



The ghosts of Ohio® Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 10 Issue 4

From the spooky desk of James Willis

It's Spring, Right?



James Willis

I should probably start out by saying that while I believe in quite a few conspiracy theories, I'm not quite ready to fully buy into the whole global warming issue. That being said, what the heck is going on with our weather? How is it possible to go from 70+ degrees one day and then barely hover above freezing the next? It's gotten so bad that I recently thought my entire neighborhood had become haunted, only to find it was nothing more than everyone throwing white sheets over the plants in their yards in an attempt to protect them from frost.

The other day, I was talking to a group of co-workers about the weather when I said

something to the effect that "this recent weather is paranormal." Immediately after uttering that, the conversation came to a screeching halt, with one co-worker even saying, "What do ghosts have to do with the weather?" I didn't respond. I just smiled.

You see, for the longest time, I've felt that the word "paranormal" gets underused and misused. Today, you could make the argument that the general public equates the word with "ghosts" and nothing more. That would be a mistake. You see, by the very nature of the word, "paranormal" means anything that cannot be explained scientifically (yet). So while the word could certainly mean "ghosts," it could also used to describe a wide range of things...even weird weather patterns. (And no, I'm not buying the explanations given by my local weatherman. We all know they just make that stuff up.)

As many of you know, when it comes to the paranormal, I am a big fan of people

broadening their minds and looking at things differently in order to perhaps see things in a new light. I feel that we've all been staring at this stuff so long, and not coming up with any answers, that we must be doing something wrong. So perhaps a different perspective might help.

With that in mind, I present to you the April newsletter, where we take a look at all sorts of paranormal things differently; from odd formations on the ground to exploring unique things to bring along on an investigation. We hope you find the information useful.

Now if you'll excuse me, I need to go through another log on the fire. I'm freezing!

Cheers,

James Willis
Founder/Director

OHIO'S MYSTERIOUS SERPENT MOUND



Jeff Craig

As the last Ice Age retreated from what is today Ohio, it opened a well-drained land rich in soils and abundant with game. The Ancient Americans that migrated to the southern part of Ohio brought with them ancient myths which evolved as they experienced new terrain, flora, and fauna. A mound-building culture became well established with a focal point in southern Ohio after 1000 A.D. It was at this time when the local inhabitants created an earthwork overlooking a small creek deep in the wooded rolling hills.

Today we know it as the Great Serpent Mound, located near Locust Grove, Ohio, in northern Adams County.

In case the reader is not familiar with Serpent Mound, it is an earthwork shaped like an uncoiling snake. The effigy, one of the few (and the largest) left in the world, is over 1,300 feet long and about three feet high in most places. The front of the mound, or the head and mouth of the serpent, open up next to an oval shape. With seven coils along the body, the end of the mound spirals into a tail and only averages one foot in height there.

The reasons for building the mound may never be solved. Many have theorized on why it was built. There does not appear to be burials in the effigy although nearby mounds do contain human remains.

Ceremonial uses such as worship of a snake spirit have been suggested. Astronomical alignments are now well documented with lunar and solar events. The head of the serpent points to the setting sun on the summer solstice. The placement of the mound in a meteor crater may be coincidental. Or perhaps the Native Ohioans knew the area has a special significance. The convergence of three eco-regions occurs near the location of Serpent Mound. Eco-regions don't begin and end along one line in the ground but transition over many miles. From the west, the Great Plains region comes to an end in the northern section of Adams County meeting the Allegheny Plateau from the east and a small sliver of the Blue Grass region from the south. Geoffrey Sea has presented his research

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OHIO'S MYSTERIOUS SERPENT MOUND CONT.

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on the Serpent Mound suggesting it was a marker placed by the Ancient Americans to assist Passenger Pigeons during their great migrations with flocks that numbered in the millions. Ross Hamilton, in his book "The Mystery of Serpent Mound," attempts to connect the design of the mound to multiple origins including the Greek alphabet, the number of the beast (666), or the Pythagorean Theorem.

I first visited the mound over 20 years ago as a college student new to Ohio and its abundant archaeological riches. For the past eight years, I have researched it more closely from the point of view of a Cultural Geographer/Cartographer and amateur paranormal enthusiast. When I started working on the first edition of Hidden Ohio Map and Guide in 2005, I decided to add Ancient American mounds. The reason for adding them to a map that mainly deals with paranormal activities was due simply to their mysterious origins. Some people may feel that these locations hold a special power. Serpent Mound is no exception. Many annual events cater to New Age ideologies including a Summer Solstice Celebration, drum circles, and Equinox events. Special one time events are often held at the park (without support from the State of Ohio) including a visit from a Mayan priest in 2012 as part of a tour with crystal skulls. Hundreds of people showed up to hear him speak.

To honor the mound and its very special significance as the largest effigy mound in the world, I created a collectible coin last year. The front of the coin features the unique effigy shape and pays homage to the illustrations of Squiers and Davis from their 1846 survey. The observant collector will see several pictographs added around the edge of the coin symbolizing the culture associated with the mound and its builders. The back of the coin is a very special illustration that maps the entire Serpent Mound Crater, or crypto-explosion zone. Within this crater lies the serpent as well as several natural features, small settlements, and the Ohio Brush Creek.



This collectible coin, cast in antique copper for a traditional look, has been designed especially for the people who find Serpent Mound to be a special place. Only 500 coins were created. Each coin comes individually wrapped in a clear PVC pouch with a hand written number like "4/500." The diameter of the coin is

2.0," larger than many collectible coins so that the detail can be seen in each illustration. Displaying the coin on a shelf or carrying it as a keepsake or charm are both great options. This coin is in no way affiliated with the Ohio Historical Society, which currently maintains the park, or the Highlands Nature Sanctuary, which manages the daily operation of the site. For details about the coin, visit my website at

<http://www.celticmaps.com/serpentcoin>

Serpent Mound is located at 3850 State Route 73, Peebles, OH 45660; Phone (On-Site): 937-587-2796; Email: Serpent@arcofappalachia.org.

Groups must observe all park regulations, including no disturbing of or walking on the earthworks, no picking or collecting of plants, animals, or minerals, and no hunting or fishing. Parking/admission for a passenger vehicle is \$7, motorcycles are \$2. Ohio Historical Society members are free. The park closes at sunset; groups must be packed up and ready to leave at that time. Water and concessions are not available at the park, please plan to bring your own.



From ohiohistory.org



Personal experiences

Silly Ghost

Linda S. Kent, OH

I was 22 and living with my boyfriend in a house located in the North Hill area. Before moving in, he told me the house was haunted. I thought that was pretty cool. The ghost liked to walk across the attic, down the stairs and stop. We would run over, open the door, and never see our ghost roommate. One of the ghost's favorite things to do was open all the cabinets in the kitchen...repeatedly! My poor dog was not off limits to our friend's tricks as well (poor dog)!

Our ghost was also quite the magician. One day while doing laundry in the basement, the door leading to the driveway opened, and someone walked into the living room and stopped. My dog was going crazy! I know I locked that door; I was sure of it. With my dog by my side, along with a wooden baseball bat, I slowly walked up the stairs. Yes..I had locked that door. Not only that, but I had the chain locked and a deadbolt as well! Ok, so I continued to walk through the rest of the house...no one was there. My dog was giving me the "what the heck" look. I agreed with her! This went on for months, and I got used to it.

I did eventually get to see our roommate. I wish I could say I acted cool. But I didn't. Well in my defense, I thought it was a burglar. I was sleeping and woke to find a young man standing close to my side of the bed. At first I just lay there hoping the intruder didn't

know I was awake. I pinched and poked at my boyfriend but he was not waking up. At this point I figured whoever was in the house had to know I was awake. So I decided I would sit up and see what he wanted and pray it was nothing more than money. As I sat up looking him directly in the eyes he moved towards me and smiled. I lost it! I started screaming and punching my boyfriend...that woke him up! I kept yelling, "There's someone in the house!" He jumped up turned on the light and no one was there. Nor was there anyone in the house at all! The ghost was young, rather good looking and dressed in clothes from earlier days. His shirt kind of looked like a pirate shirt! I never saw him again. It wasn't long after I broke up with the boyfriend and moved out.

This was not my only encounter with ghosts. I have a few stories I could tell, but this one is the best!

Got a scary story to tell?

Have you had a ghostly encounter in Ohio? Want to see it featured in a future issue of The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter? Then here's all you have to do:

Just write down your story and send it to info@ghostsofohio.org with the subject line "Newsletter Ghost Story." Be sure to also include your name as you'd like it to appear with the story. We'll take it from there and send you out an email letting you know which issue it is going to appear in. That way, you can get all your friends to sign up for the newsletter so they can see how famous you are!





STRANDED: COULD YOU STAY ALONE FOR A WEEK IN A HAUNTED LOCATION?



Kathy Boiarski

I will be the first to admit it—I am a paranormal reality show junkie. I don't watch them because I think they are out there discovering absolute proof of paranormal activity. I watch them because

they are very entertaining, they visit really interesting locations, and, on occasion, they do give me a new idea or two to try on my next investigation.

My husband does not share my love for the genre and so I have to find my own time to watch them. This usually means that on a night when he's out with the guys, and I've got the kids all tucked in bed, I'm curled up on the couch watching back-to-back-to-back episodes of everything from Ghost Hunters to Haunted Collector and Ghost Adventures to Dead Files. Often by the third hour, I have to take a mental break and watch something silly, like Glee, to shake the chills that somehow show up after non-stop ghost-show watching. There have even been a few instances, I'll confess, that I've texted my husband to see how long it will be until he comes home because I've scared myself silly.

So, you can imagine that when I found out a new show, Stranded, was starting on SyFy, I had to check it out! The show involved leaving three people alone in a haunted location for five full days, with no extra camera crews, and no production staff. It's just the team of three investigators. Even better, it is executive produced by Josh Gates (frequent guest on Ghost Hunters and star of Destination Truth). He is one of my favorite TV personalities, so that made it all the more appealing. He came up with the idea for the show and according to SyFy, he wanted it to be "a paranormal and psychological experiment."

I'd say he hit his mark.

The three people selected to go to the haunted location are familiar with each

other, e.g., friends, relatives or loved ones. These groups typically had one non-believer, one skeptic, and one believer. They each received only directions to the location and handheld cameras to document their journey. Also, they were almost always driven by a friend who dropped them off and left them... wait for it...STRANDED!

Conveniently, they all arrived at dusk or later, so the locations were looming and scary from the start. It appeared that none of the groups were aware of anything about the locations prior to their arrival. The locations were varied and included everything from an abandoned hospital to a hotel on an island that was closed for the season. A haunted mansion and a prison were also in the mix.

Each show had the same format. They would get to the location in the dark and find a set of standard ghost-hunting equipment (EMF detector, digital recorder, etc.) and a packet of information about the location just inside the door. Then the team would explore the building looking for a place to sleep and a kitchen to make dinner.

I should also mention that in addition to their own hand-held cameras, there were an abundance of strategically placed security cameras

throughout the location, both inside and out. The show is then pieced together using the team's footage and the security camera footage. The editing team magically takes five nights and condenses it into one hour.

The psychological aspect was certainly a huge part of the show. Being completely alone and counting only on your team and your bravery to keep you there has to be very difficult. I tried to put myself in their shoes, and I'm not sure I could do it. The team usually starts out in awe of the location then becomes slightly

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Josh Gates
Executive Producer of Stranded



STRANDED: cont.

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overwhelmed by the sheer size of the location and task they have set before them. Then bravery sets in and they go exploring with gusto. A bump or bang sends them into a tizzy and they have to muster up their courage to continue. Finally it is the last day and everyone is happy to go home and happy they made it through the week. As they walk out the front door and bid farewell to the location that has changed their lives forever, the skeptics are left questioning their beliefs and the believers feel more convinced than ever that ghosts do exist.

One of the things I really enjoyed about the show is that unlike all of the other “ghost hunting” shows that collect piles of evidence in just a day or two, there was actually very little evidence collected during a full week in each location. A door or window mysteriously opened or closed, two eerie photos, plenty of bangs and crashes, and maybe a voice seemed to be about all the evidence collected over the entire season!

If you decide to watch one episode just to see what it is all about, I highly recommend the season finale that took place at an abandoned hospital. The team that is there has just lost a young loved one and is searching for answers. Their mission is touching and the eerie photos (and another surprise that I’ll leave for you to experience) make it one not to miss. The episode is titled: Yorktown Memorial Hospital.

There were six episodes in the first season, which has already ended. If you have cable that offers “on demand” options, the whole season is available to watch for free under SyFy. Or you can watch a few select episodes on SyFy.com.

I really enjoyed every episode of this show. I have developed a bad habit of playing on my iPad and watching TV at the same time. There are very few shows that get me to solely pay attention to them, but this is one of them. Despite the pretty standard formula, each episode had compelling characters, dramatic locations, and enough bumps in the night to keep me wanting more. I am really hopeful there will be a second season. If you have an hour to spare, check it out!

THE GHOSTS OF OHIO ARE SPENDING THE NIGHT INSIDE THE BISSMAN BUILDING. WANT TO COME ALONG?

On Saturday, June 8th, 2013, The Ghosts of Ohio will be conducting an all-night investigation at the Bissman Building in Mansfield, Ohio. This will be a private investigation and will not be open to the general public—just Ghosts of Ohio members and a few select friends. Want to join us? All you need to be is be a subscriber to this newsletter and keep your fingers crossed. We’ll be pulling a few names from our subscriber list and letting them come along for the night.



We’ll even let you borrow all the equipment for the night to up the chances of you having a ghostly encounter.

We’ll notify the winners via email the week of May 27th, 2013. Those of you who don’t win will just have to be content with the recap we’ll post in the June issue of our newsletter. But don’t feel too sad; as long as you’re subscribed to the newsletter, you’re automatically entered in all the contests we do!

Here Come the Ghosts!

Spring has barely started springing up across Ohio (at least in a few towns) and already The Ghosts of Ohio’s fall calendar is starting to fill up. We’ve only got one confirmed date so far, but keep an eye out as we’ve got a lot more in the works!

October 19th, 2013 Delaware Ghost Walk

Also, as part of the hoopla surrounding the September 1st, 2013, release of his latest book, *The Big Book Of Ohio Ghost Stories*, The Ghosts of Ohio’s founder and director, James A. Willis, will be appearing at a select few locations. He’ll even be speaking at some of them! More details as they become available, but for now, mark your calendars!

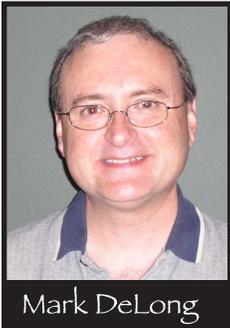
September 29th, 2013 Oxford, Ohio, presentation

October 12th, 2013 Dublin, Ohio, presentation

November 2nd, 2013 Buckeye Book Fair



KEEPING IT SIMPLE WITH GHOST TECHNOLOGY



Mark DeLong

Paranormal investigators in The Ghosts of Ohio come from many different walks of life, different education backgrounds, and different viewpoints. It is fun to see non-

technically minded members learn, setup, and operate the computer-based KAPoS system of probes that record changes in temperature, static electric, and magnetic fields, or survey areas with EMF or K-II meters. The familiar “tools of the trade” almost always include near-infrared cameras, digital recorders for EVP detection, handheld EMF detectors, and non-contact thermometers. More exotic additions include a laser spot projection grid, the Ovilus electronic speech synthesis device, Frank’s Box (a rapid AM-radio band scanner), and, at the high end of trade tools, thermal infrared cameras (FLIRs), if you can afford one!

However, not everything we try on a paranormal investigation revolves around technology. In fact, it is equally fun to see our technically minded investigators explore much older, and completely non-technical tools for spiritual contact such as crystal pendants, divining rods, wind chimes, Ouji boards, mirror gazing, and mental techniques that enhance psychic sensitivity. When you think about it, why should we even expect ghostly entities to have such savvy familiarity with modern technology?! One of the great strengths of our Ghosts of Ohio team is our ability to approach paranormal investigations with a broad mixture of both technical and non-technical tools.

While I’m definitely a technical geek in the group, my Wizard puppet (a string-based marionette, actually) is one example of an entirely non-technical approach we have used several times on actual investigations. We simply hang the puppet

up somewhere in the vicinity of active areas, and we watch for unusual interactions. A camera in the room records any puppet motion over several hours, and we watch to see if the delicately balanced marionette shows any signs of spiritual string pulling. The whole idea is to give the spirits something unusual to play with, particularly on investigations that may involve haunting by ghostly children.

I also had the most curious experience with a crystal pendant on a haunted house investigation last year! Locating myself near an old brick fireplace in the large residence, I dangled the crystal pendant from my hand and held it as still as possible while asking questions of ghostly visitors that night. Not long into this session, I experienced the most curious physical sensation—it felt exactly as if a small fish were nibbling on a baited hook! The pendant seemed to sit perfectly still at times, but then would take off and move in circles and lines as the questions progressed. During all of this, I felt what I can only describe as frequent “spiritual tugs” on the pendant just like a fish nibbling the bait.

So, while we continue to depend on modern sensor technology to try and record “hard evidence” of ghostly



encounters, we should not lose sight of the many non-technical ways it may be possible to interact with spirits. Ghosts, after all, are not a modern phenomenon. Trying to increase psychic sensitivity through such techniques as meditation and mental centering is one avenue of approach that members of the group have been recently exploring—and with some success, even for our least sensitive members! Simple devices, such as pendants and puppets, provide yet another alternative to exploring the mysteries of ghostly encounters and haunted places.



Got Ghosts?

Request for more information

From time to time, The Ghosts of Ohio learns about a haunted location that, try as we might, we just can't seem to dig up any additional information on. That's when we turn to one of the largest group of Ohio ghost experts out there—our newsletter readers! That's right, we're asking you to let us know if you have any information (or better yet, have had a personal experience) at any of the following locations. If you have, shoot us an email at info@ghostsofohio.org. And who knows? You just might get the chance to investigate the location along with The Ghosts of Ohio!

Black Mary Ann (Cleveland/Cuyahoga county)

Buffington Island (Portland/Meigs county)

Buckeye Belle (Beverly/Washington county)

New London Road Jogger (Hamilton/Butler county)

Watkins Road Bridge (Columbus/Franklin county)

COMING IN THE JUNE NEWSLETTER

The Ghosts of Ohio's ongoing experiments with EM pumps

Review of The Ghosts' night inside the Bissman Building

A visit to Elizabeth's grave

Investigations & consultations

The Ghosts of Ohio has already begun scheduling investigations for 2013. If you or someone you know is experiencing something unexplained in a home or place of business, contact us at info@ghostsofohio.org or visit our website to fill out an investigation request. All investigations are offered free of charge, and confidentiality and discretion are assured.

Not sure if you want or need an investigation? The Ghosts of Ohio also offers consultations. Let us sit down with you to discuss your current situation and what help we may be able to offer. For more information, please visit <http://ghostsofohio.org/services/investigations.html>

Interact with The Ghosts of Ohio

In addition to our website, here are a couple of places where you can find The Ghosts of Ohio lurking online:



MYSPACE

www.myspace.com/ghostsofohio



FACEBOOK

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/pages/Columbus-OH/The-Ghosts-of-Ohio/60704381381?ref=mf>



TWITTER

<http://twitter.com/ghostsofohio>

Administration

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