



# The ghosts of Ohio® Newsletter

From the spooky desk of James Willis:

## The Ghost of Ohio's Valentine's Gift to You!



James

Hope everyone had a hot and steamy Valentine's Day, if for no other reason than it might have helped you keep warm and perhaps even melt all this snow away!

Here at The Ghosts of Ohio, "love" takes on a totally different meaning. Sure, we're into Valentine's Day and all, but for us, we're in love with all things strange and spooky. So with that in mind, and in an effort to continue our deep dive into paranormal topics, we decided to take

an in-depth look at the Sallie House case. Some believe it to be a case of a ghost girl falling in love with the home's owner, although the reported activity was anything but romantic. In fact, some of it was downright violent!

But we also wanted to take a look at some different things that represent "love" for us at The Ghosts of Ohio. So we've got a review of an online podcast we've recently fallen in love with, as well as a review of a movie filmed in Paris, the city of love. Of course, it's a horror movie that was filmed inside the infamous Paris Catacombs, but you get the idea! And finally, we even took a look at the dark side of the origins of the Valentine's Day holiday itself.

So, if you've got any stray Valentine's candy laying around, grab yourself a big ol' handful and dive on into this newsletter. And save me a couple of pieces, while you're at it. None of those marshmallow fluff ones, though. Those are too weird even for me!

Cheers,

James A. Willis  
Founder/Director



## A HAUNTING: THE SALLIE HOUSE



Ginny

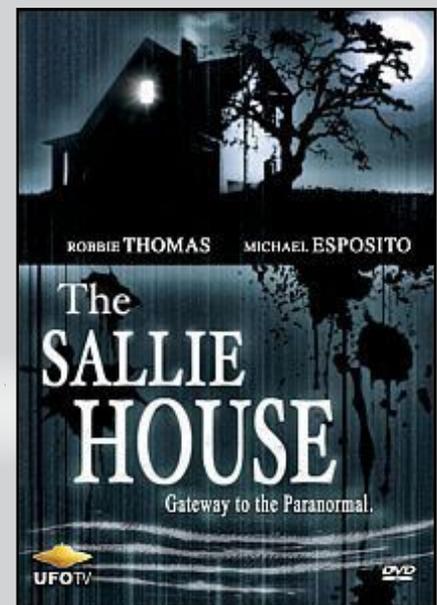
This is a review of the Sallie House episode of the TV show *A Haunting*.

Tony and Debbie Pickman moved into 508 2nd Street in Atchinson, KS, in the summer of 1993. They were

expecting their first child. After the birth of the child, Debbie's sister came to visit to help with the baby. On the last night of her visit they were just settling down to watch movies, when Tony went upstairs to get something. He noticed the light was on in the nursery, so he stopped to turn it off. He also noticed all the toy bears from the room were in a perfect circle on the floor.

He called Debbie and her sister up to the room to ask which one of them had done this and why. Neither one had any idea what had happened. They decided that it must have been Tony's brother (who lived next door) playing a prank. So, they put all the toys up, turned the light off and went back downstairs. They were half way down the stairs when they heard the light click back on. When they went back into the room, the toys were in the circle again.

Tony called his brother to ask him how he played the prank. His brother came over to say he didn't know what Tony was talking about. Tony's brother said, jokingly, "Hey you might have a ghost haunting your house." The brother had a camera and told the spirit that if someone was in the room to make their presence known. Just then, a bear that was sitting beside the TV began spinning. The brother took a picture of



this incident. This is the first time the family would be chased out of the house on 2nd street. As Tony was hurriedly loading the family in the car, he felt a

## A HAUNTING: THE SALLIE HOUSE CONT.



stinging sensation on his back. He thought he may have been stung by a bee or some other kind of bug and didn't pay any attention to it. They drove to Tony's parents' house to visit and calm down. That's when Tony remembered the pain on his back. Upon lifting his shirt, Debbie saw three scratches across Tony's back. They were about five to six inches long, but not very deep. There was a little blood, but not enough to warrant stitches. After several hours, the Pickmans went home.

Debbie called in a medium, who said that the spirit in the house was that of a little girl named Sallie. The medium also stated that the little girl wasn't there to hurt anyone, and she scratched Tony because she was scared of him. The medium advised Debbie to talk to it, tell it stories,

and buy her toys to play with. Tony didn't agree, but Debbie tried it anyway. Debbie would read stories and talk to the spirit, which seemed to satisfy it for a while.

A short period of time passed when there were not any type of experiences by the family. Then one night, they were awakened by voices coming through the baby monitor. Then, strange black spots would appear in pictures taken inside the house. One day after Debbie left for work, Tony was in the kitchen getting something to drink. After filling a glass of juice, Tony turned around and saw the spirit of a small girl, dressed in a nightgown, staring at him in the kitchen. He dropped the glass, and in an instant, the girl was gone.

The family stayed in the house for 22 months before moving out. The last incident occurred when Tony (who worked nights) was trying to sleep in the master bedroom. He was being kept awake by whispers of several people and scratching noises that were coming from the wall behind the bed. As Tony sat up, he saw a spirit of a woman materialize and begin walking toward him. As the spirit walked, she reached out her hand and pushed

Tony back on the bed. Quite disturbed and frightened, Tony tried to leave the room, only to find the door wouldn't open. After what to him seemed a long time, the door finally opened and he left the house. The family moved from the home shortly thereafter.

After watching the show, I would very much like to visit the Sallie House. There are "ghost tours" which do not include going in the house. I think the Pickmans could have brought a lot of the events on themselves simply by recognizing and encouraging interaction with whatever lives in the house. I believe by reading to the spirit and "playing" with the "little girl" that it opened them up to whatever the spirit was capable of doing. Todd Pickman seemed to be the target, possibly because he was the first to joke that they had a ghost in the house. Maybe it was just the spirit's way of showing who was boss. Either way, Todd was bruised, scratched, and hit on several occasions. Debbie and the child didn't seem to be bothered physically by the spirit.

## SIGHTINGS: THE SALLIE HOUSE



Samantha

I remember watching the TV show *Sightings* as a teenager in the early 1990s. It was a weekly half-hour program featuring everything paranormal, from UFO

encounters and Bigfoot sightings to psychic phenomena and ghost stories. Hosted by Tim White (later, a newscaster right here in Cleveland), I loved watching it because of the way it attempted to report the facts and ask the tough questions that everyone in the paranormal field still asks today. And it was groundbreaking. According to our fearless leader Jim, *Sightings* is what first put the Sallie House on the paranormal map. The show's

investigators visited the home no less than five times, and there were multiple broadcasts with updates about it. Thanks to the wonders of YouTube, we can now watch the *Sightings* story of the Sallie House (a.k.a. "The Heartland Ghost") in a convenient one-hour montage, which is what this review is all about. Please note that everything in this review is based on what I've seen on *Sightings*, not on any other research.

The Sallie House is a two-story home in Atchison, Kansas, that was built in 1872. *Sightings* first visited in 1992 after the owners (remaining anonymous at the time) reported a variety of inexplicable occurrences that seemed to be getting more violent and frightening. It all began after moving in, when they noticed strange blurring and discoloration in family photographs, and some pictures around the house would be found turned upside down.

Then, toys in the nursery got mysteriously tossed into a pile in the middle of the floor, and musical toys would play on their own. Lights and appliances began turning on and off, and occasionally they would experience electrical interference with their television. Areas of cold and static charge were felt and even followed throughout the home. Furniture started getting moved. After a few months, a flower on the kitchen windowsill and a teddy bear appeared half-singed as though from a fire; and most disturbing of all, was that the father, "Jeff," started receiving scratches and bleeding welts from an unseen assailant. He even stated that he'd seen the ghost of a little girl in the kitchen. There were certainly plenty of reasons for the owners to be concerned and for *Sightings* to launch its own series of investigations.

## SIGHTINGS: THE SALLIE HOUSE CONT.

Reporter Tim White, paranormal investigator Al Rauber, and “world-renowned parapsychologist” Kerry Gaynor participated in the investigations. They brought with them a plethora of equipment that monitored the house for 24 hours. They conducted research and interviews with witnesses and experts, and they also sought the help of psychic Peter James to try to solve the mystery.

During their investigations, they did, in fact, experience some of the reported phenomena, including electrical interference with their equipment, cold spots and areas of static that they could follow through the home, and EVPs. Incredibly, they also filmed fresh scratches and welts on “Jeff” that seemed to appear out of nowhere. Since “Jeff” claims to have seen the spirit of a little girl, could she be the culprit? An interview with a

former resident revealed that her five-year-old used to play with an imaginary friend by the name of Sallie. Peter James glimpsed the face of a little girl in an upper window, and when he tried to communicate with her, said that her name was Sallie. He even followed her spirit to a weatherworn grave in the local cemetery. According to cemetery records, a girl named Sallie Isabelle Ball was buried there. Furthermore, *Sightings* found a town record of a little girl named Sallie who died of pneumonia in 1905. So did Sallie and her family live in this house?

Interestingly, when *Sightings* researched the house’s history, they found that until 1906 a physician lived in the home, not a family with a little girl. This is the point at which a legend is born. Since the man who owned the house was a physician, and since he moved out just one year after a girl named Sallie died, and since everyone believes a girl named Sallie is haunting the house, could there be a

connection between the physician and Sallie? Did the doctor do more harm than good to his patient, causing Sallie to act up and attack male figures like “Jeff”?

It’s a compelling theory. However, historical records showed that three people died in the house prior to 1918, and Peter James also said that he felt the presence of two to three entities. And



when James attempted to get a response from one of them, he felt an electrical shock on his hand and “Jeff” was attacked, with the letters “MC” scratched onto his back. What could it mean? Most importantly, how could they get the activity to stop?

Paranormal investigator Al Rauber recommended that the family rid the house of the objects that encourage the little girl to stay. Also, “Jeff” wanted an exorcism to be performed. However, that resulted in no less than eleven scratches appearing during the ritual. The family even had a Native American shaman come to their home to “exorcise the spirit.” Eventually, they moved out and their activity supposedly stopped. However, whenever “Jeff” stops by to visit the house, he is once again subjected to the scratches he experienced while living there. In fact, they’re more severe.

After the family moved out, *Sightings* returned to the empty house with Peter

James. James could no longer feel Sallie’s presence, and none of the team could detect anything anomalous. Parapsychologist Kerry Gayner suspected that the family may have been the cause of the activity, but since they weren’t experiencing anything in their new home, we may never know what happened.

In the end, the outpouring of support and advice from viewers, and from the people of their hometown, prompted the now-previous owners of the Sallie House to reveal their true identities. Their names are Tony and Debra Pickman. The final installment of *Sightings’* study of the home revealed that there was a new owner by the name of Gloria Fish, and that the house was quiet. “Could the spirits have followed the former residents to their new house? We’ll keep you updated.” Unfortunately, the show ended before there could be an update. It went into

syndication in 1994, and was cancelled in 1997, with the exception of a few specials.

As with any paranormal program on television, I always take what I see and hear with a mound of salt. Since so much footage winds up on the editing room floor, and since I obviously wasn’t present during their investigations, it’s impossible to know how diligently they researched, collected and analyzed their findings. I find myself longing to see historical documents myself, or to ask additional questions of witnesses. I’m interested in tracing the histories of the physician and others who lived there, even after they moved on; and I want to know more about Sallie’s family. Is there really a connection to be made between Sallie and the doctor, or is this merely a case of jumping to conclusions? Only the complete story can answer that question. Hopefully it’s out there somewhere.

## GHOST ADVENTURES

## SALLIE HOUSE (SEASON 10, EPISODE 6)



Kathy

Let me start my review with some honesty: I don't put much stock into anything that happens on *Ghost Adventures*. Why do I watch it? There are a few reasons. The first is that it is guaranteed to be entertaining with lots of over-reacting and exaggerated drama. The second is because they do break out some interesting new gear. They almost always seem to have something new to play with while out ghost adventuring and I look forward to seeing what they've come up with each time.

If you have never watched *Ghost Adventures*, let me set it up for you.

It starts with Zak Bagans and his crew, Aaron Goodwin, Billy Tolley, and Jay Wasley, driving into the town or area of focus. Then Zak interviews various townsfolk, tour guides, owners, etc., to start painting a picture of what paranormal events have been occurring at the location. He loves to visually depict the especially gruesome stories with actors recreating the bloody murder scene, hanging, or accident. Then, it's time for a walk through of the location with the person who contacted them. Weird things always happen. Always. After that, they get set up and start their official "lock down." This is when Zak and Aaron get literally locked into the location for the night.

The Sallie House episode starts with walking through town with locals. No real history about the town or the house is provided other than that the house is 150 years old and there were three documented natural deaths in it. Approximately one minute was spent on that portion of historical information. Everyone tells Zak that he needs to talk to a former owner, Tony Pickman, and ask him about the dark energy in the house.

Zak then spends some time talking with a former police officer who claims the attacks on the Pickmans were completely true. He was there when the television show *Sightings* came to film and describes how a psychic they brought with them, Peter James, said Sallie was there and that she didn't like the police officer and he had to leave. Sallie was very upset with him being there and he said that was enough for him and he left the property.

Zak then meets up with a Sallie House tour guide who claims to see an apparition of an Indian in the front yard on a regular basis. She also does not believe that Sallie is a little girl but instead is a man. She frequently gets mysterious bruises while she's in the house. I found it



Spot in Sallie House basement where pentagram was said to have been

interesting that Zak never looks into her claim about seeing an Indian or even asks any more questions about that part of her interview.

She continues to tell Zak about a pentagram in the basement where a woman who moved in after the Pickmans supposedly performed animal sacrifices and other occult rituals. Zak wonders aloud if this fed the dark spirit that was already in the house and made it stronger.

Then the tour guide casually mentions that she can communicate with the spirit and it is not happy that *Ghost Adventures* is there. Zak doesn't ask her any questions about her ability to communicate with the spirit! Why didn't Zak ask her more about



Zak Bagans outside the Sallie House

what she and the spirit talk about? Why didn't he have her ask the spirit what it was? I guess we'll never know what ended up on the editing floor, but it seems to me that he either thought her information was unreliable or he just forgot to ask.

Zak finally meets up with the Pickmans.

We find out that they lived in the house for two years in the early 1990s. While there, lights would turn off and on, pictures on the walls would turn upside down or be broken and Tony saw an apparition of a little girl twice. It appeared as an adorable little girl, but Tony felt right away that it was a demon. He drew a picture of the apparition and she has short, dark, curly hair and a bow.

He tells a story about how he was viciously scratched while he was packing to leave the house.

There were three big scratches down his back, which he had a picture of to share. He was later scratched more times than he could even count over the next few months. He began to feel horrible in the house and eventually decided he was going to slit his wife's throat. He didn't do it, but that was the last straw and they moved out. He was shocked that a house, or whatever was in the house, could cause him to feel that way about the person he most loved.

Now it's time for a walk through with Tony. Zak talked him into coming back to the house for the first time in many, many years. Zak also enlisted the help of a

# SALLIE HOUSE (SEASON 10, EPISODE 6) CONT.

young, female psychic and he claims she has no background information on the house or the Pickmans. Finally, Tony is checked for scratches before entering the house.

Right away, the psychic claims there is a presence of a girl and proceeds to describe the same image that Tony saw many years ago. Same curly hair and bow among other details. Immediately, Tony's arm starts burning when they ask the girl to appear. A big scratch appears and everyone seems very stressed out. It's a little chaotic, but the psychic starts telling Tony that it wants him to go downstairs and he is saying that the pull to go to the basement is too strong to resist. So off they head to the basement.

Tony tells the spirit that it needs to leave the house and then everyone feels like they are going to be sick. The psychic says it is laughing at them and everyone needs to go back upstairs because it isn't safe in the basement. At the same time, Tony receives a large burn on the back of his neck. It's a pretty large mark and it turns into a welt.

That was enough for the psychic and Tony, and they leave the house and now it's time for the "lock down." Zak and Aaron are going to be in the house, while Billy and Jay are out on the back deck monitoring audio and cameras.

Zak begins walking around inside the house using a Structured Light Sensor (SLS) camera. This device is a lot like an Xbox Kinect, if you are familiar with that gaming system. It can map a room and figure out where people are and create stick figure type images on the screen to show where they are in the room. The idea of the SLS is that it can see spirits that can't be seen with human eyes and then turn them into stick figures on the screen. Our own Ghosts of Ohio members have begun experimenting with the SLS camera and we'll be reporting back to you on our own findings in the very near future!

Unfortunately, nothing shows up on the SLS, but Zak and Aaron start hearing noises, and the house starts to become

very active. The SLS suddenly shuts off and the guys start feeling creeped out and Zak declares, "Something is in me or around me!" He was standing on the stairs heading up to the next floor, but it was enough to send him right back down to the first floor. Zak says it feels like "pure fear" upstairs and he has to go back up there. He starts back up the stairs and is asking Sallie what she is and begins telling her that he doesn't want any harm when they hear a lot of footsteps upstairs. As they are at the top of the stairs, Zak hears a voice from the bedroom right in front of him. Almost immediately, Billy gets on the walkie-talkie and tells Zak that a teddy bear in that bedroom is moving. It was



Master bedroom of the Sallie House

rotating on its bottom and they caught it on camera. It was pretty impressive to watch the teddy bear spin around a few times. And, as if that wasn't enough, Aaron hears a laugh and they capture a small ball of light shooting out of the room at the same time as everything else that is happening. There is a lot of confusion and chaos as all of this was happening at once. Zak describes feeling as though he was standing in front of a speaker at a heavy metal concert but not being able to hear the sound, only feeling it.

When Zak watches all that happened on camera, he tries to debunk the bear moving by stomping all around the room to see if he can make it move. It doesn't budge. He feels that the ball of light was responsible for all of the events that happened upstairs.

After everyone calms down, Jay and Aaron go to the basement to play with a new gadget called a Tesla Spirit Radio

made by Jay. (I highly recommend you Google this one to learn more about how it works. It wasn't described very well in the show, but after reading a bit online, it seems like it just reacts to EMF by making creepy sounds.)

While Jay and Aaron are in the basement, Zak and Billy are on the first floor. Billy has his own new gadget that appears to plug into a computer and is called a Paranormal Puck. Earlier, Billy tested it in his hotel room to make sure it was working and asked, "Is Sallie real?" and he was shocked when he got a response that said, "Scratch Satan Pain Kept Spirits."

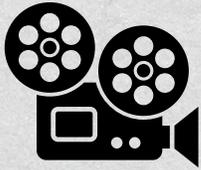
This time, it says "Relax Satan Building" and then Zak asks, "Who is Sallie?" and it responds, "Monica Paula In Attic Energy." Zak feels that this response directly relates to the moving teddy bear.

The final event in the house happens when Zak goes to the basement and enters a crawl space. He backs out quickly and when Aaron asks what wrong, he dramatically pauses before answering that he heard a female voice. Zak did catch it on his recorder, but it was

louder in person and he is rattled. He says it made him feel his darkest fear.

He sums up the episode with a closing voiceover and says he was skeptical at first but now firmly believes there is a portal in the basement crawl space and that's where Sallie comes from.

The episode truly lacked the historical background that most *Ghost Adventures* typically include. They also neglected to explain the Tesla Spirit Radio or Paranormal Puck so the viewer would understand what was happening. But it did introduce new gadgets to look into for our own future investigations. As far as the events that occurred, well, you'll have to watch it and decide for yourself how compelling they were. The moving teddy bear and the welt on Tony's neck were certainly impressive to this viewer.



## MOVIE REVIEW:

# AS ABOVE, SO BELOW



Rick

**GENRE:** Thriller/Horror

**STARRING:** Ben Feldman (Mad Men), Perdita Weeks (The Tudors), and Edwin Hodge (The Purge).

**DIRECTOR:** John Dowdle (Devil, Quarantine, Quarantine II: Terminal)

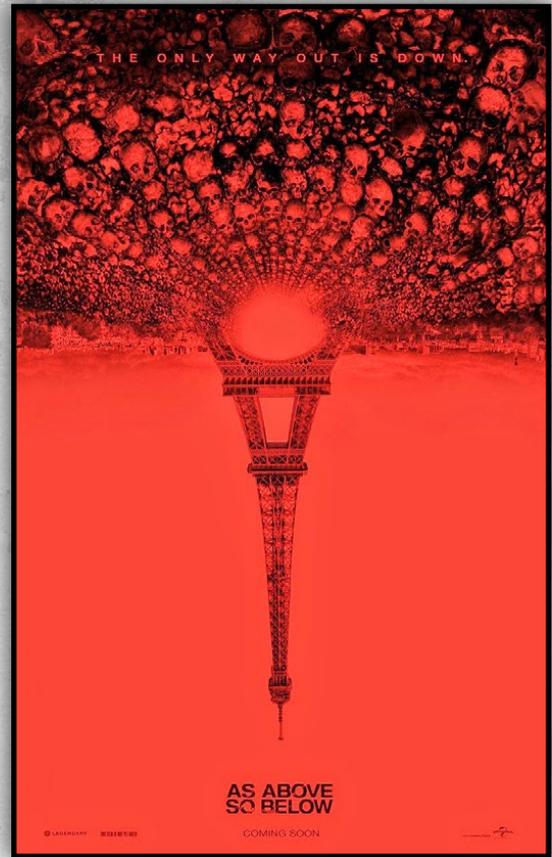
**RATED:** R

**RUNNING TIME:** 1 hour and 33 minutes

**RELEASE DATE:** 2014

**AVAILABILITY:** Netflix or Rental

**RATING:** 1.5 out of 5 skulls



**In a loud booming voice:** “Miles of twisting catacombs lie beneath the streets of Paris, the eternal home to countless souls. When a team of explorers ventures into the uncharted maze of bones, they uncover the dark secret that lies within this city of the dead. A journey into madness and terror which taps into the human psyche to reveal the personal demons that come back to haunt us all...”

Makes you want to run out and see this movie...correct? It did me. Well, that plus, in my opinion, the Catacombs are one of the creepiest places on the planet.

**Fact:** The Catacombs of Paris, France, are underground tombs located directly under the city. These tombs stretch over 300 feet below ground holding the remains of about six million people, giving it its reputation as “The World’s Largest Grave.” Bodies were gradually transferred to the Catacombs between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries as graveyards were being closed due to risk to public health. The underground cemetery has been open to the public on a regular basis since 1874 (many sections of the Catacombs are closed due to safety reasons). Visitors can see a tableau of death with bones arranged in a macabre display. The verse, “Halt, this is the realm of Death” is emblazoned above the entrance. This verse is just one of many poems and other profane passages giving pause for thought during the tour. The Catacombs is officially one of the 14 City of Paris Museums.

Based on the movie’s trailer and the history of the actual Catacombs, my expectations were high for this film. Unfortunately my expectations were never met.

Our main character is played by actress Perdita Weeks. She is in pursuit of an ancient magic stone that heals all open lacerations and keeps torches lit for centuries. She enlists the help of her close friend, played by actor Ben Feldman, whose special skill is fixing broken clock towers. Joining their expedition is a camera man, played by actor Edwin Hodge, and an urban explorer and his team. Our main character believes the sacred stone is hidden in a secret chamber buried deep within the Catacombs.

Be prepared for a first-person camera angle in which the screen goes black, countless jerky running scenes, and disorientation galore. As they delve deeper into the abyss, they encounter creepy, slow-walking robed figures and bug-eyed she-devil worshipers. Things really flip upside down when past haunts return to torment our characters like in the 1990 movie *Flatliners*. Of course, murder and mayhem ensue as complete logic and sense are abandoned.

I can’t tell what I hate more: the title of this movie or the actual movie itself. However, the only cool thing about this film is it’s shot on location inside the Catacombs, which apparently is the only movie ever allowed this exclusive access. And for that it earned one skull.

# BOOK REVIEW

## The Sallie House Haunting: A True Story



Wendy

The Heartland Ghost story can be pretty familiar to those of us who watch all of the paranormal shows that are found throughout a variety of television channels. In this particular case, the

show *Sightings* paid several visits to document the happenings at what is called the Sallie House. Located in Atchison, Kansas, just a short stroll from the Missouri River, the house has taken its name from the little girl spirit that reputedly inhabits the home, as experienced by author Debra Pickman.

In 1993, Debra and Tony Pickman leased the house in anticipation of the upcoming birth of their first child, and from the outset were beset by paranormal activity. Debra wrote in her journal every night and this book was culled from her journal entries. It takes you from their first encounters with Sallie around Valentine's Day in 1993 until the day they decided for the safety of their family they had to leave, in fall of 1994.

The spirit of Sallie remains unidentified, but presented itself as a little girl, around the age of 5-7. Working with a psychic named Barbara who was related to Tony's co-worker, they tried to figure out how to handle the situation. Encouraged by Barbara to interact with Sallie to make her feel loved and a part of the family, Debra spent months acting as if she had a second child...just an invisible one. She read to her, talked to her, set up a play area for her, and encouraged her to show signs of her presence.

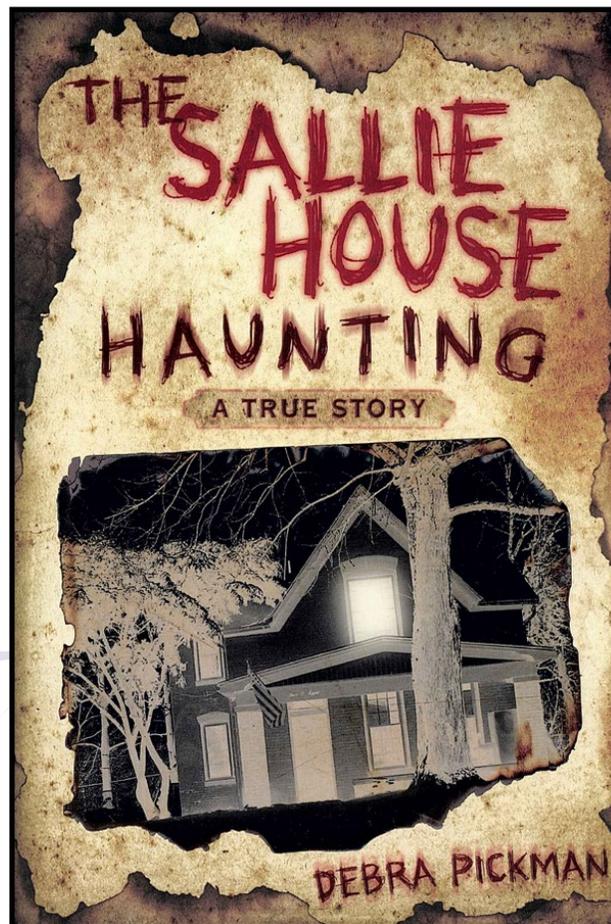
While Tony remained scared and unsure of the situation, Debra was excited about all of the signs they received...moving stuffed animals, lights turning on and off, chains swinging, and repeated appearances of dark shadows and other objects in photographs they took while asking Sallie

to pose. Unfortunately, as in other cases, things aren't always what they seem. From innocuous events like moving teddy bears, the paranormal events they were experiencing began to take on a darker undertone. Candles lit themselves, shirts, stuffed animals and leather rocking horses suddenly began to smolder before bursting into flames, the microwave began to turn on and run, and Tony became the brunt of physical attacks.

By the time *Sightings* arrived, Sallie was agitated and the activity increased and became more violent. Tony wasn't being just scratched...his clothing was igniting and finally he was pushed towards the upper stair railing, which could have ended in a bad fall. At that point, Debra and Tony felt they needed to take their now one-year-old son and leave the house to make sure their family was safe. Debra also began realizing that maybe Sallie was not a little girl spirit at all, but something more malevolent that was portraying itself as a child spirit to make itself seem harmless to the family it was invading.

The book is highly detailed, thanks to Debra's vigilant journal writing, and will definitely have you shaking your head as you read for yourself the things Debra went through to attempt to make a ghost child feel welcome in their family, only to have to admit that it probably was not a good idea to begin with.

I asked our fearless leader Jim if he wanted our personal take on the things we are reviewing, and he said go for it. So...



**Title:** *The Sallie House Haunting: A True Story*

**Author:** Debra Pickman

**ISBN:** 073872128X / 978-0738721286

**Publisher:** Llewellyn Publications

**Copyright Date:** 2010

here we go. By page 75, I was screaming at Debra in the book and wanting to throw it. While I understand this was taking place 20 years ago, and that now we have a lot more knowledge in the field of paranormal activity, I would think it would be common sense to NOT engage any type of spirit...human or inhuman. You never know what you are truly dealing with. And just a definition reminder...a spirit is a conscious being. Whether it's your late grandmother or a woodland elemental, it is conscious and has a proper place to be.

# BOOK REVIEW CONT.

## The Sallie House Haunting: A True Story

Excessive mourning and constantly begging for signs can keep a loved one from moving on, trapping them here on the physical plane. Never a good idea. On the other hand, a ghost is something you can do absolutely nothing about. It is energy on a recorder. It doesn't know you are there and cannot communicate because there is no conscious behind it. A switch has somehow been flipped, the scene or sounds play out, and the activity turns off.

Even with the work we Ghosts do, I do not engage a spirit. I may say into my recorder, "If there is anyone here who needs to say something or needs to give us some information, please do so." But I do not ask for signs of presence, or demand they show themselves, like they do on

the fancy schmancy TV shows. I let my recorder run, carry on normal conversation with HUMANS, and if someone wants to chime in, I've captured it. A human spirit needs to go to where it belongs, not stay here and entertain you by moving objects and flickering lights upon your request. The more you interact with an inhuman or human spirit, the more activity you get. And if it is inhuman? You are going to end up with violence. So my perspective on this whole Sallie haunting incident is anger that this situation was actually created into something it never would have been had it not been for the constant daily interaction from the human in the home.

Want to know what to do with a spirit?

My advice is the same I would give to someone with an illness—get a second opinion. And a third. And a fourth, if necessary. You will instinctively know what feels right and what feels wrong. And if you are questioning advice you are given, then you need to look for other answers, because you are feeling wrong about that advice. To me, being told to talk to a little girl spirit and invite her into your family? To make her feel at home and cater to her so that she doesn't scratch your husband? To me, that is wrong. Just my thoughts and opinions of course, take them or leave them as you will!

## THE SALLIE HOUSE: GATEWAY TO THE PARANORMAL



Samantha

"Just after the turn of the century in Atchison, Kansas, a legend was born from the death of a young girl. Forced to endure an excruciatingly painful operation with no way to deaden the pain, her suffering

would somehow dissolve the bonds of time and awaken those who would come to live at 'The Sallie House.'"

So begins this 2010 documentary, "A Robbie Thomas Investigation featuring Michael Esposito." And like the opening scene from a horror movie, we see a mother, desperate to get help for her sick child, pounding at the door of the town's doctor. He determines that something is wrong with the child and that he needs to perform emergency surgery, but in his haste, knocks over his only bottle of chloroform. He'll have to perform the operation without it and instructs the child's mother to help hold her down as he begins to cut...

Then the scene fades to black as a voiceover tells us, "No one has ever

known what happened that night."

Uhh, okay. What was all of that scary stuff, then?

Canadian Robbie Thomas is an author, spiritual guide and psychic who claims to be "one of the premiere paranormal investigators in North America." Michael Esposito is an EVP specialist who has investigated the Sallie House on multiple occasions. They've come together to investigate and attempt to answer questions about the Sallie House's past, and who or what is haunting it.

The house became a local legend after Tony and Debra Pickman experienced a wide range of paranormal phenomena there in the early 1990s. They've long since moved away, but the house remains a paranormal hot spot for those looking for ghosts. It's one of the stops on ghost tours, and amateur ghost hunters can investigate there.

The Pickmans moved into the house in 1993. During the 22 or 30 months that they lived there (the documentary is inconsistent on this number), they noticed anomalies in family photographs, nursery toys mysteriously taken off of their shelves and arranged in a circle on the floor, lights that turned on and off on their own, a burnt rose and teddy bear, and

candle sconces on the wall (that they never lit) had dry melted wax that had melted up the candle instead of down. Tony even saw the apparition of a little girl in the kitchen. They had brought in a psychic named Barbara Connor to help, and she was the first to mention the name "Sallie." Soon after, television programs like *Sightings* and *Unsolved Mysteries* showed interest in their story. *Sightings* was the first to cover it, and over the course of two years visited five times, with a total of eight broadcasts about the house.

Over the course of the investigations, Tony seemed to be the target of most of the activity. He experienced scratches and bleeding welts that appeared on his body out of nowhere. On one occasion, he was in an upstairs room where Debra (who was smudging at the time) witnessed him get knocked backward, right out of his laced-up work boots. He then seemed to be held down by an unseen force that prevented him from getting up. "It felt like I got hit by a Mack truck." Tony also started hearing whispers that he couldn't understand. As he lay in bed one night, he heard the whispering, felt himself getting scratched, and then saw a female apparition that said, "I'm gonna..." before shooting her arm out and disappearing. It

## THE SALLIE HOUSE: GATEWAY TO THE PARANORMAL (cont.)

was terrifying. The last straw came when Tony started to have strange thoughts of harming Debra. One week later, the Pickmans moved out.

They visited on occasion to participate in follow-up stories, and it was never pleasant. On one occasion they pulled up to the supposedly empty house just in time to see a shadowy figure through the front window. It got up from a chair and walked toward the kitchen. When they went in, the house felt heavy and unwelcoming, even making Tony feel sick. He experienced scratches every time he returned. Nowadays, they do not visit the house, nor do they have plans to in the future.

Interestingly, the man who owns the property is a former police officer named Les Smith. The Pickmans were his first tenants. He and his partner, Joe Butner, were the officers on duty during the *Sightings* filmings, and both were extremely skeptical about the whole thing. That is, until they got curious. One night, when the house was empty, they decided to take a drive by the Sallie House. As they approached, Les's headlights went out and the radio turned to static. He kept driving, and everything was restored. Of course, they decided to drive by again. This time, the dome light came on as they

drove past. On their third attempt, the headlights went out. There was definitely something strange about that house! On another occasion, Les was in the house alone after a filming and decided to try an experiment. He said to Sallie that if she was real and didn't want people coming in, then call his cell phone and let it ring twice. Later on, as he was heading to the house to let the *Sightings* crew in, his phone rang twice. Then, it happened again. When he picked up, there was only static on the line. Freaked out and in need of guidance, he told his priest what he'd done. The priest told him not to mess with it, and he hasn't since.

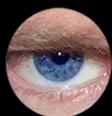
So...let's fast-forward to the present, shall we?

Robbie Thomas and Michael Esposito have included a lot of history and interviews in this documentary, which make up the majority of it. There isn't really a lot of actual "investigating" taking place. They discovered that Michael C. Finney, whose son was Dr. Charles Finney, built the house, located at 508 2nd Street. Robbie's psychic impression of Dr. Finney feels evil, as though he's been forced to walk in the shadow of his father. Could Dr. Finney be the evil entity lurking in the house?

In an upstairs closet, Robbie's dog wouldn't go in, and Robbie said that he could feel the presence of a child, and he had the impression of being told to shut up before being shoved into the closet. In the basement, he sensed two young girls named Anna and Emily, one of who pulled his pinky finger at the same time an EVP was recorded. Michael attempted to translate the EVP as, "He's the Devil," but it was so faint that there's really no way to interpret it. In total, Robbie claims that there are nine different entities in the house, and he believes that "Sallie" may have actually been a doll.

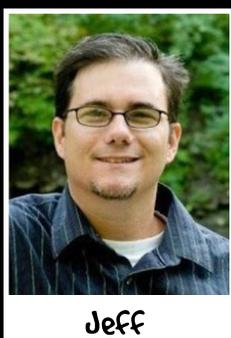
This is one of those documentaries that has some truly interesting and useful information, as well as some unnecessary garbage. The horror-like opening scene and the whole "Robbie Thomas Investigation" thing are, in my opinion, complete sensationalist crap. All he seemed to be doing was throwing out random names and scenarios, all based on his alleged psychic impressions. If you're going to watch this film, watch it for the valuable stuff, like the interviews with the Pickmans, Les Smith, and the people who live in town. Their points of view add richness and credence to the Sallie House story. It's because of them that I'm inclined to believe there's something strange going on in that house.

### PODCAST REVIEW



## SKEPTOID

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF POP PHENOMENA



Jeff

A weekly podcast has been airing since 2006, available on the web, mobile devices and now in book form. The series was started by Brian Dunning. Info about him on the *Skeptoid* website

details his credentials as a Silicon Valley computer scientist, writer and producer. Further inquiry to his background reveal a brush with the law that currently has him serving federal prison time. The details are available on Brian

Dunning's personal webpage [www.briandunning.com/message.html](http://www.briandunning.com/message.html) in which he reveals an explanation and personal accountability for his actions.

Regardless of the legal issues, *Skeptoid* continues to air weekly using guest hosts and prerecorded episodes taped by Dunning. The podcast bills itself as "a weekly science podcast dedicated to furthering knowledge by blasting away the widespread pseudosciences that infect popular culture, and replacing them with way cooler reality." The subject matter of each episode ranges widely from conspiracy theories like the JFK assassination to paranormal mysteries like *The Haunted Dybbuk*

Box. Dunning and other staff at *Skeptoid.com* have tackled some of the most controversial issues in the paranormal world which may be of the most interest to readers of this review. Such topics in the paranormal realm of particular interest, with episode number in parenthesis include: *The Real Amityville Horror* (20), *Orbs: The Ghost in the Camera* (29), *Ghost Hunting Tools of the Trade* (81), *Demystifying the Bell Witch* (118), *Shadow People* (175), *The Scole Experiment* (179), *The Exorcism of Annaliese* (248), *The Grey Man of Ben MacDhui* (292), *Black Eyed Kids* (410), *The Many Voices of Frank's Box* (429), and *The Columbus, Ohio, Poltergeist*

## PODCAST REVIEW CONT.



(448) which just aired in January 2015. Cryptozoology and UFO's/aliens are frequent subjects as well. Readers of this review may be particularly interested in: The Devil Walked in Devon (31), Alien Invasion of Phoenix (41), Spring Heeled Jack (64), Aliens in Roswell (79), Travis Walton UFO Abduction (94), Betty and Barney Hill (124), The Mothman Cometh (159), Abominable Snowman (269), Jersey Devil (282), Area 51 (313), Loch Ness Monster (318), Kelly-Hopkinsville Encounter (331), Bermuda Triangle (337), Men In Black (351), The Grinning Man (367), Boggy Creek Monster (404), and Braxton County Monster (434).

Not all episodes deal with one topic each week. Occasionally, an episode will correct errors from earlier podcasts. These corrections don't change the overall message of the episode, but usually just correct one small comment that was read in error. There are also

episodes that feature listener feedback allowing less skeptical comments and opinions. Even some episodes that may not sound interesting to those who are only interested in the supernatural are resoundingly compelling. For example, the Science of Muzak (370) isn't controversial, but the history and development of background music to enhance our shopping habits does reveal insight to human behavior. Dunning manages to address topics that have volumes of literature and media attached to them, but boils down the subject to fit in a 10 to 15 minute span. Although the short and sweet length can be advantageous in a society that is used to a collection of soundbites, I am often left wanting to know more about the subject which usually leads me to Google to start my own investigation. His use of first hand references is refreshing. A bibliography appears on the webpage.

Dunning's baritone voice and distinct enunciation create a unique media experience. When quoting someone else, Dunning simply changes his voice with sound effects. It's hokey but not a showstopper. Over the past few months with Dunning's absence, guest hosts have filled the weekly chair with mixed results in my opinion. Based on content alone, it still works, but I've become used to the founder's style. The end of each podcast reminds the reader that the now nonprofit company, Skeptoid Media Inc., needs financial support from listeners. Micro-payments are requested with the caveat that it is tax deductible. With many podcasts having lengthy intros with commercials intermingled in the mix, it's nice to have Skeptoid remain commercial free.

Subscribe to *Skeptoid* from their website at [www.skeptoid.com](http://www.skeptoid.com) or find it on iTunes.

## THE DARK HISTORY OF VALENTINE'S DAY



James

I've often been called a dark and twisted individual. And I'm OK with that. In fact, I actually sort of like it! But one of the reasons I seem to get called that is because I have a penchant for seeking out at the dark side of things. To me, there's nothing more fascinating than taking a look at things people do simply because they are "tradition" and finding the bizarre origins of these traditions.

Recently, I was watching a TV show with my daughter when all of a sudden this weird commercial for a Valentine's Day sale came on, complete with all sorts of exploding hearts and even an extremely overweight (and bearded) Cupid running around. And that got me thinking: where did all this Valentine's Day stuff come from?

Some believe that what we today celebrate as Valentine's Day can be traced back to the ancient Roman festival, Februatio. This festival was celebrated during the Roman month of Februarius, which was named after the festival (and yes, it's where we get the name February from).

By all accounts, Februatio was something of a purging/purification festival. Namely, the Romans would take the opportunity to cleanse themselves of the old and unwanted in order to prepare themselves



Painting said to show the celebration of Februatio

## THE DARK HISTORY OF VALENTINE'S DAY CONT.

for the coming spring. And while most of the purification was related to people's homes and lives in general, there was also the aspect of prepping oneself for the idea of courting a new potential mate. In

other words, this was the festival where you could start declaring your intentions to court someone, as my grandmother used to say!

Over time, a specific festival popped up in the middle of Februatio. This festival, known as Lupercalia, came to be celebrated between the 13th and 15th of February. Lupercalia was the festival where Romans could openly declare their love for one another, although they did so in very strange ways. For instance, Lupercalia involved the sacrificing of goats and dogs. Using the skins from the sacrificed goats, the young men of the area would fashion loincloths for themselves, which they would wear as they ran through the town. But wait, there's more! These young men would also carry whips with them, which they would use to strike any members of the town they came across. And yes, this was not only condoned, but encouraged. In fact, being struck by a whip during this bizarre Running of the Lionclothed Men was said to bring about fertility, so women were often lining the streets, hoping to be whipped. Kinky, huh?

Of course, as with most things, the Catholic Church had to step in and grab the holiday for themselves. That happened in the 5th century, 496 to be exact. That's the year that Valentine's Day got its official name.

To be honest, history is unclear as to whether or not the Church's decision was based on the desire to get rid of all those pesky "pagan" holidays or was

simply a coincidence. Either way, in 496, Pope Gelasius I decided to make February 14th the Feast of St. Valentine's day, naming it after a member of the clergy who had been



abducted, tortured, and murdered. He was eventually martyred by the Church. That's right, the day where people express their undying love for one another was named after a murdered man. Or maybe it's men, because there are no less than three men, all named Valentine, after who the day is supposed to have been named. Regardless, February 14th, 496, was the first time St. Valentine's Day was officially celebrated.

It might have been one of those mysterious Catholic men named Valentine who was responsible for sending the first Valentine's Day card. As the story goes, when one of the Valentines was in jail, he fell in love with the jailer's daughter. Obviously, this type of love was forbidden, but that did not stop the man from sending secret love letters and cards to his love, signing them "from your Valentine." Other sources claim the first Valentine was sent by the Duke of Orleans in 1415. He allegedly sent it to his wife while he was a prisoner in the notorious Tower of London. So regardless of which story you believe to be true, it would appear that the first Valentine was sent by a prisoner.

Oh yeah, and no journey through the dark side of Valentine's Day would be complete without mentioning one of the holiday's

most iconic images: Cupid. You know, the little naked cherub who flits about, firing arrows at unsuspecting lovers.

Well, it seems only fitting that Cupid would become equated with Valentine's Day since the Romans equated Cupid with love from the start. In their mythology, Cupid was the god associated with such things as love and affection. The Greeks called him Eros, but he stood for basically the same things as Cupid did. This would explain why, over time, Cupid and Eros would come to combine into one.

Perhaps even more famous than perhaps Cupid himself is his bow and arrows. While his arrows are usually shown to be all the same—and have the same romantic effect on people when they're shot—what is not commonly known is that Cupid actually carries two distinctly different arrows in his quiver: a sharp one made of gold and a blunt arrow made of lead. The gold arrow is the one that most people equate with Cupid as that's the one that, once you're hit with it, you're going to fall madly in love with



Cupid on the prowl

the person you're next to. However, get hit by the blunt arrow made of lead and you're going to run screaming from whomever you're currently with.

So with that in mind, here's hoping that all of you were hit with Cupid's golden arrow this past Valentine's Day and that you were whipped by a man wearing nothing but a loincloth...if that's what you're into.

April

## 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!

## COMING IN THE APRIL NEWSLETTER

- X Investigating The Villisca Ax Murder House
- X Annabelle: A Review
- X Experimenting with the Structured Light Sensor (SLS) Camera
- X Spending The Night Inside The Twin City Opera House

### Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts of Ohio are continuing to schedule investigations for 2015. 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>

 TWITTER  
<http://twitter.com/ghostsofohio>

### Administration

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**NEWSLETTER STAFF:** Editor-In-Chief: James Willis Copy Chief: Kathy Boiarski Designer: Stephanie Willis  
Contributing Authors: Kathy Boiarski, Ginny Boucher, Jeff Craig, Wendy Cywinski, Samantha Nicholson, Rick Tarantelli, and James Willis