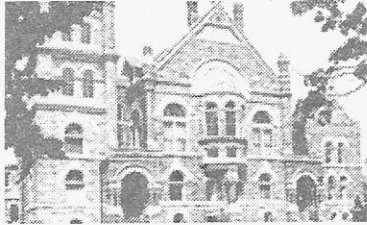


Things That Go Bump In A Canadian Night

Oxford County Court House, Oxford, ON



by Ronald Wolf

Research can be an extremely fickle task at best. Sometimes, research can fall into your hands while at times great research can be confusing leaving you with nothing in the long run.

But if you are lucky heroes can happen at the most crucial times when you are pulling your hair out.

Mary Gladwin and Ernie Hunt are the heroes of this article and without their great assistance this article would have surely found a home in the garage can.

The first Court House in the 'County', actually District of Brock, was built circa 1842. The building was located on what we call County Square, but a bit in front of the location of the current Court House", stated Gladwin, Archivist for the County of Oxford Archives

This building contained both administrative offices and gaol (jail) but was eventually deemed inadequate and a new gaol was constructed in the mid-1850s, with a new Court House being erected in the early 1890s, she continued.

A local ghost at the court house might be that of Thomas Cook. Cook was convicted of the murder of his wife Bridget Morin and was executed in 1862. We understand that his head was severed (when the rope tightened) and rolled down into the

audience, noted Gladwin.

"I understand that it was after this that people reported seeing Thomas searching for his head."

From what I have heard, the building that is haunted is the current court house, but the building was not there when these two men who are thought to haunt it, were hanged, she added. As with many old buildings, there are little nooks and crannies; there are creaky walls, especially when there is a strong wind (or perhaps there are bats in the attic); and lights often flicker.

A small elevator was built to provide accessibility and it has many quirks. Sometimes, it heads up to the top floor even if no one has programmed it for that; sometimes, it heads down to the ground floor all for no known reason.

Ernie Hunt was in charge of the court house renovations in 1981.

"We laid our supplies out for a Saturday morning early start for plumbing in one of the washrooms. Most of the parts were missing the next morning. We had no break-ins, we had cleaning staff until 1 a.m.," recalled Hunt.

Pictures were taken during the renovations and an important picture went missing. As well, an image of a face appeared in one of the pictures.

It made so many rounds that it never came back."

Even in the study of the paranormal, there are heroes in things that go bump in a Canadian night.

http://www.county.oxford.on.ca/archives/ch_new_history.cfm