

# KALEIDOSCOPE KAL'S

**T**IS FALL! Cool nights and crisp days! Monarch butterflies and jumping mullet! Chinese tallow trees fashionably attired in crimson leaves! roasting hotdogs on the fire! But fall is a prelude to something else – Halloween! Halloween with its ghosties and ghoulies, and things that go bump in the night.

Why do we, as humans, fear the unknown? Why do we gravitate to it – that shadowy darkness at the top of the stairs, or that whispered voice in the billowing Gulf mist? And why do all things haunted fascinate? Perhaps someone far wiser than myself can explain the psychology of fear, but for me, the explanation does not matter. I'm one of those people who crave a *good* scare. And cool fall nights are a *good* time to experience a *good* scare.

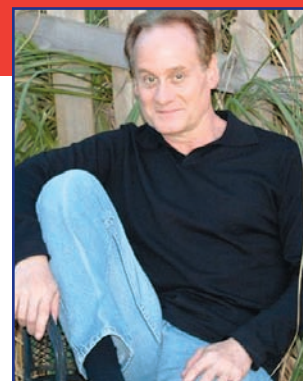


When the nights are cool and the north wind squeals around the corners of my house, I love to dim the lights, pop in a CD, wrap up in an old quilt, and wait – wait for the flickering, black-and-white figures from some ghost tale to crackle out of the T.V. One of my favorite movies involving ghosts is *The Uninvited*, starring Ray Milland and Ruth Hussey. Produced in 1944, *The Uninvited* is a stylish little flick wrapped around an old – seemingly deserted – mansion perched high atop a cliff overlooking the Cornish coast. The

house and its *uninvited* inhabitants are tethered to each other by the mysterious death of a beautiful lady. Eerie moans, frightful shadows, and a misty-white apparition all add to the suspense. Check it out – if you dare!

But you don't have to rush off to the Cornish coast to get the wits scared out of you. Nope, not at all! The good ol' Mississippi Gulf Coast can be just as scary as merry ol' England, and boasts a witch's brew of haunted sights all its own. From Pascagoula to Bay St. Louis, there are houses, public buildings, graveyards, rivers, and restaurants that hold dark secrets, sudden scares, and omnipresent feelings of cold and damp. Take good ol' Biloxi for instance.

The Marine Resource Center (OF ALL PLACES!!) has a resident lady spirit that wanders aimlessly through out the building, but calls the building's 3rd floor home. Who this restless spirit is, or why she haunts the 3rd floor, is the subject of many a conversation around the old water cooler. One thing is known for sure: the ghost has, on occasion, made herself known, which sent two employees home in hysterics! After that, no one is allowed to work alone at night on the 3rd floor, for fear Miss-Whoever-She-Is might decide to take a little stroll down the hall. Now, who says studying goeey oysters, smelly shrimp, and scaly fish is just a boring old job? I'll bet those hysterical employees don't think so!



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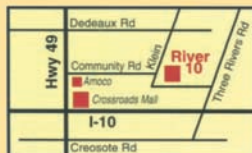
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Did you know Keesler Air Force Base (OF ALL PLACES....AGAIN!) is haunted? Rumor has it that no less than THREE roving spirits haunt the digs of the 338th Training Squadron! One — an uncomfortable presence — just sits and stares at you before vanishing. Another spirit enjoys playing little pranks on unsuspecting new recruits, like turning on their radios in the middle of the night, or opening windows in the dead of winter, or dropping little personal items belonging to the new recruit into his LOCKED wall locker! Then there's the ill-fated soldier who went through basic training at Keesler in the late 1960's, only to die of shrapnel wounds not long after his arrival in Vietnam. It appears the poor lad can't let go of his brief but happy training days at Keesler, nor his worry over Vietnam. It is said on cold, moonless nights that his low voice can be heard coming from dark corners and down long deserted hallways whispering, "I'm goin' to Nam tomorrow! I'm goin' to Nam tomorrow!" If I were currently attending basic training at Keesler, and I heard a voice whispering in the night, I wouldn't be worried about "goin' to Nam TOMORROW" — I'd be worried about "leavin' Keesler TODAY!"

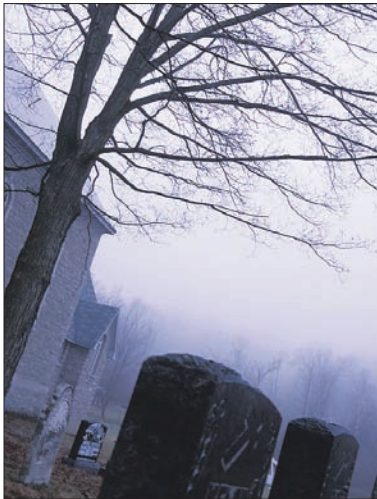
During my impetuous youth, no cold, dark, Saturday night would have been complete without at least one jaunt to Ocean Springs. Why Ocean Springs? Because that is where the Rock-n-Roll graveyard is located. Resting deep in the woods, the graveyard is infested with eerie-looking, moss-draped oaks, and littered with twisted, broken gravestones, and sun-bleached, marble statues of angels with broken wings. In those days, the graveyard was

entered by a gate — a simple gate that was always open, as if someone or something was awaiting your entrance. Legend has it, that late at night when the moon is high and the misty mist from the bayou seeps into every visible crack and crevice, the figure of a diaphanous lady sitting in diaphanous rocking chair can be seen beside an old gravestone. She's just sitting and rocking. Sitting, and rocking, and waiting. Sitting, and rocking, and waiting for who or what was always my question? Once spotted, the ghostly apparition stands and starts walking closer and closer to anyone fool enough to wait around. And then IT happens! As the unsuspecting graveyard visitor attempts to leave the graveyard, the gate slams shut, barring his or her escape!

Did I ever see the diaphanous lady? Are you kidding!! The first sign of strange things afoot, and I was the first in line to leave! Ain't no gate to tall in those days that I couldn't jump! And jump I would, running for the safety of the car, along with my ghost hunting chums. Oh! By the way! Nowadays you can't go to the Rock-in-Roll graveyard after dark. There's a high fence and an even higher gate. And the gate's now chained and locked come night. Wonder why? Are the city fathers of Ocean Springs attempting to keep silly teenagers out, or are they

trying to keep someone or something in?

Ocean Springs may boast of a haunted graveyard, but Pascagoula can boast of an entire haunted river. Long ago, warring Indian tribes lived along the banks of the Pascagoula River. One tribe, stronger and fiercer than the other tribe, let it be known that they were in the mood for a



“...the figure of a diaphanous lady sitting in a diaphanous rocking chair can be seen beside an old gravestone.”

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rumble, as it were. The other tribe, meeker and less warring, knew their days were numbered. To save themselves from defeat and disgrace, that tribe – every man, woman, and child – decided to walk into the river, singing and chanting, as they bravely approached their watery grave. On clear, cold nights – so runs the tale – it is said one can hear singing coming from the placid waters. And that is why the locals to this good day call the Pascagoula River the Singing River. Can't say I've heard singing coming from the river, but I did hear my heart pounding really, really loud one time, while sitting on the riverbank with friends.

I may not have ever heard singing coming from the Singing River, but I can say that I have seen mysterious lights flashing in the old Gregory House, once located in Gulfport in the Bayou View subdivision. The house – also known as the old Cahill Mansion – is now gone. It was torn down in the early 1980's, and the land on which it once sat is now a lovely little setting for some lovely new homes. According to the web sight, Haunted Houses.com, the Gregory House was a "dilapidated, large, barn-like, dormitory-style structure three stories high." And that it was!

Back in the early 1970's, I had a dear friend who lived across the street from the Gregory House. Many a chilly, late, Fall night, she and I would sit in her front yard under a huge oak and watch; watch what appeared to be flashes of light coming from the windows of the uninhabited 3rd floor. My friend often regaled me with stories concerning visits she had made to the house to hang out with the Gregory's teenage children. To this good day, the stories they told her, and she in turn told me, make the hair on the back of my neck stand on end.



The Blue Rose Restaurant of Pass Christian

photo: bluerose.passchristian.net

There were tales of fluorescent "somethings" walking around the teenager's beds, staring at them in the dead of night. Indescribable, bubbly moans sometimes filled empty rooms. The sharp, scratching sound of long finger nails could be heard scraping against the back of one particular headboard, which was firmly planted against a solid wall. But my personal favorite story is a tale that swirls around the appearance of a 14-year-old boy. This lad was found eavesdropping on a conversation of Mrs. Gregory's. She was talking on a phone in the upstairs hallway, and the boy was listening in on a phone in the downstairs hallway. When confronted by Mrs. Gregory's teenage children, questioned as to who he was, and chastised for being so ill mannered, the surly boy gave the teenagers a terse look, promptly put down the receiver, and VANISHED!

It was usually about that time that I too VANISHED, having heard all the stories about the haunted Gregory House that I could stomach. Bidding my friend goodnight, I rushed home in fright, ensconced in the cozy, leather, interior of my parents spanking new, 1970 Plymouth Fury III. Ah! Those were the days!

The Mississippi Gulf Coast is flush with other ghost tales and things that go bump in the night. Bay St. Louis has a "haunted" bridge, complete with a misty visage that rises from the swampy mist, and then floats along the river's edge looking for her long, lost child – lost when it was hit by a car and thrown into the swamp way back in the 1930's. And can we forget Pass Christian and its now closed, once elegant, Blue Rose Restaurant? That wonderful restaurant, encased in a turn-of-the-century house, was not without its own misty lady. But this lady had a thing for mirrors – not looking INTO them, but looking OUT from

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them. Many a late night as the last diner was leaving, a beautiful lady would appear in a vast pier mirror that once graced the restaurant's entrance hall. Thinking it was the reflection of one of the restaurant's diners, many a guest would whirl around to speak, only to find no beautiful lady in sight. When the guest would look back at the mirror, the lady in the mirror would suddenly vanish, leaving the faint scent of rose water as her only remembrance.

Do ghosts and spirits really haunt the Mississippi Gulf Coast? Is there really an old lady sitting in a rocking chair in a graveyard in Ocean Springs? Do the waters of a river in Pascagoula really sing? Can you really see the faint outline of a lady floating just above the swampy waters of a bayou in Bay St. Louis? Are these true stories, or just urban legends? Well my friends, that's for you to discover for yourself, just as I did many, many years ago. And while you're out doing a little discovering on your own, remind me to tell you the story of my own misty lady, Miss Cordelia, who occasionally makes herself known in my own house. But that, my friends, is another story for another day!

# BEWARE

of ghosts  
goblins  
ghouls  
& things  
that go  
bump  
in the  
night



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our troops in your prayers.*

*May God bless, and keep  
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**Anthony Wayne Kalberg**

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