Tioga County is also home to ghosts
...and those seeking answers

Local folklore depicts supernatural experiences for residents

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Tioga County may be known as the home to the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon, but what outsiders to the area may not know is that Tioga County is also home to many dark things. Just as any other corner of the world, Tioga County is reported to host more than just human life, but afterlife as well for those who believe. There are many folklore stories attached to this area, and the people living in it. Here are some of those stories.

Allan O’Hanlon, from Mansfield, of Soul Seekers Supernatural, a local paranormal investigation team, has travelled throughout the county and the United States, to multiple haunted sites to record messages from the world beyond. As he sat down with me, we talked about two hours concerning his experiences at different places in Tioga County that he thinks is haunted.

North Hall

MANSFIELD BOROUGH — North Hall at Mansfield University is said to be haunted by a former student, Sara. The legend is that in 1950, she jumped off a seventh floor balcony after having a horrible argument with her boyfriend. Some argue she just fell.

"Her boyfriend at the time broke it off with her, so she went into the library, which at the time, was the normals. She went up to the piano room which is now closed off, and played the piano and sang one last song," said O’Hanlon. "She then walked up the seventh floor and walked out onto the ledge at the rear of the building and jumped off."

The area is now blocked off, but you can still see the seventh floor through the glass at the top of the atrium.

"She landed on the rear walkway behind the library, which is still there. She told me exactly what happened that day when we went to speak with her," said O’Hanlon.

During this investigation, Allan O’Hanlon and his partner, Chris Kenyon, search the "Ring of Trees" in Roseville Cemetery.}

Sara has been the most intelligent spirit with whom Soul Seekers has interacted. O’Hanlon tries to visit Mansfield University once a month to visit Sara and speak with her. He claims he has a good relationship with the ghost in which she recognizes him and likes to make jokes.

Sara is a well-known legend in Tioga County. She even has her own page on the Mansfield University archives, called "Sara’s page." She is the subject of many essays, videos, photos, and more. To visit her page and dig further, go to https://lib.mansfield.edu/digitalarchives/sarah.

"The story was she always jumped from the atrium, but she said no when I asked her, and it took a couple years of work with her for her to give us the whole story," said O’Hanlon. "There were night cleaning crew people that worked there overnight, but quit because they would hear her singing or playing the piano, which she still does. I’ve heard it as many people have."

Hessel Gessel

GAINES TOWNSHIP — Hessel Gessel is named after a German immigrant who mined the area. Though most believe he is the one who haunts the location, O’Hanlon believes the ground is mostly haunted by Native Americans, since it was their territory.

“Native Americans can actually be one of the worst hauntings you investigate,” said O’Hanlon, who says that the reason is they are so in-tune with nature and spirits. Hessel Gessel is nestled on a hilltop around the Asaph area, but is quite the drive into state forest land and narrow roads. Don’t go up there in the winter, I tried, and got stuck.

Fall Brook

SULLIVAN TOWNSHIP — Fall Brook is not an easy cemetery to reach. It is secluded in the middle of nowhere in Sullivan Township, miles away from Bloomsburg and Morris Run.

The legend behind Fall Brook is that there is a banshee, or a screaming ghost. It is also said by people who have visited Fall Brook at night that, if they drive their car up into the cemetery, which isn’t recommended, the car battery will die.

O’Hanlon says he has been to Fall Brook several times and has witnessed the banshee himself, with some of his experiences being chilling. He doesn’t advise driving there, as cars are known to die during a visit in the middle of the night.

The old coal miner town’s cemetery is haunted by what O’Hanlon thinks is a banshee, along with some ghosts who were laid to rest in the cemetery. One in particular he believes lives there is that of a little girl.

Lewis Cemetery

BLACKWELL — Blackwell is a small town at the south eastern corner of Tioga County. O’Hanlon has been at this location too, where he says its quiet but evil spirits live there.

"So there are different kind of (spirit) orbs, and you can tell the difference by the color," O’Hanlon said. "There are the white ones, which are the orbs people see most in photographs."

"In Blackwell’s cemetery, we saw brown and red orbs," said O’Hanlon. "Though we couldn’t get a spirit to answer us, we knew they were there and they did not want us there. We weren’t welcome."

Roseville Cemetery

ROSEVILLE BOROUGH — Roseville Cemetery is said to be haunted by the ghost of Clarine Watson, a See GHOSTS on page 25