



The ghosts of Ohio® Newsletter

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FROM THE SPOOKY DESK OF JAMES WILLIS:

2016: THE YEAR THINGS WENT MISSING



James

Many of you might have read the headline above and thought I was going to talk about the fact that up until a few weeks ago, most of the United States appears to have “lost” spring. Snow on Easter?

Actually, I want to tell you all about the mysterious disappearance of some books from my door step, an incident that resulted in the very newsletter you are getting ready to dig into.

You see, there is a fairly new phenomena out there that all began with researcher David Paulides looking into some strange disappearances of people from U.S. state parks. The more he investigated, the more Paulides found that there were not only strange similarities to the disappearances, but that there were literally hundreds of these disappearances taking place across the United States and beyond. Paulides has compiled many of the cases into five different books, which all fall under the collective name *Missing 411*.

When I found out that there was a special edition box set of all five books in the *Missing 411* series, I had to have it. For starters, I found the whole thing fascinating and thought it might make for a good article/review in an upcoming newsletter. But more than that, I knew the set would make a perfect addition to my Strange & Spooky Library—my personal paranormal library that currently contains over 1,000 examples of what I’m sure

Mr. Poe would collectively describe as “many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore.” So I ordered the box set and it promptly disappeared.

By “disappeared,” I mean that it was shipped Priority Mail and there was a notification that it had been delivered to my address. But as far as I can tell, it never made it to my house. The Postmaster confirmed that fact (kinda) when she said that the package “might have disappeared after being delivered to one of three houses that might not have been yours.” Yeah, I don’t understand that quote, either, but that’s what she said.

I should also note that this is the only time that books I have ordered have gotten lost in the mail. Actually, it’s the only time anything I’ve ordered has mysteriously disappeared. And I have the worst mailman in the history of the United States Postal Service, possibly even including the Pony Express: Mail thrown in the middle of the yard, and boxes left out in the rain and snow, despite a huge, covered porch being a mere four steps away. Heck, I’m thoroughly convinced he never even stops at my mailbox—just sort of flings things out the window as he passes by.

Anyway, as I sat and fumed over my missing books (between futile attempts to get the Postal Service to help find the package they willingly admitted delivering to the wrong house “by mistake”), I got to thinking about other things that have mysteriously disappeared over the years. And not just things that have vanished from my doorstep. The result is this issue of our newsletter.

For this issue, we’ve got articles on crewmembers disappearing from ships and even a review of a book that claims to have finally explained what’s going on in perhaps the most famous of all “disappearance spots”—the Bermuda Triangle. And of course, we’ve got a full write up on *Missing 411*.

As for my five-volume box set of *Missing 411*, it was never found. But thanks to the wonderfully sympathetic crew over at *Missing 411*, I am now the proud owner of a brand new box set. I can’t thank them enough, especially since the U.S. Postal Service basically wrote me off and started ignoring me. The whole event, though, did allow me to come up with a brand new conspiracy theory. You know the Men In Black—those mysterious figures that appear and have been known to make people and things disappear? Yeah, those guys. Well, after this whole debacle, I’m convinced the Men In Black are real...and they all work for the U.S. Postal Service.

Cheers,

James A. Willis

Founder/Director



PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Grandpa's Missing Coins

– Donna H.

As long as I can remember, my grandfather collected coins. Specifically, JFK half dollars. He had this weird way of storing them, though. He didn't keep them in plastic or any type of protective cases. He would just keep them on his dresser in stacks that were always arranged in chronological order from oldest to newest with the newest always on top.

When my grandfather passed away in 2013, I was given nine of his half dollars. I put them in a pile on my dresser and promptly forgot about them. I don't really remember how much time had passed since I brought them home, but I remember one day looking at the coins and thinking the pile looked a little light. Sure enough, when I counted them, there were only six. I got down on my hands and knees and searched all underneath the dresser, thinking I might have inadvertently knocked some of them off. I didn't find a single one.

I kind of forgot about the coins again but I left them on the dresser where they had been. Sure enough, one day I noticed there were only three left. I looked all over, but still couldn't find them. I guess I should mention that I am divorced and the only other person that lives in the house with me is my 5-year-old daughter. I asked her about the coins, but she sort of gave me that look that made me think she had no idea what I was talking about.

I guess it was another two weeks or so and then you guessed it—the last three coins went missing. Again, I looked all over the place but couldn't find them. I can remember even going around and checking the windows thinking somebody had found a way to sneak in my house and steal the coins, even though that really didn't make sense since nothing else was missing. Just those nine coins.

It was a couple of months later when I was heading up to the attic to get down the Christmas decorations. I absolutely hate my attic because there's no way to access it other than through a hole in the ceiling. I have to get a ladder out, pop the top off, and then poke my head up into the attic. I keep most of the boxes near the whole because even if I were to climb completely up there, the ceiling is not tall enough for me to be able to do anything more than sort of bend over and try to walk without hitting my head.

As soon as I popped the top off, I poked my head up there and started to grab the boxes of Christmas decorations. I had probably taken two or three boxes down when I noticed something shining at the far end of the attic. It was almost directly under the attic vent to the outside and the sun was hitting whatever it was. I got so curious that I decided to climb up into the attic and pretty much crawl over to the other side. When I got there, I

found what had been shining. It was all nine half dollars in one tall stack. When I looked at the stack, they were arranged in chronological order with the newest on top—just like Grampy used to do.

I have no idea how those coins got up there, but there was no way my daughter could have gotten up into the attic and all the way over there to place them. I told my boyfriend and he said it was birds. I guess I could see birds snatching the coins if they were out in the open on my porch or something. But how does a bird make its way into my house, take the coins on three separate occasions, and then fly up into the attic and arrange them in one stack that also happens to be in chronological order?

As far as I'm concerned, there's only one person that could have put those coins up there—and that's my Grampy.

Oh yeah, and ever since I found the coins, I brought them back downstairs and keep them on my dresser in a stack that is in chronological order. They have never moved again.



MISSING 411: David Paulides' Research Into Unexplained Disappearances



Samantha

Imagine spending a beautiful summer day with your family and friends at one of our National Parks. You pick the perfect spot for a picnic, maybe bring along some outdoor games to play. Your group

even enjoys a short hike on one of the well-maintained trails near your site, taking in the splendor of the landscape and stopping to pick berries and wildflowers along the way. It's a great day. Until, that is, you notice that a member of your group is missing. You know for a fact that the person was right there, just feet from where you're standing. Everyone else has the same reaction, and a search begins. Your friends and family call the person's name, but there's no response. Everyone searches the immediate area, but there's no sign of the person anywhere. Perhaps this person got tired and returned to the parking area, but he's not there, either.

Your group grows frantic and notifies the park service. An official search begins, involving park rangers, local and state law enforcement, search and rescue teams, canines, mounted units, helicopters equipped with FLIR technology, and hundreds to thousands of volunteers. Despite a delay due to sudden heavy storms that roll in, the rescue teams manage to search every square mile within a 15-mile radius over a number of days. They find no sign of the missing person. It's as if he disappeared into thin air.

Your group is devastated. Friends and family continue to search long after the authorities have given up, but there's still no sign. Strangely, your search ends when about a month later, a hiker discovers a body just 20 feet off of the exact trail where your friend had disappeared. It's laying face-down in a shallow creek, nearly naked except for underwear and one shoe. An examination by the coroner proves that it is your missing friend. The cause of death is listed as "exposure."

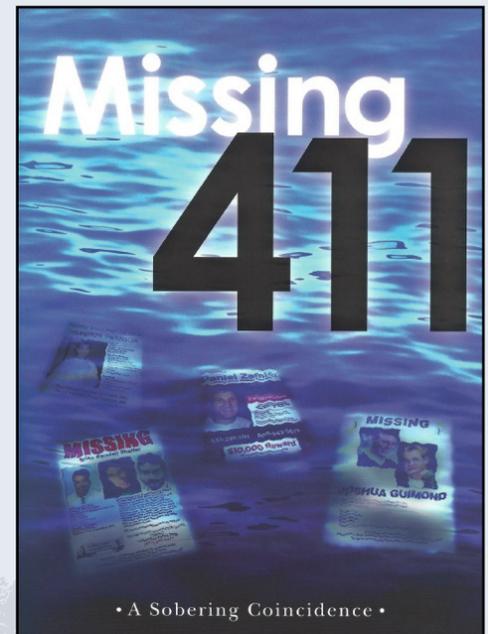
Okay, readers, I'm sure this story sounds like the stuff of urban legends and horror

movies, right? I mean, how could someone simply disappear on a clearly marked trail in the presence of family and friends? How could all of the search and rescue parties have missed him when he was found just feet from where he disappeared? Why was he nearly naked? And how could he have died of exposure in the middle of summer?

Incredibly, this kind of scenario is being played out over and over and over again in National Parks and other wilderness areas in the U.S and all over the world. In many cases, missing people are found (alive or dead) in areas that have been searched time and time again. Many others are found very, very far from where they disappeared—much too far for them to have traveled on their own, sometimes in areas that are extremely difficult to access. And sadly, there are too many missing people who are never found at all. As of November 2015, former police officer, author and investigator David Paulides and his team of researchers have documented over 1,600 inexplicable disappearances dating as far back as 1752. The facts for each case come from public records, news articles, Freedom of Information Act-acquired reports, and first-hand interviews. In one of his *Missing 411* books, Paulides says, "Many of the missing are not in any databases and will not be talked about in missing person forums. The cases were found by thousands of hours of research, scouring older newspapers, referrals by readers, and pure luck."

These disappearances aren't your standard kidnappings, accidents, or murders. Throughout his investigations, David Paulides has identified many commonalities between unusual disappearances, and these commonalities have become his criteria for inclusion in his research. The following are just some of the similarities between the *Missing 411* cases:

- People (all age ranges, including babies and seniors) disappear while playing, hiking, fishing, hunting, farming, prospecting, taking pictures, and gathering flowers or wild edibles, especially berries.
- "High in elevation, dozens of small lakes, little vegetation, and lots of



exposed rock and dirt seem to be the ideal topography for people to vanish, permanently." (David Paulides)

- "There seems to be a correlation between the names of geographic locations and where people vanish. Locations have names for a reason; why were these named as such?" (Places like Devil's Tower, Devil's Throne, Seven Devils Mountain, etc.)
- Prior to disappearing, many individuals are far ahead of their group, at the tail end of their group, decide to return to their camp alone, or they take a different path than everyone else. Paulides states that, "It's while a person is open to being victimized" that they go missing.
- People with disabilities (bad knee, hard of hearing, autistic, etc.) disappear at a highly unusual rate.
- People tend to disappear between the hours of 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.
- Many who disappear are wearing bright colors, especially red.
- Disappearances seem to happen in patterns and cycles, targeting specific areas and types of people at particular times of year.
- People who are with their pets often disappear with those animals, particularly dogs. The animals usually reappear later, even if the missing person does not.

MISSING 411: David Paulides' Research Into Unexplained Disappearances, cont.

- Bad weather usually follows disappearances, which hampers search parties.
- There are usually no tracks to follow, even in mud and snow.
- Canine searchers can't or won't track the missing person's scent. If a scent is tracked, it usually stops at a road or body of water.
- People who are found alive are usually found asleep or in a semi-conscious state.
- "Many are found in places that defy conventional common sense." For example, many are found at higher elevations and miles away from where they disappeared (too far for them to have arrived there on foot), including young children and disabled individuals.
- Many are also found in areas that have already been thoroughly searched. David Paulides says that, "...many, many of the cases that I cite... would indicate that the person had been moved into a position closer to the location from which they initially disappeared in order that they may be found."
- Those who are found (alive or dead) usually have no evidence on their feet of having walked to where they were found (no mud, dirt, etc.), and those found in wet areas are usually dry and clean.
- Many (alive or dead) are found face-down in or near water, like creeks, rivers and swamps.
- Some (alive or dead) are found in the middle of thickets or in areas that are difficult to access, like rock ledges.
- Most (alive or dead) are missing articles of clothing, especially shoes.
- Most (alive or dead) have scratches and abrasions all over their body.
- Those found alive are often confused and have an inability or a refusal to talk about what happened.

Not all survivors have been silent about their experiences, however. Some children as young as toddlers have spoken about being carried away by large dark animals, usually described as bears, wolves or dogs. "There have been several cases," Paulides explains, "where children were abducted and later claimed they were cuddled and kept warm by a bear during the nights they

were missing." Sometimes, they were even fed by the bear, none of which is consistent with the behavior of wild bears. It's possible that young children, who have a limited vocabulary, use the term "bear" simply because they don't know how to better describe what they saw. In a few cases, other children described being taken by a "big black thing" or a "big black man." One case in the 1800s cited that the missing boy complained about a "squatch baby." Some stories get even weirder. A 2-year-old boy said that he'd seen someone peering at him from behind a tree, then had an adventure in the dark with a giant and a tall, friendly tree. An 8-year-old boy said that he'd spent time watching TV and eating bacon and eggs with his grandfather (whom he'd never met because both of his grandfathers were deceased).



Cluster Map—"Cluster Map" showing areas in the United States where there have been multiple "Missing 411" cases

The experiences of older children and adults are the most fascinating because they tend to include more details. The disappearances seem to start with an odd, not-quite-right feeling, everything goes quiet, and then the surroundings aren't familiar anymore. One girl stated that she'd been playing in the woods with her friends when suddenly she found herself alone. She was missing for days before she was spotted walking along a road, almost 20 miles from where she disappeared. A Canadian woman said that she was in a remote hunting cabin when she "blacked out," woke up in the woods somewhere, and started walking. She ate berries and drank water for the two weeks she was missing before being found on a road 22km from where she'd disappeared.

Some experiences are particularly disturbing. One woman stated that she saw people hiding in the bushes staring at her, but they didn't respond when she asked for help, and an elderly woman, missing from a nursing home, went missing for six days, during which time she claimed that someone kept throwing water on her while she was in the woods. A 22-year-old woman hiking the Appalachian Trail claimed that for two solid weeks, she'd been stalked by a "group of men" that meant her harm. She never actually saw them, but she felt so terrorized that she ditched her belongings and ran off trail in an attempt to lose them. She said she survived by eating poundcake and doughnuts that she found hidden in a tree (weird!) before she was found by a hunter. A 15-year-old girl hanging laundry stated

that she'd been chased by a big man with a knife through the woods until she fell asleep, and a woman in France said that a nearly invisible hand grabbed her by the head, dragged her through the trees and brush at an incredible speed, and then dumped her on the ground.

What on earth is happening here? According to David Paulides, only 50%-60% of the missing are found alive, while 30%-40% are found deceased. Ten percent to 15% of the missing haven't been found at all. Based on what the *Missing 411* researchers have found, there's no question that there is something highly unusual, unpredictable, and frightening going on.

Perhaps even more frightening is the fact that our National Park Service is not (officially, anyway) keeping track of those who go missing in their parks. When Paulides asked the park service about this, he was told that they don't have a system in place to keep track of missing people, and the only records they have are the recollections of long-time employees.



MISSING 411: David Paulides' Research Into Unexplained Disappearances, cont.

"There is no national database in the NPS system identifying missing people," Paulides says. "There is no list in each park identifying the people, the circumstances, locations, dates that they disappeared. This is very disturbing. How would a large park or a regional district ever know if there was a serial killer utilizing the park as a location to abduct victims? Answer: they wouldn't. It's hard to imagine that a giant government law enforcement agency such as the National Park Service doesn't monitor and track these basic statistics. This is beyond inept; it borders on complete stupidity, unless this is a calculated maneuver." He states, "Tracking missing people isn't rocket science and doesn't cost money. Each park needs a clipboard, binder paper and a numbering system. Each time someone vanishes, document the name, date, time, location, one sentence about the circumstances, and the report number of the incident. When someone is found anywhere in the park, rangers can go back to the clipboard and quickly reference who the person may be. Any ranger with a laptop and Excel spreadsheet could easily upgrade the tracking system. Each time another person disappears, the spreadsheet is updated and emailed to all rangers in the park; again, no additional funds needed. This is not time-consuming, not expensive, and yet can reveal problems inside their system that need to be addressed. Why wouldn't they be doing this?" Paulides adds that there are many unidentified bones found in Yosemite National Park, probably because the parks don't keep track: "The NPS' inability to connect those dots is a complete infrastructure failure to every victim and their family who has disappeared in a national park."

Another failure of the parks is that the wilderness permits that visitors fill out for overnight stays are only used for statistical purposes. "I always believed," Paulides says, "that when I completed a wilderness permit that someone at the USFS was monitoring who was in the wilderness, who was out, and who was overdue." Unfortunately, unless you share your itinerary with family and friends, the park service will not search for you if you go missing. It seems that when you visit a national park, you are truly on your own.

What may come as no surprise is that there

appears to be some sort of cover-up happening, preventing people from knowing what's really going on. For example, there are many case files that the *Missing 411* researchers cannot access, even though they've submitted requests through the Freedom of Information Act. Some of the cases are at least 30 years old, but the FOIA requests are blatantly denied. Why? Also, there are some searches during which the FBI and Special Forces get involved, when normally they wouldn't. In one case, the Green Berets took part in a search without joining forces or sharing information with the park service or local law enforcement. Paulides says it's "as though they were up against something very unusual, and someone knew it." Obviously, the motive of the park service for keeping things under wraps would be to keep visitors coming to the parks and generating revenue. But what is the government covering up? That's the bigger mystery.

The biggest mystery of all remains, of course, "What is happening to people?" The problem continues to persist in our wilderness areas, and recently Paulides began looking into cases on college campuses and urban areas, proving that the problem isn't strictly rural. Theories abound, of course, including alien abductions, Sasquatch, time slips, wormholes, etc. No one really knows for sure. But it's defeating when frustrated law enforcement, unable to come to any other logical conclusion, says, "I'm sticking with the alien abduction theory."

The *Missing 411* team is continuously collecting and researching cases, and the information they've gleaned continues to evolve as they learn more. If you know of a case that fits their criteria, or if you have information about a case they've been researching, you can contact them at missing411@yahoo.com, or visit their website at canammissing.com. Please keep in mind that they receive 500-1,000 emails every day, so they may not respond.

In the meantime, if you're someone who enjoys the great outdoors (and even if you're not!), please follow these tips to hopefully avoid becoming one of the missing:

- Never, ever hike alone. David Paulides says, "I cannot stress enough that hikers should never leave a group and always hike in pairs."
- Never be first or last in line. People who get ahead or lag behind the group tend to disappear.
- Never leave the light of the fire when camping.
- Never take your eyes off of your children. "Children disappear in the woods when parents and guardians are not watching them," Paulides says. "It's almost as though someone is watching us. When our eyes wander from our kids, they disappear."
- David Paulides highly recommends carrying a personal transponder and being armed when in the wilderness.
- If someone you know goes missing, make sure that authorities search swamps and the tops of mountains. Many missing people are found in these places, despite how impossible it may sound.
- Yosemite National Park is "the number one location for the number of missing people in any cluster in North America."

The information I've provided here is only the tip of a very large, very weird iceberg. I highly recommend that you share this article with everyone you know and care about, read all five of the *Missing 411* books to get the full understanding of the mystery, listen to interviews, and keep an eye out for the *Missing 411* documentary that will be completed later this year. Survivalist Les Stroud (a.k.a. "Survivorman") took part in the documentary and had this to say: "The *Missing 411* series, for me, broke open a whole package of stories that nobody is talking about. We are talking about cold, hard evidence, and David has been putting the cold, hard evidence, the facts, together. This is too much now. This is too much to be coincidence. Talk to the families. They're heartbroken. Their daughter's gone, their son's gone. Their father's gone, their uncle's gone. Their mother's gone, their aunt's gone. They never return."

Enough said. Now let's do something about this.

BOOK REVIEW:

THE FOG

The Fog: A Never Before Published Theory of the Bermuda Triangle

Rob MacGregor and Bruce Gernon
Llewellyn Publications

Say “mysterious disappearances” and the Bermuda Triangle is what comes up in many people’s minds. I grew up in the ‘70s, reading all the Bermuda/Devil Triangle books, including the granddaddy by Charles Berlitz, simply called *The Bermuda Triangle*. It was a great way to scare myself silly, and at the same time started me on an eternal quest for answers to the unknown. This book has a fantastic theory that anyone interested in science and electromagnetic phenomenon will appreciate.

The co-author of this book, Bruce Gernon, actually had a near fatal experience in the triangle in December of 1970, which occurred at a time when the Bermuda Triangle hadn’t really been heard of. It was a couple years afterwards that Bruce put two and two together and found that his experience had been similar to that of others that were being discussed as having happened in the Devil’s Triangle. This started him on a lifelong search for answers, and he has come up with what seems to be a very valid theory—electronic fog.

This book goes extensively into what happened to his flight, and the flights or boat trips of others he has interviewed, and discusses

electromagnetic abnormalities that appear to happen within a fog or haze that actually clings to the vehicle it is affecting. This book takes a look at everything from Charles Lindbergh’s 1928 experience to the missing bombers of Flight 19 in 1945, and disappearances that happened right up to the publication of this book in 2005. The back of the book lists known ship and plane disappearances since the 1600s, some of which are likely natural crashes, and some...well, that is what created the legend. But while many think that the Bermuda Triangle was just that, a legend that ended, this book is here to prove that these mysterious disappearances are still happening.

What many experiencers discuss is the fact that instrumentation starts to work erratically, or not work at all, while the craft is within a haze that ground control cannot see. While the people in the plane or boat seem to see a haze they believe goes on for miles and should be seen by the ground, the haze is likely only big enough to surround the craft. The ships and



planes within these fogs are unable to be seen by ground radar, and some people even experience time slips, arriving at their targets without having used fuel, or losing time all together.

I am not going to go into detail about everything that is in this book; that is for you to discover as you read it. No one likes to hear about the end of a movie, right? So let’s just say that if you have an interest in discovering what could actually be happening in the Bermuda Triangle, this book will give you an interesting new theory to think about. Co-mingled with tidbits on Atlantis, UFOs, AUTEK and the Bimini Road, and how these all may feed into each other, this is a logical look at what seems to be one of the most mysterious areas of the world.

THE MARY CELESTE



Darrin

One of maritime history's most mysterious cases is that of the *Mary Celeste*. Until a short while ago, I did not know about the ship or its history. The *Mary Celeste*

was a 282 ton brigantine cargo ship that set sail out of New York on November 7, 1872. It left port carrying 1,701 barrels of industrial alcohol headed for Genoa, Italy. The crew of 10 consisted of Captain Benjamin Spooner Briggs, his wife Sarah, their 2-year old daughter and seven other crew members.

On December 5, 1872, the *Mary Celeste* was spotted adrift 400 miles east of the Azores by the British ship *Dei Gratia*. The captain of the *Dei Gratia*, David Morehouse, also an acquaintance of Captain Briggs, recognized the ship and was puzzled as to why it was yawing out of control. He knew Captain Briggs was a good sailor, so to find the ship in this way was a mystery. As they approached the ship, they noticed that there was no distress signal apparent. So after two hours of repeated attempts to hail the *Mary Celeste* were met with no reply, Captain Morehouse sent over his first mate in a small boat to investigate. After boarding, the vessel was found to be in good, sea-worthy condition, but there was no sign of anyone aboard. It appeared that the entire crew had left the ship in great haste. Upon inspection, Captain Morehouse found that all personal belongings were still where they had been left. The ship had plenty of provisions and there were no signs of any outbreak of fever or other disease. The only things missing were the chronometer, sextant and ship's logs. The ship's slate, which is used to take notes of the voyage before



Mary Celeste Found—Photograph depicting condition of the *Mary Celeste* after she was pulled into port. Via *Smithsonian Magazine*.

they are recorded into the log book, noted the ship's last position as 6 miles north of the island of Santa Maria in the Azores on November 25. No one has ever discovered what happened in those 11 days from that last note and when the *Mary Celeste* was found.

After discovery, a skeleton crew from the *Dei Gratia* sailed the ship to Gibraltar. There, a British vice admiralty court convened a salvage hearing to try and determine what happened to the *Mary Celeste* and its crew. Attorney General Frederick Solly-Flood was in charge of the investigation. From the onset, he suspected something was wrong and conducted his investigation accordingly. He noted that both bows had been cut by sharp instruments to possibly make the ship appear damaged. On the starboard top rail he found what appeared to be blood along with marks from a sharp instrument in the rail. He also found a sword with traces of blood that had been wiped before it was placed back in its scabbard. His theory was that the crew had gotten into the alcohol, killed the captain and his family, damaged the front of the ship so no one would try to salvage it and then left in the one

small boat the ship had. All of his evidence was later proved wrong. The cuts in the bow were thought to be natural splintering of the wood and while there were cut marks on the top rail, what appeared to be blood was rust and the sword he found was actually a bayonet that had apparently been used to stir paint and then replaced in its scabbard.

With no real evidence to prove otherwise even after three months of investigation, Captain Morehouse and his crew were awarded a salvage fee for bringing the *Mary Celeste* back with its cargo. However they only received a fraction of its value. Many thought that this was because that while there was no evidence of wrongdoing, the court did believe that the captain and crew of the *Dei Gratia* did have something to do with the disappearance of the crew of the *Mary Celeste*.

Through the years, many theories have been proposed as to what really happened: piracy, a murderous crew member, sea monsters, and even bursts of explosive marine gas. Arthur Conan Doyle even wrote a short story about it, and a film made in 1935 about the ship featured Bela Lugosi as homicidal

(continued on page 8.)

THE MARY CELESTE, CONT.

sailor on board. The most interesting account is also the most mysterious. The London Press published a letter that had been found by a young apprentice sailor that had been sent ashore to collect sand samples at Saint Paul's Rock. After reaching the beach he found a skeleton propped up in the shade of a rock. Next to it was literally a letter in a bottle. The letter was supposedly a confession written by the person after their ship had crashed on the rocks. It recounted the events of a doomed ship and its crew. Crew members started to die from food poisoning just seven days out to sea, three deaths in two days. Early one morning they spotted a ship and knew that they must ask for help in order to make it to Gibraltar, instead the first mate ordered them to take the ship. They left no one alive. The name of the ship was the *Mary Celeste*. The biggest question about this letter was why the apprentice waited 30 years after the *Mary Celeste* was first found to release it to the press.

The most plausible explanation, and one that several groups in part seem to think happened, is that while traveling from the cold winter weather and rough sea, the ship's hold was kept secure. Several of the barrels the containing the alcohol may have somehow started to leak either through porous wood or damage sustained while loading. The alcohol mixed with sea water in the bilge and it formed a gas or steam as the cold climate started to grow warmer. With the weather warmer and the sea calmer the crew opened the hold and the steam billowed out and the sudden release of pressure may have also caused a loud bang or what sounded like a small explosion. This may have made the captain think there was cause to abandon ship until they knew what had happened and if the ship was sinking or not. At this point, it is theorized that the crew got in the only small life boat available and tethered it to the ship while waiting to see what if



Mary Celeste Engraving—Engraving showing how the *Mary Celeste* looked when she was first spotted by the *Dei Gratia*. Via *Ascension Earth*.

any damage had been done. While they waited, a sudden squall caused the tether line to shear off from the ship and sent the boat out to sea. Another theory is that the crew got in the small boat and tried to make for land only to be caught by a squall and blown out to sea. Either way the entire crew ended up lost out in the open sea.

This explanation seems the most plausible because from all accounts, Captain Briggs was an accomplished sailor so it would take something drastic to make him abandon ship. There are several things that help lend this theory credibility. The ship had almost three feet of water in the hold at the time of discovery and while that is a lot it is not enough to cause concern. A skeleton crew from the *Dei Gratia* sailed it to Gibraltar. One of the ship's two pumps was broken possibly because of an earlier shipment of coal; the coal dust may have clogged the pump. Only having one pump and a hull full of cargo would have made it

hard to determine how much water they had really taken on. The sudden release of steam, the possible sound of an explosion and what appeared to be a hull full of water would have seemed to the captain enough reason to abandon ship.

No new evidence has ever been discovered that explains what may have happened to the crew. The log entries that did exist from Captain Briggs are now lost. The ship itself was lost thirteen years after the event. It had been sold and resold several times over those years well below its market value. The last owner wrecked it on purpose on a reef off of Haiti in order to try and get the insurance money for it. There are plenty of websites, TV shows, and even a documentary on the Smithsonian channel that talk about the mystery of the *Mary Celeste*. All have their theories about what happened, but no one really knows what took place between November 25 and December 5, 1872, on board the *Mary Celeste*.



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!

Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts of Ohio are continuing to schedule investigations for 2016. 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:

 **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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