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The Ghosts of Herm's Inn

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Heather Santi
Logan, Utah
November 26, 2018

“The Ghosts of Herm’s Inn” **Occupational Folklore/Legend**

Informant:

Heather Santi is the owner of Herm’s Inn, a local breakfast hub in Logan, Utah, and is consequently my boss. Heather has worked in the food industry for decades and has been with Herm’s since its grand reopening in 2012. She also owns a sister restaurant named Eggs in the City in Salt Lake City, Utah, from which she commutes every week.

Context:

“Herman’s Inn,” as it was initially called, made its debut in the early 20th century, with the exact year and date unknown. Built and founded by Herman (“Herm”) and Elizabeth (“Lizzy”) Johnson along Canyon Road, Herm’s Inn was, at one point in time, quite literally one’s last chance to “gas up” before entering the mouth of Logan Canyon. Decades later, after over half a century of neglect, Herm’s was bought and restored by local businessman Jim Laub to revive the building and its glorious history. Reestablished in 2012, Herm’s Inn is now a popular breakfast and lunch destination for those who know how to find it. Despite its unassuming appearance and quiet location within a residential area, Herm’s holds a colorful history, including an underground whiskey operation during prohibition and age-old notions of the building being haunted.

Herm’s Inn is now home to a collection of old stories and legends that still circulate around Cache Valley today, not to mention a series of newly developed jokes, traditions, and numinous experiences among current employees.



*Herm’s Inn in its original state. Exact date unknown.
(Source: www.hermsinn.com/history)*



*Herm’s Inn today.
(Source: www.hermsinn.com/history)*

I interviewed Heather in her office in the basement of Herm’s a little after 1pm. Herm’s opens at 7am and closes for the day at 2pm, so she was just wrapping up her full day at work. As the owner of Herm’s for about six years now, Heather knows more about its history and legends, both past and current, than just about anyone else in the Valley. It is also a well-known

understanding among the employees at Herm's that Heather is superstitious; hence, when anything odd or numinous happens, she is one of the first to learn of it, as she makes for a good audience. The following are stories she has collected.

The other item from this interview can be found under the following name: "The Moving Lockers." I also interviewed the manager of Herm's, Andrea Steffes, as well as other Herm's employees, which can be found under the following titles: "The White Figure," "The Children See Ghosts," "Tired of Talking to Ghosts," "The Pantry Door," "Haunted Coffee Spoons," "The Heroin Spoon," "The Moving Lockers," "The Black Figure," and "Something Down the Stairs."

Text:

Heather: [back turned, researching on her computer] You should take a picture Mira of that picture upstairs 'cause I think one of the old guys in the picture [laughs a bit to herself] is the one that everybody sees [referring to the ghost].



Black and white photograph found in Herm's Inn. Date unknown. Man in hat believed to be Herman Johnson and woman second from the left to be his wife, Elizabeth.

Heather: Yeah, so nobody has a real timeline but it's [pause] it's early 1900s is how long the building has been here, and it was literally the only route into Logan Canyon. So everyone went past this building. So that's why we have those signs that say, First, "First chance last chance," 'cause it was literally the mouth of the canyon at the time- there was nothing but us [laughing] which could explain why the ghost doesn't want to leave. I personally don't like to think of it as a ghost. I like to think of it as a ball of energy trapped in the building. [I ask who she thinks it is] I think it's somebody who was [pause] associated with the building, um, there was a gentleman that died in a car accident in Brigham trying to get up here, 'cause they used to bootleg whiskey

in this basement, and he had two operations for bootlegging- one was in Brigham City, and one of them was in this building, and he had a source on the police department, and they would tip him off and say, “they’re coming! They’re coming to get ya!” And so he was racing up here- this is the story I’ve heard- that he was racing up here and was killed in a car accident. I don’t know if that’s true. So I’ve always kinda felt [laughing] that it was maybe that guy, and [pause] but there’s allegedly three different people [laughing] in this building, so I can only account for the little old guy I don’t know. The one that Andrea [manager] saw [cf. “The Black Figure”] was quite large and black, sort of black in appearance, like [I ask for clarification] the aura! like the, the color of the thing was black, whereas the other people that have seen ‘em, they’ve actually seen like old-time clothing, and like a figure of an older man, and Andrea saw something [laugh] scary [laugh] and so, yeah, and then Riley [chef] too, saw like a figure of something going that he could never catch. [I ask about Riley further] He was here by himself in the morning, and he looked, he saw somebody go, like round the stairs, and it freaked him out ‘cause he’s the opener he thought he was by himself, so he’s like ‘hello! Who is that?’ and he followed the person down the stairs and there was nobody in the building, it was just him. But he physically saw somebody go around the stairs, and he was pretty afraid [laughter]

Texture:

Heather is an active bearer, and this interview portrayed that, as she had so much to say on the topic. She was very expressive, using her hands often, laughing frequently, and widening her eyes after telling each story. Based on my interactions with Heather on a normal day-to-day basis, it felt as though she had forgotten I was recording her; she seemed completely unphased by it and acted very casually as she normally would. It is also evident from this interview that she believed every story she shared here.

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