

# HALLOWEEN

## THRILL GUIDE

However you choose to celebrate Halloween, whether it's trick-or-treating with the kids, enjoying a cozy horror movie night, or diving into a spine-tingling adventure, remember to stay safe and be mindful of your surroundings. Happy Halloween from The Eastern New Mexico News and our local businesses! May your night be filled with frights and delights.



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# Man in black watched over Blackwater Draw

□ Legendary figure known to have a giving spirit.

By David Stevens  
And Don McAlavy

In the early 1800s, there was a single dwelling near the site of the former Greyhound Stadium between Clovis and Portales.

The man who lived alone there, presumably a Native American or a Spanish sheep herder, was known to dress all in black and ride a black horse.

Those who knew him described him as a giving spirit.

That’s the legend anyway.

“The Legend of the Phantom of Blackwater Draw” is the headline over a short essay discovered recently in archives collected by Don McAlavy, a longtime local historian.

McAlavy died in 2016, so we’re not able to ask him about the story included with thousands of pages he



David Stevens  
--  
Publisher

wrote during his 60-plus years documenting eastern New Mexico.

We know Blackwater Draw, the historic dig site between Clovis and Portales, was named for an ancient river bed that extends from New Mexico into west Texas.

How did the river bed get its name? The Place Names of New Mexico reports early settlers dug pools to tap the high water table; when the water became stagnant, it turned dark.

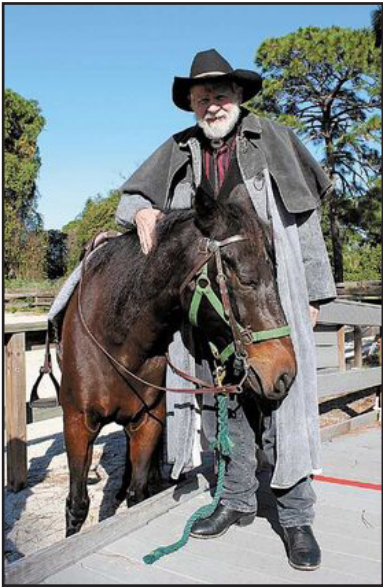
McAlavy, in his essay, suggests it was named for the man in black.

“Within riding distance from his home was a flowing spring,” McAlavy wrote. “Surrounding this spring was a draw, which legend says the man in

black protected. The area natives called the draw ‘Black’s Water,’” which evolved into Blackwater Draw.

The mysterious man didn’t just protect the spring. “He also protected many travelers passing through the area,” McAlavy wrote.

“Once a wagon train lost its way and was guided to



Courtesy Photo  
Don McAlavy wrote about regional history for more than 60 years.



Courtesy depositphotos.com

The man in black and his black horse were signs of good fortune.

safety by a man in black riding a black horse.”

Here’s the rest of McAlavy’s essay:

Legend tells that during an extremely harsh span of years, a neighboring peaceful farming tribe was suffering through the effects of drought. Just when all seemed lost, the man in black and his black horse appeared. He had with him buffalo he had killed so the natives could survive.

The legend also states that the man in black was killed late one fall while defending friends. His horse was not injured in the battle, but soon died of a broken heart upon seeing his master and friend lying lifeless on the ground.

The two, man and horse, were buried side by side near the spring.

But that wasn’t the end of the story.

As time passed and settlers began moving through the area, many told of a horseman dressed in black, riding a black horse.

This horseman, they said, would watch from a distance as the settlers passed through the Black’s Water area. The settlers claimed the man in black carried good fortune because positive things would happen when he would appear.

They came to call this man the Phantom of Blackwater Draw.

The sightings continued for decades. Even after Eastern New Mexico University built its football stadium on the site in 1968, fans sometimes claimed they saw a rider dressed in black.

They said he sat on a black horse in the distance, watching the games.

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The ghost of assassinated President Abraham Lincoln is said to haunt the White House. First Lady Grace Coolidge was the first to have (reportedly) seen the (reported) ghost, standing at a window in the Yellow Oval Room, staring out at the Potomac River. Since then, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Theodore Roosevelt all claimed to have seen Lincoln haunting the West Wing.



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# Don't be afraid to talk to ghosts



Grant McGee  
--  
Editor

I've only seen one ghost in my time.

I've heard of a ghost and heard from a ghost, but I've seen only one.

Actually, I guess it wasn't a whole ghost.

It was a hand.

This was the night of Jan. 28, 1986. I know this because it was the night of the day the Challenger space shuttle blew up.

I was getting ready for bed, standing by my bedside when something above me caught my eye.

It was a hand.

It was whitish/gray and I could see the ceiling tiles through the hand.

It just quickly floated down and then passed through the floor.

I stood there for a few moments.

Many thoughts of wonderment about life, the universe and stuff like that went through my head.

Then I went to bed.

The next morning I woke up and lay in bed for a bit pondering what I'd seen the night before.

I figured maybe why I saw the visage was because so many people were upset by the space shuttle explosion that the massive vibration upset the zone where ghosts hung out and, voila, I got to see something.

"I wouldn't tell everyone that story. People might think you were indulging in illicit substances," a friend said.

All I know is I saw what I saw.

I worked at a radio station in the area that was supposedly the stomping ground, or should I say floating ground, of a dapper ghost.

I never got to see the tuxedo-clad guy.

He usually showed up at night or when women were working alone in the building.

"He wears a tuxedo and likes to slam doors," reported one female staffer. His visit upset her so much she declined to work evenings again.

"There was a slamming door and I would look down the hall just in time to see him pass through a wall," she said.

Boss Man laughed at the stories.

"I can't remember who told me tuxedo ghost once had an apartment in New York City and he haunts that place," Boss Man said.

Now, there was that time a ghost wanting room service called the front desk of the hotel where I was working.

Actually, I don't know why the ghost called the front desk. I just figured if I were a ghost hanging out in a hotel room, room service is a good reason to call.

Here's the story.

Long ago and far away I had a summer job at the hotel where, 11 years in the future, the actor Patrick Swayze and his pals would arrive to film the blockbuster movie, "Dirty Dancing."

When I was working there though, I was paid the princely sum of \$66 a week with one day a week off.

There were benefits.

In addition to my \$11 a day I got room and board: Three meals a day and a room I shared with Chad the bellhop.

As the second shift front desk clerk I received a lot of instructions that I needed to remember.

"We never let guests stay in room 120," Manager Jay told me my first day on the job.

The mountaintop hotel, built on the shore of the highest natural lake east of the Mississippi, was one of a few owned by a philanthropic Texas millionairess who was only referred to as "Madame."

Manager Jay said one time the woman and her husband came to stay in the hotel and during their stay the husband died.

"He died in room 120. So Madame instructed the room was to be made up and left that way as long as she owned the place. The room was not to be assigned to guests ever again," Manager Jay said.

The hotel is in the high Appalachian Mountains of southwest Virginia at close to 4,000 feet above sea level.

At that elevation the summer weather was quite mild and pleasant, that was unless a thunderstorm rolled in.

And one night that summer a big ol' "thunderboomer" came rolling over the mountain.

The lightning was bright and close. There'd be a flash and the thunder was immediate, meaning the lightning strikes were nearby.

It was late, probably about 10 p.m., my shift would end in an hour.

Part of my gig was to answer calls to the front desk switchboard. This was one of those ancient "plug-in and talk" switchboards you see in old movies.

Chad the bellhop was sitting in a chair in the lobby reading a comic book and I was behind the front desk doing something close to nothing when the switchboard made its usual noise signifying a call was coming in.

I walked over to the switchboard and stared.

The lone call was coming from room 120.



Room 120's light was on and the switchboard was making its insistent noise.

"Hey Chad, come look at this," I said.

Chad got up and ambled across the lobby to the front desk.

Chad looked at the switchboard and smiled. He, like everyone else on the staff, knew about room 120.

"You gonna answer it?" Chad said.

"Yeah, I just wanted you to see it," I said. With that, I plugged in to the room 120 connection.

"Front desk," I said.

The other end of the line was silent.

Except for an occasional "click."

"Hello, front desk," I said.

Nothing.

"Well sir, just a suggestion, I'd mosey on to Glory. You're not accomplishing much by hanging out

in a hotel room all these years.

I wish you the best," I said as I disconnected the call.

Chad stared at me.

"Talking to a ghost?" he said.

"Makes sense to me. Nobody talks to them. People get all freaked out so they don't talk to them. They need to move on. They're not accomplishing anything here. Generally their egos keep them here," I said.

Chad continued staring at me.

"I would suggest if you encounter a ghost you have a chat with it," I said.

Chad turned around, walked across the lobby, sat down and went back to reading his comic book.

I didn't hear from room 120 the rest of the summer.

**Grant McGee writes for The Eastern New Mexico News. Contact him: gmcgee@thenews.email**

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# The story of Count Dracula

□ Count Dracula, a mythical, blood-sucking undead creature, is based on a very real individual who has a unique place in Romanian history.

The image of a menacing yet somewhat alluring man with canines piercing the neck of an unsuspecting victim has been circulating for more than 100 years, and is believed to have evolved from ancient Romanian folklore.

Count Dracula, a mythical, blood-sucking undead creature, is based on a very real individual who has a unique place in Romanian history. Vlad Dracula, nicknamed “Vlad Tepes” (“Vlad the Impaler”), was the ruler of Wallachia in the mid-1400s. He hailed from Sighisoara in Transylvania, but spent most of his adult life in southern Romania, according to Romania Tourism.

“Dracula” translates to “Son of Dracul,” meaning “dragon” or “devil.” Vlad the Impaler was the second legitimate son of Dracul and is one of the most important rulers in Wallachian history as well as a national hero in Romania.



readers could very well believe that Vlad the Impaler truly was condemned to live off the blood of the living for all eternity.

“Dracula” helped pave the way for more Dracula adaptations, including the 1922 film “Nosferatu,” which is the Romanian word for vampire. This, combined with the dense, dark ancient forests of Transylvania, and the fact that Romania Tourism says that Transylvania sits on one of the Earth’s strongest magnetic fields, help add to the mystery surrounding this area of the world - and the possibility that there really could be an undead predator feeding on the living.

Depending on the account, Dracula can shift his shape to a vampire bat or even mist. Additional accounts say that he will be burned by sunlight, although in Stoker’s version he is able to move about during the day despite typically being nocturnal. Hollywood films helped solidify the persistent myths about Dracula over the years.

Count Dracula is a famed character that often inspires Halloween costumes. The fictional count is based on a Romanian ruler who may have killed, but not by sucking anyone’s blood.

Vlad plundered Transylvanian Saxon villages who supported his opponents, and took captured people back to his home where he had them impaled.

Despite his brutal military strategy, there is no evidence that Vlad the Impaler had any ties to the supernatural. That connection is due in large part to

the 1897 novel “Dracula” penned by Irish author Bram Stoker, which inspired the vampire trope. Having never traveled to Romania himself, Stoker evoked authority by including many real locations in the country in his work. The book’s narrative was built around letters, diary entries and newspaper articles, so that

## CASPER

Not all ghosts are scary, and that’s true of the little white Casper the Friendly Ghost. He was created by Seymore Reit and Joe Oriolo in the 1930s and is often joined by Wendy the Good Little Witch and Hot Stuff the Little Devil.

## SLIMER

Ghosts can also be hilarious. Slimer is a green glob of a ghouel featured in the “Ghostbusters” franchise. He’s obnoxious, spews slime and often displays gross behavior. During pre-production of the 1984 movie, Ivan Reitman remarked that Slimer was similar to Bluto in “Animal House,” and likened the green goblin to the ghost of John Belushi.

# Alone in a HAUNTED HOUSE

By Jamie Mitchell

You can feel a chill as you sit alone, how long has it been? 5 minutes maybe 15? Time does not matter when you feel someone is watching and you’re all alone. The slightest creak from the old building sets you on edge as your imagination starts to get the best of you. “What was that?” you ask yourself, as you hear something squeak down the dark hallway and see a large shadow move quickly across the wall. “Could it be? Was that a ghost!?” You scream and run further into the old building.

The further you go the scarier things await you, you decide to hide in your room. BANG! After a short silence you are met with a hard banging sound coming from above you. You jump and let out a tiny squeak. “Oh no! It found me,” you think to yourself. You then hear footsteps and the push door in the room you came from creak open.

After some time has passed you finally find the courage to leave your room that you’ve been hiding in. As you unlock the door and swing it open, your legs shake from fright, only to find a cute black cat with green eyes rolling on the floor looking at you. Watching the cat purr and roll around you laugh “So you’re the one making all that noise!” The horror has ended or so you think.

As you sit playing with the kitty you think back to the ghost you saw, and terror fills you all over again. “The cat explains some of the noises but what about the ghost?” You begin to breathe heavily as you start to feel like someone’s behind you, watching you. The hairs on the back of your neck stand up and goosebumps run down your arms.

CREEEAAK..

A cartoon illustration of a haunted house with multiple gables and glowing yellow windows. In the foreground, a white ghost with large black eyes is reading an orange book. To the right of the ghost, a black cat with green eyes is sitting. The background is dark blue with a full moon and several black bats flying around it.

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- What do you call a ghost's true love? His ghoul-friend!
- Why did the vampire go to the doctor? He was coffin!
- What do you get when you cross a vampire and a snowman? Frostbite!
- Why did the scarecrow win an award? Because he was outstanding in his field!
- What do you call a witch who lives at the beach? A sand-witch!
- Why did the mummy go to school? To improve his "wrap" sheet!

**WHAT DO YOU CALL A HAUNTED CHICKEN? A POULTRYGEIST!**

**WHY DON'T SKELETONS FIGHT EACH OTHER? THEY DON'T HAVE THE GUTS!**