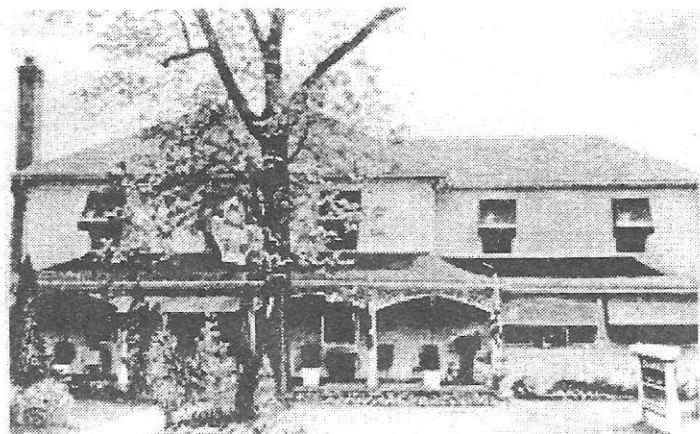


Things That Go Bump In A Canadian Night

by Ronald Wolf

A Tale Of Two Restaurants



The Estaminet, Highway No. 2, Burlington, Ontario

Haunted Stories, tales, or events; call them what you will but this particular story really started way back in the late 1800s. British Loyalists Emma and George Byren came to this new land called Canada.

They opened a restaurant in 1902 called Estaminet. Although the history of the restaurant is extremely rare and newspaper articles are few and far between we do know that according to Patrick Cross and Michelle Desrochers' website burlingtonghostwalks.ca In 1943 Emma celebrated her 70th birthday at the Estaminet. Emma ran the well known establishment until it was sold. It has since changed hands several times up until 1994 when it became known as Emma's Back Porch (EBP) Restaurant. This is the longest running restaurant in Ontario.

But not all tales or stories have good times and this one of forgotten lore is no exemption. It seems the Byren's had five children two of which passed into the great beyond at an earlier age. Robert died when he was six years old playing near the water as he slipped on rocks while Sahara died at the age of four of pneumonia. Perhaps it is these children which can be seen and heard to this very day at the restaurant.

Mike Crooks, manager of the EBP for the last eight years, retold a particular story which seems to back up the information that children do in fact haunt the restaurant. Could it be Robert?

Before Crooks arrival as manager, Fred (not real name) was hired as a dishwasher in 1994. Fred went downstairs to get ice cream from the old walk in freezer. He came up stairs and went home. He only worked for one hour. The reason for his early departure was a child was sitting downstairs. When Fred went to see if the child was OK, Fred's hand went right through the child, stated Crooks.

Crooks research into this particular story backed-up the story of a young employee that went home after one hour of employment.

If anyone knows anything about the restaurant it would be Pat Cross. He investigated the legend for well over a year and there's more information being found as time goes by. Although Cross could not be reached in time for this article, his partner in paranormal spoke on his behalf.

"Emma spent a lot of time greeting people on the stairs," stated Michelle Desrochers, one of the directors at Burlington Ghost Walks which is a division of Canada's Most Haunted

Research.

It was on the fourth step that Emma died. Some people would feel sick on the unlucky step and others feel a little push. One true and unfortunate episode happened on the very step. An elderly woman felt that she was pushed on the fourth step causing her to fall, causing internal bleeding from which she perished a week later, she noted.

Desrochers had her own episode of the paranormal while giving a tour there. She said she stopped in the washroom while the tour ventured on.

"I could hear footsteps coming but I couldn't hear anything after that. I could hear this door close. I raced out of the bathroom. I opened the door because they would have been in the main part of the foyer. There would be no way they would be gone that fast. There was nobody there at all."

When it comes to those that bump in the paranormal there are untold theories on spirits but one theory most people seem to agree on.

"Time is completely irrelevant. The cycle of the moon, the earth, all that, they're energy based not so much time based," she explained.

Some of the famous which visited the restaurant include: Ella Fitzgerald, Liberace, Former Prime Ministers John Diefenbaker, and Pierre Elliott Trudeau. There were rumors that Queen Elizabeth visited the restaurant in the 1940s before she become the queen.

Another incident includes that of an old industrial salad spinner. It takes two adult hands to spin the spinner. At times it can be seen spinning by itself.

Lastly, just few weeks ago, another incident happened in the basement of the restaurant aka the dungeon, while cleaning junk from the basement. At the end of the night one of the managers and bartenders heard some "freaky noises" glasses shaking, static sounds, pounding sounds on the walls and floors while the girls were finishing off their shifts. They would be the first to make light of what other might have seen or heard. They both were adamant about what they both heard enough to freak them out. They are still nervier about being downstairs, stated Crooks.

Burlington Ghost Walks start their tours at EBP. "It's a two-hour-tour just like Gillian's Island." At times the tours even go longer depends on what we find there, ended Desrochers.

<http://www.emmasbackporch.ca/burlington/index.html>
<http://www.burlingtonghostwalks.ca/emmas.htm>