



Time Flies, and Man Does Not Take Heed

By Kathy Samprón

At twilight following a warm, late-summer day in 2009, a SpiritPI investigator, on a preliminary walk-around, takes a picture of the massive wooden clock mounted on the wall of the equally massive great room of the Highlands Ranch Mansion. The investigator makes sure to take pictures of the entire inscription on the clock: “Vassene il tempo e l’uom no se n’avvede.” The English translation of the Latin inscription turns out to be “Time flies, and man does not take heed.”

One day in 1904 John Springer probably carried his wife Eliza across the threshold of their new mansion, built on the southern plains 15 miles south of Denver. One hundred and five years later, the investigative team of Spirit Paranormal Investigations carries all of its investigative equipment across the same threshold.

SpiritPI’s president, Kevin Samprón, finds it easy to break up the investigators into teams. All get along equally as well and work effectively together. His twin sister Kathy is part of SpiritPI and continually reflects that the group is like a family. As a matter of fact, team members Jason Alder (vice president) and Kendra Alder are married, and Kendra’s sister Erin Feltes is a valued teammate as well. Lucas Miller-Barr, Jess Delvecchio and Brian Schieltz bring years of experience to the team; and investigators Kim Pritekel, Gypsy Osler and Shane Heath’s gifts of sensitivity add to the mix.

Home base is in the kitchen; it feels like the 1930s in here with all of the white and blue tile and the vintage stove and refrigerator. We plug our laptops and other equipment into the ancient outlets, but the outlets have been updated to handle the 21st century.

Back in 1904, the Highlands Ranch Mansion was a good day’s ride from downtown Denver. Today, Highlands Ranch is a master-planned community. Highlands Ranch Community Association Community Relations Manager Jamie Noebel and Assistant Facility Supervisor Curt Avery give Kevin and Jason a walk-around tour.

During the simple tour, the experienced investigator in Kevin takes hold when, feeling a tug on his shirt, he gently says “Jamie, I think I just felt a tug on my shirt. Could you take a quick picture?” Kevin continued, “If someone just walked up to me, come and take a picture with me.” Kevin holds out his arm as if to put it around someone’s shoulder, and Jamie takes the requested photo. There in Kevin’s hand in the digital photo is a solid white anomaly that looks like a floating cotton ball. Did Kevin share a nice moment with one of the former residents?

Upstairs has an oppressive feel to it; however. The Highlands Ranch Mansion contains the fleeting memories of violent, unrequited love. About a hundred years ago, a lonely Sassy Springer, John's second wife, took up with two men: Frank Henwood and Tony von Puhl. Did Sassy ever bring either one or both of these lovers to the Mansion? And when Frank shot and killed Tony in the Marble Bar of the famous Brown Palace Hotel in Denver in 1911, did the violent memories of this sordid relationship leave their imprint on the Mansion? There is no written proof, but it would not surprise a historian or any of the team members of SpiritPI if such phenomena existed. That's why SpiritPI is so anxious to investigate such a notorious location and either refute the claims or capture positive, supportive evidence.

The aforementioned wall clock, many decades disused, is known to start up again at mysterious intervals. We'll have to set a static, night-vision camera on it.

The library is where the men gathered to smoke. I'll bet if we scratch the century-old wood paneling with a thumbnail or hold the flame of a lighter to it, we'll reawaken the long burned-in aroma of a good cigar.

The white-and-black marble floor of the ballroom is glamorous. This is the room where we captured a video anomaly later that night. In the video evidence, right beside Curt, you can easily see a floating, snaking object manifest and then charge at the camera being repositioned by Jason and Kevin.

The music room is at the opposite end of the ballroom. One of our remote microphones picked up the sounds of old-time music in this location.

The Jack-and-Jill bathroom between the children's room is a great spot to do some personal investigating. Shane seemed to be getting interaction. He kept talking to a little boy he sensed, and the balloon he set up seemed to dance upon request. Careful review of audio evidence from a future investigation at the same location revealed a child's voice clearly announcing "Mommy, I love you!"

After Sassy and John were long removed from the Mansion, John's first father-in-law Colonel William Hughes inhabited this grand home. Colonel Hughes's granddaughter Annie sold the Mansion to Phillips Petroleum magnate Waite Phillips. Future owners included Frank Kistler. He bought the place for \$425,000 in 1924. After the Great Depression, he was lucky to get Lawrence Phipps Jr to purchase it for a mere \$250! When Phipps passed away in 1976, the Mansion was sold to the famous Marvin Davis. Davis then sold the Mansion and property to Mission Viejo Homes in 1978. Another 33 years and 80,000 Highlands Ranch residents later, time flies, and man does not take heed.