

Strange phenomena can make skeptics believe in ghosts

Strange

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Editor's Note: This is the second of a two-part feature on occurrences in this area that lend support to the belief that ghosts do, in fact, exist. Part one appeared in last Wednesday's edition of Today Newspapers.

BY JUDY PARISI

Dennis Seale, director of admissions, worked in Hobart Manor for several years, but due to the reorganization, is now located in a different building. He vividly depicted the environment of his former office, noting that while the hallway outside the room was carpeted, the entry room had wooden floors. Seated at his desk, Seale was alerted to visitors by the sound of their footsteps on the hard wood surface. But, prone to keeping late night hours, Seale reports that "many, many times I heard the sound of footsteps outside my office, went out, and found no one."

Seale asserts "that this was one of the things that happened constantly" and when it did the building was always locked.

"Those things don't bother me. Okay, so something is going on that I can't explain," Seale says, "But, I never said there was a ghost."

An incident which might compel Seale to reconsider these words occurred when he and several co-workers "vividly heard what sounded like a glass breaking." The noise that "at least five persons heard," according to Seale, was attributed to a nearby ladies room, furnished with a tile floor. One of the secretaries quickly proceeded to the spot, only to discover no indications of such a mishap. Twice more that day similar sounds were heard which also failed to be equipped with origins.

Kathy Hein, a secretary and wit-

ness to all three disturbances, says that the first time "it happened it sounded as if it was 10 feet away." She testified that while there is a bathroom on the second floor with a tile floor that would have been capable of producing the same noise, no one on that floor broke anything or even heard the crashes.

The secretary is unhappy that she has been relocated from the castle which she says is "interesting."

A couple of years ago the weird events in Hobart Manor were brought to the attention of Ed Warren, a demonologist, and his wife, Lorraine. The couple, who have spent the major portion of their 30 years of married life ghost-hunting, lectured at the college's Occult Week Program.

At Seale's invitation, the Warrens visited the building noted for unearthly shenanigans, in an attempt to unravel its enigma. In the admission director's office, the couple felt the presence of a supernatural being.

The basic vibrations led the occultists to the cellar. Mrs. Warren receded into a trance-like state in which she saw images of spirits and was able to apprehend key words and phrases. She perceived the image of a woman nursing a sick child, in what used to be the nursery. Since the room was part of the servant's quarters, the child was most likely not a member of the Hobart family.

Mrs. Warren felt a presence of a spirit in a room with double windows. The double windows are located across from Todt's earlier office, one of the hotbeds of preternatural goings on. "That is where the spirit supposedly lurks," says Todt.

Investigation into the building's history, however, has not disclosed any unusual deaths or incidents

which would satisfy the theories of clairvoyant minds. Ronald McArthur, assistant to the director of admissions and chairman of a special committee researching the history of the castle, says that the simultaneous deaths of Garret Jr. and Jenny Hobart in 1941 offer a "potential" hypothesis.

Asked if there really is a presence, McArthur says, "I'm enough of a doubter to say that I've never seen anything and until I see something concrete or at least something I can't explain, I'll have to reserve judgement on it."

Ringwood Manor State Park is located in the Ringwood Valley of the Ramapo Mountains. The estates passed through 200 years of private ownership before becoming a public outdoor recreation area.

On the property sits the Manor House and over a dozen abandoned iron mines which since Colonial days have yielded 2,500,000 tons of ore.

According to a booklet entitled "The Story of Ringwood Manor," ghosts and spirits are commonplace on the estate.

Serious accidents are bound to happen in mines, but, very frequently in Ringwood, mishaps were preceded by "strange knockings" according to legend. The pamphlet reads that at the onset of the noises "miners would quit work at once nor would they return until their fears were dispelled and they were reassured by officials that all was well." Self-induced unemployment due to fear, very often lasted several days.

Another feature of the park is "Spook Rock," so named because legend has it that every so often the spirit of an early settler "issues from

a crack in the rock and with moans and strange wailings terrifies the wayfarer."

The Manor is not without its ghost. A legend purports that the ghost never makes visual appearances but is only heard in four rooms of the Manor and only seldomly on "stormy" and "dismal" evenings. "He enters the house, slams the front door, waking everyone. He stalks across the hall, up the stairs to the second floor hall, across this hall and stops."

However, Elbertus Prol, curator of the park for the past 10 years, claims he hasn't "experienced any nocturnal manifestations." He asserts, "I, for one, think that all the noises in the house can be explained."

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