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GHOST BUSTING WARD HOUSE

by

Dale Butterworth and Rard Dutz

"So she's upstairs playing the piano, and he's downstairs working on something or other."

"Uh huh."

"Anyway, she comes down and asks him if the music is too loud and he says no, the music is fine but it is sort of bothersome whenever she moves the piano from one end of the room to another. He said that that makes a lot of noise. I don't know ... it's wierd."

"What's wierd?"

"She said that she wasn't moving any piano around."

"So what's your point?"

"They were all alone in the house. If she wasn't moving a piano around, who was?"

The above is an excerpt from one of several interviews, conducted by these reporters, in their efforts to either validate or disprove the "haunting" of Ward mansion. We feel it important to state initially that no definite conclusions were drawn. Some people are convinced that they've seen and heard things — wierd things — take place there. Others liken a belief in ghosts to a belief in the Tooth Fairy or the Easter Bunny. It doesn't really matter which of these arguments one subscribes to. The stories Ward house has spawned are interesting enough in themselves.

A little backround: In 1865 General William Green Ward, his wife, and his two daughters, Caroline and Maria, moved into the newly constructed Ward mansion. (For the uninformed, the house overlooks the football field).

The Ward family enjoyed an affluent lifestyle. The house was equipped with an art studio, tennis courts and stables, as well as a large glass guest house.

According to Debbie

Wedinger, a senior at Wagner who wrote a comprehensive paper for sociology on "The Rumors of Ward House" last year, the architecture of the house itself is, in some ways and according to some people, connected with occult phenomena. According to Miss Wedinger's paper, "Parapsychologists feel the house has ... a negative energy present," because the house itself is constructed of inverted pyramids. (It should be stated that Miss Wedinger herself remains cynical about much of the macabre phenomena that is purported to have taken place in the mansion).

In 1941, Marie Ward, having (along with her sister) squandered away most of her family's fortune, died mysteriously due to injuries sustained after she fell down the house's main staircase. She was 78. Even today there is some dissention as to whether her fall was an accident, or whether sister Carolyn helped her along with a good, firm push.

Carolyn, also in her late 70's, died some three months later. Both she and her sister were spinsters.

The mansion, since the death of the Wards, has since been purchased by Wagner College and used primarily by the music department. In the late fifties, however, strange stories began floating around the campus: Wierd stuff is going down at Ward house.

People claim to hear bodies falling down steps.

People hear music emanating from empty rooms.

An old woman is seen standing on the front porch.

An odd "presence" is felt in practice room # 8 (Caroline's old bedroom).

On more than one occasion a small boy's screams are heard. (This is odd because,



officially, the only children known to have inhabited the mansion are Caroline and Marie. However, there is some evidence to suggest that our "ibidinous General may have had two illegitimate sons, one of whom is said to have grown up in Jersey. The other is said to have died in the mansion. Cause of death: Unknown.

One girl swears that she felt herself being pushed down the house's main staircase as he was descending. She attests to have been alone although for an instant she

claims to have glimpsed the image of an old woman, sprawled on her back at the foot of the landing.

The incidents do not restrict themselves to students. Dr. Cross, the head of the music department, is said to have inadvertently taped the sounds of a body tumbling down the stairs while he was recording an "ear training exercise." The tape itself is said to be in the Horrmann library, one of sixteen such tapes, if anyone wants to take the time to listen.

It was concluded that a story of this kind necessitated a visit to the house. These reporters undertook such a visit a week prior to publication. We spent well

over four hours in the house alone (the mansion has been boarded up since last year due to "heating problems"). Nothing conclusive was seen or heard.

This is not to suggest that people who claim to have witnessed bizarre incidents are fraudelant in their assertions. We are convinced that many of them honestly believe they are telling the truth.

Some people, it has been learned, have, in years past, become obsessed with confirming whether or not the

house is haunted. One fruitcake even went so far as to start a small fire in one of the rooms "to see if a ghost would come and extinguish it."

Now, what can you say about someone like that? You can only pray that the man with the butterfly net catches up with him damn fast before he does permanant damage.