

Ghosts of Upstate South Carolina

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The Lady in White

A Ghost Story Worth Sharing

Wes and Peggy Lawton didn't want to sell their house in northern Greenville County. They had put so much effort into restoring it. But the repair work was becoming so much of a hassle that in 1983 they decided to sell the stately manor that had been built by Wes's great-grandparents and which was known in the family for the distinctive boulders that sat out front. They left the new owners—distant cousins of Wes's—all the furniture and a bottle of champagne to celebrate the new home.

Peggy said it was so tough to sell that they refused to go back for almost seven years to even see the house. However, seven years is a long time, and curiosity started to get the better of them. They called the new owners and were invited to come by for dinner.

The Lawtons said sure, expecting a nice southern-style meal, with southern hospitality included. They expected a long night of telling old family stories. It was not to be, Peggy Lawton said.

"As soon as we got there they sat us down in the living room and started fussing at us," she recalled years later.

The new family wanted to know why the Lawtons hadn't told them about the "visitor in white." Peggy and Wes shook their heads. They had no idea what the family was talking about. The couple prompted Peggy and Wes, "You know, the woman in white who comes downs the steps." Peggy and Wes were still not sure until the woman said bluntly, "Why didn't you tell us about the ghost?"

A ghost? They had never seen a ghost in their fifteen years there, Peggy answered. Surely, they were joking. The couple shook their heads this time and began to tell a chilling story.

One day shortly after they moved into the house, the new couple's grandson came tearing into the kitchen saying he saw a woman in white coming down the stairs. The child was very distressed by what he thought was an intruder in the home. The family checked the room and the house, but found no one. They chalked it up to the child's imagination even though he was highly agitated by what he had seen. But not long afterward, the fiancée of one of their children reported seeing a woman in white descending the stairs. The description matched the child's almost exactly.

Wes and Peggy apologized, but said they had never had a problem of any kind with any spectral visitors. After the evening, they asked their own children if they had ever seen anything. The children, who by now were adults, said no, but they said they always felt the house was spooky to be in.

In looking at the house's history, Peggy decided only one person in the house's past matched the description. The home had been built in 1902 by Wes's great-grandfather, John F. Wyman, a doctor from Aiken, to use as a summer home. As part of the construction, John Wyman's wife, Rosemond Hack Wyman, hand carved the rods in the stairwell.

"Her handprints are practically all over the house," Peggy said.

And Rosemond Wyman was known to wear all white almost all the time. A woman in white on Rosemond Wyman's hand-carved staircase? Peggy doesn't think it is a coincidence. She surmised that when they sold the house out of the direct family, Rosemond Wyman wanted to see who the new people were. She must have been calmed when she learned the family was not a threat to the house she adored so much while alive.

"She never bothered anyone," Peggy Lawton said. "I think she was just curious and wanted people to know she was still around and cared."

Shadows and Voices

Strange Things in a Downtown Greenville Office

It was early winter and the sun was just setting. Bill Bishop and Joel Hogg's printing company, emedia group, had moved into new offices in downtown Greenville in the last few weeks, and the two co-owners were the only ones there after several long days of getting things organized. Bishop was sitting in his office and had an old turntable playing very quietly in the background as he looked over some files. Out of nowhere, he heard a scratchy voice whisper: "Bill, Bill."

"It was like somebody had shot something through me, I turned around so fast," Bishop recalled.

He looked toward the open door at the other end of his office. No one was there. He picked up the phone, thinking somebody—maybe Hogg—had figured out the new intercom system.

Nothing.

He looked at the stereo.

Still nothing.

Somebody had to be playing a trick on him, so he eased away from his desk and walked quietly to his door. He jumped through the doorway to surprise anyone hiding behind the corner, but instead found himself standing in the dark hallway alone. He looked up and down, but no one else was there. He crept along the wooden floors toward Hogg's office with the thought that his normally stoic business partner was playing a trick. Bishop peeked into the office to see Hogg busy at work

with his head down. Bishop watched for a good minute to see if Hogg was going to get back up and play another trick.

Hogg just kept his head down and continued working, so Bishop finally walked in. Hogg looked up, saw his distraught friend's face, and asked what was the matter. Bishop, who is normally very jovial, said very directly, "Please tell me you did that." Hogg stared back. His face showed no trace of knowing what Bishop was talking about.

"That was pretty strange," Bishop recalled.

It wouldn't be the last strange thing that happened.

Emedia's offices are located in a downtown building that once served as a funeral home before becoming a successful printing company for close to eighty years. When Hogg and Bishop bought the company in 2004, several of the old-timers working in the basement said there was a ghost in the building, but they didn't elaborate.

Two emedia employees soon told them another strange tale, not long after the night that Bishop had heard the voice in his office. The man and woman had been working in her office, and the woman was goofing around and singing the high part to the song "Loving You." The man asked her to stop, saying her voice was killing him. She complied and they both left the office for a few minutes. He came back first and heard the same song playing on his coworker's computer. He was annoyed, but not angry. He thought she was messing around with him by putting the CD in. She came back, and he asked her about the song. She said she hadn't done anything and tapped the little button to release the CD drawer.

She popped a shiny Rod Stewart CD out, and then showed her coworker that she hadn't been playing the song off the Internet either.

Bishop said other employees started to see a strange shadow, especially in the kitchen area. The shadow was hard to explain. It looked like it came from a person, but that was impossible because no one was walking by. Bishop described it as something you saw out of the corner of your eye. You knew

it was there, but you could never turn fast enough to get a good look at it. They also heard loud thumping noises that couldn't be explained.

Finally, Bishop was in his office with another employee when they heard a loud, garbled noise that sounded like a few seconds of music being played backward. Before either person could get up, they heard the noise again. Bishop and Hogg were stumped as to what might have been causing the noises until Bishop's young daughter found a framed picture in one of the closets. It was of the original owner of the printing company. The little girl guessed he was the ghost and that he was making the noises because he felt he was no longer needed or appreciated. So Bishop dusted off the picture and put the black-and-white photo on his desk with pictures of his family.

"It's kind odd, because there in the middle of all my kids is a picture of an old man."

But it ended the strange rumblings, so there it will stay.