



The ghosts of Ohio[®] Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 19 Issue 4

"SO, WHAT DO YOU DO, REALLY?"



James

That's a question I get a few times a year. It's a fair question, too, especially when one visits The Ghosts Of Ohio website or any of our social media accounts and finds very little in the way of "evidence" or information related to investigations. The reason for that is closely tied to what I founded The Ghosts Of Ohio to "do":

Try to help people find answers.

You'll notice I didn't say "find paranormal answers" or "proof of ghosts." There's a reason for that, too. Those of you who know me or have been a subscriber to this newsletter for a while know that my approach to investigations is to find answers, even if those answers are not paranormal. In fact, much to the chagrin of some of my paranormal peers, I will travel pretty far down the Investigation Highway before I even begin to entertain that something might be paranormal in nature. Believe me, I wish I could just hear a strange noise, mark it "ghostly", and move on. It would certainly give me more free time. If nothing else, my family would certainly appreciate having me around more often (I think). But that's not why the vast majority of people reach out to The Ghosts Of Ohio. They want answers, not merely ghostly confirmation. And to give them anything less would mean, to me, that I'm not giving someone everything they want and deserve.

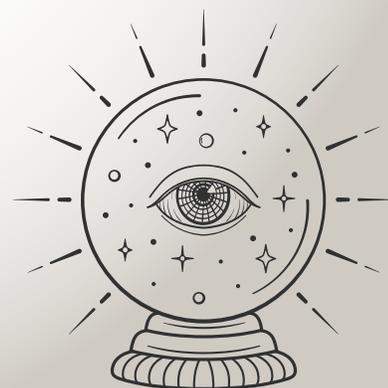
Of course, whenever the idea of ghost evidence is brought up, I'm usually asked how often The Ghosts Of Ohio has declared a location "haunted." Many are shocked when I respond with "almost never." Again, there's a reason for that, and it's one that raises the

eyebrows of many of my peers in the paranormal community: I don't know what a ghost is. What's more, I don't think anyone truly knows what a ghost is. Simply put, if we really knew what a ghost was, no one could doubt their existence. So how can we say a location is haunted by a ghost when we don't know what a ghost is? In situations where we conduct an investigation and come away with something we can't explain—audio, video, unusual changes in atmospheric conditions, etc.—we simply present it as "unexplained" to the clients and allow them to reach their own conclusions. After all, the clients are the ones who live and/or work at the location, so who better to review the "evidence" and reach their own conclusions? To insert our own personal opinions and beliefs into an evidence review would be wrong on so many levels. Sadly, there is a developing trend in paranormal research where investigators act as "experts" and, while well-meaning, make erroneous statements about unknown activity being paranormal in nature. This needs to stop.

In my opinion, paranormal researchers exist because they are looking for answers—sometimes for themselves and sometimes for others. However, we must all realize that to muddy the waters by putting forth unproveable claims, they are not only hurting themselves and their client, but the field of paranormal research as a whole.

Cheers,

James A. Willis
Founder/Director



PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

"THE FOOTSTEPS WERE FOLLOWING US"

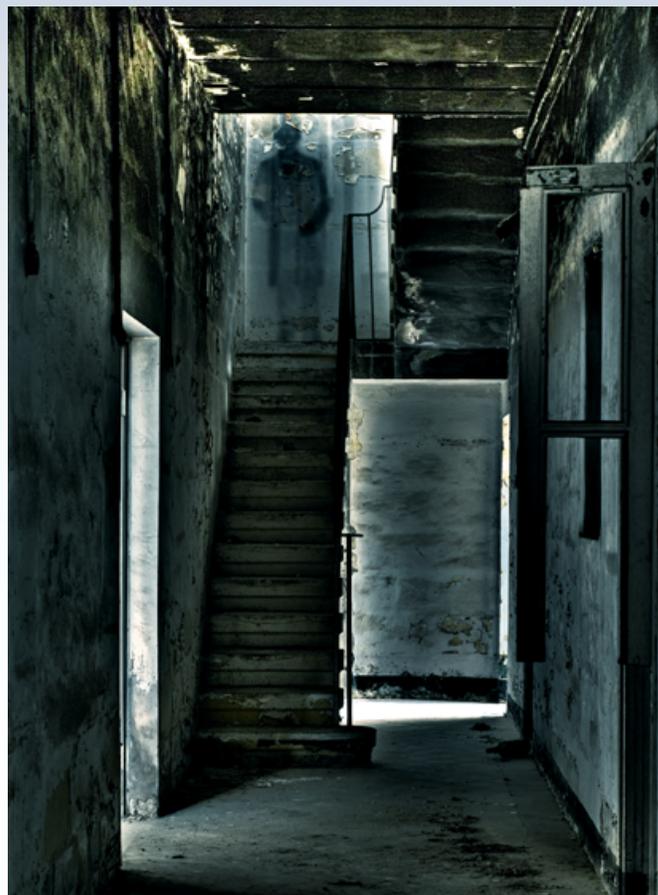
Name and location withheld

Love your newsletter! I especially like the Personal Experiences as I feel it gives people a chance to share their stories with others who would understand and appreciate them. People like me!

That being said, I would ask that you not use my name or mention the location by name. That's because I was young and what I was doing the night I had my experience would most certainly be classified as trespassing. I'm older now and understand that what I did was wrong, but my encounter has stuck with me all these years.

It was 2002 and I was just driving around, bored, with a group of my friends on a Saturday night. As it got later, we just started talking about ghost stories, which eventually led us to talking about (location name withheld), a very popular abandoned location that was supposed to be haunted. My friends had all grown up in the area, so we were all familiar with the stories, but none of us had even been. So, with nothing better to do, we decided to take a ride out there to see if we could see anything.

This location is back in the woods and sits on top of a hill. You can get your car pretty close to it, but you'd still have to climb the hill to actually get to the building itself. Well, we parked the car at the bottom of the hill, turned off the headlights, and just stared up at the building. None of the windows were there, so you could sort of see into the rooms and hallways, but the whole place was surrounded by an old chain link fence with No Trespassing signs around it. You could totally see where people were getting through the fence, though. After a couple of minutes, (name withheld) started up his car and I was like "wait, we're not going in?" Everybody in the car said "no," except my friend, (name withheld). When I started making fun of everyone else in the car, calling them chicken, they ended up daring me and (name withheld) to go into the building. What's more, they gave us a flashlight and told us we needed to talk across the top floor, from one end to the other, just to prove to everyone waiting in the car that we actually did it. So, my friend and I grabbed a



flashlight from the trunk of the car and headed up the hill. The rest of my group followed, saying they would go as far as the fence.

Getting through the fence was a tight squeeze, but fairly easy. Once we were through, we walked around the building and eventually found a door that was hanging open, and we went in. As soon as we were inside, you could feel the whole atmosphere changing. I thought at first that it was just my imagination due to being standing inside an abandoned building that was supposed to be haunted, but the air just felt heavy. I felt like someone, or something didn't want me there, but again, I chalked that up to the fact that I really wasn't supposed to be there because I had just ignored the "no trespassing" signs.

(continued on page 3.)

"THE FOOTSTEPS WERE FOLLOWING US" CONTINUED

It took some time, but we eventually found the staircase leading to the top floor. As we walked down the hallways, we noticed that a lot of the furniture was still there, which was kind of weird. There was very little graffiti, which proved to me that not many people had been inside the building, even though it had been abandoned for almost 20 years.

When we got to the top floor, we waved the flashlight out the window, signaling to our friends down below that we were up there and ready to start walking the length of the floor. The top floor of the building was nothing more than a long, straight corridor that ran the whole length of the structure. On either side, there were doorways that opened into rooms, all of which had windows in them. So, what we did is we walked a few feet until we'd come to a doorway on the right side—the side facing our friends who were outside, near the fence. Then we'd flash the flashlight at the window, so our friends could follow our progress.

I guess we probably went about 30 feet or so, when I heard something behind us. My friend later told me he heard it, too, but at the time, I didn't know that, even though he stopped walking the second I did. It sounded like footsteps, so I instinctively thought someone was behind us and I shone the flashlight back behind us. There was nothing but an empty hallway there.

We started walking again, but almost as soon as we did, I heard what sounded like footsteps, once again coming from behind us. This time, I decided to keep walking to be sure and guess what? It sounded like the footsteps were following us. Without telling my friend, I suddenly whipped around, hoping to catch whoever it was standing behind us in the hallway. Again, nothing there.

I called out "hello," but received no response. In fact, I didn't hear anything at all. I thought one of our friends had snuck in behind us and were trying to give us a scare, but there was no movement at all. Nothing but silence. I then thought maybe it was a security guard and said "sorry, we're just trying to find my dog. We saw it run in here." Again, there was no answer. I then told my friend "just start walking again. I'll catch them." When he started walking down the hallway, I turned off the

flashlight and started walking backwards behind him. My thought process was that once I heard the footsteps again, since I was already facing in that direction, I'd just turn the flashlight on and be able to catch them.

I guess we had walked about another 20 feet or so and I started hearing the footsteps. I took a few more steps and then turned the flashlight on. Once again, there was nothing in the hallway, only this time, the footsteps kept walking and they were getting closer. That was it. My friend and I took off running towards the end of the hallway. Thankfully, there was a staircase there and we were able to get all the way downstairs and then jump out a ground floor window to get back outside. I don't remember if I heard any more footsteps while I was running, but I bet my own feet were drowning them out if they were there.

When we got to the fence, all of friends were gone, so we took off down the hill towards the car. We were both relieved to find the car still there, with our friends sitting inside. We were barely in the car when (name withheld) started it up and we took off.

Once we were out of there, we told our friends what had happened and then asked why they had left us. They all said that they thought the police had caught us inside. When I asked why they thought that, they all said that they had watched out flashlight going through the building, but that each time we turned around and pointed the flashlight behind us, they could see the outline of what looked like a person standing there behind us. They figured we had been caught trespassing by someone. They were too far away to make out anything except a shape that looked like a person. So, they figured they had better clear out or else they were going to get in trouble, too.

I still have no idea what happened that night or what caused the footsteps. I can only honestly say that each time I turned the flashlight on and pointed it where the footsteps were coming from, I never saw any figure. In fact, I never saw anything at all, so I can't explain who or what my friends saw while they were watching us from outside the building.

BOOK REVIEW: SKINWALKERS AT THE PENTAGON



Wendy

Skinwalkers at the Pentagon: An Insiders' Account of the Secret Government UFO Program by James T. Lacatski, D.Eng., Colm A. Kelleher, PH. D., and George Knapp

Independently published (October 2021)

When fellow Ghosts Of Ohio member, Frank, pointed this book out to me, I had to read it. I've been fascinated with the Skinwalker Ranch, and loved the 2005 book, *Hunt for the Skinwalker*. I have always wanted to go and investigate there. Frank, who is former military, is also highly intrigued. I was all for going down there and scoping out Skinwalker Ranch with Frank until I finished this book. Now I no longer want to go anywhere near Skinwalker Ranch.

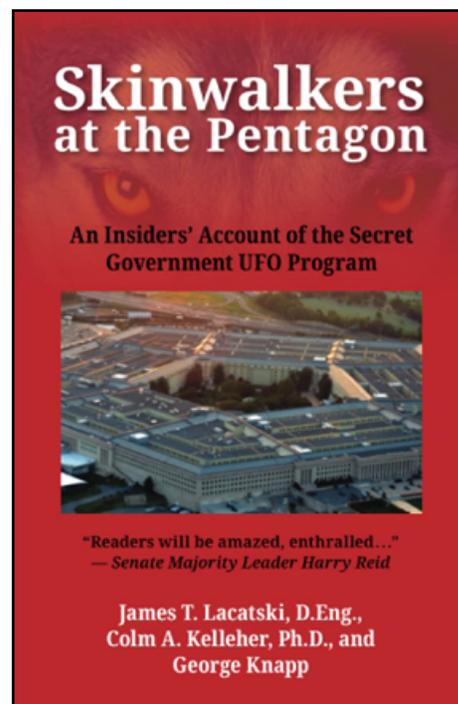
First off, this book is very heavy in government details, and essentially reveals how the government's UFO programs were created and are currently being handled. There are several pages of acronyms listed in the front of the book for a reason. All the chapters that have to do with the development of an investigative government team are rife with acronyms. This makes for very hard, dry reading.

But amongst those chapters are further details of what occurred at Skinwalker Ranch when it was owned by Robert Bigelow. And they are not pretty. What happens to the government people who investigated there over

the last 10-12 years is pretty horrific. While I find any information I can get about the ranch deeply intriguing and interesting, interacting with it is no longer on my bucket list.

The nastiness of attacks that are occurring in the homes of the investigators is rather frightening and dealing with 7-foot wolves that walk around on their hind legs is not in my skill set. Nor do I believe I want it to be. In my childhood dreams, I always tried to make friends with the monster, but reality is a different thing.

This book gives great insight into the financing and operation of the groups that investigated here, while also giving more insight into the investigation into the 2004 USS Nimitz 'Tic Tac' UFO event, whose video was recently declassified. I'm not going to give any additional details about it here. I'm leaving that to the next reader.



EQUIPMENT REVIEWS



Got a piece of paranormal equipment you've always wondered how it works? Does it really do what it's supposed to be doing? Or maybe you've created some paranormal equipment you'd like field tested? Either way, let us know because The Ghosts Of Ohio would love to help!

Drop us a line at info@ghostsofohio.org with the subject line "Equipment" and we'll take it from there!

WHO WRITES THE NARRATIVE?



Samantha

Merriam-Webster defines a shyster as “a person who is professionally unscrupulous.”

Why am I bringing this up? Because the time has come to expose some disturbing trends in the world of paranormal investigations. These trends go against everything that a

legitimate, objective investigation should be, and they make discovering the truth that much harder for those of us who are putting in the work.

When The Ghosts of Ohio investigates of a location, we focus primarily on three things:

1. Historical and contemporary records (maps, blueprints, photographs, genealogy, newspaper articles, property information, etc.)
2. Environmental conditions (EMF levels, temperature, humidity, etc.)
3. Experiences & concerns of the people living or working in that location.

We try to not have any preconceived notions about what we'll find on the investigation. Rather, the three aforementioned things, combined, paint a picture of both the location and the people who have interacted with it to give us a good starting point from which we can base our investigation.

What we typically ignore are “experiences” by people who haven't lived or worked in that place, along with interpretations of history that aren't backed up by documentation. In other words, rumors, hearsay, and lies.

Yes, lies. Unfortunately, the paranormal field is seeing a rise in shysters who seem willing to say and do virtually anything to gain money & notoriety. They seem to fall into one of two categories. They either purchase properties with the intent of profiting off of their “haunted” reputations, or they convince property owners to allow them to be the “official ghost group” of their location. The problem with both of these scenarios is that these people can control whom they'll allow on the premises, and also any narrative they want to tell about its history and their own “experiences” there, regardless of accuracy or legitimacy. The more dramatic they can make the story, the more people want to visit. And, of course, more visitors means higher profits.

PARANORMAL

WHO WRITES THE NARRATIVE? (Continued)

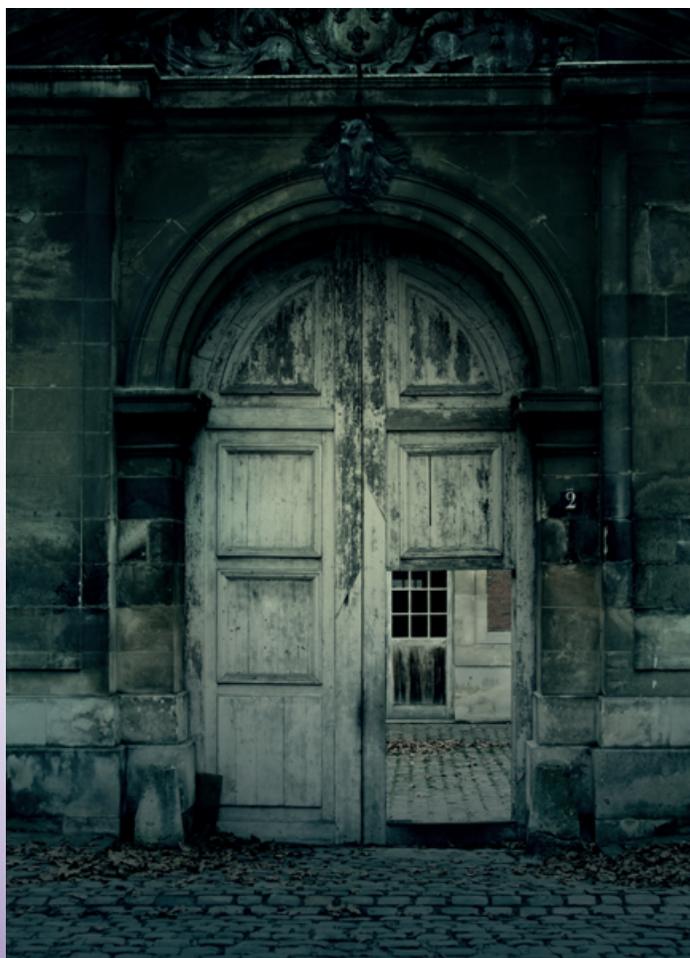
Our first indication that something was amiss was when we realized, after repeated visits to certain locations, that the narratives changed drastically with each visit. Where there used to be an innocuous, boring basement now was some sort of gateway to hell. A bedroom that didn't used to have reported activity had now been filled with toys, supposedly to entice a ghost child to play. An upstairs hallway now houses a "demonic presence."

Some of these ideas are obviously inspired by paranormal TV shows, which notoriously misinterpret and exaggerate "evidence" to get viewership. I'm sure you've seen so-called investigators freak out over a single syllable captured on a recording, or a faint knock from across the room that may or may not have been in response to a question they asked. Instead of investigating further, they take those things as "evidence" and impose their own meaning on them, thereby creating a narrative. They may even stage scenes and introduce "trigger objects" like toys, dolls & gadgets to add perceived weight to the story. The worst of the worst even go so far as to plant people & devices throughout the location in order to fake paranormal activity. They know that the majority of visitors won't investigate further to discover the deception. They'll freak out or get excited, tell their friends about their ghostly encounter, and then their friends will want to visit, too.

The whole situation has become so ridiculous (and disheartening) that The Ghosts Of Ohio doesn't even bother entertaining their stories anymore. If we want to investigate one of these locations, at most we'll ask for the straight-forward history. Otherwise, we just want to be left alone to investigate. This is beneficial because we can allow our own experiences & findings to guide the investigation rather than trying to squeeze evidence into a preconceived story. We actually take the time to check out any perceived activity, thereby weeding out any natural or manmade causes. We also do our best to test any theories we may have, never drawing conclusions based on partial findings (that is, if we draw any conclusions at all). Often, we wind up discovering things unrelated to what we may have been told. Honestly, this is the only reason we've visited certain locations more than once. Interesting things can be found if we ignore the bunk.

Perhaps the most distressing issue we have with the shysters out there is the fact that they're not honoring the places, histories, or the memories of the people who lived or worked in those locations. Owners of "haunted" places need to be held to a higher standard. They should have no problem sharing legitimate history with patrons, citing documentation & sources to prove they've cared enough to do their homework. Additionally, any "spirits" that may be in the location should be treated with respect, not as a circus sideshow. This is something everyone—owners, visitors, investigators—needs to remember. The purpose of investigating the paranormal is to discover something about death and the afterlife; and the point of view of those who have passed matters. They're people, just like the rest of us.

If you've had similar experiences to what's been highlighted in this article, we'd love to hear from you. Perhaps together we can shine a spotlight on these bad practices and initiate a change for the better.



OUR 2022 CALENDAR CONTINUES TO FILL UP

It looks like we are starting to move towards “normal” again, as we continue to get presentation requests from all over Ohio for 2022. There will even be a few brand-new presentations to choose from!

The following are confirmed presentations as of this writing. Keep in mind that things can, and probably will, change at a moment's notice. So, if you are at all interested in attending any of these events, please be sure to follow The Ghosts Of Ohio on any of our social media accounts as we will post updates as soon as they happen. Also consider contacting the venue(s) directly as they will also be able to fill you in on any guidelines/rules regarding masks.

Thursday, May 5th, 2022 @ 6:00 pm
Weird Ohio Road Trips presentation
 Jackson City Library
 21 Broadway Street
 Jackson, OH 45640

Monday, July 25th, 2022 @ 6:00 pm
Just How Weird Is Ohio? presentation
 Seville Library
 45 Center Street
 Seville, OH 44273

Friday, July 29th @ 8:00 pm
Ohio's Historic Haunts presentation
 Hamilton Lane Library
 300 N. Third Street
 Hamilton, OH 45011

Saturday, October 15th @ TBD
Ohio's Historic Haunts presentation
 Stark Library: Jackson Branch
 7487 Fulton Dr. NW
 Massillon, OH 44686

Saturday, October 22nd @ TBD
An Evening with Ohio's Spirits presentation
 Athens, OH
 Details soon!

Monday, October 24th, 2022 @ 6:00 pm
Meet The Ghosts Of Ohio presentation
 Seville Library
 45 Center Street
 Seville, OH 44273

Tuesday, October 25th, 2022 @ 6:30 pm
Ohio's Historic Haunts presentation
 Dayton Metro Library: New Lebanon Branch
 715 W. Main Street
 New Lebanon, OH 45345

Wednesday, October 26th @ 7:00 pm
Meet The Ghosts Of Ohio presentation
 Columbus Metropolitan Library: Southeast Branch
 Virtual Presentation

Thursday, October 27th, 2022 @ 6:00 pm
Amityville: Horror Or Hoax? presentation
 Medina Library
 210 South Broadway Street
 Medina, OH 44256



UPDATE ON INVESTIGATIONS & CONSULTATIONS

As of this writing, all members of The Ghosts Of Ohio organization who will be taking part in investigations have been fully vaccinated and most have been “boosted”. Masks will be worn at the request of the home/business owner and/or in accordance with any mask mandates. Virtual investigations and consultations are also available. More information on scheduling is included at the end of this newsletter, but if you have specific COVID-related questions, feel to 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.

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 e-mail 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 and consultations for 2022. All members of the organization who would participate in investigations have been fully vaccinated.

Additionally, we can also make arrangements to drop off ghost-hunting equipment at your home or business and walk you through how to set it up yourself if you prefer. So, 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](#)

 [TWITTER](#)

 [INSTAGRAM](#)

Administration

The Ghosts Of Ohio Newsletter is a free, bimonthly email newsletter. To subscribe, unsubscribe, or change your email address, please visit

http://www.ghostsofohio.org/mailman/listinfo/mailman_ghostsofohio.org

Please do not send vacation notices or other auto-responses to us, as we may unsubscribe you.

The Ghosts Of Ohio collects your name and email address for the purpose of sending this mailing. We will never share your name or email address with advertisers, vendors, or any third party, unless required by law. The Ghosts Of Ohio will never sell, trade, or rent your personal information.

For more information, please visit us online at www.ghostsofohio.org.

Newsletter Staff:

Editor-In-Chief: James Willis

Designer: Stephanie Willis

Contributing Authors:

Wendy Cywinski

Samantha Nicholson

James Willis