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Wide Unclasp'd 2





**S**o, Left Turn!

I had a plan for this issue, and it turned out that it wasn't going to happen.

BUT...

One of my favorite trips to the House, besides the one where I landed my wife's heart, was the day we recorded an episode of the NerdVana Podcast. It was a great time, that you'll read about the rest of the issue!

I'm happy to say that I've managed to get a couple of appearances on podcasts, most significantly the Known Unknowns podcast. If you haven't listened, you should!

I've got a tour of the House set up for next month, and I'll be doing another photo essay from my visit. I'm still bummed that the Historic Firearms exhibit is closed, and what I hope is that they turn that space into a more legit museum. It's a small space, but it's at least a place where they can highlight the Winchester materials. It was sad in recent years to go and look at the display cases off the gift shop where the tools and other Winchester manufactured goods were all sun-damaged. There is no shortage of these materials, so getting them in good condition isn't too hard. I don't know if they have a conservator... and if they do, I wanna interview them!!!

As far as ghost stuff. I've re-discovered The Shadowlands (<http://theshadowlands.net/places/california1.htm>) and have been looking up places. It was one of the key sites during the investigator boom of the early 2000s.

I was planning on making a visit the day the House closed as a part of the precautions California took to fight COVID-19. As a part of the lockdown, they've introduced a digital tour that costs 10 bucks, thereabouts. It's a good deal, I think, since you can do a lot of exploration at your leisure. It re-opened with a Garden tour in late May, though I'm hoping we're less than a year away from a full in-house tour again. I think they could probably make that possible with a self-guided tour using spot audio.

I'm also including a few stories from my friends on Facebook. I asked for stories, and I got 'em!

Also, if you like you can write in to us here at Wide Unclasp'd and tell us your ghost stories or other paranormal tales. There are a few here, largely because of a Facebook post I've made, and I'm going to be focusing on them for each issue! Wanna submit? DrinkTankEditorial@gmail.com and lemme know!

So many other things going on, which is amazing considering so much is locked down!





# The NerdVana Podcast

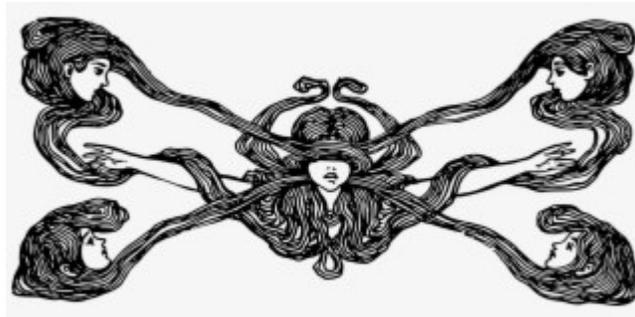
Recording at

The Winchester House

**T**he NerdVana Podcast – October 2013

Now, the way the House has approached its ghost story has been uneven. For a couple of decades, they would not at all talk about the ghosts, and then when they added Flashlight tours, they allowed their tour guides to talk about it then. As the 1990s gave way to the decade whose name shall not be spoken, the company saw the resurgence of the Ghost show, and moved further and further into the idea. There is a LOT more for fans of the ghost side these days, and the blog now features paranormal content. It's a cool time.

In 2013, the NerdVana Podcast recorded an episode from the very House itself! The episode was centered around the writer H.P. Lovecraft, and featured a number of exceptional guests, myself included. Even then. I'd spoken on the topic of the House a few times, though I'm not sure if any of the podcasts are still around. People who work at the House stopped by to chat, including Patti Nunes and Lindsey. These are the stories they told.



**P**atti Nunes

Now, Patti told a great story. It was the early morning and the first tour was going through the House. To get to her office, she had to wait until the tour had gone beyond the bedroom. Patti waited for the first tour to go by, and she followed about thirty seconds or so behind. As she went through, she noticed that the bed was messed up, as if someone had been in it. She flattened it out, annoyed because she had to fix it before the next tour, which wasn't too far behind. She fixed the bed, went to her office and did her day.

Now, the average tour is 26, which I think is the maximum for the regular tour pre-2017 (I believe it's 30 now) and Patti thought that if the guide had 26, one of them can easily sneak away and climb on the bed, then jog on to catch up. It wouldn't take but a few seconds for a guest to manage that mischief.

Later in the day, Patti saw the guide of that first morning tour.

"Looked like one of your first tour guests broke off, rolled around on the bed in Sarah's death room," Patti said.

"Um," the guide answered, somewhat confused, "there were two people on the tour, and I walked the entire thing backwards. No one got away."

This isn't the only story of the kind. The room where Sarah Winchester passed away has been the site of many sightings, though the bed in the room is not original to the House.

Lindsey from Marketing.

Lindsey started in the Giftshop, but she left the glamour for the Marketing team. Her first media crew, a Japanese show that imported an Irish psychic to visit the House. It was a pretty typical visit from a media team, and one of the guides took the camerapeople out into the house, leaving Lindsey and the Irish medium alone in the ballroom. They were sitting there, chatting about how she had come across the Gift, and then the lights started flickering, and a door slammed shut. The Medium then began looking beyond Lindsey, and started talking to someone.

“There’s a man in overalls behind you.” She said.

Lindsey turned around and saw nothing, but the medium described the man: overalls, a foreman. This is similar to the Wheelbarrow Man, but he wasn’t seen with the Wheelbarrow. The Medium said she had not done any research on the House, but it’s hard to not know these stories if you’re working in the space.

Her other story was set during the First Flashlight tour when she had an office that was in the House itself, instead of in the Gift Shop area, which had been built in the 1970s. When they do the Flashlight Tours, those that are working in their offices have to keep their lights off. You know, to establish the mood.

Now, in her office in that old part of the House (if it’s the office I think it is, it’s actually in an area that was likely a part of the original farmhouse). To get to it from the regular hallway used by guests on tours, you had to go down a hallway (and beyond the wall-like velvet rope!) and through a doorway, a small hallway, and then a door that led into the office. So, if this sounds like perhaps the scariest place to be in the entire world, you’re right!

So, Lindsey is alone, in her office in the House, with the only light being from her computer. She was working, and suddenly the door between her office and the hallway was swinging. Not only was it swinging, but it was also swinging at an irregular interval. She sat there, watching it swing for ten minutes. For ten minutes!!! Of course, she was made of sterner stuff, and after those minutes, she yelled “stop it!”

And it slammed shut.

And she finished up what she was doing and ran out of the room, and out of the House.

As Linda Wenzelburger said on the podcast – “why’d you wait ten minutes? One minute and I’d be out of there!”



# The Field with No Birds by John Vaughn

**S**

n April 1945 my father was Five years old and living on the family farm. One of the Neighbours was a man in his thirties when he developed what they called "Gallopings Tuberculosis" more likely these days to be Lung Cancer. He had a young family, the oldest was six and the youngest barely two. After several months of struggle, he took to his Death Bed, the neighbours came round to see if they could help ( even though TB was a fearful thing) along with the Young Farmers Best Friend , the Local Parish Priest came to give him the last rites. But instead of giving him the rites , he told his friends wife "he could arrange for everything to be all right!" But she had to lock the door and whatever he said or what she heard she was not to come in.

She went downstairs to sit with the Neighbours when all in the room heard a terrifying series of Wails, what sounded like a fight and Latin being screamed! this went on for twenty minutes when all fell silent and the priest roared "open the door!" It is said when the door was opened the priest had visibly aged ten years but the young farmer was sitting up in bed. The Doctor was called and to their amazement, the young farmer was healed, no sign of the disease

His wife went to the priest and asked how and it was a miracle but he stopped her and told her what she must do next. The Next day was May the 1st, Bealtaine the old Celtic new year when people carried out magic to bless their lands , their crops and the herd for the year. He told her to take a Bull up to the top field and tie it to the trees in the grove there before midnight and not to go back into the field before the dawn...( I hope this is intriguing you)

Then he told her do this every year on the eve of Bealtaine and her husband would live until their youngest child was 18. So she did as she was told tied the bull by the tree and did not go back. the next morning Neighbours noticed that the Bull who was no older than four was dead in the field as was every bird in the grove. which had fallen out of the branches dead including the chicks in their nests. My father remembered what happened next, they went to church the next week, only to find the Priest had been replaced and with the new priest came a letter from the Bishop that was read out to all in the Parish. The Village was not to talk of the events, the Priest had been sent abroad to a mission in the Far East (when you consider the War was still going on , fairly dangerous!) and would not be returning and the Bishop had a warning for all the parishoners, the Priest was a young foolish man who had been trying to do a good thing " but please remember , the road to hell is paved with good intentions!"

The Field became known as the field with no birds as no bird would ever nest in it for the next sixteen years. My father describes as kids ,boys daring each other to go into the field even for a few moments but each year the farmer and his wife on the eve of Bealtaine would leave a bull in the top corner of the field by the grove of trees and by dawn of the 1st of may like clockwork the Animal would be lying dead in the field. My Father was 21 when it ended. The Farmers daughter had celebrated her 18th birthday and the next morning her mother awoke to find her husband had died peacefully in his sleep beside her in the night and the Birds? the Birds came back and the trees were full of bird song again on the dawn of May The 1st!

