



GENEALOGY

Relatively Speaking

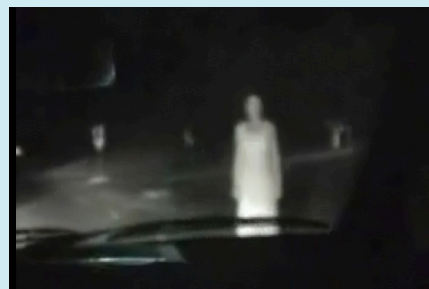
October 2024

SPOOKY ROOTS

ILLINOIS GHOST STORIES

By Kyra Zirlin

Illinois is home to numerous ghost stories, each spookier than the last. From Des Plaines, Illinois to the infamous Graceland Cemetery in Chicago—our phantasmal cousins are all around us. For our October newsletter, please enjoy the following collection of eerie ghost stories cemented in history, just in time for Halloween.



Resurrection Cemetery – Justice, Illinois

Ghosting up and down Archer Avenue, between her resting place and what was once the Willowbrook Ballroom (now an empty lot after a horrible fire in 2016) hangs Resurrection Mary. Mary is a harmless apparition who, by all accounts, appears in a 1930's dancing dress, beehive hairdo, and metallic pumps. It is reported that Mary likes to frequent Archer Avenue, where she'll ask those driving past for a ride home. She'll slip into their backseat and direct them down the road before mysteriously disappearing mid-drive. Local lore believes that Mary died walking home from a dance party sometime in the 1930s after a hit and run accident. Some folks believe she must have passed in a bad car wreck. The cemetery believes that Resurrection Mary is actually Mary Rozanc, a young girl who died at the age of 16 on December 28, 1930,

though there is no historical proof. Although history has not made it clear who Mary was, how she passed, or why she likes to hang around, she is a part of a common cultural phenomena—the “hitchhiking ghost,” as seen in South Carolina’s infamous Walhalla Hitchhiker, the phantom hitchhiker of Bedfordshire in Great Britain, or in Quezon City in the Philippines, where she is known as the White Lady. The next time you’re in Justice, Illinois, wander on into Chef’s Melody Lounge on Archer Avenue where they put out a Bloody Mary every Sunday just in case she decides to stop by. Who knows, on your way home someone might ask for a ride.



Schweppe Mansion – Lake Forest, Illinois

In 1917, Mr. and Mrs. John G Shedd (the builder of Shedd Aquarium) built a beautiful mansion in Lake Forest, Illinois as a gift for their beloved daughter, Laura, and her new husband, Charles Schweppe. Grand yet hollow, this house holds tragedy within its walls. In 1937, Laura Schweppe passed away, leaving the bulk of her estate to her two children, and a small portion to her husband. Exactly 4 years and 25 days after his wife's death, Charles Schweppe tragically took his own life, leaving behind a note that read, “*I’ve been awake all night. It is terrible*”. After these events, the home sat empty for fifty years before a couple purchased it with the intention of refurbishing the home to its former glory. Legend says that long dead waitstaff can still be seen preparing meals for their ghostly employers, and bare footprints appear fresh on old cement. Most strikingly, there is one window, situated in Charles Schweppe's old study, that stays pristine whilst its neighbors are grimy as if the home's original owner religiously cleans it even in his afterlife.



Mount Carmel Cemetery – Hillside, Illinois

Relatively close to where Al Capone is buried lies Julia Buccola Petta, a young mother who died in 1921 while giving birth to her still-born son, Filippo. Anonymous in life, but famous in death, she lies under an intricate and expensive statue of herself in her wedding dress. Those who visit the cemetery claim to see a sad looking woman walking around in a wedding dress, often following those who have young children. It is reported that wandering children, once found, said they took a walk with a kind lady in a white dress who was looking for her lost son. In 1927, six years after Julia's death, her mother, Filomena, had her exhumed after relentless nightmares claiming Julia was still alive, trapped in her casket. After Filomena confirmed that her daughter was sleeping peacefully, she had a photo taken of Julia and put it on her headstone next to a photo of Julia on her wedding day, so her daughter could be forever remembered in both life and death. However, a noticeable mystery hangs innocently on Julia's gravestone—although Julia had been dead for six years, she had decomposed very little and looked almost the same as she did the day she was buried. The photograph her mother took proves it. Experts say it must have been a combination of ground temperature and other unusual factors, but it is said that Filomena believed God was just letting her see her child one last time.



Graceland Cemetery – Chicago, Illinois

Encased in glass, sitting quite far into Chicago's famous Graceland Cemetery, sits a beautiful statue of a little girl holding a parasol. Under the statue lies Inez Clarke, a six-year-old girl who died in 1880 from a lightning strike. Born in 1873 to an unwed mother, Inez lived happily with her grandparents until her tragic death while out on a picnic. Security guards throughout the years claim that the statue disappears from its glass enclosure at night, later seen wandering around, playing and laughing. During lightning storms, it is said that the statue disappears completely as Inez is so afraid. Because Inez passed so long ago, her true story is unclear as cemetery records have been lost or damaged over the many years. Regardless of her true past, cemetery workers often state that they are happy Inez is able to laugh and play amongst the headstones for all eternity.

We hope you enjoyed these spooky tales. If you have any ghost stories of your own, let us know (we love to hear them). Perhaps you'll see your own eerie legend in next year's October Newsletter. Have a wonderful Halloween.

SOURCES

[AN OLD HAUNT GETS A NEW LEASE ON LIFE – Chicago Tribune](#)

[Girl in Glass: The Inez Statue at Graceland Cemetery – Mysterious Chicago](#)

[The Italian Bride – Hillside, Illinois - Atlas Obscura](#)

[Resurrection Mary, The Hitchhiking Ghost of Archer Avenue - Chicago History Museum](#)

[Scientists create 'ghosts' in the lab by tricking the brain | Reuters](#)

[Five Scientific Explanations for Spooky Sensations | Smithsonian \(smithsonianmag.com\)](#)

[10 Scientific Explanations For Ghostly Phenomena - Listverse](#)

[The science behind seeing ghosts - BBC Three](#)

[12 Scientific Explanations For Haunted House Phenomenon \(ranker.com\)](#)

10 WAYS TO TELL IF YOUR HOUSE IS HAUNTED

1. Are you seeing shadowy figures or clear apparitions?
2. Are you smelling some unusual or inexplicable odors?
3. Are you feeling cold spots or changes in temperatures?
4. Are you hearing unusual noises?
5. Are your lights flickering or turning on and off inexplicably?
6. Are you finding objects in places where you absolutely did not put them?
7. Are your pets acting strangely?
8. Are you having tense and unusual dreams?
9. Are you feeling weak and ill without any explanation?
10. Are all your electronic devices completely drained even after charging?

Well...you may have a ghost. Try researching your area, home, and talking to your neighbors about these occurrences. Perhaps they know a story or two about your new friend.

5 SCIENTIFIC EXPLANTATIONS FOR A HAUNTED HOUSE

Are you seeing shadowy figures or clear apparitions?

Here's one explanation: an excess of electricity in your brain. In 2015, neuroscientists based in Lausanne, Switzerland discovered that sending an electronic pulse through an epileptic patients' brain induced visions of sorts. The patient claimed she saw a shadowy figure behind her, copying her movements, and that the figure tried to grab her. However, the visions ended up being a miscommunication in the left temporoparietal junction of her brain—the area of the mind that helps you tell yourself apart from others. Instead of a shadowy figure, she was, in fact, seeing herself.

Do you have the feeling of being watched? Are you hearing sounds that have no source?

It's all your ear's fault—blame no one else. Humans can hear sounds up to 20,000 Hertz, but we are unable to detect anything lower than 20. These “silent” noises are called infrasound, and while we can't hear them, we can feel them in the form of vibrations. We feel these waves in our stomachs especially, and this can create either a positive feeling (such as awe) or a negative feeling (such as unease or fear). In the right surroundings, like an old house after you've just heard some creepy ghost stories, the infrasound can make you

panic. Infrasound can be produced by storms, wind, weather patterns, and even everyday appliances, like your TV (i.e. The Poltergeist?). The next time you start to panic, feeling as though you're being watched by long-dead eyes, take a breath—it's just your ceiling fan.

Are you feeling cold spots or changes in temperatures?

Don't worry, it's probably not your ghostly roommate getting all up in your space. It is, however, weather getting all up in your space. Drafts entering through open windows, cracked doors, or chimneys mix with the heated temperature of your home and fight for space. Cool air rises and heated air drops, creating a gush of cold breeze as they try to equalize the temperature. So, no worries, just grab yourself a sweater. Unless of course you like this sort of thing—then who knows what that shivery gust could have been.

Are the hairs on your arms standing up? Do you generally feel disturbed for no reason?

Once again, science offers us a perfectly reasonable explanation—tiny atoms. Ions are atoms with an uneven number of protons and electrons. If an atom gains an electron, it becomes a negative ion, and if it loses an electron, it becomes positive. Ghost hunters are famous for carrying ion detector machines, as they claim ions are an indicator of long-dead ancestors. However, ions are quite natural, exist everywhere, and are caused by all kinds of natural phenomena like weather, solar radiation, and radon gas. They have also been proven to change our moods and create brief fields of electricity that make your hair go wacko. In fact, negative ions can make us feel calm and relaxed while positive ions can give us headaches and make us disturbed and sick. Next time an ion reader rings off the charts, don't go thinking it's a see-through cousin. There's probably a storm raging out back, or the sun may have just sent a burst of bright radiation.

Are you having tense and unusual dreams or feeling weak and ill without any explanation?

A ubiquitous, pervasive organism may be at fault—mold—the dreaded, smelly, and very unhealthy mold covering most of our basements, attics and air ducts. Common household molds like *Aspergillus* mold and *Stachybotrys*, or black mold, cause symptoms that many humans claim in ghost reports. *Aspergillus* causes shortness of breath and optic nerve inflammation, which makes dark shapes float in people's visions. *Stachybotrys*, when tested on lab mice, created a feeling of intense fear and dread, as though you were about to die. These molds also cause bad dreams and sickness if one is exposed for long enough. Let this be a reminder to have your home checked for mold. Unless, of course, you'd rather it just be a ghost. In a toss-up between mold and ghosts, I would probably pick the new roommate, too.

NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

The Chicago Tribune, 1907

HAUNTED BY DEAD MOTHER

FRANK SWULIUS SAYS A SPIRIT DISTURBS HIS PEACE.

Believes the Apparition of His Dead Parent Is Punishing Him Because He Cursed Her for Leaving Most of Her Property to His Sister — His Wife Confirms Report of Mysterious Doings in Their Household— Tables and Chairs Upset.

Because he cursed his mother for her supposed injustice to him previous to her death a year ago, Frank Swullius, 1596 West Thirty-ninth street, believes he and his family are haunted by her spirit.

When the mother of Swullius died last February she left most of her property to her daughter. The son thought he had been treated unjustly, and his anger over the matter caused him to utter violent execrations against the dead woman. Shortly afterward the strange apparitions, accompanied by uncommon noises, took possession of the Swullius residence.

Convinced He Is Haunted.

At first the son and his wife treated the visitations as imaginary and tried to forget the "spirit" because they did not believe in what are termed "ghosts," but as the apparitions increased the number of their visits Swullius' conscience smote him and he became convinced that he was haunted because of the unkind words he had spoken against his mother.

One night recently a shadow passed between Swullius and the lamp in his room. He looked up and saw what he declares was the form of his mother. Mrs. Swullius also saw the apparition. Since then tables and chairs have been moved to and fro and the water was turned on and off at the sink when nobody was near.

Bothered While at Work.

Until two weeks ago Swullius was night watchman in one of the warehouses of Swift & Co. at the stockyards. But the avenging spirit haunted him there, too, so he sought a day position on the killing floor

of the Swift plant.

"I am convinced that there is more to these apparitions than I first thought," Swulius said last evening. "I know I haven't imagined the things that have happened recently." Mrs. Swulius corroborated her husband's story.

The mother of the haunted man was Mrs. F. Kujawski. She lived with her daughter, Dr. F. Reenstrom, at 1003 West Thirty-first place.

"My mother was always kind to all of us," said Dr. Reenstrom, "and if Frank is followed by a specter it is because his conscience troubles him. He sees her in his own conscience and then he believes that he is being pursued."

LOCAL HAUNTS SCAVENGER HUNT

Thursday, October 1 - Thursday, October 31

Discover 10 historically significant locations in Buffalo Grove, Prospect Heights and Wheeling. Visit and take a photo outside five of these locations to successfully complete the hunt and receive a prize. Registration begins October 1 at the Adult Services desk or call 847.459.4100, extension 3.

[REGISTRATION](#)

GENEALOGY INTEREST GROUP

Monday, October 28, 7-8:30 pm

Monday, November 18, 7-8:30 pm - *Registration begins October 15*

Monday, December 16, 7-8:30 pm - *Registration begins October 15*

Join this informal group in a collaborative setting to explore library databases, research your family tree and connect with other enthusiasts and skilled staff.

[REGISTRATION for October 28](#)

[Website](#)

[Events](#)

[Catalog](#)

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