



Fostoria
REVIEWTIMES.COM

Mar 30, 2009

Ghosts busted

By CHANDRA NIKLEWSKI

staff writer

A ghost hunting group investigated whether there were beings other than the rat and bat living in the Seneca County Courthouse Saturday.

The Buckeye State Paranormal and Haunting Investigators arrived in Tiffin to determine if there was any paranormal activity in the courthouse.

Other ghost-hunting groups were present, but BSPHI worked an agreement with Tiffin city officials to explore the aged structure.

There has been a significant amount of controversy surrounding the courthouse; controversy BSPHI founder Gene Lafferty knew all about.

"It's hard not to know about it because every place that we do, we pull up all the history that we can," Lafferty said.

That history explained the full battle over the fate of the courthouse, built in 1884. Seneca County Commissioners have been trying to demolish the structure, but have been met by roadblocks every step of the way.

Lafferty appeared to side with the preservationists regarding the courthouse as he pointed out the wood work and discussed the many options such as putting in small shops to keep the structure filled with people and a benefit to the downtown area.

Besides interesting architecture, the history of the building came out in other ways.

Explorations of the many rooms in the structure revealed books and diaries.

The books and diaries were accounts of activities and legal transactions from more than a century ago.

"This courthouse has such a history. People were married here, convicted here, a sheriff's office was here and in the 1800s sheriffs had the power to hang people," Lafferty explained.

There is no known record of anyone being hanged in Tiffin, however.

The group set up equipment in many of the rooms which included infrared cameras. Wires snaked through the hallways and the investigators hoped to catch voices of spirits on recorders and visuals of them on the cameras.

Lafferty explained hearing voices was sometimes due to spirits answering questions and investigators went room to room trying to provoke any possible ghosts into speaking, even using some insults in order to create anger in a spirit.

The investigators also asked for signs such as movement, doors closing or knocks. A few times, movement was detected, but it was not from a ghost.

Instead, a bat was found in Judge Michael Kelbley's courtroom which had everyone excited at first until its true nature was discovered. Within half an hour, a rat in the hallway outside of the courtroom also caused a brief moment of excitement.

Lafferty said the team spends a lot of time debunking phenomenon. Sounds on recorders may be that of people in the next room or the

next floor. Hot or cold spots could be due to old piping or window drafts, according to the investigators.

Lafferty said hundreds of ghost hunting groups contacted him about exploring the courthouse and a few of them arrived to conduct their own investigation.

Eric Glosser of the Central Ohio Ghost Squad was on hand to see if he could find anything. He said his 21 years as an officer has prepared him for any encounters he may have.

"I'm more afraid of people than ghosts," Glosser joked.

Glosser said he has had some interesting experiences, but none that were incredibly scary. "I haven't seen Satan yet or anything," Glosser said.

At least one frightening moment occurred in Kelbley's courtroom when the temperature seemed to drop and the monitor read an eerie 66.6 degrees. Satanic sightings aside, the coincidence was slightly unsettling.

Paul Shoemaker, member of the Seneca County Maintenance Department, said he never saw anything out of the ordinary during his weekly visits to the courthouse to make sure everything was in working order.

Shoemaker also insisted there were no bats or mice in the building before the investigation and was teased mercilessly for his mistake later in the investigation.

Shoemaker would also like to see the building saved and Lafferty said there have been votes asking the public if they want to pay for the building to be restored, but there has never been a vote asking if they want to keep the building.

By the end of the night, many odd occurrences had been debunked, but there were a few which might need to be investigated further.

Lafferty said he will post results from the investigation at www.bsphi.com in approximately two weeks.

[All contents © 1996 - 2009](#)
The Findlay Publishing Company
P.O. Box 609
Findlay, OH 45839-0609
Phone:  (419) 422-5151
www.findlaypublishing.com

Please read our privacy guidelines at <http://www.reviewtimes.com/templates/about/privacy.asp>