



Investigation Summary Report

Plantation Treasures Natchitoches, LA



HISTORY

Plantation Treasures is housed in the old Prudhomme Hughes Building and is located across from the beautiful and historic Cane River. This area of Natchitoches, Louisiana, is a National Historic Landmark and is the oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana Purchase Territory.

The Prudhomme Hughes Building, standing for over a century on Front Street in Natchitoches, is a captivating example of the elegance and grace which is so typical of this eldest town in the Louisiana Purchase.

Familiar to Natchitoches since the 1820's as the Prudhomme Hughes Building, the brick structure became the property of many interesting families. It is said that Gabriel St. Ann Prudhomme, a talented and promising young architect, designed and supervised the casting of the rich iron lace which frosts the long galleries on the front and back of the building.

There is a humorous story about the Hughes and Aaron Saloon and Billiard Hall on the ground floor in the earlier days of this thriving enterprise. It had a particular elegance, comparable to that noted in similar palaces in New Orleans which were frequented by the elite.

It had the nature of a club for young gentlemen, with its elaborate decor, and was considered a meeting place on Sunday nights when lavish candlelight turkey suppers were served by white-coated waiters. (As opposed to the above reasoning for the purpose of the three staircases, others contend that of the straight and spiral cases, one of them would suit the young gentlemen frequenting the restaurant and saloon, depending upon their condition!) The first story in the north half of the building has always housed commercial enterprise. Parker's Shoe Store occupied that part of the building around 1899. After the 1900 sale of the property, Hughes Dry Goods bought out the shoe store and turned it into a mercantile establishment.

During this time, the old Normal School, now Northwestern State University, had opened its doors, and in accordance with an act of the Louisiana Legislature, the saloon in the building was forced to close its doors (those swinging shuttered frames which and hidden much imagined intrigue and excitement from curious feminine eyes.) Alcoholic beverages could not be sold within five miles of a public institution of higher education, so read the law! And so the whole first floor came to be utilized by the Hughes store. It was completely renovated for its new purpose, but the beautiful old polished mirror was retained to reflect coquettish faces crowned with hats from the millinery department, and the shuttered doors sheltered the fitting rooms.

In the spring of 1959, the second floor of the Prudhomme Hughes Building was renovated to serve as the home of radio station KNOC. In 1965 Natchitoches Broadcasting Co. put the first FM broadcast station in Natchitoches on the air, KDBH. Both of these stations shared studios and offices on the second floor of the Prudhomme Hughes Building.

During the 1959 renovation the delicate iron railings on the front and rear galleries and the two beautiful staircases on the back were reworked, and their former grace restored. The distinctive hardware, locks and hinges, on the tall doors and windows opening onto either gallery were either redone or exact duplicates were made to replace them.

Through the years, the Prudhomme Hughes Building has stood on Front Street, accommodating numerous types of enterprise, and yet, always remaining a splendid reminder of the unique spirit and intrinsic beauty of Old Natchitoches.

ACTIVITY

There have been numerous reports of activity over the years at this location. The most common are of objects moving in the store area and hearing voices. A lot of times customers will be shopping and hear someone ask if they need help, only to turn around and have no one there. There have been sightings of a strange mist on the back spiral staircase. A mirror has broke on its own startling the owner of the shop. Sometimes there will be a foul smell reported coming from in between the shop area and the stockroom. In that same area, a door to a closet will open on its own. Also in that closet, items will move on their own as well.

INVESTIGATION

We arrived at Plantation Treasures a little after 8 pm. The team consisted of Brandon, Lori, Steve, and Bess. We were greeted by the manager, employees and a couple of other people who heard we would be there. We started with a walk through of the building and decided where to set up cameras. Due to the size of attic, we had a little trouble finding an I.R. camera that would light up the entire space. Finally, after almost 30 minutes of trying, we finally resolved the issue. We were finally able to go lights a little before 10 pm.

We divided into 2 groups, one upstairs in the attic and the other down in the shop. Down in the shop area on the first part of the night, Brandon and Lori were standing next to a jewelry stand when Brandon thought he heard a bead hit the ground by his foot. At the same time, Lori experienced a cold sensation down her arm. After much searching, the bead could not be found. We were lucky enough to catch the sound on audio. It wasn't until the end of the night when activity started picking up. Steve and Brandon were down in the shop area and heard something fall off a shelf. A purse, something that the ghost is known to play with, had fallen off of a table. Brandon reset the purse on the table and tried everything he could to get the purse to fall off again, even jumping right around the table. There was even an e.v.p. caught directly after the purse fell. Brandon asks if it was worth it and the women's voice answered yes. There was another e.v.p. obtained in the attic area when Brandon, Lori and the shop manager Sherri were investigating. Brandon ask if there is anything there with them and a woman's voice ask What's this for? The voice does not match up with the other 2 women up there and the question is never answered. There were other e.v.p.s captured, but due to bleed through noise from other floors, they were undecipherable. Finally at the end of the night, Brandon got startled for the first time in his ghost hunting career. After deciding to call it a night, Brandon and Steve began hauling equipment out of the attic area out onto the back balcony. Sherri, the shop manager came upstairs and asked if Brandon would walk through with her as she locked up the upstairs. After walking through, Brandon returned upstairs to get the last of the equipment left on the back balcony. Even though no one was upstairs except for Brandon, something rammed hard on the inside of the attic against the door Brandon was standing next to. He jumped and made his way downstairs rather quickly.

We would like to thank the owners, managers, and employees of Plantation Treasures for being such gracious hosts. We had a blast investigating there and can not wait to make a return trip sometime in the near future.