

# HAUNTED OCEAN COUNTY

By Juliane Bilotta

If you're looking for a good scare this Halloween, you may not have to travel far. Ocean County is filled with ghost stories and other unexplained phenomena all the way from Jackson to Long Beach Island. Here are a few local haunts to put you in the mood for ghost hunting.

## Georgian Court University

No college is complete without a campus ghost, and Georgian Court University in Lakewood is no exception. George Gould, son of railroad tycoon Jay Gould, owned the estate that is now the university with his wife Edith and their seven children. Gould was notorious for travelling around the globe and seeking adventure, unlike his wife who found solace in simply maintaining her rose garden on the property. On the rare occasion that Gould was home he carried on an affair with the woman



Photo Credit: Georgian Court University

White Oak on the former Golf Course

who would eventually become his second wife, Guinevere Jeanne Sinclair, by using a system of tunnels underneath Edith's beloved rose garden to sneak to her room. One night while Edith tended to her garden, she found a tunnel that led her to a room where she discovered George with Guinevere. Edith dashed back out of the tunnels, crashing into walls and crying hysterically until she made it back to her rose garden. She later died on the golf course of the estate, but students report seeing Edith still walking across the grounds near the lagoon or in her rose garden.

## Lakehurst Naval Air Station

On May 6, 1937, the Hindenburg airship (LZ129) burst into flames over the



Photo Credit: Ocean County Historical Collection

Lakehurst Naval Air Station, killing 35 people on board. Herbert Morrison's famous radio recording of the crash is chilling to listen to as he details the chaos and tragedy of the scene. "Oh the humanity!" he cries as the Hindenburg tumbles out of the sky like a ball of fire with all 97 passengers trapped on board. Many lives were saved, but those who perished seem to still be trapped on the base. In Hangar 1, an airman is often seen clad in vintage gear

Hangar 1, Lakehurst

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walking around the hangar, sometimes giving a quick “Good morning!” before vanishing. People working in and around the hangar also report hearing “Away the lines! Away the lines!” or “She’s afire!” in early morning hours. Several other apparitions are said to be seen at the Branch Medical Clinic which served as the morgue and hospital in the immediate aftermath of the crash.

### **Exit 82**

Summer is officially over and the parkway will finally be free of tourist traffic but not of paranormal activity. Since the mid 1950’s, drivers have been coming into contact with a ghost referred to as the “Exit 82 Ghost”. The specter is a tall man in a long raincoat that waves his hands wildly at cars passing by. Many people have pulled over to help the man, only to find nothing there upon stopping. This occurs so frequently that even police are aware of the ghost, who they say is just trying to slow down speeding cars.



### **Long Beach Island: Surf City Hotel**

When the Powhattan ship sank just off the shore of LBI on April 18, 1854, Edward Jennings, owner of The Health Mansion, took all fifty of the deceased passengers and gave them a proper burial.



Photo Credit: Ocean County Historical Collection

In the process, however, he also took everything of value off of the corpses for himself. Although never formally charged for the crimes, everyone in town knew Jennings was guilty, and his reputation was irrevocably marred. After the wreck, Jennings seemed to become more distant and detached from reality often seen pacing back and forth on the balcony of the hotel, arguing with someone who wasn’t there.

He moved to California shortly after and was killed in a bar fight in San Francisco. Did the weight of his crimes send him running across the country, or was Jennings driven to madness by the spirits of those he robbed? Some believe that the spirits of those who perished on the Powhattan still haunt what is now the Surf City Hotel. A Union soldier with a missing arm is seen frequently walking near the beach, and many people report seeing glowing orbs all over the surrounding area. Another frequent sighting is that of four women linked arm in arm walking together. Before the original hotel was destroyed, it sat abandoned for years but people reported seeing lights flicker on and off, and shadowy figures floating across the window. Are these the restless spirits of the Powhattan victims still angry over their unfortunate end?

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### **Ocean County Courthouse**

In downtown Toms River, the Ocean County Courthouse seems unassuming among the multitude of office buildings and shops, but there may be more going on behind the Grecian pillars than we think. Since 1994, people have reported strange occurrences in Courtroom 1. Doorknobs rattle, lights turn on and off, and motion detectors go off when no one is in the room. There is also an apparition of a middle aged man wearing a shirt and tie who appears in the court room.



*Courthouse and West and East Wings sometime after 1950*

### **Barnegat Light**

Another shipwreck with a chilling tale takes place in Barnegat Light. A young couple on board the schooner, Tolck, died in the wreck when it ran aground near Barnegat Light one cold January. Their baby girl was onshore, just out of sight



*Photo Credit: Andrew Bossi*

*Barnegat Light, Barnegat Inlet*

from where the boat sank. Young couples pushing a baby in a stroller have been approached by this young man and woman in full period clothing who stop to admire their baby before disappearing. Bound by the eternal power of love, the unfortunate couple walk up and down the beach, often heard lightly singing “In the Sweet, Bye and Bye,” forever searching for their daughter.

For Further Reading:

*New Jersey Haunts* by Elias Zwillenberg,

*Ghosts of the Garden State I and II* by Lynda Lee Macken

*Haunted Jersey Shore, Haunted New Jersey* by Charles A. Stansfield, Jr.

*Weird NJ*

**Just remember, if you plan on doing a Weird NJ outing or ghost hunt, please make sure the location is allowed to be trespassed and safe to explore.**

**On October 21, 2011, The Ocean County Historical Museum will be doing a paranormal investigation with the public (Call 732-341-1880)**

**[www.oceancountyhistory.org](http://www.oceancountyhistory.org)**