



Spirit Society of PA.

A P P A R I T I O N S

A Review and Preview of SSP Activities and Items of Interest • Vol 8, Issue 8 - Aug 2004

"ROO'S" BOOS - NOTES FROM KELLY

Where has the summer gone? John and I have been busy with many lectures and tour groups in the last few months. We've met a lot of interesting people on our journeys. It is nice to see how other groups handle their investigations and group meetings.

Al Brindza's Moundsville video has received a lot of positive comments from those who viewed it in our lectures. It is one of the best apparition videos I have seen to date. He has had some national television networks show interest as well.

This is the time where all of us are out searching for spirits on Battlefields and graveyards. Remember if you capture *legitimate* anomalous photos, EVP or video you would like to share with our group, please feel free to bring it to our monthly meetings.

Please mark your calendars in September. For the first time in eight years, our monthly meeting will be held on the **THIRD** Monday in September (20th) due to scheduling conflicts with the Sr. Citizen Center. Our meetings will resume on the second Monday of the month beginning in Oct.

As usual, we'd like to have our annual Halloween party again this year. This is the month that we usually set the date/time/place. If you have any suggestions as to where you'd like to have our party this year, or would like to offer your home, please let me know by September 10th so we may include it in our September newsletter. (Note: I will be away at Troy Taylor's Halloween event in Decatur on Oct 30-31)

I'd like to personally thank all of you for your help in raising money for our SSP account. This month Marianne Ross will be selling SSP sweatshirts for the fall/winter season. Linda May will also be selling T-shirts and Sweatshirts for an SSP fund-raiser in August/September as well. Please support these ladies in

helping us raise money for future events and the monthly rent.

A big "Thanks" goes out to all of you who contributed to this month's newsletter. It is much appreciated. It helps cut down on our time putting it together. This is YOUR group and YOUR articles, comments and photos are always welcome!

This month I've asked some of my students to speak on the topic of **Developing your Intuition**. That is the theme for August. I am very proud of each and every one of them and their progress. They will be telling you how they began their journey into the wonderful world of psychic studies and how it has helped them in their lives. If you have any questions, they will be happy to answer them.

Kelly's Magical Garden will begin Level 1 Intuition classes in November. See me for details or go to www.kellysmagicalgarden.com.

POSITIVE LIGHT

"Seeing death as the end of life is like seeing the horizon as the end of the ocean." - **David Searls**

Put yourself in a state of mind where you say to yourself, "Here is an opportunity for me to celebrate like never before, my own power, my own ability to get myself to do whatever is necessary." - **Anthony Robbins**

"If you count all your assets, you always show a profit!" - **Robert Quillen**

Some of our favorite people were recipients of the first Annual Paranormal Awards at the ERPC. Amongst these, Troy Taylor's newly revised *Ghosthunter's Guidebook* was voted Paranormal Book of the Year, Mark Nesbitt's *Ghosts of Gettysburg Series* was voted Best True Hauntings Collection and Rick Fisher received the Special Achievement Award. Ed Okonowicz, with another superbly entertaining performance, was voted the Best Speaker Award.

**SPECIAL NOTICE:
NEXT MEETING
IS SEPT. 20TH
REGULAR SCHED. (2nd MONDAY)
RESUMES IN OCT (OCT. 11)**



Speakers & Award Recipients at the recent Eastern Regional Paranormal Conference were Mark Nesbitt, Rick Fisher, Ed Okonowicz, Vince Wilson, Kelly & John Weaver, Troy Taylor, Charlie Addams & Rosemary Ellen Guiley (missing from pic). We'll be returning next July and the location Vince has chosen for that event is hauntingly significant - more details coming soon!

GIFT OR CURSE? by Mazie Albright

After my Grandmother died, my Grandfather lived with us for thirteen years. In December of 1971, just a few days before Christmas, he was hospitalized with pneumonia. Knowing my Grandfather wouldn't be home for Christmas, we took his gifts to him on Christmas Eve. After giving him his gifts, I walked away and was staring out the window of Polyclinic Hospital. My father came over and asked me what was wrong. I told him this was the last time I was ever going to see my Grandfather. He told me to calm down; the doctors said "Pop" would be home in a few days. I told my father he just didn't understand – Pop was never going to leave the hospital. Sometime during the night, I awoke in my bed and it seemed like I was watching a big movie screen. I saw my Pop in his hospital bed. He opened his eyes, they fluttered back in his head and I knew my Pop died. I woke my parents and told them I just saw my Pop die. My father told me I was just having a bad dream and to go back to bed. At 8:00 Christmas morning, we got a phone call from the doctor telling us that my Pop died during the night. I'll never forget the look my father gave me.

My father had always had a habit of biting his fingernails. One evening while visiting my parents at their home, my father held out his hand to show me that he had stopped that habit. I took his hand and just felt this shock go through my arm and my only thought was that his fingers looked like a dead man's hand. I let his hand go. The next morning my mother called me to tell me my father collapsed upstairs and she was waiting for the paramedics to come. He died of heart failure before they arrived.

A few years later, I had a friend whose mother was dating a man from whom I always picked up bad vibrations. One night my heart just started racing and I was having trouble breathing. I knew it had something to do with this guy and that it was not good. I called my friend and told him he had to try to get his mother away from her boyfriend. I told him I had a really strong feeling that something bad was going to happen. My friend called me later and told me he spoke to his mother and she told him everything was fine. Four days later when neither my friend nor his family could make contact with his mother, they contacted the police. When the police entered her home, they discovered that her boyfriend had shot her in the head while she was sleeping and then shot and killed himself.

There are many more instances, but the last one I will write about involves my husband and father-in-law. One night I had another of those "movie screen visions". I saw my husband in a chair with his head buried in his hands crying. This caught me by surprise because I had never seen my husband cry. The next thing I saw was my father-in-law. He had always had very dark thick hair and a dark mustache and beard. In my "vision" he was lying in a casket. I knew which funeral home and room he was in, however, he was bald and his beard and mustache were white. This really upset me. I didn't know if I should tell my husband what I saw. My husband knew I was upset about something so I finally told him a few days later. He just blew it off as a bad dream. About three weeks later his father was admitted to the hospital with pneumonia. The doctors found a spot on his lung and tests showed that he had lung cancer, which, eventually, also traveled to his brain. My husband sat in our dining room chair and cried. My father-in-law lost his hair during radiation and the kemo turned his beard and mustache white. His service was at the same funeral home and in the same room I saw in my vision. I think my husband was a little afraid of me then. He couldn't understand how I could have known what I knew and I couldn't explain it to him.

Now he thinks I'm just weird and that's fine with me!

The visions and feelings still come – I just don't share them anymore with the people who are involved.

Musings of a Ghost Adventurer *A New Monthly Column By Melissa Griffith*

Since this is my first time writing a column for *Apparitions*, I will introduce myself and simply give some background information on how or why I am fascinated with ghosts. My name is Melissa Griffith and I have lived in Mechanicsburg for the past 10 years. I have been interested in the paranormal since birth. Ghosts have always fascinated and yet, terrified, me. I read every book I could find on the subject, watched every 'ghost' t.v. program known to mankind and visit as many haunted locations as time and money would allow.

My mother, Doris, and little sister, Amanda, also share a love of the paranormal, so I think I was lucky that my interest was never discouraged or ridiculed in anyway (aside from some occasional good-natured ribbing). Although I seem to be as sensitive to the paranormal as a brick, my mother seems to have at least some psychic abilities.

A dream she has had twice was that she was attending a funeral. She recognized everyone in the room, but no one would talk to her. It was as if they couldn't see her. She kept asking people who had died, but no one would answer her. She walked up to the open casket at the front of the room, but as she did the body inside it would become blurry and she couldn't identify the person. She had this dream just before her father died in 1976 and also before my father's death in 1979.

A few years ago, she told me she was laying in bed one night asleep (or at least she thought she was asleep) and her father (who, as I mentioned, died decades ago) came into the room and nonchalantly sat on the edge of the bed and began chatting with her. She was fairly certain it was just a dream, but it felt so real, like he was *really* there.

Her brother (my uncle) Joe had a similar experience not long after my grandfather died. He was working the late shift and would arrive home in the middle of the night. For some unexplained reason, he took some beer and went up to the attic (he has one of those attic crawl spaces where you have to pull the ladder down from the ceiling). He sat up there with his legs dangling down into the hall when my grandfather appeared sitting beside him, drinking beer and talking to him. I remember hearing him tell this story and he said to my mother, "Dorie, I swear it was real. He was there. I wasn't dreaming."

Strange how these two similar incidents happen more than 20 years apart.

More weird family connections? I remember as a child when shopping for sweaters or blouses for my grandmother, my mom would always tell me it had to be a v-neck, that Grandmom didn't like things close to her neck. At the time, I assumed this was just a personal preference. I, also, do not like things around my neck or my wrists. I never wear a watch (only loose bracelets) and will on occasion (if I have to dress up for a special event) wear a necklace, but only for a few hours until it bothers me so much I take it off. Sometimes in the winter I wear turtle-necks, but they also aggravate me in few short hours. I never put these two strange quirks together until one day when I was visiting my cousin, Leigh Ann.

Now, I must explain that Leigh Ann (along with her mother, my mom's sister) are really into witchcraft—not practicing it, but just reading and learning about it. Amanda (my sister) is also intrigued by witchcraft and, according to Leigh Ann, so is our mutual cousin, Nancy (who, unfortunately, I'm not close to as she is quite a bit older than I

and we did not 'grow up' together).

"Don't you think that's weird?" Leigh Ann asked me. "What's weird?" I wasn't quite 'getting' it. She said, "That all of us are interested in such strange, paranormal things? I mean one or two people in a family is probably normal, but this many?" I agreed that that was, indeed, unusual.

Then she sprung it on me, "Didn't Grandmom ever tell you why she couldn't stand things around her neck?" I admitted I had no idea. Then Leigh Ann told me that, apparently, Grandmom would sometimes have dreams of being accused of witchcraft and being sentenced to be hanged! Totally bizarre! We couldn't help but wonder if somehow, somewhere in our family's distant past if this occurrence didn't actually take place!

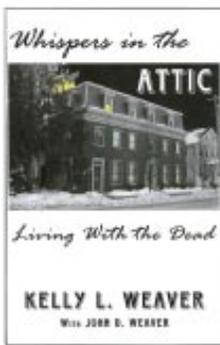
Another strange coincidence—my grandmother had passed away on Memorial Day weekend in 1997. She had suffered a massive stroke and we were summoned to Philadelphia to see her one final time as death was imminent. We arrived and although she was not conscious, we got to visit with her in her hospital room. In the wee hours that morning, we received the dreaded, but expected phone call. She was gone.

Amanda was away with her boyfriend for the weekend at a Nascar Race in Dover—her first 'overnight' date—but they managed to make it up for the funeral.

The reason I mentioned Amanda's 'overnight date' is this. One day I realized that Grandmom passed away on May 28, 1997 and Amanda's son, Damian, was born on February 26, 1998—almost EXACTLY nine months later. That means he was conceived the same weekend she passed. Is it possible Grandmom's soul was reincarnated into Damian? Amanda was a mere teenager at the time and this was a surprise pregnancy—or was it? Maybe it was already predetermined by fate or the mysterious 'powers that be.'

I suppose I have written more than enough background. Now that that is out of way, I hope to share some of my haunted adventures with you in future issues!

Whispers in the Attic - Living With The Dead Kelly's long-awaited first book is selling well! Copies are available at SSP meetings, Ghosts of Gettysburg Headquarters, Troy Taylor's History & Hauntings Book Company, The Inner Connection in New Cumberland and Borders in Camp Hill. Also available at Amazon.com Upcoming book signing events with Kelly include Aug. 13 (7-10pm) at Mark Nesbitt's *Ghosts of Gettysburg* store on Baltimore Street. "...This is a must-read book for anyone who has an interest in psychic phenomena, ghost hunting or with a desire to better understand the mysterious world that we live in." - Troy Taylor, Author/Founder, American Ghost Society



Spirit Society of PA.

APPARITIONS

Story & Photo Contributions are Solicited - send to:

John & Kelly Weaver, 43 Essex Rd, Camp Hill, PA 17011

E-mail: weaviate@aol.com

S.S.P. Website: www.spiritsocietyofpa.com



SSP Photo Quiz:
Which one of these is really Edgar Allen Poe's Grave ?



Technically, one could say "Both" -- Poe, who died in 1849, was originally buried in the rear of the Westminster Burial Grounds in an unmarked grave. When friends of the poet sought to have a monument prepared, it was destroyed when a train derailed into the adjacent monument shop. Funds were raised for a new monument, and Poe's body was relocated to the front of the church yard in 1874. (The "new" grave is shown on the left)

In 1913, a stone was created to mark the original burial spot in the rear. Some controversy exists regarding if it really was Poe's body that was relocated. Poe's grave is most famous for the ritual that has taken place there every Jan 19th since 1949: A mysterious dark clad figure with a white scarf leaves 3 red roses and a bottle of cognac in honor of the poet's birthday.

In what is undoubtedly one of the most spectacular ghost photos ever taken, an apparition bearing a strange resemblance to author Troy Taylor is seen lurking behind the marker for Poe's original grave on the right.

Seriously, Troy told me that when he first visited Poe's grave a few years ago, he saw a black cat (how Poetically appropriate) lurking in the old graveyard. Another person on the tour mentioned having seen this cat. Perhaps its just the birds and squirrels that attract him, then again... Here's a link to a site with some great pics of perhaps the same feline: www.geocities.com/~uncialle/poepage.html. Troy's own story on the Poe grave is found at: www.prairieghosts.com/eapoe.html

Kelly and I hope to join some BSPR members for an investigation of the catacombs beneath the church - where much activity has been reported - early this fall. - JDW

SSP SWEATSHIRTS ARE AVAILABLE !

For the cool weather ahead you need a cool sweat shirt and a cool dog to model it, thus Ted. E. Bear has posed with one of our new sweatshirts. Color is black with the SSP logo in white, sizes small to XXXL available. "Jerzees" brand, 50% cotton, 50% Nu-blend fleece. And they're only \$15!



Marianne Ross will be taking orders until Aug. 16. All shirts must be prepaid. Size samples & order forms available at tonites meeting. Please pay Marianne at the meeting or contact her at 741-4502. E-mail is: dennyross@verizon.net. Mailing Add: Marianne Ross 108 Lexington Road York, PA 17402

WHY SALEM? By Diane Nell

Have you ever wondered why the witch-hunts in Salem became so out of control? Why did Salem take these charges to such an extreme level? Accusations of witch craft had been made in other New England towns. These usually resulted in a lot of gossip and occasionally an arrest or even a conviction. However, only in Salem did hysteria reign.

For those of you are unfamiliar with the trials, I present here a brief background. In February 1692, two cousins, 9-year-old Betty Parris and 11-year-old Abigail Williams, who were living in the house of the Reverend Samuel Parris, started running around the house screaming and throwing themselves about until a local doctor suggested that the girls were bewitched (Now a days, we'd call that a temper tantrum and get the girls counseling). When questioned by the authorities, the girls named Tituba, the family slave, as the witch. Tituba was from the West Indies and admitted that she read palms, told fortunes, and dabbled in some voodoo, (Oh boy, would some of us ever be in trouble!!) but denied harming the girls. The two girls then named Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne. More of Salem's preteen and teenage girls began having fits (Yikes! Girls and their raging hormones can certainly be nasty!) and more of Salem's adults were accused of witchcraft. Even Sarah Good's 4-year-old daughter was accused and sent to prison with her mother where she remained in irons for 9 months! By the time summer rolled around the jail was filled with more than 100 accused witches (Those conditions must have been horrible!). By the end of the year, 19 people were hanged (more than in all the previous New England witch trials) and 1 was pressed to death under heavy stones (what a terrible way to go). Finally, influential ministers and magistrates, who had been so willing to see the devil's work in the behavior of the girls, realized that things had gotten out of hand (Of course, some of them and their wives were now being accused. What a difference it makes when it now comes into your own household!). The trials stopped. What caused the witch-hunt in this particular town as opposed to other New England towns though?

According to researchers Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, one of the reasons was that Salem was really two towns. Close to the coast was Salem Town, a commercial center where merchants and tradesmen lived. They were richer and more secular. A little further inland was Salem Village, a traditional and more impoverished agricultural area. Here the people were poorer and more devout. (Was this the earlier version of the being from the wrong versus the right side of the tracks?) Is it any surprise that the Villager's became resentful of the Town's people?

Added to this was a family feud between the Putnams and the Porters. (A family feud. Hummm, isn't that amazing? Not that family feuds have ever caused any problems.) Both families lived in the Village, but the Porters lived on the town side and the Putnams on the other side. In 1686, Thomas Putman, Sr. died and left most of his estate to his 2nd wife, Mary Veren Putnam, and his only son by that union, Joseph. This did not sit well with his older half brothers, especially the eldest, Thomas Putnam, Jr. (Gee, surprise, surprise!). Watching Joseph become one of the richest men in town and then marry Elizabeth Porter, from the only family in town richer than Josephs, deepened his bitterness. These two families were found on opposite sides of all the major issues taking place in Salem, of course. The Putman families belonged to Reverend Parris's church (remember him and his delightful daughter and niece?). The Porter families were leaders in trying to get Parris replaced. This is was where things stood when the witch trials began. The Putmans were prominent among the accusers (Thomas's 12-year-

old daughter was the most active of the "bewitched" young ladies) while the Porters' friends and families were prominent among the accused (jealousy can be deadly!).

After all this, Thomas Putnam, Jr. died a poor man (jealousy really doesn't get you anywhere) and his sons all moved away from Salem. Three of his 5 daughters remained spinsters (Maybe because they did not have a dowry? Whew. Aren't we glad, ladies, that this is no longer a factor in finding a husband?). On the other hand, Joseph Putnam stayed rich and his children prospered. All of them except Israel Putnam remained in Salem. Israel became a very successful soldier and fought at Bunker Hill where he uttered the famous words, "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes".

Another researcher, Bernard Rosenthal, is convinced that the trials were part of a scam by the county sheriff, George Corwin, who greatly profited from the illegal seizure of the properties of the wealthy defendants (now there's a job that comes with perks). Corwin's uncle and father-in-law were among the judges who sent the witches to jail or to be hanged (gotta love having family in places of power). Rosenthal also found that Cotton Mather, the influential minister, backed the court because, in his opinion, one of the defendants, Reverend George Burroughs, was a threat to the religious leadership. He had mixed feelings about the trials, but was willing to back them just to get rid of Burroughs (so much for Mather being a religious man).

The Salem witch-hunts originated from the underlying patterns of the Salem community and the immediate motives of its participants. Corwin may have been driven by greed (never a good reason for anything) Mather by theology (so much pain has been caused in the name of religion throughout history), Putnam by jealousy and resentment (also never a good thing), the girls by boredom or frustration (too much time on their hands can usually stir up mischief and worse by teenagers), but things were at the point in Salem that it didn't take much, namely Tituba and the girls, to set up an explosion. I hope that you now have a clearer understanding of the witch-hunts of Salem, MA. *Kelly and I visited Salem in the early 90s, prior to being active ghosthunters. The Old Burying Point is perhaps the creepiest cemetery I've seen (we spent a couple hours there at night) and along with the touristy stuff there are many historic sites to visit. Unfortunately, we have heard from a few folks who've visited recently that it has become much more commercialized, with numerous hokey ghost and witch tours. Despite this, I would still think its worth a visit and we do hope to return someday - JDW*



I was honored to participate in a panel discussion on ghost investigations during the ERPC, along with Mark Nesbitt, Rosemary Ellen Guiley and Vince Wilson. Troy Taylor would certainly have participated but had not yet arrived. We had a good laugh when in the midst of some comments I was making about digital cameras and how I didn't totally agree with them, he "magically" entered the room! (Troy has softened his anti-digital stance in his revised *Ghosthunters Guidebook*) One point we all agreed on was using a camcorder to document every phase of the investigation is simply invaluable. It's much easier to just verbally note an unusual event or instrument reading than trying to write it down; you can prepare a written report when reviewing the tape. If any anomalies or EVP segments are captured, its a great bonus!

Sissy Cat brings Solace to Gravely Ill By Bill Wundram

Animals have supernatural senses.

“We know it’s true,” says Pat Oostendorp, activity director at Ridgecrest Village, Davenport, who has tracked a dozen cases where a pet tiger cat named Sissy Cat has seemed to know when a patient is near death.

“Sissy has sensed death with that many patients that I know of. When a person is terminally ill — I’d say actively dying — that psychic cat will plant herself in the person’s room and stay until the patient’s death. That can be for days and days, but she will climb on their bed, or sit in the chair with them,” Pat says.

Becky Blumer, director of nursing, agrees: “It’s uncanny.”

Both say Sissy Cat — a Ridgecrest pet — has a sense that is supernatural.

The widow of a man who died a month ago has a story to tell about the phenomena of Sissy. The cat had been making the rounds of patients’ rooms when Leonard Sprosty was admitted to Ridgecrest.

“She knew from the minute that he came to the nursing wing that he was terminally ill,” says Mae Sprosty, Davenport, whose husband, Leonard, a retired meat cutter, died at the age of 85. “The cat stayed at the foot of his bed much of the day instead of wandering around the nursing center. When he was in pain, she would stroke his arm with a paw. We never had cats in our 62 years of marriage, but the two had instant bonding.”

After Leonard died, Sissy Cat climbed onto his empty bed, then jumped to the floor and walked around the bed two times. When Pat told her, “Leonard has gone,” she left the room.

Sissy Cat came to Ridgecrest two years ago, a gift, a grown cat. She immediately made herself at home in the nursing center, which has 100 beds and houses the most critically ill patients. “At once, she seemed to become psychic,” Pat says.

The staff tells stories that make Sissy sound like a clairvoyant cat. “I’d say that she has ESP,” says Becky, the director of nursing.

Pat and Becky tell of a very ill man admitted to the nursing center. The family had gathered around, and Sissy — as if told — wandered into the room and immediately climbed onto the patient’s bed. She did not leave until he died the next day.

While visiting Ridgecrest, I walked into the room of one patient who was stretched out in a recliner watching a ball game. He is ill, but struggling, and on his chair was Sissy Cat. She looked lovingly at him when he said: “That cat is half human.”

The activity director says, “It is as if God sent Sissy down to comfort those who are at the edge of death. One has to see it to believe it, the way she immediately attaches herself to those who are about to die. She’s like an angel. She senses what they are feeling. When she has been with a patient for hours, she may leave for a short time and hide, as if she needs a breather. It sounds odd, but I’ve seen Sissy Cat attach herself to too many terminally ill patients not to know that something is uncanny, extrasensory about her.”

The majority of the terminally ill are in Station 2 at Ridgecrest, where Sissy Cat headquarters, reigning over two younger cats, Milo and Caramel, who came to the facility as kittens.

“The three of them will wander into rooms and are greeted by 95 percent of the patients; the other 5 percent hate cats. The three of them will visit a little while, and then Sissy will meow, like a command, and all will walk out together,” Pat says.

The two younger cats are catching on to patient care; maybe they’re being taught by Sissy. They will jump up and ride on a flat cart when a patient is being wheeled somewhere in the facility. That eases the tension, and the patient smiles.

Pat is the one who named Sissy. “When she came here we were told that she was scared of mice, so they named her Sissy Mouse. I thought that wasn’t proper, and renamed her Sissy Cat.

During our visit with one gravely ill man, Sissy Cat appeared to excuse herself from his chair and wander down the hall and duck into another room. There, she jumped onto the lap of an aged, very ill patient.

Copyright © 2002 *The Quad-City Times*

More on the Baltimore Paranormal Conference & Tour

Vince Wilson, host of the Eastern Paranormal Conference, speaks at the spot in Fort McHenry where the only deaths occurred during the Sept. 1814 Battle that inspired Francis



Scott Key to pen the words to our National Anthem as he saw watched the “Star Spangled Banner” fluttering defiantly against the English bombardment of the fort.

A gun position here took a direct hit, with Levi Claggett being one of those who was killed. His spirit is said to be one of the most active here. Vince reported that EM meters frequently go “crazy” in this location, and while I cannot say my Trifield meter acted crazily, some very sporadic and thus suspicious spikes were noted at various locations around the perimeter.

Here’s an odd fact: Major George Armistead, who commanded the fort during the battle, sent his wife Louisa, into the country when a British attack seemed certain. She was 9 months pregnant and the Fort was no place for a civilian at such a time - much less one about to go into labor. Ironically, the town where she was sent to stay was Gettysburg, PA. Her nephew, Louis Armistead, was to die there in 1863, mortally wounded while leading his Virginia brigade against Federal forces commanded by his good friend Winfield Hancock.

Vince also related a disturbing story about the underground powder magazine shown below. An historian was doing some research in this section and when bending over, was hit in the back with what seemed



to be the butt end of a musket. Uninjured, he informed a ranger what had happened, only to be told that it was likely the ghost who haunts that area of the fort. - JDW