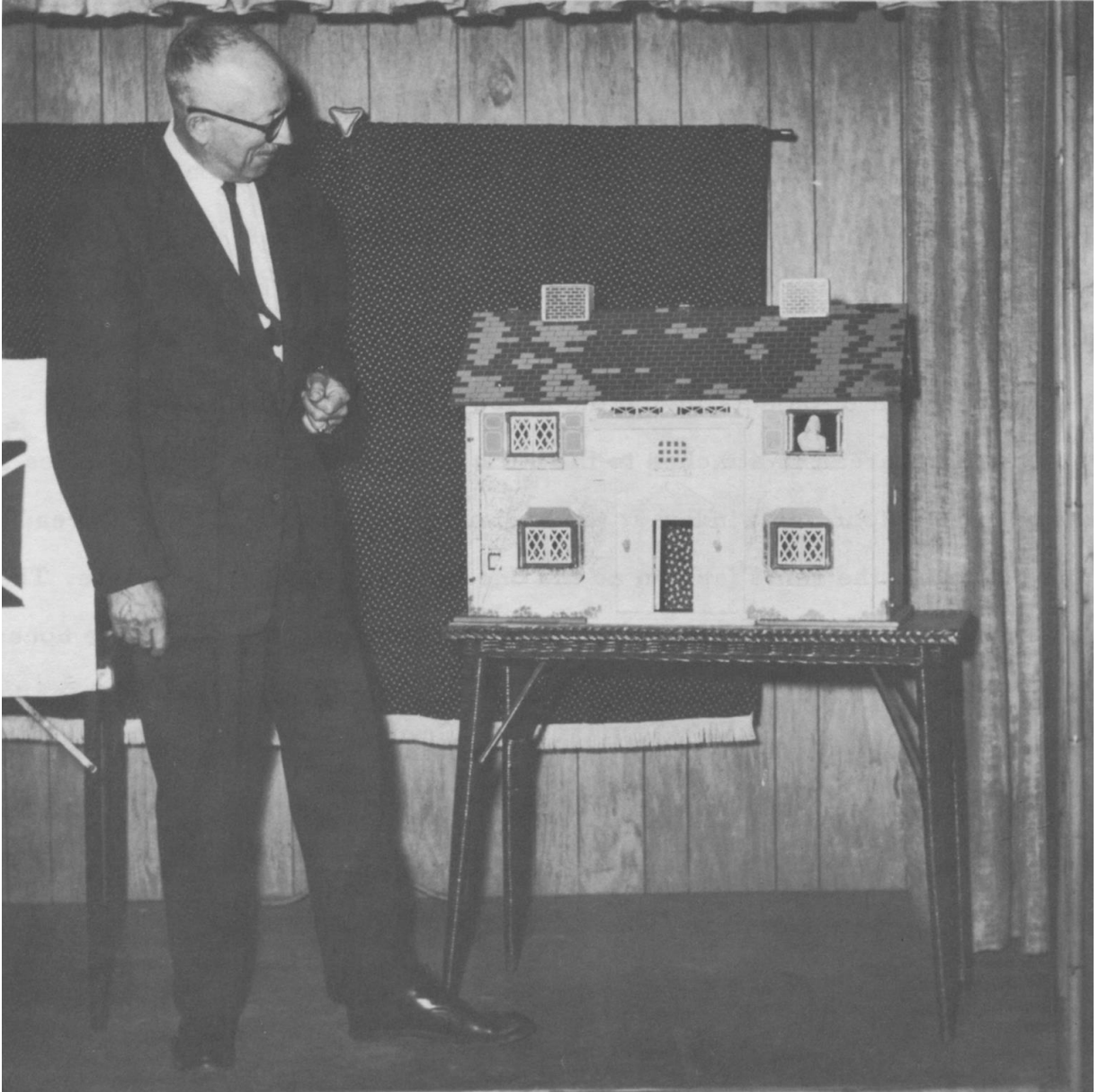


Three snapshots showing The Great Leon performing The Haunted House.

This is fixed at the right side wall and passed through a small hole in the left side wall. A hook made from a small black safety pin is tied to the end of the thread on the left side so that it may be attached to the seat of the pants of the performer. The thread is relaxed or pulled taut by the body movements of the performer in a very natural and undetectable way, primarily as he bends forward to look into the house when he is standing by its side. Note that the roof of the house opens to give access to its interior without bending to allow placement of objects inside the house while the thread is relaxed.

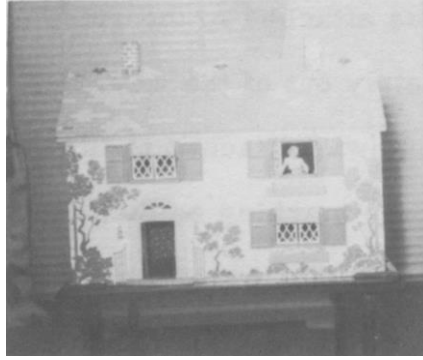
A second thread is attached to the back of the front panel and provides the control of the door and window at the beginning of the routine. This thread is manipulated in the same fashion as the one in the interior of the house. The pins on both threads are held along the molding at the left side of the house so that they can easily be grasped at the proper time. Leon provided for this by instructing the performer to stick the pins into the soft wood molding. He later attached a small piece of felt to the side of his own house as a kind of pin-cushion. The most trouble-free procedure is to attach a small magnet(s) to the molding (as shown in plate 2). The two threads must be kept clear of each other and free of any entanglement.

Altho Leon did not include the idea in his instructions, he made provision for the possibility that the interior thread might break during performance. A third thread was installed across the interior of the house, duplicating the one shown in the illustrations. This extra thread was attached to the sides and back wall with magician's wax so that it was completely out of the way, but could be put into operation if need arose. The pin end was attached to the molding along with the others. It should be given some marking so that it will never be confused with the regular "operating" thread. The careful performer will renew his threads frequently and examine them before each performance for any sign of wear or fraying.



Leon M. Leon is in the opening phase of the Haunted House, still complete with its front section in place, and the ghost of Miss Hurst looking out the upper window. Some may prefer to fold white gauze flat to resemble a "ghost" and fasten it to the upper window.

The lower house is an earlier model used by Leon's father. Differences are in detail only with the door in the center in one case, and on the side in the other. The decorations, as seen here in both cases, came on the original doll houses when purchased. You will find this type of item in the toy department of your local stores. You will also find them in the special Toy Catalogues of most Mail Order Houses.

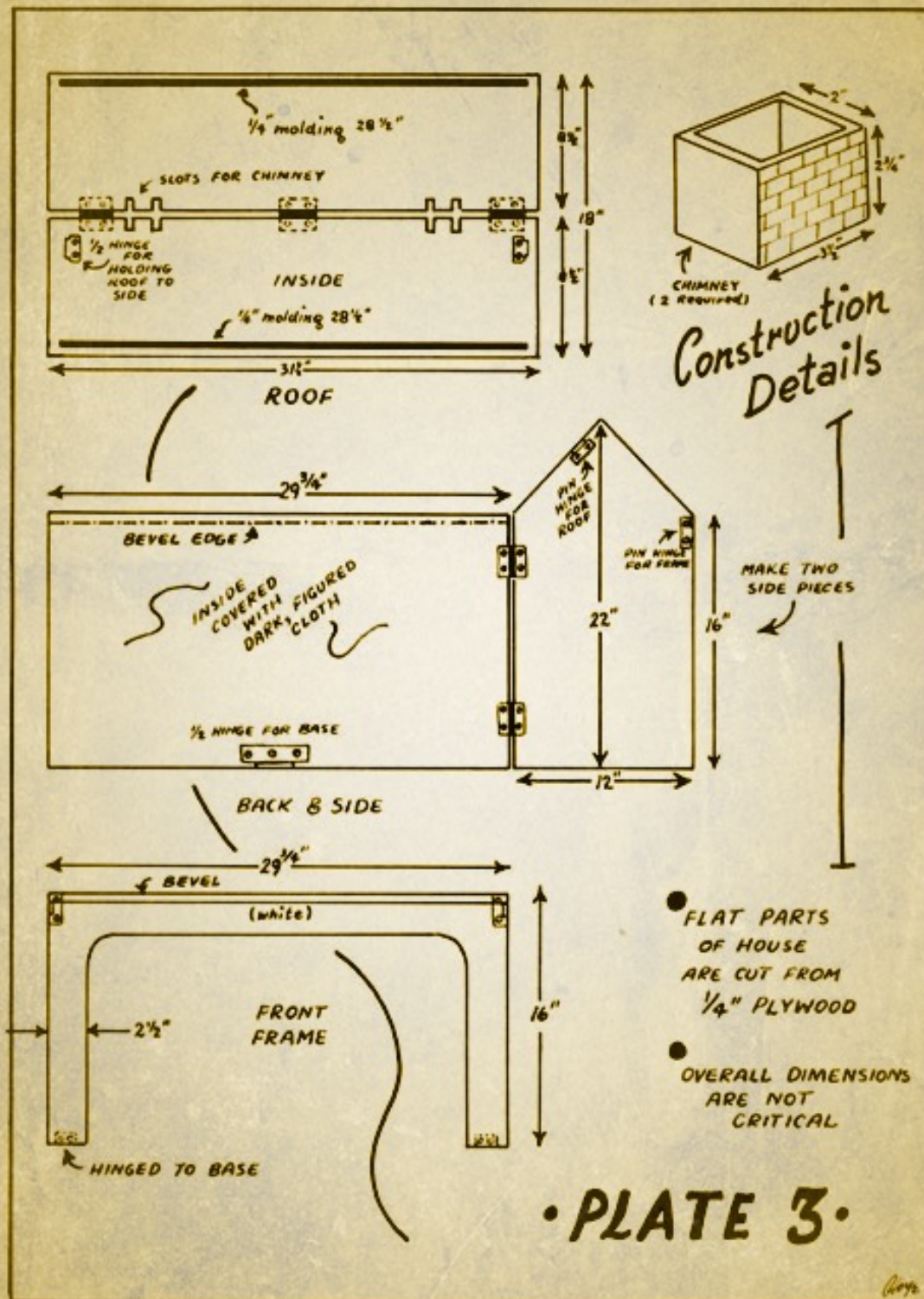


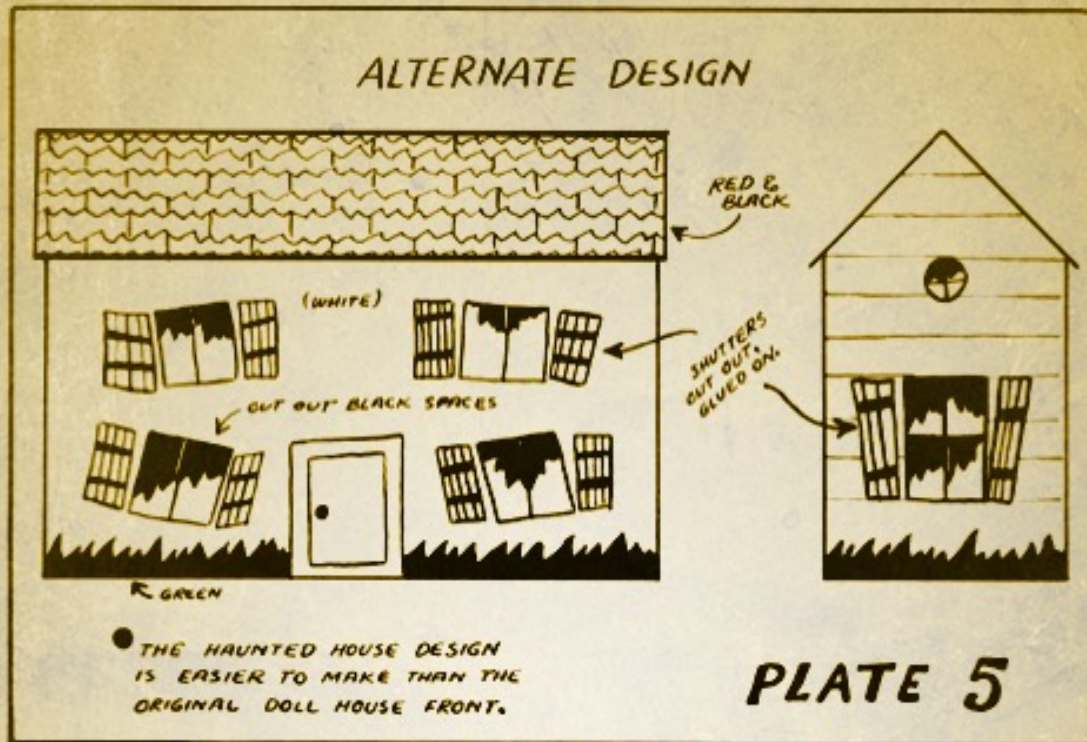
The construction details for the house are given in Plates 3 and 4, and are based on Leon's house. While the approximate dimensions are convenient for the illusion, the exact size is not critical. That is to say, if the house is to be built from raw material, minor changes may be made to suit the builder. One important reason that some performers may wish to build the whole house (instead of starting with a ready-made doll house) involves a possible change in the exterior design. Apart from the fact that a child's doll house is more elaborate than need be, the haunted house theme may well be carried out more directly with exterior finishing such as shown in Plate 5. The ramshackle looking house with crooked door and windows has a special charm, and it is quite easy to decorate. (Still other ideas for the house are to make it a log cabin, a little red school house, a haunted temple, or a medieval castle.) A purchased doll house could be painted over with a flat ground coat and then re-decorated with any theme you had in mind, keeping the physical style of the house in mind when selecting the decorating scheme.

The most mechanical part of the house is the apparatus for the door and window manifestations. Careful study of the figure on the bottom of Plate 4 will make the working clear. The door is provided with a spring hinge and a small block to prevent it from going past the door frame. The special thread for operating the door is attached to a small eye on the door block and it runs to the right edge (from the back) of the house-front, where it passes thru a staple. The window arrangement is more complicated, but not really difficult to make. The double windows on the upper right (audience view) swing open. In Leon's house, these were little metal frames which contained a number of tiny openings. Small pieces of wood will do as well. The windows open freely on pivots made of small brads. Two small wires are attached to the back of the windows and threads are tied to these.

The threads are passed thru a small eye below the window and tied together. When the threads are pulled from below, the windows swing out.

Another pair of threads tied to the wires and passed thru eyes at the side of the windows are attached to a small spring. This provision is to close the windows when the lower thread is relaxed. Finally, the lower thread leads to the door and is of such a length that when the door is slightly more than half open, the window line will be taut. Thus both door and windows are controlled with the same line (see further instructions below).





As was mentioned under effect, when the window opened, the audience saw the apparition of a woman in the window. This is accomplished first by blocking the window with black cloth so that it only appears one can see thru (other windows in the house are cut out too, and the interior is partly visible). A small picture of a woman, (or man or spook, etc.) is pasted to a piece of black cloth and the cloth is glued behind the window opening. It is left free at the bottom so that it will not interfere with the opening mechanism (see dotted lines on illustration).

SPECIAL PROPERTIES

In addition to the house, a number of special props or pieces of magic equipment are required for the routine. The specific effects are up to the performer and any of those which are presented below (most of which were worked out by Leon) could be left out or still other effects could be added. In keeping with the presentation of Leon's routine, however, information on constructing the props he provided with his marketed outfit will be presented. The major requirement is, of course, that all the effects operate with a thread hook-up. Thus in many cases, common objects provided with means to hook them to the control thread become suitable for the act. In reading the list which follows, please also refer to Plate 6.

1. Table. This is a simple miniature table which is painted white. It has metal rods for legs so that it will remain upright when it is set over the thread and lifted. In connection with the use of the table, a key ring from an 8" or 10" set of linking rings (a ring with a slot) will be valuable.

2. Bell. Any small bell may be used. The one Leon used had a wooden handle and a "V" slot was cut at an upward angle in the wood to provide for hooking the thread. The slot must be large enough so that the thread will engage it without failure. The bell is white except for a black band which helps hide the slot.

3. Hammer. A small tack hammer, also painted white, has a "U" bend of wire soldered to the claw end so that it easily hooks to thread and does not slip off in the action of raising and lowering it.

4. Chain Link. In itself, this is a well known trick. Separate links are exchanged for a linked chain with a mirror glass. The addition for this particular version involves a black wire hook which is attached to the center of the solid chain. The hook is made so that it will extend over the rim of the glass.

5. Flap Card. The special card which makes the raising and floating card possible has a "V" shaped piece glued on the back. The card should be a duplicate Two of Spades (any suit) in order to fit the patter story as given.

6. Trick Gun. For the effective episode where a gun is fired, a small toy cap pistol is required. A bingo shooting device (available in novelty shops, this spring gadget fires a single cap when released) is soldered to the handle of the gun and a metal strip which turns on a pivot screw is provided to hold the bingo device closed until the proper time. The gun also has two small wire hooks.

7. Flap Slate. The alterations necessary to adapt this well known trick for the house act are quite simple. The flap is covered on one side with the material used to cover the inside of the house and the flap has two small black wire hooks attached. The flap, of course, covers the writing which is on the slate beforehand.

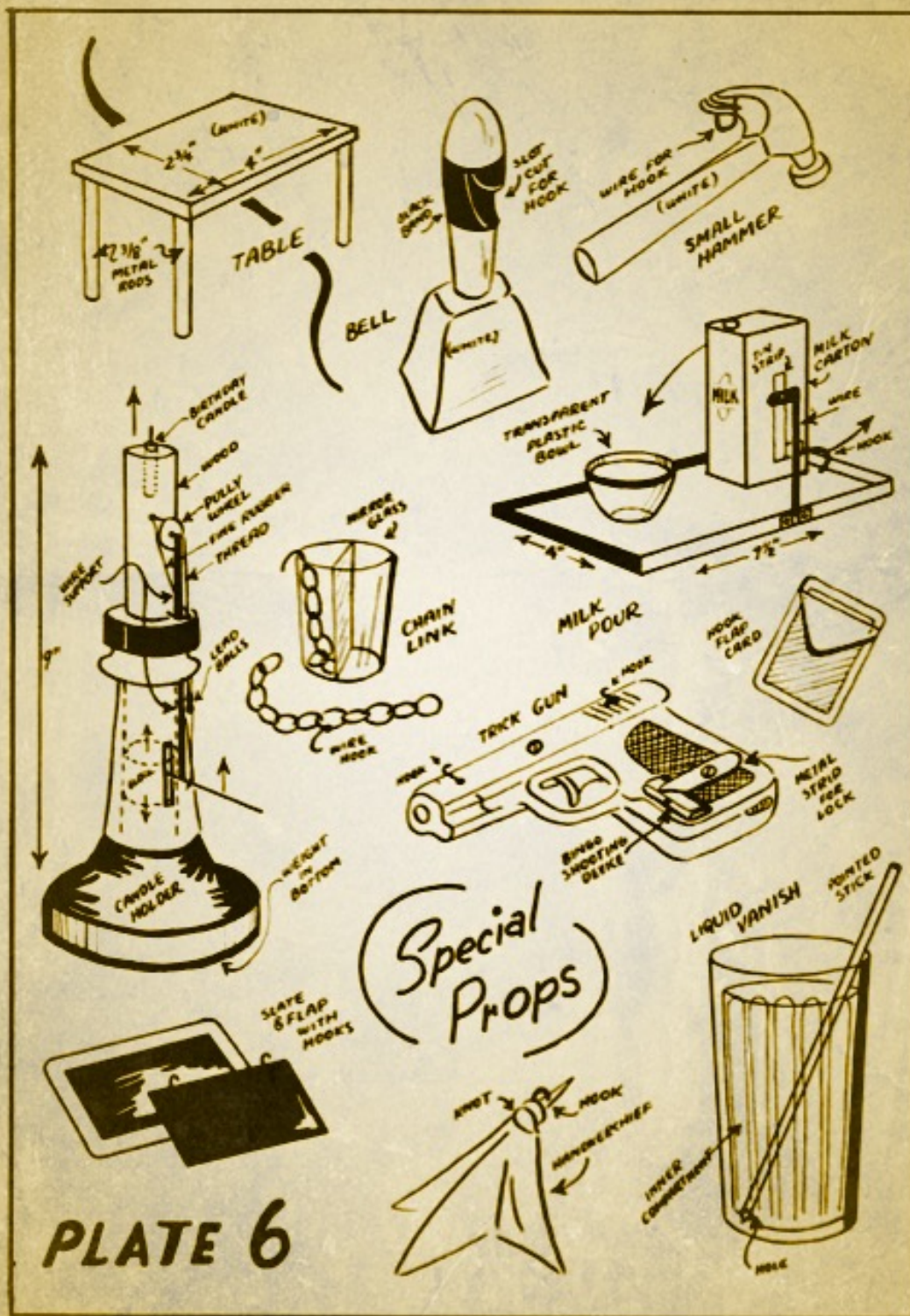


PLATE 6

8. Spook Handkerchief. (This was not included in Leon's outfit.) A large white handkerchief has a big knot tied in one corner. A wire is hooked inside the knot and extends at the rear. Also required is a small box with a hinged cover. A cigar box will answer quite well.

9. Liquid Vanish Glass. This is another standard magical effect. It requires a glass with an inner compartment of plastic which is smaller than the glass. The milk fills the space between the inner wall and the glass and when it is allowed to run thru a small hole at the bottom of the gimmick, the level goes down as if someone were drinking the liquid. Leon's method for performing the effect also requires a thin stick with a pointed end (natural wood color so it looks like a soda straw when a few feet away). The pointed end of the stick is forced into the hole at the bottom of the gimmick to plug it up. When the stick is moved, the milk begins to run into the inner compartment. (Various types of milk vanishing glasses may be purchased from magic dealers).

10. Milk Pour. One of the more complicated pieces of special equipment, and one which will require some experimentation on the part of the builder, this effect is well worth the effort. It consists of a small tray on which are displayed a pint size milk carton and a small transparent plastic bowl. The carton is actually attached to an upright wire from the tray and pivots in an arc from the support. The molding on the tray masks the fact that the carton does not rest on the tray and a hook at the rear engages the thread. (In Leon's outfit, a small pop bottle with a milk can label was used in place of the milk carton, which was not well known at the time, and was much more difficult to fix up.)

11. Candlestick. This is the most elaborate of all the props and is optional. Study the illustration in Plate 6 carefully to understand how it works. The device employs a large wooden candle holder with a heavy weighted bottom and a small wooden candle. A stiff black wire is attached to the candle and is bent to pass down thru a hole in the rim of the holder. At the bottom the vertical wire is soldered to a horizontal wire which projects several inches so that it may be engaged with the control thread. To make raising the candle from the holder work smoothly, the horizontal wire enters a round block which rides freely in a cylindrical space inside the upright portion of the holder. The floating effect thus depends upon support of the vertical wire which is invisible against the black patterned background cloth of the house interior. The turning motion of the candle as it ascends is achieved thru the action of a thread which is attached to the candle and passes around a small wooden pulley wheel fixed to the candle at the point where the wire support enters. This thread travels down thru a hole of its own into the rim of the candle-holder and terminates with several small lead balls (fishing weights). Its length is such that when the candle is about an inch above the holder, the thread becomes taut and pulls the candle in a circular motion as it continues upward. A piece of fine rubber band attached to the candle and support wire causes the candle to revolve in the opposite direction as it is lowered back into the holder.



The Floating Table being performed in the upper photograph by Leon M. Leon, and in the lower one by his father, the Great Leon, inventor and designer of the Haunted House.

12. Special Rope. (Not illustrated) The rope trick in the act is another standard trick. It employs a circle of rope on which a knot is provided by an extra short length. To make this rope, glue the ends of a 5' length of soft rope with rubber cement. (Instructions for performance are included below).

13. Materialization. Leon included the well-known smoke trick in his routine as a spirit materialization. The effect requires a mason jar with a circle of blotting paper in its cover. Common household ammonia (a small quantity) is placed in the bottle. The blotter is saturated with dilute hydrochloric acid. When the two chemicals are brought together they form a heavy white gas. (Leon eventually discarded this idea because the hydrochloric acid is corrosive, but his consideration was partly because of problems in shipment of the Haunted House outfit. With reasonable care, it can be an excellent addition to the act.

14. Balloon Blowing. (Not illustrated) This is another chemical trick which Leon included with his later outfit. This is based upon the fact that when the chemical, Bangsite, comes in contact with water it generates gas. A small quantity of Bangsite is placed into a rubber balloon. A small vial of water, tightly corked, is next forced into the mouth of the balloon with the cork toward the inside, and the balloon is tied above the vial. When the cork is removed thru the balloon and the water contacts the Bangsite, the balloon quickly becomes inflated.



Above, Leon is seen smiling at his success with the slate trick sequence. These photos of the house will help the builder to know what he is aiming at in his finished product. Note also the pattern of the cloth on the inside.

The lower photo shows the Great Leon on some occasion where he worked in front of a Venetian Blind. It shows the posture and handling thru the open roof - in this case the passing of a ring over the floating table.

PERFORMANCE AND PATTERN

(This section includes Leon's instructions and his original patter story. Some suggestions for alternate patter and new effects will also be given at the end)

Regarding lighting, you can have as much light as you like when performing this Haunted House routine as long as the lighting is even and does not make any shadows on the back or sides inside the house. Do not have any lights directly above or behind the house. Do not perform in front of a light wall or background. Try to perform in front of a piece of dark furniture, or a screen or any dark object.

The assembled house is sitting at the front left hand corner of a card table (which makes it about the right height). The front panel is in place, the threads are carefully hanging free from their pin ends ready to pick up, and the rest of the props for the act are arranged along the back of the table in order used. Approach the table from the left and stand to the side and slightly in front of the house. From this position your left hand can get the pin attached to the control line for the door while you are making opening remarks and gesture with the right hand toward the house. The left hand hooks the pin into the center crease in the back of the left pants' leg. You will find that by bending to look into the house, or by turning your body slightly, you can cause the door to open at will. Be sure to stand enough to the front of the house to keep the thread in a straight line. Never, never sway or move from side to side in order to pull the thread. This does not look natural and is not necessary. The patter begins as follows:

"Some time ago I visited a spirit medium, Mr. Ivan Swindle. After relieving me of my hat and coat and five dollars, he ushered me into his den where he started the seance by telling the following story: When in Scotland I heard many ghost stories about haunted houses and the terrible things that take place there. So I had my friend, Abie McFurstenberg Cohn, show me a haunted house where a Scotchman had murdered his sweetheart, a Miss Hurst, for being extravagant. She washed out his shaving brush, so he shot her. Here is an exact miniature of that house.

"After examining the house and finding nothing but some old things lying around, we went outside to hide in the woods and await the arrival of the spirits. (At this point you get control pin for door as indicated above). We ate our lunch, consisting of milk and sandwiches, and as it was very hot, we dozed off. Suddenly I was awakened with a strange feeling, as if my skin was possessed by a thousand demons. I think I got ants in my pants.

"Looking up, I saw two ghosts approaching the house. Then the door opened and closed as tho the spirits had entered. (Bend over looking at front of house causing the door to open and then allow it to close). I sat there speechless, waiting, and soon the door opened and I heard the male spook bidding his sweetheart goodbye. (Cause door to open and keep it open by the taut thread). As he disappeared among the trees the window opened. (Open window by putting a little more pull on the thread.) I thought I saw the ghost-like form of a beautiful girl at the window. She looked so sad and lonesome surrounded by

ectoplasm waving in the breeze. She took one look at me and closed the window and locked the door. (Close window and door slowly). (Be sure you do everything slowly).

"I woke up Mr. Cohn and we went to investigate. We found the house empty. I will show you it is empty by taking the front off, leaving nothing but the arch, the two side walls, the back and the roof. (While saying this last paragraph, you remove thread which is fastened to the door and window from pants leg by unhooking it. Then rest the left hand, with the hook hidden, against the inside front of the house. Remove front of the house and place it under the table, face up, pinning the hook beneath it, in order to hide it. You do not use the front again in the act. Next, remove the two chimneys from roof. You may use this move to get possession of interior control pin and go directly on, or you may display house by picking it up with the right hand at the center front and the left hand on the base at the back.)

You hold the house next to your left hip, take a few steps forward and call their attention to the fact that they can see thru the front of the arch. Then turn the top towards the audience so they can see the interior of the house. Continue revolving the house and show the back. Give the house another quarter turn so that the bottom is facing the audience. Now turn it so that the arch is facing the audience and again place it on the table. Under cover of placing the house on the table get interior control pin and stick it in pants leg.

Pick up the dinner bell with the groove in the handle towards the back away from the audience. Open the roof. Always use your left hand to place any object in the house. Always keep the roof closed when the effects are in operation. Always keep in a position so that your left pants pocket opening is even with the front edge of the house. Place bell in front of thread which runs across the upper part of the house so that the thread catches in the groove. Keep the thread slightly taut and use the left hand to place the bell in the house. As you catch the thread in the groove allow the thread to slacken as the bell is placed on the floor at the center of the very rear of the house. Now shut the roof. If you bend over to peek from the side into the arch, you will take up the slack on the thread and you will cause the bell to move. If you do this fast, it will throw the bell out of the house. Always keep the thread taut when placing things in house.

This movement of bending over to peek into the house is the most natural movement to control the thread for all effects. The movement is absolutely invisible if done correctly.

(Patter story resumes:) "Placing the bell in the house I told the spirits to toll the bell if they wished me to enter. (Pause) The bell remained silent. So, you see, I was told off. Next, I asked if she wished anything to eat. (Pause) There was still silence. I asked, 'Do you wish anything to drink?' (Here is where you stoop over and cause the bell to ring and almost jump out of the house.) Okay, you shall have a drink. I will give it to you in style. (Remove bell by taking it out thru the front arch).



In the upper photo Leon gives a good example of a typical pose to be adopted while working the Haunted House - bent over slightly to watch the action (but actually causing the action to take place). In the small photo we see the Great Leon, many years previous, doing the same trick --the Rising and Turning Candle.

Note that in the lower photo, the candle is lit - its flame makes a very dramatic focal point for the action.

(At this point you open the roof and place the table in the house. The liquid vanish glass - loaded with milk - goes on the table. The table is placed * in such a manner that it will be ready for the floating effect which follows. In order to balance, it must be set so that the thread runs diagonally under its legs.)

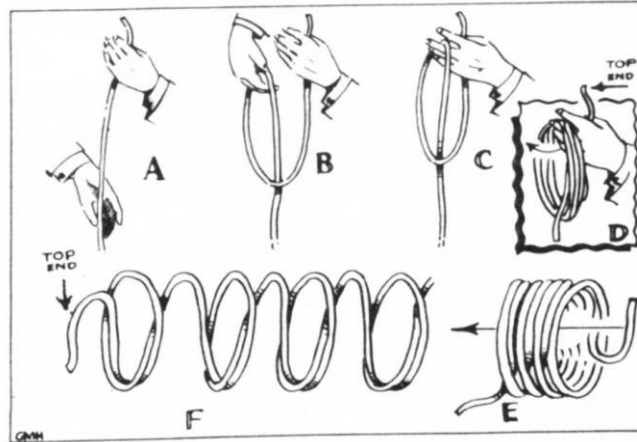
"Here I have a full glass of milk which was left over from my lunch. (In showing glass move the stick, which audience thinks to be a straw, so that the hole in inner compartment is opened. Place glass on table and close roof.) Now you see the milk gets less and less as the ghost drinks it. And it is said, to make things worse, Miss Hurst was cursed with a terrible thirst. At first I thought she would burst. But you see, she left the glass just moist. (Aside). This should have been rehearsed!"

(Remove glass thru front arch)." Do you wish me to remove the table or are you strong enough to remove it yourself? (By peeking into the front of the house, cause the table to float and remain suspended between the floor and the roof. Experiment with this effect so you can perform it correctly. When the table is placed across the thread diagonally , as indicated above, and the thread gradually made taut, it will turn slightly as it leaves the floor, and balances on the thread . With the table suspended, you pick up a ring (key ring from a linking ring set) and pass it over the table. The ring is held with the fingers of the left hand over the slot and it is placed into the house thru the roof. The ring is held behind the thread and against the right (your right) side of the house. You slide the thread thru the slot and move it out over the table and back. Be careful not to disturb the thread. Finally you reverse the moves and free ring, removing it thru the roof. Next, you remove the table from above, lifting it from its mid-air position. The sequence must be practiced carefully.)

"We next took a long piece of rope and we tied the two ends together, cutting it at the center and dividing it into two portions, we placed the rope into the house and soon the spirit started to work on it. It is completely restored and the knot has vanished. The rope is in one piece as it was at the beginning." (As indicated earlier the rope is actually a continuous loop with an extra piece tied on. You may tighten the knot as you are talking. Now you cut the rope at the joint and it looks as tho you cut the rope in two. Winding the rope around your left hand so that it forms about five inch loops, you slip the knot off into the right hand in which you are holding the scissors. Replace the scissors in the right hand pocket, leaving the knot behind with the scissors. Now lift the roof and place rope over thread so that it lies on the floor of the house. Make it move just a little, very slowly, by peeking into the house. Remember to close the roof before making the rope move. Remove rope thru the front arch and show that the knot has vanished.)

"Winding it up once more we will see what takes place". (A in the sketch shows the rope just before winding it up, held at one end in the left hand and the right hand takes hold of it as shown in A. Now right hand turns so that rope turns with it, and a loop is brought up as in B. This loop is hung over the fingers of the left hand as in C. The right hand takes hold of the rope twelve or thirteen inches below the loop and repeats the same move again. This is repeated several times until you have used all the rope, as shown in figure D. E shows what happens in this action. The top end, as indicated, is then passed thru all the loops. The rope, thus looped is laid on the thread as before, opening the roof to put it

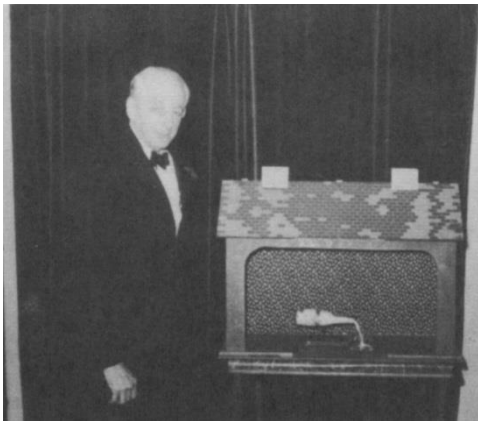
in. Cause rope to move a little.) "Again we see the spooks at play!" (Now give the rope a sharp jerk - after you have lifted it free of the thread and taken it outside thru the arch - and the slack thus being taken up in the loops, a number of knots will now be seen in the rope) "And this time we found the rope full of spirit knots!"



"Here I have a little white hammer which will answer questions, one rap for no, two raps for yes." (Remember that the hammer has a little hook in back of the claw. Lift roof and place hammer in house with the handle in front of the thread. Let the handle slide down the thread until it catches in the hook. Have the hammer rest on the floor, on its side with the head toward the audience and the end of the handle touching the back wall. Then close the roof and, by looking in the front, cause the hammer to operate.)

"Are you happy in Spirit Land?" (Slowly hammer rises and raps once). "She rapped once, meaning no. Are you lonesome? Again she rapped once, meaning no. Then I asked, would you like your sweetheart to return? (Pause) I say, would you care if your sweetheart would NOT return? (Pause) You see, her only answer is that she doesn't give a rap!"

"In the back of the house we found a number of links of chain like I have here. Each link is separate. I will place them in a glass and place the glass in the house." (The chain link trick is ready, with the joined rings in the rear compartment of the mirror glass, and the hook extending over the edge (as mentioned earlier). Place the glass on a small plate with chain away from audience. Have the loose links of the chain on the plate in front of the glass. Hold the plate in the left hand, picking it up from behind the house in such a position that the glass appears to be empty. Drop the loose links into the empty half of the glass with your right hand. Now pick up the glass from the plate with your right hand. Replace plate on table back of house. Open roof with left hand, holding glass up with right hand. Then pass the glass to the left hand giving it a half revolution in doing so.



The above picture shows Leon with a rope effect in the Haunted House. When the Great Leon devised the house, the rope tricks done with magnets, so popular today were not known.

We think the experimenter with the house may come upon some interesting results by trying the Instanto Rope Trick or some other magnet effect.

The small picture to the left shows the Great Leon with the bottle sequence, for which his son has substituted the more modern Milk Carton.

This brings the complete chain side towards the audience. Grasp the glass in the left hand placing the index finger over the very top of hook to hold it in place. Place the glass in the house so that it is in back of thread and so that the hook slips on the thread. Push glass to center against the back wall. Close roof and now as you stoop down sideways to look into house, you can cause the chain to creep out of the glass. Open roof and remove chain thru the top of the house, by catching it by the link at the hook and lifting it straight up off the thread. Show chain and then lift out glass and drop chain into the empty half of glass.

"You always hear chains rattling in a haunted house. This is why." (Lift roof and place glass in as directed above.) "I was amazed to see the chain being carried away by the ghost. It was all in one piece again as it crawled out of the glass like a living snake. About this time Ivan Swindle started to laugh and demanded another five. I let him have it. Believe it or not, that was the first time I was able to strike a happy medium!"

"As the spirit is working very hard, I will give it another drink by placing this carton of milk and a bowl in the house. See her lift the carton and pour the milk in the bowl." (For the carton and bowl effect, fill the carton with diluted milk to within an inch of the top of the carton. Now place the bowl on the opposite end of the tray from the carton. Lift roof of house and place tray, with props, in front of the thread so that thread will catch wire hook. Keep the tray well towards the front of house. Close roof. Now peeking inside of house with your left pants pocket even with the front of the house will cause the carton to tip and pour the milk into the bowl. Remove by lifting tray from front of house. This trick works best if tray is placed at angle of about 60 degrees.)

"Here is a pack of cards. As I riffle thru them, please tell me when to stop. This is the card you have selected. The cards are now shuffled and I place them in the house. We will see if the spirit can find it. What is the card? The two of Spades? Very well, we will now see the ghost raise the deuce."

The special hook or tab card described earlier and illustrated in Plate 6 is used. Have this card on the back of the deck. Show the deck by fanning it and then ask for someone in the first row to call "Stop" as you riffle thru the cards. When they call "Stop" do the move - described in most good books on card technique - to slip the card from the top of the deck to the top of the portion remaining in your hand. Show the two of spades. False shuffle the cards and keep the two of spades on the back of the deck. Place the deck in house in front of the thread so that tab catches thread. Lay deck on floor, face up, with the top toward the rear of the house but have the pack well up in the front part of the house. Have someone call out the name of the card and then by peeking into the house the card will come out of the deck and slowly rise up. As it starts to float up, put your left hand in so that the card floats up to your hand.

If you elect to do the candle trick, this is a good place to introduce it. Place candlestick in house so thread will be resting under wire very close to candlestick. By trying this out, you will find the best spot in house to place the candlestick.

"By this time it was getting very dark and altho we knew Miss Hurst did not take the light, we placed a candle in the house and lit it." (Do so). "This made Miss Hurst very angry and for spite that night she did fight the bright light with all her might for she was tight, causing us a slight fright by grasping it like a spike and raising it to the height of a kite. Now behold the sight of a light in flight!"

The cap pistol is now introduced. It is loaded with a roll of caps and the Bingo shooting device is also loaded ready to fire (see instructions that come with this novelty item.) To perform this sequence, open up roof of house, pick up pistol and shoot it two or three times, stating: "This is a model of the pistol Miss Hurst was murdered with, and I will try to show how the murder was committed."

Tear off the dead caps that protrude from top of the pistol. Now pass pistol from right hand to left hand so that the wire hooks rest across the palm of the left hand. Place the pistol thru the roof, catching thread in hooks. At the same time, place pistol a little past center of the floor, giving pistol a quarter turn so it points toward audience. Push back the brass catch with your index finger without lifting the pistol. (The weight of the pistol will keep the shooting device closed until pistol rises.)

Then shut roof of house. Now follow the patter: "Miss Hurst, please be careful and not shoot anyone! Turn the pistol the other way before you shoot!" As you take up on the thread the pistol will turn slowly sideways, rise and shoot. Take pistol out of the house and shoot it again.

The balloon trick fits in well here. The balloon is prepared as explained earlier. Remove cork while holding vial in balloon upright. As you are talking remove cork from vial and as you drop balloon and vial into house, turn your hand so that the water from vial runs to bottom of balloon onto the chemical Bangsite. This will form a gas and inflate balloon very fast. It also generates a little heat but not enough to cause any discomfort. (If very thin balloons are used, an Alka Seltzer tablet, broken to fit thru the mouth of the balloon, and flooded with water from the vial as above described, will also inflate. However this is not as powerful as the chemical and will only work on the thinnest rubber.)

"Miss Hurst, you have been kind, so I will give you this toy balloon, but as our time is up, let me see how fast you can blow it up." (Cork is removed from the vial of water, working thru the rubber walls of the balloon with the fingers to accomplish this. After balloon is inflated, remove thru the arch.)

"Here is an ordinary school slate. We will clean both sides. I should have a sponge for this. I remember in school when I told my teacher I had lost my cleaning sponge she told me to use the little boy's behind. Did that start a fight! Well, the slate is clean enough now and if we are lucky we may get a message. We now place the slate inside the house. Would the spirit of Miss Hurst like to reveal herself so that we all may see her? (The flap on the slate covers the word "YES" boldly written. You pick up the slate, holding the flap in place, with the hook side down. Keep the thread almost taut and place the slate face down on the floor. Engage the thread in the hooks by dragging it across the thread as you place the slate, flap down, to the very back of the house. Close the roof, peek in and cause

the slate to slowly slide forward and rise until it stands on edge as it reveals the message. The message is "YES". As you pick up the slate with your right hand from the front, unhook the thread with your left hand from your pants leg and resting your left hand on the side of the house, pin the thread in window molding at the same time you show the slate with your right hand.

You are now ready to perform the smoke trick, the final effect in the act. The mason jar and cover (or an ornamental glass stoppered candy jar or herb jar, with a circle of blotting paper fixed to the bottom surface of the stopper) prepared with ammonia and hydrochloric acid, are ready.

"Well, her answer is yes, but it's not as easy as all that. Really a spirit is of such a transparent nature that all anyone has ever seen is the ectoplasm of the spirit. I will use this jar as a spirit trap. It is always easier to get spirits in a bottle! (Here you place the cover on the jar and quickly place the jar into the house. Smoke will start to form almost at once.) "Now you all can see the ectoplasm of the spirit forming in the bottle. To prove we have caught the spirit and that the house is empty, we will tear the house completely apart."

Remove the jar and place it aside. Take off the roof and show it. Remove the pins from the hinges at the side of the arch and the one at the back of the base. Fold up the house and lay it on the table. Pick up the jar again and uncover it. "I will now release the spirit and as you see it go, you can almost hear it say goodnight!" This is a very sensational ending as the white cloud of smoke drifts upward out of the mouth of the jar.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS

As an alternate ending to the routine, you may wish to use the spirit handkerchief. Upon discovering via slate writing that the spirit is willing to be seen, you place the box with the prepared handkerchief into the house. "Here I have a gentleman's handkerchief. We will let it be the cloak for the spirit. Notice I put it back into its box." (When you show the handkerchief you actually hook it on the thread. Upon replacing it, the thread runs into the box on one side and out on the other. Close the cover. By pulling the thread, the cover of the box slowly opens and the handkerchief stands up. (Box to be a small cardboard one, with a lid like a cigar box). When handkerchief is at its full height, remove it thru the roof. You may introduce the business of making the handkerchief stand in your hand here. It depends upon the fact that the handkerchief is starched enough so it will remain upright several inches above your hand when you pull it up correctly. Blow the handkerchief over. "Now the spirit has left!" Here you turn to the house as if looking for the spirit. Look into the box and then remove box with right hand as left hand unhooks pin from pants. Finally fold up house as instructed above.

Leon's beginning patter may seem a little involved. Your story might start more directly as follows: " Here is a miniature replica of a house which I visited in . . . (localize) . . Some people say it is haunted and after my experience there, I am inclined to believe them. Let me tell you what happened. Here go on as Leon indicates.

The moves for passing a ring around the floating table are difficult to master, partly because one tends to be over-cautious. Nevertheless, the use of the ring makes an important phase of the routine. An alternate approach would be as follows: On the right wall inside the house, a small hook is placed so the ring can be hung after it is threaded on the hook up. In this case an untricked ring is employed. In setting up the house, the threaded ring is placed on the floor at the center. The thread is, of course, relaxed at this point. Now after finishing the business with the door and window, you remove the front as Leon instructs. You discover the ring inside the house. The ring is lifted and hooked on the side wall, out of the way, but now ready to be used at any place in the routine where it seems appropriate.

SOME FURTHER EFFECTS

The possibilities for additions to the basic routine are numerous. For example a talking skull could easily be incorporated with some comedy questions and answers. Also suitable would be a small skeleton, loosely jointed. The skeleton could be introduced as a pile of bones. It is placed in the center of the floor and the thread hooked to a wire attached to its head. Now the figure gradually stands up and the bones seem to fall together to take the shape of a skeleton. Leon M. Leon uses a small Television Card Frame with his routine. This is an apparatus for the visible production of a card which is widely sold. Leon has fixed up the apparatus so the control thread can trip the mechanism. He talks of producing a picture of the spirit (Miss Hurst) and then a queen of Spades appears in the frame. Another idea is to have the spirit light a light bulb. This is the usual gimmicked bulb set in a small wooden stand. A mechanism is fixed so the thread will cause a contact at the base of the bulb and light it up. Before presenting the effect, the apparatus is shown free of wires, etc .

One of the spirit manifestations often used by mediums was the production of flowers, and this could make a pretty alternate finish for the house. Either the back wall, the side wall, or one panel of the roof could be made with a flap door like the side of a Jap Hank Box, and into this hiding place spring paper flowers are laid flat, as many as can be loaded in and still be able to shut the flap. Some simple method of release from the outside of the house, like an eyelet with a nail thru it, which nail can be pulled out by means of a short strong thread, thereby letting the trap fall open and the flowers release themselves can easily be devised. The release should be at the back, so that performer can change his position, having taken off all pins, and stand with his hand on the roof of the house as he makes the remark about "one of the striking manifestations of spirits in the old days was that they could fill a room with fresh flowers, and the odor of roses impressed itself on all the persons present. The spirits of today do not have the power of the old time ghosts - do they, Miss Hurst?"

With a hand resting on the roof, and the body bent over the house to make this jibing remark at the spirit, the other hand pulls the ring or thread or whatever release device you have set up, and the trap falls to fill the house With flowers, which burst their way out thru the arch and on to the table. At the next instant, after pulling the release, the same hand drops to a bulb atomizer and sprays the surrounding air with a good whiff of a strong floral perfume. "My profound apologies, madam! There is no lack of power in you. Thank you for a wonderful demonstration (bowing at the house) and thank you, ladies and gentlemen for your belief in spirits! (bowing to the audience) (In this type of finish, the house is merely wheeled away intact on the table, flowers and all.)

Do not fail to consider musical recordings with this trick, of a sepulchral type, violins especially. Have it very soft in the background throughout, or if you have an assistant off stage, or can get a timed recording on tape, let the music come on during the manifestations only, in good volume.

A final note to those who develop the Haunted House act is to go thru all the effects they already have and see which ones might be adopted to the routine. In this way much fresh material will be introduced.

THE END