

Ghosts are strangely absent from campus — or are they?

By Gemma McLuckie

For a campus 112 years old, Ohio State sure lacks for ghost stories.

Now there are some rumors of a presence in Oxley and Mack halls. Not a ghost, mind you, more like a weak poltergeist. And there is the guy buried in the north wall of Bricker Hall. But it's never been recorded that he's bothered anyone.

It's kind of disappointing.

Shouldn't there be a phantom of the Orton Tower? Maybe a hoary tenured professor who was especially fond of "Carmen Ohio." After passing to his reward, he returned to good old Orton Hall to check out the chimes.

However, there's not a clue that that ever has happened.

And it seems strange that no smell of

orange blossoms lingers near University Hall in remembrance of the many weddings performed there. Surely there was one jilted bride or groom whose spirit longed to return to the chapel to zap couples whose nuptials turned out more happily.

"I've never heard of any," says Ruth Jones, library associate 1 in the University Archives. And she's been around campus for 35 years.

"Ask Bill Wahl, maybe he'll know," she suggests. Wahl is known to get around campus. As manager of the Office of Visitor and Community Relations, it's his job.

Jones may be a skeptic, but Wahl has had personal experience with a ghostly phenomenon at the University.

Naturally, it was the poltergeist at Oxley Hall. And naturally, it wasn't that scary.

Oxley Hall is not one of your glamour buildings on campus. Along with Mack Hall, it exudes a miasma of oldness. Not at all like a charming antique, understand.

Wahl and other people claim that something goes around the buildings turning on lights that were turned off, and opening doors that were closed.

"I was down in the basement when the lights went out," Wahl says.

Wahl's story is corroborated by Randy Gebhardt, who received a master's degree in journalism from Ohio State in

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Campus ghosts: Rare occurrences at Ohio State?

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1984. Gebhardt now is director of new business development for Technology for People, Columbus. However, from 1980-1983, he was the security manager for the south residence halls.

According to Gebhardt, at night the security guards entertained each other with stories of a woman who died in Oxley and whose ghost remains.

"Supposedly, Oxley was closed as a residence hall because so many parents reported that their daughters had seen the ghost," he says.

Well, no matter. Gebhardt vouches that the lights and door routine is "absolutely true." He gives examples of mysterious goings on involving Christmas tree tinsel, cotton balls and a ladder.

And down in the bowels of Oxley Hall where it joins with Mack Hall, there is a metal grid, he says. Unattributable clunking sounds sometimes echo all the way down the halls when there are no humans in the area.

No living humans that is.

Maybe ghost story tellers at Ohio State have something to talk about after all.

OSU buildings spooked by thievish poltergeists

By Laurie Jamieson
Lantern staff writer

Just when you thought Ohio State was safe from ghosts, hatchet men with white masks and yes, even Jason and Cujo, a few OSU buildings could be the setting chosen for the next Stephen King movie.

Oxley Hall, the first residence hall on campus and now an office building, has a history of unexplained occurrences and folklore, said Randy Gebhardt, a security guard for south area residence halls from January, 1980 - December, 1982.

"In the 1930s and '40s, Oxley was an all-female residence hall. The folklore was that a women died and her ghost still lives there, and strange things happen," he said.

"Because of the strange things that went on, the residence hall got a bad reputation and parents wouldn't let their daughters live there. So it shut down."

Gebhardt said when he was a security guard, other guards used to stand in the courtyard in the middle of Canfield, Mack and Oxley, and see lights at Oxley go on and off at 3 a.m.

"All doors and windows would be locked and no one is there at that hour, so how could that have happened? They found doors that had been locked were open."

One incident Gebhardt described occurred during Christmas break, 1980.

"We had a female security guard by Mack and Canfield outside. Another security guard and myself were making the rounds. She got a strange feeling someone was looking at her. When she turned around, she looked up at one of the balconies of Mack and saw the door to the dorm slam shut."

Gebhardt said she called him on the radio and said that something strange was going on.

"I've never heard anyone so scared in all my life."

"We called the dorm director and toured the building. We saw a ladder that had been on the third floor was now on the second floor. We went to the balcony and started seeing tinsel lying on the floor leading out of a dorm room," he said.

They entered the room where the tinsel was coming from and immediately the director realized the Christmas tree that had been in the room was missing, he said.

"Someone had gotten into the room and dragged the Christmas tree down the hallway, but the weird thing was the tinsel just stopped in the middle of the hallway."

The tree was never heard from again.

Tunnels connect the basements of all the courtyard buildings on south campus.

Gebhardt said in the tunnel between Mack and Oxley Halls the basement floor is made out of long grids that when walked on make a loud clanging noise. Loud enough to carry to the dorm rooms (or wake the dead).

"Most people try to avoid walking on the grids, and walk on the regular part of the floor because the sound is too eerie!"

Bill Wahl, manager of community and visitor relations, said he was curious about the strange things that were happening, and decided to go to the Oxley Hall basement.

"I went down there with another person, and we walked about 50 feet into the hallway tunnel and the lights went out," he said.

"We ran back out of there so fast. When we got to the light switch it had been turned off, but no one was there to turn it off."

Ken Decker, manager of south area security since 1984, said so far in Oxley Hall, he has never had any strange things happen to him or his security guards.

Maybe the ghosts *are* gone now, so rest easy. But then again . . .

Halloween tales haunt university

By Teresa Hailey
Lantern staff writer

Legend has it there is a haunted elevator on the OSU campus. This elevator holds the secret to a young woman's death.

The legend goes that many years ago a professor murdered a young female student in the northwest elevator of Denney Hall, while it was stopped on the fifth floor.

The professor fled the scene, leaving the woman to bleed to death.

Now, when the elevator stops on the fourth floor to go down, the dead woman's spirit makes the elevator go back up to the fifth floor to save her before taking you down to the floors below.

Do you believe it? Or not?

"Yes, you hear many tales similar to this during this time of the year, and they are all over the world not just here at Ohio State," said Daniel R. Barnes, associate professor of English.

"But it is important to keep in mind, that is just what they are — tales, with no evidence to back them up," he said.

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"Bobbing for apples, drinking cider, wearing costumes and masks, these are the types of beliefs and traditions that are still certainly carried out around Halloween time," Barnes said.

However, beliefs involving evil spirits are not prevalent anymore. Those beliefs were more common in the late middle ages, he said.

Barnes, who teaches folklore, said legends promote the notion that the spirits abound on Halloween. The holiday is linked to a seasonal, nature-related cycle, moving into the season of death, which is winter, he said.

All sorts of other traditions, practices, and beliefs gather together with this notion to make Halloween what it is today, Barnes said.

American beliefs and traditions are relatively recent, he said.

"Disguising yourself and going door to door extorting treats from people is really only traceable back to the late 1920s at the earliest," Barnes said.

Barnes said most scholars

believe the Halloween tradition of trick-or-treating, or beggar's night, started in New York where a group of children went door to door begging for money, he said.

"The children often wore their faces blackened with cork, but still this doesn't necessarily mean that there haven't been long traditions of disguising oneself," he said.

Also, trick-or-treating used to be limited to one night a year, but now kids seem to be able to trick-or-treat three nights, depending on where they live, Barnes said.

"I believe that this practice, particularly, is a sign of the increase secularization of Halloween," he said.

Halloween used to be a religious feast in the early Christian church, and still is for the orthodox All Saints' Day, Barnes said.

"It was tied to very strong, theoretical beliefs and practices, but now I think it is tied to the decline of the influence of the church," he said.

"You just don't find it tied to the belief systems that you might have 100 years ago," Barnes said. "Halloween has been picked up for commercial interests as well."

Barnes said he can remember when they started selling costumes at Woolworth in 1950. Now, it's a huge, industry connected with masks, and plastic jack-o'-lanterns, he said.

"I think that Halloween is also beginning to particularly stir those fearful of satanic cults and satanism," he said. "I think there certainly has been a revival of anxiety about that."

Folklorists are most interested in traditions and customs surrounded by the calendar event, he said. "Even though we are interested in the supernatural, revived spirits and legends of ghosts, very often they just don't seem to be tied to Halloween," he said.

Those types of things seem to happen all the time, Barnes said.

Oxley Hall filled with tales of spirits



Photo illustration by Sean C. Hess/the Lantern
A vacant room in Oxley Hall?

By Keith Montgomery
Lantern staff writer

Something is amiss in Oxley Hall.

No one knows what or who it is, but many people have heard disturbing tales of a ghost who walks the building's now-deserted halls.

Perhaps it is the spirit of a woman, left alone over Christmas in the 1930s when the building was a women's residence hall. As the story goes, she was securely locked in for safety, but when the hall was reopened, she was found dead.

Although such tales of campus horror abound, there is no evidence they are any more than hearsay. No OSU records exist on any deaths



occurring in Oxley Hall. The university has only been keeping statistics on campus deaths since the early 1980s.

Lisa Heines, a former OSU student from Worthington, said she heard the woman in Oxley Hall was found hanged.

"Somehow, the doors were locked with the woman and a stranger inside the building," said Heines.

Now every Dec. 17, the day the woman is said to have died, her third floor room light is supposed to be on and screaming can be heard, she said.

Heines said one year she drove by the old dormitory on the seventeenth and the light was, in fact, on.

Residents of Mack and Canfield halls have their own ghost stories to tell.

Pam Hollo, a former night staff member from Brecksville, said she heard the woman who lived on the third floor committed suicide.

People on the night staff always were afraid to check the doors con-

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Halloween Around the World

ALL SAINT'S DAY:

Festival of the dead was gradually incorporated into a Christian Ritual. Here are other ways Halloween has been celebrated throughout Europe.

• **England & Ireland** - People once carved out beets, potatoes and turnips to use as lanterns on Halloween.

• **Europe** - It is a European tradition to bake a coin in a cake. The person who gets the coin will be rich. Rings were also baked into the cake. The finder of the ring will be married soon.

• **Poland** - On the eve of All Souls Day the family gathers around the table set with extra places for invisible guests.

• **Scotland/Ireland** - Young people try to determine their future spouses by throwing apple parings over their shoulder.

• **Romans** - Apples are a tradition possibly because the Romans had a festival around this time for Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit and trees.

• **Wales** - People used to mark a stone and put it in a bonfire. If the stone was missing the next morning the person would die within the year.

• **England** - It was only on Halloween that the help of the devil was invoked for fortune telling.

SOURCE: Encyclopedia Britannica

necting Oxley and Mack halls because, for some unexplained reason, the doors sometimes would be found unlocked during the middle of the night, Hollo said.

Helen Ivory, a senior from New York and former night staff manager, said she heard the woman's suicide set off a string of suicides among other women in the hall.

Ivory said the building had to be closed down to prevent others from attempting suicide.

According to another rumor, the residence hall was closed after many parents refused to allow their children to live there because of the ghost stories they had heard from

students.

OSU records show the building was renovated in 1967 to provide offices for expanding university departments.

Janet Tebben, a junior from Newark, said she was told there were three women living in Mack Hall in the 1960s who had a suicide pact. They sneaked into Oxley Hall to kill themselves and now are said to haunt the building.

Tebben said she also heard the ghost was not a woman, but William Oxley Thompson, the former OSU president for whom the building is named.

After the renovations, the Office of Commuter Student Affairs moved to Oxley Hall, where it was located for 15 years.

Luther Smith, administrative assistant of commuter student affairs, said he heard the ghostly rumors when his department was in the building.

"Something about a girl killing herself in a bathtub," Smith said.

To Smith's knowledge, no one had ever seen a ghost.

Another OSU employee also has heard rumors and experienced his own "close encounter" with the

ghost of Oxley Hall.

Bill Wahl, manager of community and visitor relations for university community relations administration, said he has heard two ghost stories about Oxley Hall.

One story corroborates Hollo's tale of a young lady who committed suicide in the building and now makes the third floor lights go on during winter quarter, when she is said to have died.

Wahl also heard that women living in Oxley Hall during the 1950s were frightened into having a ghost hunt because they would find doors open, and food and other belongings missing. But all the hunt turned up was a vagrant living in the attic, he said.

Wahl said he and a co-worker had their own poltergeist experience when they toured Oxley Hall.

He and Randy Gebhardt were exploring the basement tunnel that connects Oxley and Mack halls when the lights went out.

Wahl distinctly remembers turning the switch on, but when they went back to inspect the switch it was in the off position, he said.

Students say woman in pink haunts Pomerene

Mirror Lake skater joins Pomerene ghost, OSU legends tell

By Keith Montgomery
Lantern staff writer

Pomerene Hall's claim to fame is the original party animal: a woman that just will not leave the party.

Who is the lady in pink and why would she choose to haunt room 213 Pomerene Hall?

No one really knows, but some people who have seen the apparition say she is definitely there.



Lisa Heines, a former OSU student from Worthington, said as the legend goes, a lady dressed in a pink party dress walks across the room to a window and then vanishes.

Heines said she has only heard of a few people who have seen the ghost.

No documentation of any deaths

in the areas can be found, only rumors and hearsay abound about the ghostly legends.

There is another ghost as well, Heines said. She appears on Mirror Lake.

Only on cold wintry nights a ghostly skater appears on the lake, said Dorrie Wells, an administrative assistant in the health, physical education and recreation department.

The female skater is dressed in old-style clothing and is warming her hands in a muff, she said.

While it is not as well known or talked about, the ghost of Mirror Lake might be the campus's most seen ghost.

It is hard to find people willing to talk about the sighting because many do not believe what they saw.

Interestingly, most of the sightings of the skater are by witnesses standing on a Pomerene Hall balcony overlooking the lake, while the lady in pink can be seen when looking across the north side of Mirror Lake towards Pomerene Hall.

No one has ever linked the two ghosts, but it is curious that the lady in pink chooses to walk to a window overlooking the lake.

The two women are also dressed in clothing which could be from the same period, Wells said.

She said the ghost stories are all

hearsay, but the story about the lady in pink could fit in with Pomerene's past.

Mary Yost, a physical education teacher at Ohio State for 53 years, said Pomerene Hall was a popular gathering place for women.

Room 213 was once the site of elaborate meetings and afternoon teas, said Yost.

The party room, now a dance studio, is also famous for its secret door according to Wells.

Once, a chaperone's door blended into the wall so well hardly anyone knew it was there.

However, a handle and locks have been added that now make it easy to see.

Kappa Sigma haunted by 7-year-old

By Keith Montgomery
Lantern staff writer

Most children dream of staying in a candy store or toy store forever. But members of the Kappa Sigma fraternity, 1842 Indianola Ave., say a 7-year-old girl is spending eternity in their house.

Fraternity members have some interesting ghost stories to tell.

David Gilby, a junior from Monroe and the house historian, said the fraternity's house used to be the home of Ohio Governor Mordecai Bartley and his family.

Bartley was governor of Ohio from 1844 to 1846.

While the governor lived in the home, a fire in the basement took



his 7-year-old daughter's life, Gilby said.

He said ever since the house became a fraternity in 1895, members have reported seeing a little girl running around the mansion or standing in corners of the bedrooms.

Unexplainable events have also taken place in the basement, he

said.

One summer, residents investigated the sound of someone playing billiards, Gilby said.

All the investigators found in the rec room was balls moving and no one around, he said.

The investigators reported all the pool cues were in the rack, but it looked as if someone was playing, Gilby said.

House members have also complained of hearing the sounds of a party on the upper floor when no one was up there.

Mark Thompson, a senior from Cleveland, told of one investigation in which he took part.

Two Halloweens ago, Thompson said, he and three friends were in

the basement playing with a Ouija board.

The board spelled out that a 7-year-old spirit was in the house, but Thompson could not recall her name.

Thompson swears no one was cheating, and said everyone involved was spooked.

Phi Kappa Psi members say equally mysterious events have taken place at their house across the street, 124 E. 14th Ave.

Jeff Haskett, a senior from Stow and president of the fraternity, said the house was built to be a governor's mansion.

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Halloween through the Years

- **"All Hallow Even"** was first celebrated by the ancient Celts in Ireland in the fifth century B.C.
 - **All Saints' Day** started in the seventh century by Pope Boniface IV to replace the pagans' festival of the dead.
 - **All Saints' Day (Nov. 1)** was a holy day of obligation in the Roman Catholic Church. It commemorated all the saints and martyrs known and unknown.
 - **All Souls' Day (Nov. 2)** was started by the Abbot of Cluny in A.D. 998.
 - **All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day** were not celebrated universally in Christendom until the 13th century.
 - **All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day** were adapted by many groups to set aside a special time to honor the dead and usually signified the end of the year.
 - **The Romans** celebrated it from Feb. 13-21. **The Buddhists** honored April 15, the day Gautama Buddha died. **The Japanese** celebrated with the Feast of Lanterns.
- SOURCE: John C. Messenger, Jr., professor emeritus of anthropology

During the construction, a carpenter fell from the roof and died, he said.

House members and alumni believe the carpenter's spirit still haunts the house, said Haskett.

Haskett and previous presidents have all heard footsteps in the chapter room when it was securely locked.

The one-time ballroom, now only used for chapter meetings, is directly above the house president's bedroom.

Upon investigation, no one could ever be found, but a window would be open or something else would be obviously wrong.

Just like Kappa Sigma's ghost, the Phi Psi spectre also seems to be

particularly fond of billiards.

Members have often investigated sounds of someone playing billiards in the house basement. They have found moving balls but no one there.

Haskett said alumni, especially previous presidents, have all told the same ghostly legends.

Soul of prehistoric man flustered in Orton Hall

By Laura Crabbe
Lantern staff writer

1940s, is also present on the campus. "Dr. Warner stays here to guide the student teachers and students in the science fields," he said.

Medical students, in particular, may have uneasy feelings when working with cadavers.

"A lot of the medical students in the labs probably have an uneasy feeling because a lot of the cadavers they use have spirits that didn't go on (to the light) and they're hanging out near their body. They don't really like people touching their body," Bethel said.

Bethel and Till said the spirit of a prehistoric man with a humped back, thick hair, and a protruding forehead, lives in Orton Hall. They said he is very confused and disturbed about what he sees every day.

"He doesn't understand the people, the technology, or the building itself. He watched it (Orton Hall) be built, but he still doesn't understand how it could happen," Bethel said.

Bethel said the prehistoric man cannot speak but sometimes will create disturbances to get people's attention.

"Sometimes he'll bang on things, doors will slam, or guttural noises can be heard when he tries to communicate," she said.

The prehistoric man's spirit, who has been trapped here for millions of years, is upset the artifacts and fossils in the Orton Hall museum have been taken from the earth.

"He wants to empty this room out and bury it to put it back in the earth."

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Ohio State is haunted. Cindy Bethel, a Columbus psychic/channeller said ghosts roam the Ohio State campus every day.

"There's thousands of them and they're everywhere. One of the reasons I've never been real comfortable coming down here (to campus) is because there's so many of them. Since they can't communicate with people, they want to talk to me all the time. It's overwhelming," Bethel said.

The uneasy feeling many experience while walking on campus at night may have more to do with ghosts than safety, said Bethel. "During the night time, they go everywhere. It's when they're most active and they have free-roam then," Bethel said.

Medium/channel Thom Till, said the spirit of a Elaine or Miriam Hoyer is among those on campus. Till said Hoyer was involved in the university administration in the 1920s and has remained on campus because of her love for the university.

"Wherever the president's office is, that's her home base. But she considers the whole campus her domain. She's like a little archangel lady that saves little girls at night sometimes and she's the one who gives you the goose bumps so you know when you're in a dangerous situation," Till said.

Till also said Dr. Warner, a biology or botany professor in the 1930s or



Laura Crabbe / the Lantern

Psychic channelers Cindy Bethel, left, and Thom Till claim the ghost of a prehistoric man inhabiting Orton Hall won't rest until this skeleton of a giant three-toed sloth and other museum relics are reburied.

cheered up, Till said. "If someone's depressed and not feeling well, come here. This is 'happy hall,'" Till said.

The ghost of Woody Hayes was even at the game in Pennsylvania this past weekend, Till said. However, Till said Hayes mostly spends his time with his family.

"He's not as enthusiastic about football obviously now as he used to be. He spends more time with his wife and his kids. On campus, he does help a lot of the players and coaches," Till said.

Bethel said when a person dies, their soul is supposed to go toward a very strong light, which is God. Many times, however, the souls do not realize they are to go to the light and, instead, get "trapped" here on earth until they realize or are directed to go toward the light.

"The movie 'Ghost' is a pretty accurate description of what happens

(when a person dies)," said Bethel. "When souls see the light, they don't understand what it is and that they need to go to it. They get stuck here until they decide they know to move on or they may feel there is something they need to help with and they stay here," Bethel said.

The reason many people are unable to see ghosts on campus is because ghosts move at a higher vibrational level than humans do, Bethel said.

"It's like seeing a fan, when it moves real slow, you can't see through it, but when you move it up to a faster vibration or rotation, you're going to be able to see through it. That's the only difference between being in the physical body and not being in the physical body. They're still here but you see through them because they're moving at a higher vibration than we are," she said.

Many sororities and fraternities

claim to have a ghosts. Till says this is because many of them do.

"There's a lot in sorority and fraternity houses because usually there's a lot of partying and drinking. When you drink or use drugs, you open yourself up and are able to tune into their (ghosts) vibrations," she said.

Anyone who drinks alcohol or uses hallucinogenic drugs opens themselves up to ghosts, said Bethel and Till.

"When you drink alcohol or you

take drugs, it wide-opens all of your energy centers... You're open to anything coming through, which is why some people have what they call 'bad trips'" Bethel said.

Jason Thrush, a member of the Kappa Sigma fraternity, said members have heard and seen many strange things in their house.

"One time a guy got home late at night in the summer. He went into his room and started studying when he heard footsteps coming to his door. He opened the door and saw no one

was there so he went back to studying. When it happened again he heard someone laughing. He ran out the door and downstairs and saw our chandeliers, which are ten-foot-high, swaying," Thrush said.

Although many people are afraid of ghosts, Bethel said they will not cause harm.

"There's none of them that is going to cause harm. If they're causing disturbances, it's probably because they're confused and they don't know what to do," Bethel said.

.. that's where it belongs," Till said.

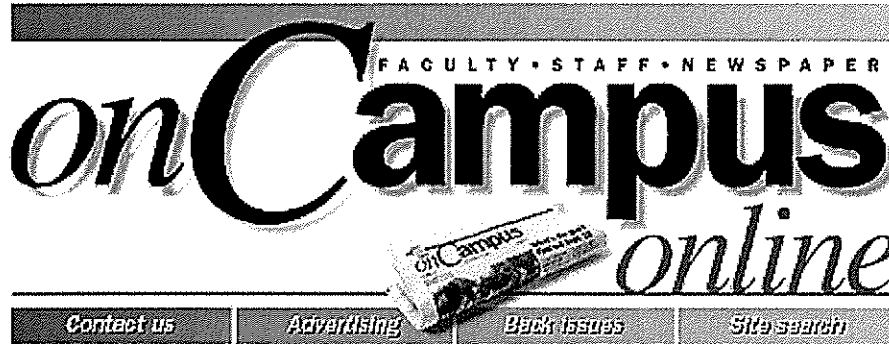
Orton Hall has other ghosts. When students in Orton Hall feel a cold chill or hear a loud noise, it's probably the ghost of Edward Orton trying to stop them from misbehaving, Bethel said.

"He (Orton) doesn't go much for nonsense. When students start acting up in here he has a really hard time with that and he makes his presence known," Bethel said.

University Hall is a "happy" and social place for ghosts of past students, faculty and staff to hang out, Till and Bethel said.

"I see little kids with their beanies and sweaters. It's like a big kindergarten for older kids," Till said.

University Hall is a place where people should go if they need to be



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School Spirits

By Susan Wittstock

On a chilly fall morning, when the leaves drop golden and burnished from the trees and the mist is drifting up from Mirror Lake, a lady can sometimes be seen gliding over the water. She skates, her long pink dress floating around her, in a dreamy silence that separates the living from the dead.

Or so the story goes...

The Lady of the Lake is just one of the many ghost stories that have attached themselves to Ohio State's Columbus campus. Pomerene Hall, Oxley Hall, Hopkins Hall, the Ohio Union- all have had tales which change with each new generation of occupants- and with each telling- but the ghostly lore persists.

The Lady of the Lake

"The most famous one is the Lady of the Lake," says Bill Wahl, retired manager of Ohio State's Visitor and Parent Relations and the Parent's Association. Wahl has become an unofficial collector of campus stories since he began giving ghostly tours during parents weekends in the early 1990s.

"For about 18 years, I was director of the University campus tour program, and in that capacity I learned about every building and over the years collected these stories," he says. "Probably all of this is hearsay, but probably there's some basis in reality somewhere."

Wahl likes to tell the story behind the Lady of the Lake. "That one kind of goes back to a Professor Clark. He got involved in a deal of some sort selling stocks and bonds

for an oil exploration in Alaska and he asked a bunch of folks in Columbus, including faculty, to invest," Wahl says.

The venture failed, and when the professor returned to campus, he was despondent because he felt he had let down everyone who had invested with him.

"He ended up going to Dr. William Oxley Thompson and saying, 'I don't feel good about myself and I feel like taking my life.' Eventually, he went up on a hill to a garden where Pomerene Hall is today, at 12th and Neil avenues. He went there sometime before dawn, around this time of year, and put a revolver to his head.

"A student who went to gather vegetables found him. The Lady of the Lake story comes from his wife asking the University to help her husband," Wahl says. "She was very bitter and vowed to never let the University rest. Shortly after her death in the 1920s, students started noticing in the early morning a woman in an antebellum outfit floating across the lake."

Wahl suggests watching for her from the north side of the lake, looking toward Pomerene. "I think around 1980 was the last real sighting students had," he says.

Greetings and footsteps

The Lady of the Lake may not have been spotted for several years now, but staff who work in Pomerene Hall today have several stories to share of unusual occurrences.

Ann Yurcisin, director of the Office of Disability Services, which is housed in Pomerene, attests to a "presence" in the building. She and her colleagues good-naturedly share their work space with a ghost known as the Pink Lady- who may or may not be the same woman who glides across the lake.

"I've been told that the Pink Lady is a polter-tech-geist," Yurcisin says.

Her department uses computers with adaptive technology for the visually impaired. The computers have a human-like voice that reads aloud materials scanned into them.

"There have been times when the equipment is entirely turned off and no one is around and a person will walk in and be greeted," Yurcisin says. "It will say 'Hello.'"

She says the computers require several steps to turn on, and although the equipment is programmed to read material, it is not designed to speak greetings or other phrases independent of a scanning.

The equipment has spoken to staff and students at various times, Yurcisin says. "We wrote it off or fluffed it off as just a couple of incidental things: just unexplained and kind of fun. We think it's delightful. There is no eerie or uncomfortable feeling at all."

Dorrie Wells, operations administrator for the School of Physical Activity and Educational Services, says there are mysterious footsteps that make their way through Pomerene and a door that keeps unlocking itself.

The footsteps have thus far gone unexplained. "This happens throughout the building," she says. "We've made numerous attempts to determine where they're coming from. You can move to it, but there's never a soul around."

The footsteps have been heard sometimes by graduate students late at night, or by staff working on weekends. "It's really kind of eerie," Wells says. "It's always happened to me very early in the morning."

The door that unlocks itself is in an area with limited access, Wells says. "You lock it and double-check yourself and have someone else double-check, and we still find it open."

She speculates that it may have something to do with the building moving and settling, but doesn't rule out the possibility of a ghostly touch. "I am open to the idea," she says.

The presidential curator

A former president has been known to visit the campus building named after him. Hayes Hall, named for President Rutherford B. Hayes, was completed in 1893, the same year Hayes died.

"The story goes that early on in the history of the

building, around 1915 to 1920, the building was used as a residence hall," Wahl says. "There were two students that were chronically late getting in."

"One night, right around Halloween, they were out late studying and didn't come back until about 10 p.m. All the doors were locked. They tried throwing pebbles at windows and calling up to friends, but no one came down to help them. Finally, an older gentleman with a beard let them in. When they asked who he was, he says, 'I'm the curator of the building.'"

The students told their friends that an older gentleman had opened the door for them, but no one knew whom they were talking about. "A few days later they saw a picture of the man who had let them in hanging on a hallway of the building," Wahl says. "It was a portrait of Rutherford B. Hayes."

The Oxley presence

Oxley Hall, now used as office space but originally the first women's residence hall, has its share of ghost stories.

Several versions exist that center around the death of a young woman in a third-floor corner room. Wahl's version states that she may have committed suicide, but that no one was really sure why she died.

Cathy Collins, administrative associate for housing, food services and event centers, knows of one which says the woman surprised a burglar while staying in the dorm over a holiday and was murdered.

Wahl tells of several sightings over the years of lights shining in the fourth-floor attic. One investigation unearthed a vagrant living there. A year later, when police were called when a light was shining again, they discovered no one. "The door was locked and there was dust on the floor. The only foot prints were their own," Wahl says. "The speculation was back that it was the ghost."

Collins, who worked in the building from 1992 until a year ago, has a story about the attic. "We had heard that when the EMS folks were there testing the fire system in the attic, alarms started sounding and, although all the windows were closed, a big gust of wind

came through and the lights started swaying back and forth. The firefighters left the building, they were so scared."

She says the story was verified later when the building had a fire drill. "One of the EMS people that came out for that mentioned he was there and that it was true." He told them he had worked in a lot of campus buildings late at night, but had never experienced anything like that before.

Sherif Barsoum, program manager for international education, whose office is in Oxley, says rumors still persist about the Oxley ghost. "It's said to be in the attic. People just hear noises and sometimes see a ghost in the attic. It's a man that walks around."

The attic is used for storage, but Barsoum says no one really likes to go up there.

Collins has never seen the ghost, but says the building does have a creepy feeling to it. "There have been times at night you would hear the halls creak and make noises, funny sounds. It is kind of spooky in that building."

The Native American flutist

The Ohio Union may not have the creepy feel that the gothic architecture of some of the campus's older buildings have, but it too has a ghost.

Wahl's version of the story refers to a Native American tribe that lived long ago on the property that would eventually become the University, along a small stream that ran from near the Union down through the area near Mirror Lake.

"Early on in the University's history, before the turn of the century, there were a great deal of trees here," Wahl says. "It was not uncommon for students to report camp fires burning in the woods. They'd notify professors or administrators, and the administrators would go and look and never see anything."

A statue of a beautiful Native American woman was found at one point. The artifact was dug up but was soon lost. "Then students started hearing flutes in the woods, and some said it was a young man who had lost

his love and retrieved his statue," Wahl says.

Even today, Wahl says, the sound of flute music is occasionally heard in the second floor lobby of the Ohio Union.

Two years ago, a student trained by Wahl was giving a ghost tour of campus. "After they came back from the tour, parents walked back in and there's this flute music playing in the stairwell. It really gave everyone goosebumps," he says. They investigated, and discovered a Native American man standing in a third-floor stairwell playing a flute.

"Everyone thought I'd hired him," Wahl says, but he hadn't. "The man said he had felt compelled to come and play."

The elevator mischief

Hopkins Hall's only elevator is a dingy structure, with a metal floor and doors and an interior decorated with student graffiti. The elevator, according to Wahl, has been known over the years to give art students a bit of a fright, and not because of its appearance.

"The building was constructed in the 1960s," Wahl says. "Soon after it was constructed, a young lady working late on an art project was accidentally locked inside the building for the night by the custodian. She had hopped on an elevator and spent the night screaming."

She graduated and was later killed in a car accident. Soon after her death, the elevator began acting strangely. "The elevator would stop and lights flash. It stops just long enough to make students late for class and then will start back up again."

The ghostly whispers

The curved length of stairs that edges the sidewalk in front of the Wexner Center is known for its ability to conduct whispers along its length. It also is possible, when standing almost in the street at a point halfway through the stairs, for a person to give a shout and have it echo back to him.

In 1993 or 1994, a student came to Wahl to tell him of a strange experience he had on Halloween when he went

to stand on the spot and shout. The student's story presents a twist on the echo effect.

On Halloween Day, stand in the midpoint of the stairs at the street's edge, and listen closely. The story has it that the soft whispers of ghosts of faculty and staff on the Oval will rustle in your ear.

But then, maybe it is possible on any day to sense echoes of the past while strolling slowly along Ohio State pathways or walking quietly down building hallways- ghosts or no ghosts.

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Haunted, 'gory' tales buried in Ohio State lore

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The pleasant facade of Ohio State's campus hides years of history — 142 years of history to be exact. And some of those years could be considered dark, giving rise to ghost tales, some which are grounded in more fact than others.

"They're all gory, gory stories, stuff that people like to hear," said Melanie McGurr, assistant professor with university libraries.

The department is scheduled to hold its "Voices from the Vault: Unique and Amazing Finds from Special Collections," display and discussion of strange finds in the archives at 4 p.m. Monday in 150 William Oxley Thompson Memorial Library.

Referring to the ghost stories to be presented, McGurr said, "A lot of these, they might not be real. Stories in the '70s or '80s, they're too real, it's too sad. I like the nebulous ones a little bit better."

Oxley Hall, McGurr said, is supposedly haunted by a young woman who resided there when it was a dormitory.

"She was left there over break," McGurr said. "And when they came back from break she was dead. She either hung herself or someone killed her."

McGurr also said three ghosts haunt Mirror Lake. Those include a skater who floats above the lake, the pink lady who looks out over the Lake from a window in Pomerene Hall, and the



Daniel Chi / Asst. photo editor

Pomerene Hall on OSU's campus is said to be haunted by several ghosts.

wife of Dr. Clark, who was a professor in the early 1920s.

“(Clark) invested heavily in some sort of Alaskan scheme, and he lost all his money. He asked his fellow professors to invest with him, and they wouldn’t. Somehow he went to the administration for money and they turned him down because he had lost all his money. And he shot himself,” McGurr said. “His wife claimed she was going to haunt this place because of what they had done to her husband.”

A story with less gore is that of Herbert Atkinson, a former Board of Trustees member whose cremated remains are set behind a plaque on the second floor of Bricker Hall.

“Supposedly he still comes to faculty meetings. And sometimes in the lobby, people still see a guy with a pipe, a cup of punch and then the lights flash and scary things happen,” McGurr said.

The haunting of Hayes Hall is also less violent than others on campus.

Former U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes died before the completion of the namesake building, which stands on the Oval.

“I’ve heard stories that you could knock at night and (Hayes) would let you in,” McGurr said.

Other stories are less supernatural.

“In 1925 two students died after they took pills from the campus dispensary that had been filled with Strychnine (used as a pesticide) instead of medicine ... They never solved that,” said Lindy Smith, assistant curator with OSU libraries.

James Snook, a veterinary medicine professor, is another notorious figure in OSU’s haunted history.

“It wasn’t his sad, tragic tale, but the sad, tragic tale of Theodora Hix, his graduate assistant, mistress and victim,” Smith said. “He murdered her.”

Smith said despite Snook being a 1920 Olympic gold medalist with the U.S. pistol team, he didn’t kill Hix with a gun.

“He beat her with a hammer and cut her throat,” Smith said.

Kevlin Haire, an archive librarian, added, “He was convicted and six months later, executed down at the old Ohio penitentiary.”

Haire said although she’s not a believer in the supernatural or hauntings, it’s a fun part of her job.

"I'm not a subscriber to that kind of interest, but I think it brings sort of a fun aspect to campus for people and makes them look back," Haire said. "For us, you can look back in history to see who the person might have been."

Smith agreed and said, "If it encourages interest in the past of the university, we're all for it."

Some students don't think the stories are real, though.

"I haven't experienced anything to make me believe it," said DeWhittney Barnes, a first-year in human development and family science. "I think it's a little myth."

Other students said they also didn't believe the stories.

"I've looked into ghost stories. The explanations are mostly wind drafts, headlights. If you ask two people, who saw the same thing, they'll say they experienced different things," said Derek Keckley, a second-year in geology sciences. "Some people are more superstitious than others, I guess."