

IS THE JOINT HAUNTED?

or

In Search of the Ghost of George Davenport

by John Donald O'Shea



**Copyright 2010
John Donald O'Shea**

IS THE JOINT HAUNTED?

Synopsis

On July 4, 1845, Col. George Davenport of Rock Island, IL was murdered in his home by robbers looking for gold and paper money. The Davenport Mansion was the first fine home built in the area. In the years that followed, it fell into disrepair.

Eventually the home was saved by a not-for-profit group, the Col. Davenport Historical Foundation, a group founded to save and restore the historic house.

Because Davenport died a violent death, many have long wondered whether the house might be haunted. Recently, a local paranormal society decided to investigate. This is the story of how that investigation went.

IS THE JOINT HAUNTED?

Cast List

George	George Davenport
Susan	His Step-daughter
Judy What's-her-name	Head Guide at Col. Davenport House
Harriet	Ghost Hunter
Gwen	Another Ghost Hunter

IS THE JOINT HAUNTED?

Props List

A chair, a table and a sofa for the Parlor

2 suit cases or large tote bags for Ghost Hunters to carry their equipment

Standard EMF Detector (measures alternating current)

Tri-Axis Magnetometer - a/k/a Gauss Meter (measures direct current)

Thermographic Camera a/d/a Infrared Radiation Camera and tripod

Digital Camcorder and tripod

Note

Since most theater groups would not have all this fancy equipment, and since most people would not know what a Tri-Axis Magnetometer looks like if they saw one, the director can use old cameras or odd looking instruments to substitute.

IS THE JOINT HAUNTED?

or

*In Search of the Ghost
of George Davenport*

by John Donald O'Shea

**Copyright 2010
John Donald O'Shea**

(The setting is the Col. Davenport Historic House, and just out front and just out back. George Davenport came with the U. S. Army to Rock Island, the largest island in the upper Mississippi River in 1816, to serve as a sutler to the troops. Some years later, he built a mansion on the Island for himself, his wife Margaret and his step-daughter, Susan. The family lived there until he was murdered by a gang of robbers on July 4, 1845. With the passage of time, his house fell into disrepair. In more recent years his historic house has been restored and maintained by the Col. Davenport Historical Foundation)

George. (*Looking north across the river to Davenport, Iowa*) The river's beautiful tonight.

Susan. Yes, George. But not as beautiful as the day we first got here.

George. Do you remember how green the river and trees were?

Susan. Yes. Do you? No bridges. No buildings. No town of Davenport.

George. Just you. I can still see that little girl - as you stood beside the river with the sun
gleaming in your hair - as if it were yesterday.

Susan. I loved the river from the first moment I saw it.

George. (*Noticing unexpected visitors*) So did I. ... Oh, oh! Susan, we've got visitors.

Susan. At this hour?

George. Did you invite somebody?

Susan. No. Did you?

George. No. It's bad enough that we're plagued with herds of sight seers tromping
through our home on Thursdays and Fridays from 11 to 3.

Susan. And on Saturdays and Sundays from 12 to 4. I wonder how they'd like it if we
went traipsing through their homes?

George. You'd think this place was some sort of decorator show house.

Susan. Or on the Parade of Homes tour.

George. On the other hand, maybe we should be a little bit grateful. They've done a
nice job fixing the place up.

Susan. Yes, it was in pretty bad shape when they came in. What do you suppose they
are doing here at this time of night?

George. It can't be a Board meeting. This isn't the first Monday.

Susan. Isn't that Judy, what's-her-name? One or our many super-duper guides?

George. It sure looks like her.

Susan. But who are the two with her?

George. I haven't the faintest idea.

Susan. Why are they carrying suit cases?

George. They had better not be planning to move it.

Susan. It's crowded enough with just the two of us here!

George. I'm willing to make a few concessions during the afternoon.

Susan. But at night time we deserve to be left alone.

George. After all, we are entitled to a modicum of privacy.

Susan. I quite agree.

Judy. This is it, Harriet.

Harriet. It's really a lovely setting.

Gwen. We'd both like to thank you for permitting us to conduct our investigation.

Judy. For a minute, I didn't think there was going to be any investigation.

Gwen. *(Highly amused)* I didn't think the officer at the gate was going to admit us.

Harriet. *(With laughter in her voice)* It was as if she had never heard of Col. Davenport.

Gwen. I thought I'd die laughing. When you told her you were going to the Col. Davenport house... *(She is cut off by Harriet).*

Harriet. *(Really laughing as she interrupts)* ... she asked you if the Colonel was expecting you?

Gwen. She apparently had no idea who George Davenport was....

Harriet. ... or that his house is on the island.....

Judy. I better mention it to Jessica. It suggests that maybe she should wratchet up our public relations campaign.

Gwen. Maybe what we do here tonight will help. Everybody loves ghosts.

Harriet. Gwen and I have every expectation that you will find the work of the *River Bend Center for Psychic Research and Paranormal Investigations* professional in every way.

Gwen. Harriet and I take great pride in our reputation.

Judy. *(To the two people with her)* Okay, so, where would you girls like to set up shop?

George. Set up shop? Wait a minute! Who is sutler around here, anyway?

Judy. I'll get the keys and open the place up.

Susan. They don't have any right to set up shop here.

George. Not as long as I'm around. I may be dead, but

Susan. You're still not gone.

George. That's for sure.

Harriet. We need some input from you before we decide.

Judy. Why?

Gwen. Once we know the history of the house, we can set up our equipment for optimal effect?

Harriet. We like to focus on the "hot spots."

Judy. There are four fire places.

Gwen. Judy, dear, you don't understand.

Susan. *(To George)* Neither do I.

Harriet. “Hot spots” are the locations where ghosts have been encountered ...

George. *(To Susan)* Susan, darling, have you ever encountered a ghost around here?

Gwen. *(Continuing Harriet’s thought)* ... Where there have been psychic “manifestations.”

Susan. *(To George)* Not that I remember.

Judy. What kind of manifestations, Gwen?

George. I was about to ask the same question, myself.

Susan. I don’t believe in Ghosts!

George. Neither do I.

Harriet. That’s hard to say.

Gwen. Ghosts manifest themselves in lots of different ways.

Harriet. They often appear at historical sites as a cloudy or vaporous mist.

George. *(To Susan)* Ever see any vaporous mist around here?

Susan. Only when they mow they lawn every Tuesday with that old tractor.

George. What’s the difference between a cloudy mist and a vaporous mist?

Susan. You’re going to have to ask Harriet or Gwen.

Gwen. Often they appear as orbs, globes, or balls of light.

Susan. Really?

George. How does she know that?

Susan. Do you think she’s ever seen one?

George. It probably depends on how much she’s had to drink.

Harriet. Or sometimes, as disembodied spirits.

Susan. That’s absurd! How can you see a disembodied spirit?

Judy. How can you see a disembodied spirit?

George. I think there's a echo in here.

Gwen. Sometimes they show up as "partials."

Judy. Partials?

Harriet. You, know. Without a head. Or without legs.

Susan. (*To George*) She mean "partials," as opposed to ...

George. (*Finishing her joke*) ... "impartial?" Or perhaps, "Whole-tials?"

Gwen. Sometimes they're invisible to the naked eye, but show up on film.

George. That explains why we've never seen one. I don't own a camera. Do you?

Susan. No.

Gwen. Then again, they can be visible to naked eyes, but very transparent in nature.

Judy. I've never seen any thing like that around here.

Susan. Me, neither.

Harriet. Of course, occasionally, they appear solid.

Gwen. When that happens, witnesses commonly mistake them for real people.

Harriet. Until they vanish before their eyes.

George. I used to have an uncle who had things mysteriously *appear* before his eyes!

Susan. Pink elephants?

George. Most of the time.... But now and then, little green snakes.

Susan. But did they *vanish* before his eyes?

George. More often than not, when he sobered up.

Gwen. But then, sometimes, they appear as dark shadows or dark entities.

Harriet. They're usually very sneaky and evasive.

Gwen. When they are spotted it's usually out of the corner of your eye or as they are darting through a wall.

Susan. I think she's referring to mice.

George. Or roaches.

Harriet. They are often spotted in mirrors.

Susan. I've never spotted a mouse in our mirror.

George. How could you? It needs replating.

Judy. I've never seen any of those things.

Harriet. Have there be any reports of ghosts?

Judy. Not that I'm aware of.

George. Me, neither.

Susan. Buster Miller claims we've got squirrels behind the walls.

Judy. But then, nobody's around the house at night.

Susan. Thank heaven for small favors.

Harriet. That could explain things.

Gwen. Ghost are generally nocturnal.

Harriet. How about unexplained noises?

Gwen. They're normally associated with poltergeists.

George. What's a poltergeist?

Judy. What's a poltergeist?

Susan. You're right. There is an echo in here.

Harriet. A poltergeist is a noisy ghost. They're almost always invisible.

Susan. I wonder if she's ever seen one?

George. Have you?

Susan. Certainly not.

Judy. What sort of noises?

Gwen. All sorts. They seem to enjoy dragging heavy chains across the floor.

Susan. I've never heard anything like that.

George. That would ruin our hardwood floors. I wouldn't put up with it.

Harriet. Sometimes, they moan.

Judy. Why?

Susan. That's what I was going to ask.

George. They're probably Cub fans.

Harriet. It's as if they experienced a great tragedy in life.

George. Such as expecting the Cubs to win the World Series -- since 1908!

Susan. Or voting for "Hope and Change" in 2008."

Gwen. Of course, some of them throw things.

Susan. Their things, or ours?

George. Big things?

Judy. Big things?

Harriet. Occasionally.

Gwen. But more often, just glassware and crystal.

Susan. I love our crystal. George, don't let them in!

George. Relax. Neither of us believe in ghosts!

Susan. What if we're mistaken?

Judy. Hopefully not our antiques.

Harriet. Actually, they seem to prefer antiques.

Gwen. Some seem to revel in rearranging furniture and tilting pictures.

Harriet. The more frolicsome ones seem to delight in repositioning chairs and stools so people trip over them in the dark.

Susan. *(To George)* Has that ever happened to you?

George. Just once. The time Chief what's-his-name passed out in the hallway in the winter of 1839..

Judy. I've never heard any such reports.

Gwen. That's too bad. Without a starting point, finding a ghost becomes much more problematic.

George. If ghosts don't exist, finding one will be more than problematic.

Susan. Have I ever mentioned that I don't believe in ghosts?

George. I seem to recall that you did.

Harriet. We'll have to start with a walkthrough.

Gwen. To try to divine the most likely area of ghost activity.

Judy. And once you do, that's where you set up your equipment?

Gwen. Exactly.

Judy. Just what equipment do you use?

Gwen. We have a number of rather sophisticated instruments.

Harriet. We have two EMF meters.

Judy. What do they do?

Harriet. They detect electromagnetic fields.

Gwen. Our standard EMF detector measures alternating current -- current from man-made sources such as electrical wires.

Harriet. Is the house wired for electricity?

Judy. Yes.

Harriet. Too bad. That could distort our readings.

Judy. But ghosts aren't man-made electrical current, are they?

Gwen. There are differing schools of thought on that.

Harriet. Since ghosts had to be born before they could live and die, there's one school that holds them to be - in a sense - man made.

George. I'm guessing that would be Augustana.

Gwen. But just in case they aren't, we also have a magnetometer - a Gauss meter - which measures direct current -- current in the Earth's electromagnetic fields.

Judy. But I thought ghosts were spirits of the dead? You seem to be saying that they are some sort of electrical or magnetic energy?

Harriet. Many experts believe ghosts to be plasma.

Gwen. Plasma is electrically ionized gas. Rather like the aurora borealis.

Harriet. If ghosts are plasma, our Gauss meter should be able to detect them.

Judy. What if they're not?

George. Yeah! What if they're not?

Gwen. Then we've wasted a lot of money purchasing very expensive useless equipment.

Harriet. We use the more expensive tri-axis meters which allow us to measure all three axes - all three dimensions -- simultaneously, rather than single axis meters.

Susan. *(To George)* I've got a question: Is it just possible that these people are idiots?

George. I'd say it is probable!

Gwen. Of course, we have a number of other tools.

Judy. Such as?

George. *(With scorn)* Snares, butterfly nets, bear-traps

Harriet. We have a thermographic camera.

Susan. *(To George)* Oh, of course. I should have known.

George. For the first time in my life, I'm glad I died in 1845.

Harriet. It's a camera that forms an image using infrared radiation.

Gwen. It's similar to an every day camera.

Harriet. But the everyday camera uses visible light, in the 450–750 nanometer range.

Gwen. The thermographic camera detects infrared radiation in wave lengths as long as 1400 nanometers.

Judy. So for it to work, a ghost would have to give off infrared radiation?

Harriet. Exactly.

Susan. *(To George)* Do they?

Judy. Do they?

George. *(To Susan)* I haven't the faintest idea.

Gwen. Well, there's one school *(She is cut off)*

George. Probably St. Ambrose....

Harriet. We can't say for certain.

Susan. I wonder what a thermographic camera costs?

George. One might be useful to determine how many squirrels are living in our attic.

Susan. Speaking of squirrels, have you seen Buster lately?

George. Why don't they just set up a digital camcorder?

Gwen. That's why we always set up a digital camcorder.

Susan. Bingo!

Harriet. It also picks up noise in case your ghost is a poltergeist.

Susan. Or a squirrel.

Judy. Why are you so certain we have a ghost?

Gwen. Because you simply cannot have a old castle or historic home without a ghost.

Susan. I didn't know that!

Harriet. A ghost is the best advertising gimmick you can have.

Gwen. They absolutely guarantee news coverage and scads of publicity.

Harriet. And tourists love them.

Gwen. If we can document that you have a ghost, your admissions will double. Maybe even triple.

Harriet. Ghosts are good for business.

George. *(To Susan)* If that's true, it's too bad we don't know any.

Susan. Maybe we could do a check of the homeless shelters?

George. Before we would allow any ghost to move in, I feel rather certain that we would want references.

Susan. Good for business or not, I'm not sure I want to share our house. I like my space.

George. Exactly.

Judy. So, where do you plan to set up?

END OF FREE PREVIEW