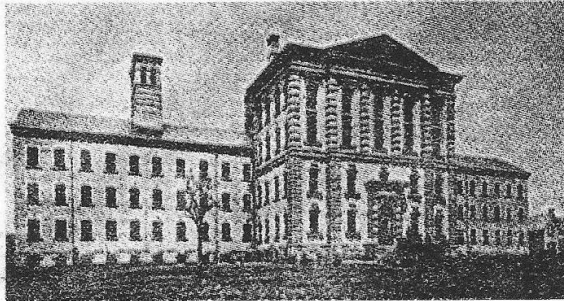


Things That Go Bump In A Canadian Night



The Old Don Jail, Toronto, Ontario

by *Ronald Wolf*

Many old buildings appear eerie or haunted but there's one in Ontario that has its share of sad times and of haunted stories.

It was this month, 146 years ago that Don Jail a.k.a "Palace for Prisoners" opened for business.

In 1864 prisoners worldwide had been confined in appalling and inhumane conditions, such as three or four inmates to a cell with a bucket for a toilet that was emptied once a day.

Even though the conditions at the jail were better than before, they still were horrendous by today's standards. The jail saw 34 executions and even women and children that were locked away with the man of the family, a suicide, and a least one famous haunting.

The famous haunting is that of a young woman with blonde hair. It was there, in one of the tiny cells reserved for women in the west wing, that a prisoner hanged herself in the 1890s.

She's about 5' 6", wears a white gown and appears very agitated as she floats up around the second level of the rotunda, said field investigator Scott Smith of Toronto Ghosts and Hauntings Research Society with more than 25 years of experience.

It was reported that jail guards on the graveyard shift saw her spirit floating through the air in the main rotunda.

The power of suggestion is huge when it comes to the paranormal. A few years back in Toronto a group of people invented the Phillip Experiment.

"They created their own ghost. They made up a history for this gentleman, a name Phillip, a location, a lot of information creating this person. They had a seance and this person came by and talked to them!"

From all the people in the group they had created an entity. It was a hugely wonderful experience "One important thing to remember when investigating is if the ghost experience is real. If someone said they had seen a ghost they believe it. I take every bit of information they give me but it's not a case of whether I

can prove a ghost exists or that they saw what they believe they saw. It's a case of what caused them to see it. That's what I'm interested in."

Other events include a punching bag being punched from ghostly hands. One person, according to the website www.torontoghosts.org, was taking a tour of the jail, had strange experiences.

"While standing in one particular area outside a row of cells in the east wing, the air began to feel heavy and I experienced a chill, a tingling sensation on my skin and an overwhelming sense of sadness."

Recently 15 men who went to the gallows between 1880 and 1932 were uncovered on a TV show "The Hangman's Graveyard."

The Don Jail closed its cell doors for good in 1977.

No matter if the living has been good or bad or how long ago their voyage was on earth, some spirits never leave. Their lives become a huge part in things that go bump in a Canadian night.

"The rotunda was used in the movie Cocktail as the movie's main bar.

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