

1993

Ghosts of Hartwell Hall: 1993 & 2016

Jennifer Valaitis

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Ghosts of Hartwell
Jennifer Valaitis

GHOSTS OF
HARTWELL.

J. Valaitis. 1993

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This interview was conducted to preserve some of the stories about the ghosts that roam the halls of Hartwell. From this interview insight is added to the rumor that there are ghosts present in the building of Hartwell located on the campus of SUNY Brockport. The interview was conducted in the basement of Hartwell. A background of how the people interviewed were chosen is needed in order to understand the transcript. I contacted Alan, the resident director of Mortimer Hall, to see if he knew if the cleaning staff of Mortimer would have any stories. He said he knew of none but that he could introduce me to someone that did. He introduced me to Marion Quill, whom is the head of housekeeping on campus. When talking with her she mentioned two women who would have great tales. She said that she could ask both Florence Miller and Natale Glick, whom are part of the custodial staff of Hartwell, if they would mind talking to me. Within the week I had an interview appointment set up. Natale Glick has been part of the staff for approximately two years this May and Florence Miller has been there for three and a half years, four years this September. Both women were extremely helpful and had wonderful personalities. I would like to thank them both for their tales and their time. I would also like to thank Marion Quill for setting up the interview.

The Ghost(S) Of Hartwell

Florence Miller: Then when you came to this main hall up on the main floor, sometimes look back at 190 (room 190) and he would be standing in the door way, with his hands on his hips, just a looking.

Jen Valaitis: It was a guy?

Florence: It was a guy. He was always dressed in black and you could never see a head.

Natale Glick: I was coming down these stairs here....

Florence: There was that one time when Christmas break was over and it was ready to come back to school we went to the upper floor to make sure we had chalk and erasers. We opened the door in 239 and heard voices. Couldn't really make out what it said.

Natale: It was a woman's voice and I turned around and said "did you hear that?"

Florence: We were in the back hall one time it flushed the toilet. And the door of the stall hit. We could hear the distinct sound of a stall banging. There's two guys upstairs at Seagrant who've said they've been in there and the toilet flushes next to them and there's no one there.

Jen: Have you heard of any deaths in the building?

Florence: Yep, a guy died in the boiler room. I've heard a girl drowned in the swimming pool.

Natale: There's a girl who worked on maintenance who saw a girl standing in front of Hartwell one time and she described her and they looked her up in the year book and they said it was the girl who had drowned in the pool that one day.

Jen: It was a student?

Natale: No, she worked on the grounds crew but I don't know who she is.

Florence: No, the girl who drowned.

Natale: Oh, yeah, she was a student.

Florence: And the guy that died in the boiler room he took care

of the boilers here back then.

Jen: You don't think he would harm you?

Florence: No, I really don't. I just think he's here until his dream is fulfilled. He left something in his dying. He has not never come near us yet, we have seen him. He's never harmed us. Every morning you go up on the upper floor and hear these weird noises. Thursdays are bad in here. Maybe whatever happened here happened on a Thursday.

Jen: Has there been anyone else who has seen or heard the ghost?

Florence: Like the secretaries now has. Janine upstairs saw a shadow pass across that 239 (room). Saw the shadow up there at 239.

Jen: But you can distinctly see a body? You said he was with his hands on his hips.

Florence: Yeah. And that one night I was dust mopping, this was when we was working 11 (pm) to 7 (am), I dust mopped the floor and I was coming down and something shot across, in the lobby part, and I hollered down, "Lester is that you?". He answered me from the basement and I walked up and looked behind those petitions up there and there was nothing there.

Jen: Did you ever tell your family about this?

Florence: Yep.

Jen: And they think your crazy?

Florence: Yep. They said we don't believe in ghosts. And I said come to Hartwell and you will.

Jen: I've heard stories of people that go up to the bell and they hear noises in the top (of Hartwell) but there's nobody there but them.

Natale: If you're in the building real late at night....

Florence: Yeah, you can hear voices.

Natale: Cause Evelyn and I were in her one night doing special cleaning and we were sitting down next to the offices. And you were out in the hall and it sounds just like there's a group of people. It's like mumbling, you know. If it's total quiet. I don't know if it's just the building or what it is but you can hear mumbling like it's a whole group of people.

Florence: Ya know one night when we was working and they put us from 5 (am) to 1:30 (pm) we was in the back hall and I heard this voice talking back and forth. But it was so weird that something just told me to get off the floor. It really did. I got down here (the break room) and I heard these voices and I said I don't care, it's five after one they can write me up. Something is telling me to get out of this building, and we left.

Jen: Do you think he would ever harm you?

Florence: No, I really don't because I, we've been around them here.

Natale: She's had things touch her.

Florence: That one day I felt a terrible pain go through my head. Ya know. That's the day the voice said whatever she actually said to us in that classroom. I came out in the hall and I'm looking and something just, a terrible pain went through my head and I had to get out of the hall to keep it from, like a pressure pain. Remember I told you? (addressing Natale)

Jen: Have you seen any floating objects?

Natale: Remember the measuring cup (addressing Florence).

Florence: Yeah, one day in the back hall, that was up on the second floor, we was near the door of the men's room and the measuring cup was setting up on the shelf and it flew straight across in the janitor closet and landed setting straight up, just as nice as it could be.

Natale: She told me it flew across She said it had to have hit the wall and then when it hit, it hit sitting straight up.

Jen: There haven't been any records on the man that died in the boiler room?

Florence: We did read that one book there....

Marion Quill: That might be a file you'd want to check with Public Safety. The two incidents between Public Safety, and Brockport Police department or Fire department. They would naturally have to be called.

Jen: You don't know the man's name? (who died in the boiler room)

Florence: No, that's just what we heard. They told us...

Natale: What's the name of that book? The Heritage or something?

Florence: Yeah about Mr. Bates too.

Natale: That's who they think might be in here because he died suddenly and he was...

Jen: Who was Mr. Bates?

Florence: He was the first..

Natale: Headmaster.

Florence: Headmaster.

Jen: Of this school? Of Hartwell when it was just a school not a college building?

Natale: Yeah.

Florence: And his wife, if you read the book its, it is exciting to read.

Jen: Had you heard that there was a ghost in the building before you started working here?

Florence: Yes, I did.

Jen: Do you think if you did not know there was a ghost you would know there was one now?

Florence: No, if I don't think if I had heard nothing or seen nothing I wouldn't have believed it. But I know I've seen him. And I've heard her speak. I do know there's something in this building.

Jen: Have you seen the woman or just heard the woman's voice?

Florence: Just the woman's voice, we've never seen the woman. There is something in this building because doors open here and shut.

Jen: By themselves?

Florence: Yeah. That one night I called Public Safety. I mean there was nothing there. But the door slammed and ahh there was nothing there.

Jen: How was their reaction to it when they came?

Florence: He checked everything. But, they could not find nothing either.

Jen: Have you heard of any other ghosts on campus?

Florence: Fine arts, I heard.

Jen: Do you know what the original building was used for?

Florence: It was a grade school. If you go in the back now there is like little urinals back there and little tiny toilets.

Jen: The guy who died who worked in the boiler room is the ghost?

Florence: We don't know if that's originally who the ghost is in here or not.

Natale: It could be Mr. Bates, it could be that guy, it could be the girl who died in the pool.

Jen: Do you know how she died in the pool?

Natale: I just heard that she did.

Florence: I don't think whoever it is is out to hurt you. A poltergeist is what moves things and I don't think there's poltergeists. Well that night Steve worked over here he saw the same thing that I did. The guy standing there one night and looking around. But, you can't never get near him.

Natale: Yeah, he's a cleaner over in Fine arts and he said that Halloween night he worked here cause neither one of us were here. He told us that his cart went down the hall. We don't know, we weren't here. But, he swears up and down that it did. He won't work here.

Florence: He's scared of this stuff. So's Kim. She won't work in here. She went up one of these stairs..

Natale: The back stairwell.

Florence: And opened one of them doors. That girl came down and she was sweating and..

Natale: She went all the way up that back stairwell to the like attic, she couldn't find her way out. She ran all the way out and the doors were locked at the bottom, she was sweating. Sweat running off her face, her face was all flushed, she was scared to death. She said that she just felt a real funny feeling while she was up there.

Natale: I don't feel anything. Once in a while we'll turn around and look because I think somebody's behind me. But you know (addressing Florence) you stand right next to me and I don't even know you're there.

Florence: I hate to say it but I have a feeling when they go in to go to remodel this building that somebody might get

hurt.

Jen: Do you think because they are disturbing the realm of the ghost?

Florence: I do.

Natale: Could be.

Marion: Very possible. Very uncomfortable, making changes to what they call their homestead.

Florence: We told that to guys when they told us (about the remodeling) they said "what are you taking? You want some of my pills?". When you go in the back there just be careful cause you might get hurt back there. But I do believe that. Cause his dream is not fulfilled in this building. He's harmless, he won't hurt ya.

Jen: And he's never made any attempt to communicate?

Florence: No, but one time we had a light blinking in the back hall and I said, we call him Clyde, "Clyde don't you. Leave that light alone and stop flashing it". And the second time I said it do you know that light never blinked one more time. It stopped and it stayed on. I talk to him every morning.

Natale: Somebody used to come in, they used to teach a class over here, he said that they'd come in and there'd be a math problem left on the board at night and when they came in the problem was solved. That was a long time ago.

Florence: I've only seen that shadow of a man but he's always the same. He was always dressed in black. And even that time I seen him shoot across the hall he was still dressed in dark colors, but I've never seen his head.

Jen: Is it like the headless horsemen kind of thing?

Florence: Yeah. He's just standing there. I could never....

Marion: You talk about seeing no head, ok, but does he have hands or does it cut off at the sleeves? Or feet? If you see all black does he have feet in his shoes?

Florence: He would be standing like this I would say. With his hands (on his hips), standing straight up. (she demonstrates his position)

Marion: But what about hands or feet? Do you see shoes on his feet?

Florence: I've never paid attention because you know when you actually look at him you see him and then you don't. Just

like when we used to be doing blackboards you would know something was at your back. But, the minute you would turn around you would see it move. Just like that, it wasn't there.

Natale: We were right up on the main floor about half an hour ago pushing the cart down. I swear there was somebody behind me and I was pushing the cart and I turned around to look. Gone. I said it has to be a student going upstairs.

Marion: I think some ways in the way you guys talk about him or her, either one, that there not in here to hurt anyone. I think they're in here more to protect people because they don't harm anybody but they're always giving a presence checking for your safety.

Florence: One night we did go back to the pool. Remember that night? (addressing Natale). Gail took us all back there because there were kids in here. We went back in there and we heard voices and music playing and I said "let's get out of here". There was nothing back there but us, there was four of us back in there. Early in the morning now we've heard them in here. I used to come in at 4:30 (am) and I will not come in this building anymore by myself. When another car pulls in then, we both come in together.

Jen: Why?

Florence: Scary. You ever been in here and just sat in here and all a sudden something's bumping out there and there ain't nobody around here but you? He's never taken nothing off our carts, never nothing, but, we've seen him. And we've heard her. And that one time we was in that classroom, well it's closed off now, on the main floor, and that toilet flushed. It was ten after one and I said its too early to go down stairs so we'll just go in here and sit down for a minute and then we'll go down.

Natale: And it was a dark classroom.

Florence: And it was dark and we had the light off in the back hall. And that toilet flushed and the door slammed. I said "ooohhh we're getting out of here".

Natale: I know the two gentlemen upstairs when they used to go in the men's room in the back, they used to say that they would hear foot steps come in and the toilet flushed. And there was not a soul in there but them (Chuck and Dave). Janine up in Seagrant has heard her name called. And so has she (addressing Florence).

Florence: Yes I did.

Jen: You don't wear name tags do you?

Florence: We did for a while. But, not then. Where was we in a dance studio or some place cleaning and someone said "florence". I went out in the hall and there was not a single soul standing in that hall. Was there? (addressing Natale).

Natale: And I thought someone had called her to. I said " didn't anybody call you?" and she said "I think they did."

Florence: And there was nobody in the hall.

Natale: And Janine's had her name called, couple times. And she thought it was Jane the other secretary. When she went over there it wasn't.

Jen: Do you go home feeling uneasy?

Florence: No. I think there in this building and this is where they stay. There not out here to hurt anybody.

Jen: Do you ever try talking with them?

Florence: Yeah, I talk to them every day Don't I? I say "good morning, how are you?" But no answer. I've said "let me in this back hall, unlock this door" but he won't.

Jen: Do you see more of the man than the woman?

Florence: Yeah. I've seen more of the man than the woman. Now when Lester worked down here he used to say the woman. Didn't he?

Natale: He said he could feel a woman's presence.

Florence: They are good ghosts.....There's nothing to be scared of.

One story that was not captured on tape but was talked about was how Natale fell from a six foot ladder. Florence and Natale had been cleaning in one of the dance rooms. Natale was up on a ladder and lost her balance. As she fell she felt as if someone had "set" her down. She landed with one arm hung over the dance bar. However, she felt no pain. She was asked to fill out an accident report but she did not because she was not hurt. She swears that it was as if someone had set her down. Florence and Natale believe that such an impact on the dance bar should have caused serious damage. However, Natale was fine.

Hartwell Hall: Haunted or Not?

By: Contessa Blosenhauer

The following is an account of a night spent in Hartwell Hall from 8 PM to 5:30 AM from March 18th to March 19th, 2016. Two students, myself and MCC student Erik Payne, and the Monroe County Paranormal Investigation Team (M.C. P. I) conducted research and performed a couple of tests. The results were inconclusive. Attached below are links to audio clips recorded that night, Jennifer Martin's *Ghosts of Hartwell Hall* interview, and the Stylus article by Kiara Alfonseca on the night in Hartwell Hall.

After getting permission from the building coordinator, Mary Derleth, and the campus police, Erik and I arrived outside of Hartwell at 8 PM on Friday, March 18th. The investigation team arrived a few minutes after us. Their team consisted of their lead investigator, Rob, and six other members. They pulled up in two black SUV's and unloaded a few cases of equipment including an infrared camera, digital cameras, voice recorders, and a non-contact laser thermometer. We entered in the door closest to Studio 64, the room where there is believed to have been a pool years ago. Legend says a student drowned in that pool but no evidence to support that has been found.

I briefed the team on the history of the building and about my research. We decided to explore the building so they could take a look around. We went down almost all of the hallways on each floor and I showed them the locations of supposed activity according to the interview conducted by Jennifer Martin (Valaitis). The odd thing was that the doors to the basement, the bell tower, and maintenance rooms were all unlocked and open. We went into the basement which was a typical basement with pipes running through and small passageways in the walls connecting to other small rooms. One maintenance room was located on the side of a wall and consisted of rafters and a maze of metal paths leading to other rooms and one of the lower roofs. It looked like a typical boiler room. One of these paths took you to a corner in the wall where the ladder to the bell tower stood. The first ladder was smaller and about 10 feet high. That led to a small, wooden circular level where another ladder stood. This was about 50 feet high, skinny, and metal, shaking while climbing was frequent. The bell tower was small, musty, and had a

collection of two dozen women's panties hung and draped all over the room and on a clothesline down the middle. Empty beer cans were also all over the floor and littered in the corners.

After we explored the building we decided to perform a few tests resembling the activity mentioned in Martin's interview. In the men's bathroom near Studio 64 we placed a flashlight on the edge of the left sink. In an upstairs classroom, Brian, one of the investigators, wrote an algebraic equation on the board. We split up into two teams to conduct EVP sessions. I stayed with Rob, Brian, Stacie, and another investigator. We focused on Studio 64. Erik went with the rest of the investigators and went back up to the bell tower and in auditorium. In Studio 64 we surveyed the room and noted the vent, which was off, and any spots that could affect our session, including lights and sounds. Sitting in the left corner of the room, next to the piano, the investigators asked a series of questions to the supposed ghost. No answers came. Rob decided to lay in the middle of the studio while they continued the questions. Rob claimed that the air right above him was about 20 degrees colder than the level of air from the top of his body to the floor. I joined him a few minutes later and there was a difference in air temperature. The only vent in the room was off and the air seemed to gently flow the opposite of the vent. While lying there I began to feel an intense pressure on my right foot. Rob and I laid head to head on the floor but he got up and looked where my feet were, he didn't see anything.

The other group came back into the room and we grouped back together and discussed our investigations. Erik's group said they attempted an EVP session in the auditorium but they had no response except when they walked into the room. Erik said he thought he saw the figure of a person sitting in one of the seats when they walked into the room and it moved quickly. All of the seats in the auditorium were up except for the one where the shadow was. That seat was the only one down. Being a skeptic and non-believer in ghosts, he doubted what he

saw. We stayed in Studio 64 for about another half hour and then we went upstairs to a classroom. Stacie asked the ghost questions while the rest of us talked and joked around. Brian said that when they're talking amongst themselves and joking, they get more activity than when they're asking questions in silence. No response came so we tried to find room 239, where activity was said to happen, but there was no room 239. Only rooms 238 and 240 existed meaning they combined two rooms together.

We went to the balcony above the auditorium and conducted an EVP session where Stacie and Rob asked questions to the spirit. We didn't get any audio response but there were a lot of conflicting light beams due to the large windows and traffic lights outside. We could have potentially missed an answer vision-wise due to this. Then we went into the auditorium and Erik showed us the seat where the shadow had sat. The seat was still down. We sat around variously in the seats and the floor and talked once again. Some of the team explained how they got into investigating and I explained how I did as well. These investigators are all volunteers and have regular day jobs like everyone else. Most of them are teachers, except one who worked in a tattoo shop and the other who didn't say what he did. We swapped stories for about an hour until the team decided to wrap up for the night as it was coming close to 2 AM. While we talked they kept their cameras and recorders on just in case.

The team started packing up their equipment and two of their investigators stayed behind for another half hour to finish up. The four of us checked our tests and the results were disappointing. The flashlight never moved and the math equation was still unsolved. The two investigators packed up their camera and left shortly after. Erik and I walked around the building and routinely checked the flashlight and equation and also left a rolling desk chair in the hallway by the cafe. Since there was only two of us in the building, the chances of activity increased. At 5

AM we left the building and sat in the parking lot for fifteen minutes, hoping the ghost would do something with no one inside. After going back in we checked again but nothing had changed.

We gathered our stuff, put a wet floor sign in the middle of the auditorium floor and moved the chair further down the hallway before we left. Erik and I went back the next day and weren't sure what to think as the wet floor sign was folded against the wall and the chair had been moved back into the café space but the equation was still unsolved on the board. Was it ghost activity? Probably not as it is more likely it was a maintenance worker performing a check in the building. During our night in Hartwell we didn't run into a single person or worker outside of our group. Erik and I heard dozens of noises as we sat outside studio 64 and the hallway with the chair.

Rob contacted me a few weeks later and sent me some audio clips to listen to. I wasn't sure of what I heard. After that, the team said the results were inconclusive as the audio and video footage was unclear. According to the unclear results and my personal experience I would say Hartwell doesn't seem to be haunted on the surface but some deeper investigation might be in order. Perhaps one or two people for two nights instead of one. Paranormal activity happens more when human activity is less so maybe the fact that we had a large group affected our investigation.

Attached Document Links

<C:\Users\cblos1\Downloads\fwdaudiofromhartwell.zip>

http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=student_archpapers

<http://www.thestylus.net/news/view.php/1018824/Paranormal-activity-investigated-in-Hart>