



# The ghosts of Ohio<sup>®</sup> Newsletter

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FROM THE SPOOKY DESK OF JAMES WILLIS:

## Your wife must really love you to let you keep all that haunted stuff in your house



James

Since February is all about spreading the Valentine's love, as it were, I figured it was a good time to answer a love-related question I get asked a lot. Namely, how much does someone need to

love you in order to be allowed to fill up your basement with "haunted" objects.

I automatically become someone who might be able to answer that question due mainly to the fact that my basement currently houses my Strange & Spooky Museum—a collection of over 200 pieces that I have come to possess (no pun intended) in my 30+ years investigating the paranormal. And yes, some of them are alleged to be haunted and/or have some sort of spirit attached to them.

Now, I know what sort of images that last sentence conjures up (pun intended this time). So I should probably pause for a moment to clarify things. While I am all too aware of the plethora of "haunted" items currently being sold on the Internet or how some reality shows love to play up the idea of haunted items being able to cause all sorts of havoc (heck, there are even people who travel around with their collection of haunted items and every single one of the spirits seem to be "dark," "negative," or just plain "evil"), the truth is it's been my experience that items that are truly haunted are incredibly rare. And they certainly don't appear to be capable of flying around the room and causing all sorts of bad luck and general misfortune.

Again, I should probably clarify: There are things in my collection that I truly believe may have a spirit attached to them. And there are even a couple that seem to give off this negative vibe. But I don't fear these items or even wonder what they are capable of. That's because I had sat and tested each and every piece with such things as EMF detectors, temperature gauges, and even IR cameras and have not gotten any sort of quantifiable data that

there is something powerful lurking around me. My wife has been present and has even talked to some of the people who believe they can feel presences surrounding some of the items. And she believes them, as do I. As to why these presences don't make themselves known to me in my house, I really don't have an answer, but it is something I have long pondered. The best theory I can come up with is that if these spirits are indeed negative, they just don't do well in a loving, caring environment that I call my home. Neither my wife nor I fear anything in my collection. And as for my 6-year-old daughter, other than hanging out and playing video games with me in the room that houses the collection, she couldn't really care less. It's all just "daddy's ghost stuff." So maybe since we're all so positive (or nonchalant) around it, there's really nothing for the negative stuff to grab onto.

Or maybe, as they often say, love conquers all...even negative energy from ghosts and spirits.

Cheers,

James A. Willis  
Founder/Director



leads me to believe there is any sort of energy surrounding these items that is strong enough to cause the item to move, let alone fling itself around or physically harm me. Does that mean there's nothing attached to the item? Certainly not. But as far as I'm concerned, until I am able to detect an energy/force/mass strong enough that it could potentially move an item, I'm not worried in the least.

Some would call me naïve in that regard. That my putting all these items out on display is just asking for trouble. There are even those who have seen and handled some of the items I bring to my appearances and presentations that swear



## PERSONAL EXPERIENCE #1

**SCRATCHES IN THE CEMETERY**

—Frank D., Dayton, OH

I think it's time I told you my story. Several of us decided to check out this old abandoned cemetery back in the woods. Legend says that it is haunted by evil spirits that don't like anyone coming to the cemetery at night. You know, the typical spooky story. So anyway, we go out there and yeah it's spooky and stuff but pretty much just because we're sitting in the middle of nowhere in a cemetery at night.

I guess we were out there for a half hour and nothing was happening. We tried talking to the ghosts like they do on those ghost shows, but nothing happened. I was ready to go, but my friends were all like no, we have to keep trying because we're here already. So I just started walking around all by myself. The rest of them were in the middle of the cemetery and I was walking around the outside. There was nothing around us but tombstones and trees.

I had walked all the way to the outer edge of the cemetery and was just sort of looking at the trees and stuff when I noticed there was some sort of weird mist up in one of the trees. It was really weird because it sort of looked like a person in that it was shaped like a person. But you could see through it. As I watched it, it started to come down the tree and move towards me. I guess at first it was 30 feet from me, but it started getting closer. As it got closer, I still couldn't make out any details. It was just this weird cloudy stuff that was shaped like a person. I wasn't scared at this point. I was just sort of interested in what I was seeing and trying to figure out what it was. I didn't even think it was a ghost at that point. But of all a sudden, as I'm watching this thing get closer, I suddenly got really scared. I don't know why, but this idea popped into my head that whatever this thing was, it wanted to hurt me. I probably should have run at this point, but instead I just turned around and yelled for my friends to come and look at this thing. At this point, I had my back turned from whatever I had been looking at.

I guess that turned out to be a bad idea because as I was yelling to my friends, I immediately felt this painful stinging sensation on the back of my neck. It surprised and hurt so much that I yelled and grabbed my neck.

My friends came running over and I had them look at the back of my neck. There were three fresh scratch marks across the back of my neck, one of them was so deep that it was bleeding. They said it looked like scratch marks as if someone scratched me with their nails. They took a picture with their phone and showed me and yeah that was exactly what it looked like.

We were all so interested in looking at the back of my neck that we forgot all about the misty shape that I had been looking at. When we got around to looking for it, it was gone.

I still don't know what I encountered that night. I only know that whatever it was, it didn't like me and decided to scratch me. Gives me the chills just writing about it.



**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](mailto: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!



## PERSONAL EXPERIENCE #2

# Coughing In The Night

—Liz W., Delaware, OH

Back in the 1990s, my husband and I bought our first house. We were both really excited because it was something of a fixer upper and we were both interested in spending lots of time turning the house into a home. But in order to have the time to do that, right after we closed on the house, my husband had to take on extra work in order to save up his vacation time for the spring in a few months. For that reason, he was called out of town on business a lot and I often spent nights alone in the house.

I guess it was the second or third night alone in the house when I first heard it. I woke up to use the bathroom around 2:30 am when I heard what sounded like a woman coughing 3 or 4 times. It was loud, distinct, and seemed to be coming from the kitchen area, which was just down the hall from our master bedroom. To me, it sounded exactly like a woman coughing out in the kitchen. Needless to say, I was a little freaked out, but after the initial freakout, I sort of convinced myself that I hadn't really heard anything and my mind and ears were playing tricks on my sleepy self. I still made sure to peek out into the kitchen, but it was empty and the sound had stopped. So I just went back to bed.

The next night, my husband was back from his business trip and all was normal. Looking back, I pretty much forgot about the whole thing, especially when I didn't hear the coughing sound that night. I do know that I never even mentioned it to my husband.

About 3 weeks later, my husband was called out of town on work. That very night, I was woken up by the same coughing sound coming from the kitchen area again. I just sort of laid there in the bed, wondering if I had actually heard it. But when the coughing sound continued, it was clear

that I really was hearing it. I guess the coughing went on for 15 more seconds before it stopped suddenly. I wasn't sure what I should do at that point because it was clear to me that there was an actual woman in my kitchen. I finally got up the nerve to creep out into the hallway and flip the light on. There was no one there. I went around to all the doors and windows and made sure everything was locked up tight. They were.

The next night, I heard it again. In fact, I heard it for the next four nights until my husband returned from his business trip. It was always the same sound: A woman coughing from the kitchen. Each time, I would go and look and there was never anyone there and I could never determine a source for the sounds.

Of course, as soon as my husband came home, the coughing stopped. And of course, since I told him about hearing the coughing the moment he got back home from his trip, the fact that we didn't hear it that night made him think I was making the whole thing up.

About a month went by without any incidents. Then, my husband went to Indiana for the night on business and yes, you guessed it, I heard the coughing sound. And of course, the following night, with my husband back in town, we didn't hear it. That was when I decided that I needed to try and do a little research. What I found out was amazing.

According to our neighbors, the people we bought the house from never lived there. They were essentially just house flippers. But the previous owners had lived there for close to 30 years. It was just a husband and a wife and the wife was a heavy smoker. She was so addicted to cigarettes that even though she had emphysema and had to use a walker, she refused to quit. Oddly

enough, her husband hated cigarette smoke and forced her to either quit or smoke outside. Neighbors said it was common to see the woman standing out in the back yard in the middle of a snow storm, smoking. That was, they said, unless the husband was out of town, because that's when she would smoke inside the house. Specifically, she would sit in the kitchen and smoke all day. Neighbors said it initially caused some concern because, in an attempt to possibly get rid of the smell of the smoke, the woman would open the kitchen windows, even in the dead of winter. They said that if you were walking past the house and she was in the kitchen smoking, you could see the smoke wafting through the open window and hear her inside, coughing.

When I learned all that, it convinced me that, as weird as it sounds, what I was hearing was the ghost of the former homeowner, sitting in my kitchen while she was smoking. I know that sounds crazy, but how else can you explain what I was hearing? On top of that, I only heard it when my husband wasn't home and that was when she would smoke in the house—when her husband wasn't home. I really can't think of any other explanation.



# IRELAND: LAND OF THE LEPRECHAUN AND LEAP!



Wendy

As the green beer season is quickly approaching, my thoughts turn to other things, besides myself, that are Irish. And of course being a “ghostie,” I began thinking about Leap Castle (pronounced “lepp”) and its famous elemental spirit. This then lead me into the realm of Irish spirits (not beer!) as a whole. So I thought I would share some of Ireland’s more interesting spooky beings with you in time for St. Paddy’s Day.

Leap Castle is probably the most well known of Irish haunts. Besides its usual lords, ladies, and souls left to rot in the oubliette, Leap has a very famous elemental spirit. An elemental is most easily explained as a spirit of nature. There are wind, water, earth and fire elementals associated with most ancient religions, and they are often called upon in spellwork. Basically you could say that faeries, elves, gremlins, banshee, brownies, kelpies, etc., all fall under the general umbrella of elemental spirits.

The elemental in Leap has no definite known origins. Some say it was brought there by the druids, to protect an ancient burial or worship site, and indeed odd figures and lights are seen in the trees surrounding Leap. Others say it is something that emerged due to occult practices that occurred in the castle. The current owners claim to

have never seen nor heard it, yet visitors to the castle ruins have complained about scratching or bites, mostly on their legs, accompanied by the smell of rotting garbage and earth. To me that would indicate an earth elemental— usually a spirit that is very low to the ground, and aggressively protective of its territory. I would liken it to a troll or gremlin.

As Christianity took hold over the British Isles, St. Patrick came to Ireland to drive out the snakes. Only it wasn’t literal snakes; Ireland never had snakes to begin with. Satan in the Garden of Eden was represented by a snake, so when St. Patrick drove out the snakes, he was in reality driving out Satan, which to the Church at that time meant the old gods and old ways of worship. Where were the old gods to go? They retreated to caves under the dunes and in the water, and became the faery folk, retaining their human form and their supernatural powers, only on a minor scale. They lived in groups, or as “solitaries.” The best known of the solitary male faeries is the Leprechaun.

The Leprechaun was originally viewed as a tiny wizened old man who made or repaired shoes. But they were known to be very



Leap Castle—From *TheRichest*

mischievous, and loved to show their power over mankind through playing pranks. Many humans went mad looking for the Leprechaun’s treasure, usually stated to be found at the end of a rainbow. Going back to the origins of this faery, we find that the leprechaun usually obtained his riches by digging up treasures buried during times of war, and then reburying it where only he had access. Catching a Leprechaun usually meant you were given 3 wishes, but it didn’t mean the Leprechaun had to be truthful. So those wishes could quickly become curses via the Leprechaun’s sharp, intelligent mind.

What about other elemental spirits? One that quickly comes to mind is the Banshee, a wailing woman with red hair that appears near the home where a death will soon occur. Traditionally during funerals in Ireland and Scotland there would be a keening woman in attendance. Sometimes a family member, sometimes a professional keener, it

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# IRELAND: LAND OF THE LEPRECHAUN AND LEAP CONT.



Wendy

was this woman's job to cry and wail a lament throughout the funeral proceedings. The more crying, the more the deceased

was loved and mourned! From here grew the legend that some of the more important Irish families had a faery woman as a keener, who began her wailing before the death had even happened, as a warning to the family. The appearance of the banshee wailing could also indicate that a family member who was away, possibly at war, had died.

A more frightening haunt is the Dullahan. This is a headless horseman, a spirit popular throughout the world. But in the case of the Irish Dullahan, he uses a human spine as a whip, and if he

coach and opening your door, you might find yourself drenched in a basin of blood thrown by the horseman, or struck by his head! This marks you for death. The Dullahan sometimes has a travelling companion; the banshee. The banshee is considered a faery, while the Dullahan is considered a goblin. That is because while the banshee's cries indicate an upcoming death, the Dullahan throwing blood or his head at a victim is said to cause the death, marking him as a more malevolent spirit.

Ireland has many more fae, but another interesting being I found was the Irish Vampire, Fir Gorta. This spirit didn't drink blood, but instead came from the ingesting of blood! During the Potato Famine of the mid 1800s, starving people supplicated their meager food with relish cakes. These were small patties made of oatmeal, turnip greens and fresh blood drained from the neck of animals. Once the famine was over, some people still craved those cakes and continue eating them. From there grew the story



*The Dullahan — From Strange State*

door of people still eating relish cakes and beg for cash. If he was refused, the household fell sick and sometimes perished. A warning to those who ingest blood!

So while you're drinking your green beer and eating your boxty, remember to ignore the sound of the approaching coach outside your front door, and throw a copper or two into the begging cup of the starving man at the back!



*— From Thomas Crofton Croker's "Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland"*

catches you in the face, the whip can destroy your eyes. He is also seen driving a black coach with a coffin. Hearing the sound of an approaching

of Fir Gorta, who was a skeletal man travelling the countryside with his begging cup in one hand and a staff in the other. He would go to the back



# MEET THE GHOSTS OF OHIO: Wendy



## Length of time in The Ghosts of Ohio?

I've been with the Ghosts of Ohio for just over 11 years.

**What got you interested in ghosts?** I became interested in ghosts because I've been dealing with them since I was about 2 years old. I went through my teens scared and running from the occurrences. Then, I began reading and researching about paranormal events, which fits in with my generally "weird" lifestyle. When I found out there were groups that were investigating the paranormal in the effort to help educate people on what was going on in their own homes, I knew I had to be a part of that. I began looking for a group that would be a good fit for me. The Ghosts of Ohio was that group. Smart people, very open minds, both believers and skeptics that can sit down and have rational discussions...I've never regretted the decision to join!

## Favorite piece of ghost-hunting equipment?

My favorite piece of equipment is myself. I have an environmental sensitivity, which, along with all its negative effects in my life, also lets me feel fluctuations in the EMF fields. So I always follow my intuition on investigations, and always hope to back up what I am feeling or sensing with scientific equipment.

## Favorite place you've investigated?

My favorite place to investigate? Too many. But Gettysburg is probably the most fun, just because it is so expansive, and you get to be outside dealing with nature, and possible elemental activity, along with human paranormal activity.



## Three places you'd love to investigate?

Number 1 is the Tower of London. I already pinpointed activity there in the Jewel House on a trip years ago, and would love to get locked in for the night and just investigate to my hearts content! Next, the Valley of the Kings, because nothing says spooky quite like a pharaoh's curse. And finally, the White House. I'd like to know what Abe has to say!



## SEND THE GHOSTS BACK IN TIME!

Two issues ago, we announced our new "Back In Time" feature where we asked you to share your spooky stories from childhood and we would do some research to find out where those stories stand today. Sort of like a supernatural scavenger hunt where we try to unearth all those tales from your youth. I guess we struck a nerve with you guys because the response has been overwhelming! We've gotten over 95 requests so far, which include everything from ghosts and haunted houses to mysterious monsters and even a few UFO sightings! Amazing!

For those of you unfamiliar with what we're doing, it all goes back to the idea that everyone, even though who might not believe in the supernatural, has one thing in common when it comes to ghosts: a scary story of a haunted place from your childhood. You know, the old house you weren't

supposed to go near or the creepy old grave sitting all by itself on top of a hill. Maybe the monster that lived in the woods behind your house. Well, whatever it was, we're sure that you've often thought to yourself "I wonder whatever happened to that place?" Well, now's your chance to find out!

The Ghosts of Ohio wants you to send us your childhood ghost stories. We'll take it from there and dig into the history to find out if there really was any truth to the tales that chilled your bones as a youth. Just send an email to [info@ghostsofohio.org](mailto:info@ghostsofohio.org) with as much information as you can remember and we will jump right on it. We'll even supply you with a free report with everything we were able to uncover. So what are you waiting for? Send The Ghosts back in time!



## BACK IN TIME

# The Hell Town Bus



James

*I'm hoping you can settle a bet for me. I grew up near Hell Town and used to go out there all the time. I am familiar with all the legends, but the one that freaked me out the most was the one about the serial killer murdering the school bus full of children. I know for a fact that there was a bus down there, but my friends, who aren't from the area, tell me that I'm full of it. Can you tell them that there really was a bus at one time? Thanks!*

**Richard R., Boston Township, Ohio**

Actually, I can! But since the legends surrounding the area known as Hell Town are so varied (and plentiful), we should probably give a bit of background information first. There will be a link to the full story of Hell Town and all its many legends at the end of this article if you'd like to dig a little deeper.

But focusing specifically on the Hell Town bus, here's what we've got:

### LEGEND

Years ago, a school bus full of children was making its way through the area when a mysterious figure somehow managed to hijack the vehicle (in some versions of the tale, he's disguised himself as the actual bus driver while in others, he is the bus driver who just "snapped" one day).

Once he had control of the bus and the children, he drove to a secluded spot near the woods and murdered everyone onboard. When he was done, he simply vanished and was never apprehended.

It is said that when authorities attempted to tow the bus from the location, it broke free and rolled over several individuals, killing or maiming them. Each time they tried to drag the bus off, something happened, resulting in death or serious injury. This led authorities to simply leave the bus on the spot where the murders took place. It also gave rise to the rumor that the bus itself was cursed.

Before too long, visitors to the area late at night claimed to see the empty seats of the bus fill up with the ghosts of the murdered children. What's more, people would sometimes spot a shadowy figure of a man standing at the back of the bus, smoking. This was believed to be the ghost of the murderer.

These ghost sightings became so commonplace that local authorities decided to remove the seats from the bus, hoping this would stop the apparitions from appearing. It didn't work. The ghosts continued to appear, only now, they brought ghostly seats with them.

Finally, the locals decided they had had enough and somehow managed to drag the bus out of the area, leaving nothing behind. Or did they? For there are those to claim to have seen a phantom bus in the woods, filled with the ghosts of little children.

### TRUTH

As with all good urban legends and ghost stories, the Hell Town Bus tale does have some roots in truth. There was, indeed, a school bus in the area for several years.

However, the truth is a bit more mundane. Turns out it was nothing more than a decommissioned school bus that a local was using for storage, which explains why the bus didn't have any seats in it. When the resident moved from the area, he left the bus behind. It sat abandoned for several years before it was towed from the area. There were no reports of any accidents or deaths associated with the bus' removal.

Along those lines, there is not a single reported incident involving a mass murder on a school bus anywhere near the area known as Hell Town. Obviously, a crime as horrific as the one alleged to have taken place on the bus would have made local, if not national, news. But there is not a single mention of anything like that happening.

All in all, it would appear that the Hell Town Bus legend got its start from nothing more than a spooky-looking abandoned bus in the woods and just grew from there.

*Got a spooky story from your childhood you'd like for us to look into? Then send the Ghosts back in time by sending your story to [info@ghostsofohio.org](mailto:info@ghostsofohio.org) and we'll get right on it!*



# SPEND THE NIGHT WITH THE GHOSTS OF OHIO: BRYN DU MANSION

On Saturday, February 18th, The Ghosts Of Ohio spent the night locked inside Bryn Du Mansion in Granville, Ohio. We were all quite excited about this because, unlike many of the past locations in the Spend The Night program, Bryn Du had not been “investigated to death” by other paranormal groups. As such, we couldn’t help but wonder if perhaps our showing up would peak the curiosity of the spirits said to inhabit Bryn Du and make for a very paranormally active evening.

To say that the ghosts of Bryn Du Mansion delivered would be an understatement, at least initially. In fact, we were still on our pre-hunt tour when everyone in the group heard what appeared to be a woman talking, somewhere off in the distance. In fact, her voice would be heard several times while we were on the tour.

As for the hunt itself, during the first vigil of the evening, we captured what appears to be a woman’s voice several times from the third floor, with the closest females being two floors below. Interestingly enough, the “voices” were captured on video during The Ghosts Of Ohio’s first-ever Facebook Live event. Further analysis is needed, but it certainly is intriguing!

To see the video for yourself and possibly hear the voices, follow this link. <https://www.facebook.com/60704381381/videos/10155000398931382/>

Let us know what you think! Oh yeah, and based on our possible success with Facebook Live, we just might be planning to incorporate it into future investigations. So you may want to “Like” our Facebook page so you don’t miss out!



# WANT TO SPEND THE NIGHT WITH THE GHOSTS OF OHIO IN 2017?

For those of you not familiar with our Spend The Night program, simply put, it's an opportunity for some of our fans to get locked inside of a haunted location with us on a private, overnight ghost hunt.

All you need to be is an active subscriber to this very newsletter. As long as you are, there's a chance your email address will be randomly pulled from the list. When that happens, you and a guest are headed to a haunted location with us for the night!



## Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts of Ohio are continuing to schedule investigations for 2017. If you or someone you know is experiencing something unexplained in a home or place of business, contact us at [info@ghostsofohio.org](mailto: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:

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

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<http://twitter.com/ghostsofohio>

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