

Around Cheyenne Magazine article DRAPER HOUSE

By Jill Pope
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Generally when someone mentions that a location is haunted they tell of hearing strange noises, footsteps or banging sounds. Could this be something paranormal, or simply the Wyoming winds, maybe an overactive imagination? We've all spent those evenings alone where a creepy feeling overcomes us, the tiny hairs on the back of our neck stand on end, and our creative mind goes into overtime. Flashes from every horror flick we've ever seen run through our heads. Our sixth sense comes into play.

For generations tales of ghosts carry on, some of them quite elaborate. There are so many individuals from different walks of life with paranormal tales to tell. Is it possible that there are this many different sightings if there truly isn't something in another realm showing themselves? In my position as the Cheyenne Street Railway Trolley manager I have compiled several notebooks that are filled with unusual experiences that people have relayed to me. We offer ghost tours each October so I am always looking for new tales of the paranormal in our fair city. For the most part these individuals are convinced their experience were something supernatural, telling their tales with much conviction. With the numerous reports that I've collected it's hard to believe that they could all be false. Are we naive to believe that if we haven't seen or touched something, then it simply doesn't exist? A 2007 AP-IPOS POLL states that 34% of people say they believe in ghosts, 19% believe in spells or witchcraft and 48% believe in ESP. It says that 23% say they have seen or been in presence of ghost, and 30 Woke up from sleep with sensation of a presence in room. (polled 1,013 adults Oct 16-18, 2007 with a Margin of +/- 3.1%. The "don't know" responses were omitted).



Often time's recounts of the same occurrences are reported by separate individuals for the same location. These people stating that they were not aware of the previous person's encounters. When an event in history happens and is documented you would think that it would then be fact, set in black and white. However, in doing research on our local history I find so many factual conflicts from articles in books and newspapers. It becomes difficult to discern the truth on tangible events, so imagine the struggle of getting consistent solid evidence on things of a ghostly nature. In the generation of reality TV, ghost hunting has found its niche. These investigative teams all seem to have one thing in common, their goal is to explain these events with scientific principals wherever possible, to debunk what they can. New technological advances assist us in confirming what many already believe. There is more to our world than meets the eye. Many of the processes are just theories as the science is still being developed. Keeping up with the times Cheyenne has a team of paranormal investigators called W.P.I. The Wyoming Paranormal Investigators, (who branched off from C.P.I. the Colorado Paranormal Investigators). Armed with a plethora of electronic equipment the investigators enter the location in question. They take EMF/ Electro Magnetic Field readings to detect high levels of electromagnetic fields in the area. They high levels can be created naturally or they can be man made. It is theorized that spirits or ghosts are made up of energy. When a ghost is trying to manifest itself, the theory is that they cause fluctuations in the earths natural electromagnetic field, causing an EMF meter to register these fluctuations. When they get high readings they look for a reason such as a power source to explain it. Laser and digital thermometers are used throughout the premises to read ambient temperatures. It is thought that spirits or ghosts are made up of energy. When a spirit or ghost is trying to manifest itself, it will draw energy from its surroundings.

Researchers have found that quite often there is a noticeable localized temperature drop in an area where a spirit or ghost is trying to manifest. Ultra sensitive audio equipment is ran to pick up sounds that the ear alone cannot hear. This is known as electronic voice phenomenon. Infra red video cameras are set up and the lights are turned off. These display things that are not otherwise visible to the naked eye. The cameras are generally connected by fiber optic lines that go to a DVD recorder and are transmitted onto a monitor for review. After the investigation many hours are spent going through the audio and video recordings searching for hard evidence of paranormal activity. Many people have captured great paranormal images on film, and with the introduction of Digital Cameras it is now possible to quickly view the photographs without waiting to develop them. Ghosts or Spirits can manifest themselves in such a way that the human eye cannot see them.

Ghost enthusiasts often claim to have photos of orbs which show light specs on the picture. These are thought to be energy being transferred from a source such as a power line or batteries. The spirit draws energy from this source enabling it to manifest into the light form. According to the laws of Physics, energy being transferring like that would assume a natural shape of a sphere. This theory can also be tied into the EMF readings received during spirit activity. Most often these orbs can be explained as dust particles, water spots, dirt on a lens, or reflections from the camera flash. These investigations need to be approached with common sense & good judgment.

While each banging door or footstep heard could have a fascinating story behind it, it is the more bizarre happenings that really capture our attention. The mystery of it all is so intriguing. Sometimes while digging through historical files I come across some historical event that corresponds with a ghost story that I've previously been told. An ah-ha moment if you will.

In 2003 the stately Draper House was said to be beyond repair was torn down. It had been located at 2116 Carey Avenue. Harry's Pizza was built in front of it. In its day this 18 room elaborate home was full of activity. Built in the 1880's for the George Draper family, the house later served as the Governors Mansion for William Richards. It also housed an Episcopal Church parsonage. Mr. Draper was elected to the territorial legislature in 1877. He was the proprietor of Draper & Hammond Hardware store which enjoyed great success supplying the gold rush crowd in the 1870's. The Drapers held lavish parties for the top society members that were hard to surpass.

The Draper home was positioned beside a Federal Building. A couple of the Federal employees tell of separate sightings of a woman they each assumed to be the spirit of Mrs. Draper, seen before the building was razed. Comparing notes between the two employees it's astounding how similar their experiences were. They each reported that several times they had witnesses a woman in a calico dress sitting by the window on the 2nd floor. She was brushing her long flowing dark hair. One of these employees was allowed to tour the building before it was torn down. Upon entering the 2nd floor room where the apparition of the woman had been she noticed a deep impression in the chair by window, as though someone were seated in the chair. On the dreaded day that the wrecking crew arrived the employees stood helplessly by. Once again the woman was seen in the window. She extended her arm and gave a slight farewell wave to the employees.

Digging through our archives we pulled out a photo of the home. In the photo Mrs. Draper and 2 of her children were standing on the porch. The 2 witnesses were moved when they saw the familiar face of the woman they'd seen so many times sitting by the window.

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