

Voices from the Grave

Highlandlake cemetery provides a lesson in EVP!

By Kellen Michaels



When you first meet Pauli Driver Smith, the Highlandlake Executive Director, and Pat Jorgenson, a local resident and pseudo Weld County historian, you immediately feel at home in their close and friendly company. The rich stories they tell about the history of Highlandlake and the nearby town of Mead Colorado, have the team of Spirit Paranormal Investigations and Ghost Story Magazine completely mesmerized.

Pauli, it appears, is the real savior of this small but very important little cemetery. For thirty years preceding 1987, Highlandlake cemetery fell into complete disrepair and eventually was hidden by heavily overgrown weeds and brush. It was at that time that Pauli “re-discovered” the cemetery and determined that something needed to be done in order to clean it up and make it presentable. She eventually kindled strong interest in the project and recruited a team of local residents to set forth with the task of cleaning, documenting, and preserving the historic cemetery. A team of dedicated people now work on a regular basis to mow and tend to the cemeteries ongoing upkeep.

As far as the history of the cemetery goes, it all started in the summer of 1871 when Mr. Lorin Cassandre Mead and his wife, Elizabeth, came out to Colorado looking for an area to colonize. While traveling through this area, Lorin spotted an antelope standing in the middle of a muddy buffalo wallow. The animal lifted its head slowly and seemed to share a very special psychic moment with Mr. Mead. Lorin would later say that it felt like the antelope was beckoning him to stay in this area. Upon his return the following spring, Lorin staked his claim near the shore of the natural spring where he had shared his moment with the antelope, and it was on that day that Highlandlake was born.

Highlandlake cemetery was established five years later when a fellow settler named C.A. Pound sold part of his land to the local association. There are approximately 100 people buried here, including the Meads. Because many of the early residents were poor they could not afford stone headstones. Instead they marked their family’s graves with simple

wooden crosses. Unfortunately these markers did not hold up to the passing of the seasons. Now many of the graves lay completely unmarked. The last person laid to rest in the cemetery was a gentleman whose family got special permission to bury his ashes back in 2003.

After a preliminary inspection of the cemetery and some in-depth discussions over dinner, the ghost hunters dig in for the investigation. They start by following Pauli around as she discusses the various residents of the cemetery and the different sections, such as the Hispanic area, which hold the remains of many of the farm and crop workers who lived and passed through the area. We find out that Highlandlake was one of the first cemeteries in the area to allow Hispanic people for burial. The Paranormal Investigators are hoping that Pauli's personal stories about the residents buried in this cemetery might cause some kind of ghostly reactions.



Something bright and odd hiding in the trees - Looks like a ghost bird!

As the investigation progresses on through the cemetery, the feeling this evening is predominately calm and quiet. But then as we approach the section of the cemetery where many infants were laid to rest, one of the investigators makes a comment about the infants buried here, when all of a sudden the temperature suddenly and swiftly proceeds to drop like a rock. The whole group feels it at the same time and they are completely overwhelmed by the sheer strength of the temperature drop. Sixty, fifty-five, forty-seven, thirty, can these temperatures be right? Twenty-eight, Brian Schieltz continues to shout out as he reads the gage on his thermometer. Kevin Sampron, Michelle Bennett, and their

guest investigator, Jessie Gonzales, immediately jump into action and start shooting off pictures and asking questions to the spirits, trying to solicit a response from the apparent paranormal activity sweeping the area. After about 10 minutes of this bone chilling event, the temperature returns back to normal and remains there for the rest of the night. The group moves on, trying to make sense of this strange event.

Next, the batteries in the investigators' electronic equipment start going dead. One by one, each investigator loses a battery they had seemingly just replaced either at the start of the investigation or not long before it. "The spirits are trying to manifest themselves" states Kevin in response to this weird electronic phenomenon.

As the night progresses, a new kind of threat emerges, uninvited visitors start dropping in on the cemetery as word of the investigation spreads through this small town like a bullet. Pauli plays the part of defender and has to head off these people one by one throughout the night, as they pull into the cemetery trying to catch a glimpse of the Ghost Hunters in action.



An orb trailing Brian

The formal investigation concludes itself around 1:00am as the excited ghost hunters pack up their equipment and says their goodbyes to both Pauli and the spirits of Highlandlake cemetery. With the strange temperature drop and battery drains, the excitement level is high among the group that they may have caught something good.

INVESTIGATION FINDINGS:

The Electronic Voice Phenomena or EVP started showing up immediately. On the way home in the car, Kevin is listening to his recordings when he starts to hear the clear voices of the spirits of Highlandlake responding to investigators questions and the environment around them. “Wow!” Kevin shouts at the unbelievable clarity and sheer volume of some of the Class A EVP’s that he is hearing. “They were clearly communicating and responding to our comments” he concludes.

Although they only captured a handful of anomalies on film, and on their ghost hunting equipment, they all rule this investigation a resounding success due to the overwhelming number of “rare” EVP they captured at the cemetery.

Back in the lab, the team at Spirit Paranormal Investigations finishes reviewing their data and trying to clean up the EVP recordings to see what the spirits where trying to tell them. Below is summary of the actual EVP messages that were captured:

EVP1 – “It’s For” – A gentleman is trying to explain what something is for. We were unable to make out the end of the message very clearly. An interesting point is that this same man stating the exact same message was captured on a 2nd EVP recording.

EVP2 – “Oh my God” – A faint women clearly screaming these words.

EVP3 – “That’s B.S. (followed by an unearthly laugh)” – An angry man replying to a comment by Lead Investigator Kevin.

EVP4 – “Spooky Laugh” – A very spooky sounding women laugh.

EVP5 – “We have to stay here” – Just as the investigators are leaving, Kevin catches an elderly women spirit warning the others not to follow them home.

To hear these EVP recordings yourself simply go to Spirit Paranormal Investigations website located at www.spiritpi.com and click on the EVP link.