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The Spy House Museum



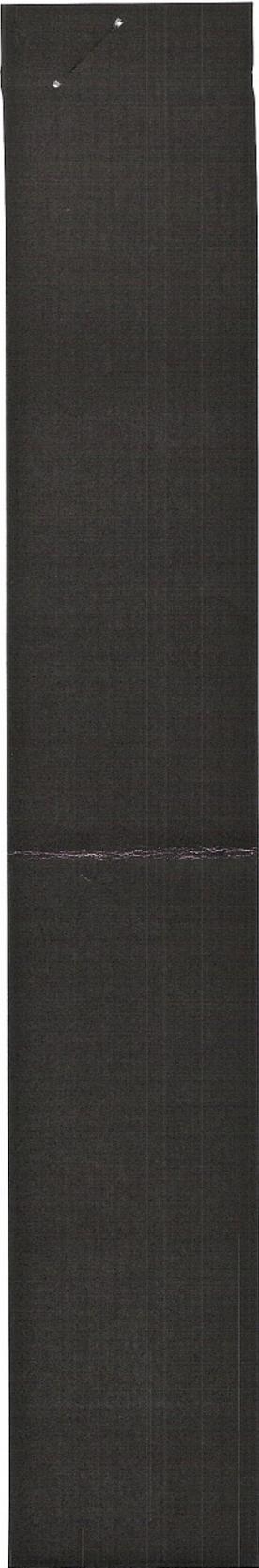
Spy House Museum, Port Monmouth, NJ

The most haunted house along the Jersey shore is the Spy House Museum, built around 1663 by Thomas Whitlock in Port Monmouth, New Jersey. The house is considered to be the first house built on the Jersey shoreline. The house is probably haunted because of its physical age as well as its colorful and violent history. The haunted structure is a three story wooden house that has been steadily renovated throughout the centuries.

The Spy House's colorful past spans three centuries and has been a private home, an inn, a Revolutionary War gathering place for both the British military and the colonists, a pirate's hangout, an occasional bordello and also a museum. During the American Revolution the private home was converted into an inn by the widow Seabrook to protect it from being burned or destroyed by the British. The house's nickname was appropriately earned during the Revolutionary War. The Colonial spies watched the British leave their ships to come to the inn for supper and then they would attack the undermanned ships anchored in the harbor.

The Spy House was on the brink of being torn down, when a retired concert singer, Gertrude Neidlinger and her brother saved it. With her exuberance and pride in the history of the Shoal Harbor area Gertrude created a hands-on museum in the late 1960's. For years, school children and groups of people enjoyed the museum along with the various outdoor activities that were offered there.

In October 1990, Jane Doherty started ghost tours at the museum to educate people about the other side and to help generate revenue for the Spy House. The ghost tour's became so



popular that more tours were added each year to accommodate the crowds, but tours were still sold out. On the brink of national fame the Spy House was featured in two nationally distributed books, the television show *Sightings*, and had just been named in U.S. News & World Reports as one of the three most haunted houses in America, when the board of trustees evicted the curator and founder of the museum, Gertrude Neidlinger. The board then stopped the ghost tours, changed the furniture, filled in the original cellar with dirt and shortened the museum hours to weekends because of lack of funds. . [Continued...](#)

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The Spy House Museum, continued....

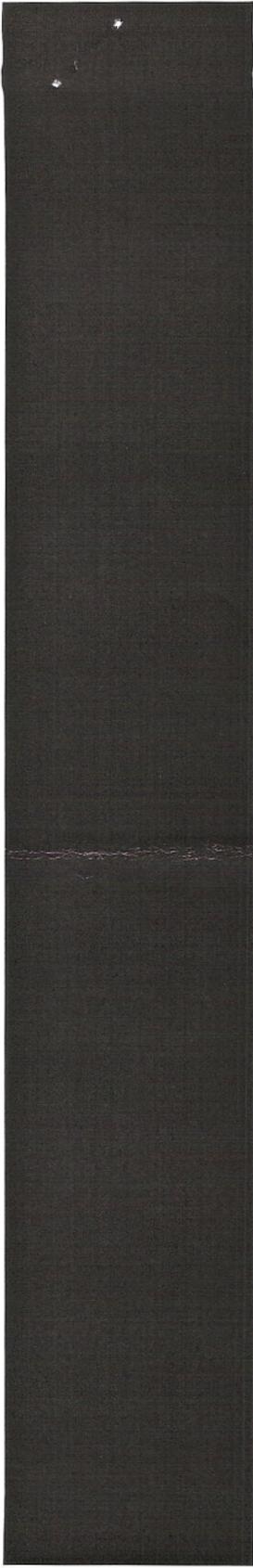
The controversy ensued from 1993 until a few days before Gertrude's death. The Spy House museum was a haunted dwelling that people from all over the United States visited and enjoyed each year. Although no one can enjoy the museum as it use to be, the lingering memories, stories and experiences will always be remembered.

Jane Doherty first visited the Spy House while filming a television show on the paranormal. She was there to psychically investigate the Spy House for ghost activity under the watchful eye of Bill Roller, the skeptical host of a public interest program called *In Your Interest* on the Home Network Shopping Channel. Although the T.V. crew did not visually encounter any ghosts in the Spy House, Jane's mother, experienced a ghostly sighting outside the house. Jane's mom described a woman staring out to sea who didn't move the whole time. The woman was dressed in clothes that Jane's mother had not seen in this life. The woman wore along black skirt with a red blouse with billowy sleeves. Her hair was tied back with a big black bow and she wore a bonnet on her head that was tied under her chin. After describing the experience to the curator of the museum, Gertrude informed Jane that was the spirit of Abigail who has been seen staring out to sea on numerous occasions.

During the investigation Jane determined the presence of several spirits. In the downstairs room in the original section of the house there was a spirit who routinely walked from the fireplace to another section of the room seemingly tending to her chores. The woman spirit dressed in colonial garb was part of the haunting phenomenon. She just kept doing her earthly chores oblivious to her new spirit condition. Someone standing in her path could sometimes feel a chill as the colonial woman walked in her path. However the spirit from the colonial time period would never know you were in her way, because she did not have a consciousness. She was caught in the other dimension redoing repetitively what she last did before her death.

Although the camera crew and host did not sense the spirit, they did experience the dosing rods move as the spirit walked in her usual path. A rustling sound attracted the crew's attention and a

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frightened gasp was now heard in the room. The TV host and crew now frightened with the possibility of encountering a spirit focused the camera in the area of the rustling sounds. There was a sigh of relief and a laugh as the spirit sounds were identified as a mouse rustling some autumn decorations and not a ghost.

A stern-looking sea captain has been seen looking through a telescope pointed to the sea. He has visibly materialized to several people throughout the years. Continued....

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The Spy House Museum, continued....

A man named Roger, who participated in a Revolutionary War re-enactment at the museum saw the captain dressed in his uniform in the back upstairs bedroom. At first Roger thought the figure was a man participating in the re-enactment until the sea captain turned his head, frowned and then disappeared right in front of his eyes.

The Reverend William Wilson, who was a later owner of the house, has been seen holding a minister's bible conducting a funeral service in the front bedroom. Historical accounts revealed the Reverend Wilson's wife and mother-in-law died within ten days of each other. The spirit of Abigail has been seen at the back upstairs window staring out to sea. She reportedly waits for her husband to return. He was a sea captain who was lost at sea. At times loud sobs have been heard coming from the bedroom. Many witnesses have seen her image and people still wait at night in the parking lot in hopes of getting a glimpse of the spirit. Abigail is probably the spirit that has visibly materialized the most.

There is a spirit of a young boy named Peter who has been seen wearing an English style shirt and knickers probably dating to the 1800's. Peter reportedly plays with buttons and is known to interfere with cameras by moving the button to the off position just as a person tries to photograph a picture in the Spy House. Amateur and professional photographers have experienced the phenomenon. The camera will not work inside the house, but will function normally outside the house when away from the spirit energy. Re-entering the energy of the house usually repeats the problem. The mechanical mal-function is usually persistent until the photographer acknowledges the spirit presence in some way. When the spirit is acknowledged, then it knows you are friendly and you are not there to test.

If you hear a banging or clanging sound around the old potbelly stove, it will probably be the spirit of Tom. Some believe Tom is the spirit of Thomas Whitlock. A former owner of the house. Tom was notorious for one bad habit, especially during and immediately following Jane's ghost tours. Tom loved people so

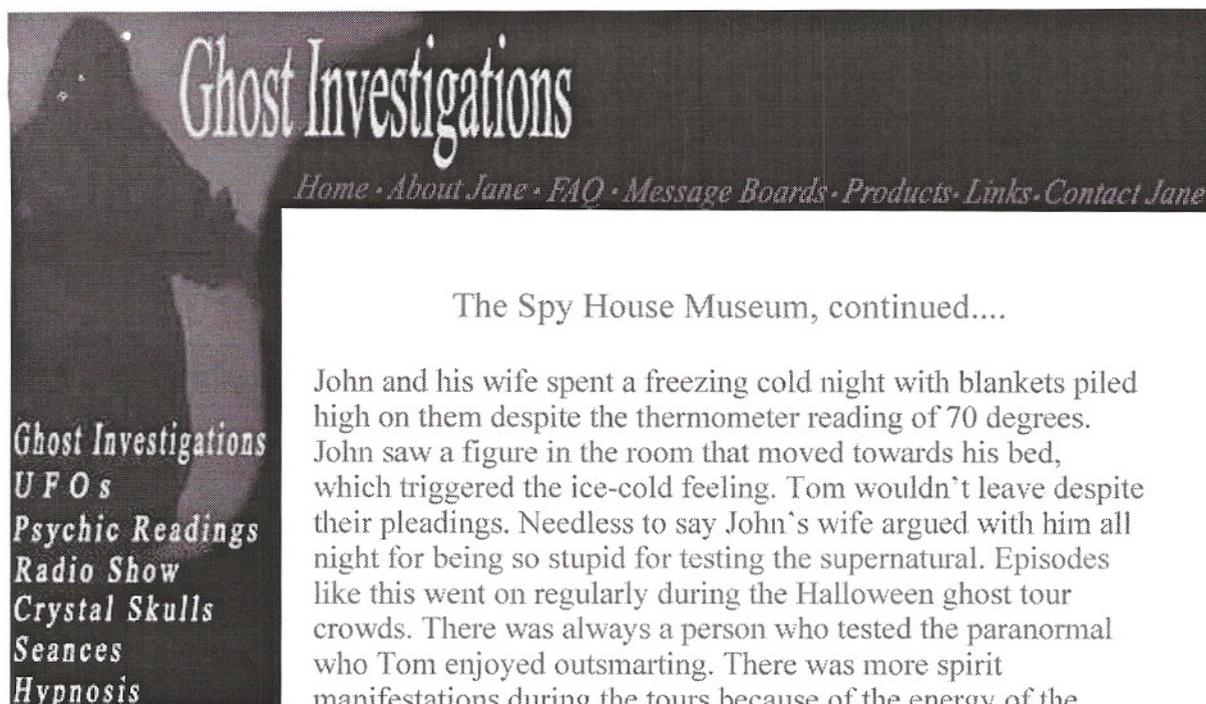
much he often left the Spy House to follow visitors to their homes. Some were happy to have the other-worldly visitor and others were not so happy.

During one of Jane's tours a skeptical participant jokingly invited Tom to come home with them in order to prove the existence of ghosts. The next morning Jane received a frantic call from the tour participant. Sleepless and frightened he asked Jane for her help to release Tom from his house. Continued.....

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The Spy House Museum, continued....

John and his wife spent a freezing cold night with blankets piled high on them despite the thermometer reading of 70 degrees. John saw a figure in the room that moved towards his bed, which triggered the ice-cold feeling. Tom wouldn't leave despite their pleadings. Needless to say John's wife argued with him all night for being so stupid for testing the supernatural. Episodes like this went on regularly during the Halloween ghost tour crowds. There was always a person who tested the paranormal who Tom enjoyed outsmarting. There was more spirit manifestations during the tours because of the energy of the crowds. Spirits need energy to manifest and during the crowded tours there was always an abundance of energy for an opportunity for a spirit to manifest. There were reports of an 18th century gentleman who manifested in a rather peculiar way. He liked women and let them know of his presence by pinching them on their rear ends. Considering that the house on several occasions served as a bordello, a male spirit interacting with female visitors was a common episode in this haunted house.

Penelope Stout who once resided at the Whitlock-Seabrook house has been seen as a ghostly inhabitant on a number of occasions in the front bedroom. Penelope reportedly died childless and has been seen holding a baby in her arms. Penelope is a spirit apparently with a consciousness because she can interact with people who visit the house. During a ghost tour at the Spy House a participant came with a baby in her arms. Startled, she screamed when she felt forces lift the baby out of her arms. She described the encounter as if a ghost were holding it – although the baby was still in her arms

The most infamous of the spirits known to haunt the Spy House is Robert, a pirate who was Captain Morgan's first mate. Jane first encountered Robert during a trance state. A New Jersey newspaper reporter was present to witness the spirit communication for a newspaper article in the Asbury Park Press. Much to Jane's and the group's surprise who were there to witness the event Robert spoke through Jane and revealed there were underground tunnels, buried treasure and other pirate loot at the Spy House.



An archeological dig was planned after sonar readings revealed data indicating the possibility of tunnels. The dig was abandoned after tests indicated the water table and ecological surface could not withstand the digging without ground collapse. Witnesses reported to Jane that there were a number of old sterling silver dining pieces recovered by local residents from the banks of the Spy House throughout the years. This is a mystery that will never be solved. A [video](#) of the investigation and cellar where the possible pirate tunnels exist has been filmed and is available for purchase.

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