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FAMOUS GHOST LEGENDS AT
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

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When I began to research my topic on famous ghost legends at Western Kentucky University I was afraid I would not be able to find enough information. The opposite could not be more true, there are more ghost believers on this campus than I thought. I noticed that, believe the story or not, the teller of a ghost story enjoys telling the story as much as the audience enjoys hearing it.

I was not sure how I was going to approach my informants about the subject. Talk about ghosts on campus is not your basic small talk at a party. I remembered when I lived in Schneider Hall all those late night rap sessions when we did talk about strange happenings in the dorms. Many nights six or more of us girls slept in one room with all the lights on. The popular legend-cycle of ghost stories or scary stories easily fits into any dormitory situation across the United States. When the story is being told there is always someone who says "Yeah, that happened to my cousin's roommate at college," or "My Aunt Bessie's next door neighbor had that happen to her." We can always fit the story to some situation in our own life.

This story telling in the dorm is a good way for the girls to get acquainted. The way the dorms are arranged, narrow corridors and isolated rooms, it is difficult for people at one end of the hall to come in contact with those at the other end. Therefore, situations which attract groups from

all over the floor of one particular room helps the individuals feel as a group.

Girls, after getting over their first step of getting to know each other superficially, invariably end up late at night to talk. The conversation among the new groups of friends often lead to descriptions of what they have heard about college life, their past experiences and then the famous line, " Did you hear the story about.....," then someone proceeds to tell a scary story that someone told them or they make up along the way.

After awhile the story telling on a floor dies down because everyone has heard most of the stories. They then use the stories to scare the new people ^{whom} they invite into their sessions. The tellers make the ghost stories sound so believable, if they are not already true, that soon they are passed on as truth.

Tale swapping in all surroundings is an ever-changing process. There is a constant give and take by the teller of the story and the audience. These ghost stories bring people closer together as a single unit. They help ^{sp} alleviate fear of things by discussing it in the open eventually friendships are established because of these stories.

"The Roommate's Death" story can be found at every college. The version of the story changes to comes degree with each telling. The story can change to fit the atmosphere of the school or something at the school that can easily be related to the story.

Another famous story told is "The Legend of the Babysitter and the Killer Upstairs." The story tells of a young girl who comes to babysit two young children in their home. At 7:30 she took the children upstairs and put them to bed. She went back downstairs to watch t.v.. While watching T.V. the phone rang and there was this male voice on the other end saying "At 10:30 I'm going to kill the children and then I'm going to come after you." She thought it was a joke and didn't think much more about it. Again the phone rang and there was this male voice on the other end saying " At 10:30 I'm going to kill the children and then I'm coming after you."

At this point the girl began to get a little scared that the man might actually be coming to kill them all. She thought of going up and checking on the children but didn't want to disturb them. Again the phone rang and the voice said "It's getting closer to the time and I'm going to come after the children and I'm going to get you too."

The girl then decided to call the police. When they first heard the girls report they thought her friends were just playing a joke on her, They told her the next time a phone call from him came thru to keep him on the phone as long as she could and they would trace th phone call.

She sat down and tried to watch some more T.V. but by this time she could not concentrate on anything but the man on the other end of the phone. Finally, the phone did ring and the man said, "I'm coming in at 10:30 and I'm going to kill the children

then I'm coming after you." The girl was terrified when she hung up the phone but she had to wait for the police to call her. The police did call and the officer told her "to go outside immediately, don't go upstairs; don't do anything, just you leave the house. When you get out there, there will be a policeman outside and he will take care of it."

The girl was terrified and thought she should look in on the children but remembered what the officer had told her about getting out of the house right away. So she went outside the policeman told her that they traced the phone call and it was made on the extension from the upstairs phone. The whole time the man was talking to her from the second floor of the house and he had murdered both the children who were found mutilated in their beds. Had she waited any longer she would have gotten it to.

This story, along with "The Roommate's Death" story are the popular stories told in the dorms. The girls can easily identify with the babysitter or the roommate because at one time or another they have all babysitted and they were living in a dormitory.

I am sure I have not collected all the ghost legends ever told on Western's campus but here are the ones I found most interesting. I have tried to take the most consistent version told about each legend and some of the most bizarre ones. Many of these ghost stories might not be true but then again you never know.....

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THE AREA

I collected all my information from the campus of Western Kentucky University. From my friends, the library, and people I talked to on campus. I am sure I looked strange carrying a pad and pencil with me but once I got the ball rolling everyone was more than anxious to tell me their version of each story.

INFORMANTS

Name: Suzanne Barton
Address: 1311 7th Street, Corbin Kentucky
Age: 20
Birthplace: Lexington, Kentucky
Occupation: Student
School Status: Sophomore

Name: Larry Pund
Address: Santa Claus, Indiana
Age: 21
Birthplace: Santa Claus, Indiana
Occupation: Student
School Status: Junior

Name: Susan Budnik
Address: 12343 Saddle Ct., Louisville, Kentucky
Age: 22
Birthplace: Dayton, Ohio
Occupation: Student
School Status: Senior

Name: Scott Neff
Address: Route 2, Dale, Indiana
Age: 20
Birthplace: Dale, Indiana
Occupation: Student
School Status: Junior

Name: Lawrence Thomas
Address: 2128 Sherwood Ave., Louisville, Kentucky
Age: 20
Birthplace: Louisville, Kentucky
Occupation: Student
School Status: Junior

Name: Laura Ross
Address: 6219 Morrhaven drive, Louisville, Kentucky
Age: 20
Birthplace: Tampa, Florida
Occupation: Student
School Status: Junior

Name: Karen Strange
Address: 158 Cannonade Trail, Corbin, Kentucky
Age: 19
Birthplace: Nashville, Tenn.
Occupation: Student
School Status: Sophomore

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Name: Jennifer O'Connell
Address: Route 1, Newtown, Penn.
Age: 21
Birthplace: Newtown, Penn.
Occupation: Student
School Status: Senior

Name: Cherly Sheperson
Address: 567 Cornish St., Harrodsburg, Kentucky
Age: 23
Birthplace: Harrodsburg, Kentucky
Occupation: Student
School Status: Senior

Name: Michele Morris
Address: 3543 Strauss Ct., Memphis, Tenn.
Age: 20
Birthplace: Williamsburg, Penn.
Occupation: Student
School Status: Junior

THE WEST HALL GHOST

A young couple planned to be married the week after their finals. The young man lived in West Hall room 102. They went home the weekend before this to visit his parents. The night they were coming back to school was a rainy and foggy night. It is not known if the boy dozed off at the wheel or the rainy roads caused the car to hit a truck coming in the opposite lane. The truck driver was thrown from his truck but he was not hurt, He went to the aid of the couple and found the girl dead and the boy was on the verge of death. The last words the boy said was "I have to get back to room 102." Every week before the couple was suppose to be married they return to visit West Hall room 102.

THE BEMIS LAWRENCE GHOST

A bunch of boys are returning from a night of partying and are taking the elevator to there room. The elevator becomes stuck and because of previous instructions they knew they needed to have someone climb on top of the elevator and punch the reset botton. One of the boys climbed up to do this and when he did the elevator crushed him in between floors. The boys forgot to punch the stop botton before the boy climbed on top of the elevator. The blood of the boy dripped down into the elevator on all of his friends. Every year at the same time of the accident you can hear the ghost of the boy moaning between floors.

THE RHODES HARLIN GHOST

A young freshman girl finds college life of hard for her. Being away from her parents and friends at thome ¹⁸⁸² she decides to kill herself. Her roommate and some friends stop her the first nithe she attempted to jump from the 9th floor. The girl waits untill an when most of the people are out of the dorm. She jumps for the 9th floor and her body is splattered all over the ground in front of Rhodes Harlin. It is believed that she can be seen some nights standing in one of the windows on the 9th floor.

THE VAN METER GHOST

When Van Meter Hall was first being built and middle aged worker fell to his death while working in the balcony area. The ghost of this worker can be seen wandering around in Van Meter Hall at any time of the day or night.

Another version of this legend:

When Van Meter Hall was first opened to acting a young student took his life on the center of the stage. People that have preformed on Van Meter stage have said they can feel the presense of the ghost when acting on that spot, He has been seen hiding behind props waiting to return to the stage again.

This version of the Van Meter Ghost seems far from possible but it is a story a student told me:

One night Henry Hardin was out drinking and decided to go up to Van Meter Hall and sleep it off in the balcony. While up there, because of his drunkness, he fell from the balcony and there is were he died. Henry Hardin can be seen come nights, with hottle in hand, stumbling around Van Meter Hall.

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THE NORTH HALL GHOST

A few girls were staying in the dorm one weekend and they were bored. They decided to have a seigance in one of the girls room. One of the girls involved in the seigance had a boyfriend die recently in a fatal accident. She wanted to call him back from the dead because she loved him very much. When the seigance started a blue mist entered the room. As the girls called for her boyfriend to appear the mist became larger and larger. Finally the girl started to the mist and telling it that she would go with him because she still loved him very much. The blue mist surrounded the girl and her eyes grew wide and black. The mist left out the window and the girl's body laid limp on the floor. The other girls called for the dorm mother and she called the doctor. After examining the girl, the doctor remarked it was the youngest victim of a herart attack that he has ever seen.

THE SCHNEIDER HALL GHOST

A young girl who lived in Schneider Hall was engaged to a boy who was going off to the army. She wanted to get married before he left. He was feeling pressured so he broke the engagement. He told her if he changed his mind about the broken engagement he would call her the night before he left. She could not be in the room that night so she told her roommate to take any messages. The roommate went down the hall for a minute and the boyfriend called to tell his girlfriend that he loved her and the engagement was back on. This was the only chance he had to call her and he was going to write her when he got to his base. When the girl returned home and found no message she went to the balcony and jumped to her death. She is still known to be roaming the halls of Schneider looking for her message she never recieved.

THE SCHNEIDER HALL GHOST

This story took place on the second floor of Schneider Hall. Two girls who both lived in New York could not afford to go home for the Christmas holiday. They were not roommates but they decided to stay in the same room to keep each other company. They were told to keep their door locked and not to go out of the room for anything. The girls were up late talking and one of them got thirsty and decided to go down the hall for a coke. The other girl did not think it was a good idea but she realized that nobody else was in the dorm so nothing could happen. First five minutes and the ten minutes went by and the other girl was getting a little bit worried because there was no reason for her roommate to be gone so long. After forty-five minutes she heard a noise. It was a dragging noise and she could not figure out what it was and she was absolutely petrified. She didn't know what to do so she just waited for her roommate to come back to the room. And then she heard another noise. It was a scratching noise at the door. At first she thought she was hearing things but the scratching noise persisted for sometime and the girl finally called the police. When she heard the police at her door she opened the door and saw the body of her roommate lying there. Her fingers were bloody to the knuckles from scratching at the door for help.

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