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## The ghosts of Jonesborough

By Heather E. Seay  
Online Editor / Staff Writer



*The Haunt Masters Club stands downtown in front of the Christopher Taylor Cabin. (Charlie Mauk / H & T Photographer)*

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You can just about throw a rock and "hit a haunted place in Jonesborough," explained ghost hunter Toni Greenway as she walked through the Oldest Town in Tennessee.

Greenway, Justin Guess and Robert Handschumacher, three members of the Haunt Masters Club, a Tri-Cities paranormal investigation group, came to Jonesborough recently to visit historic places thought to house "ghosts."

"So many passionate people lived here," said Guess, "it's no wonder they're still hanging around." The Haunt Masters are made up of 12 members, who investigate paranormal activity using a wide range of technical equipment such as infrared sensors, motion activated cameras and audio recording devices.

They were recently selected as "one of the best in the country based on the evidence they've collected during their ghost investigations," according to the publishers of a recent DVD that includes the club's experiences called "Ghosts Coast to Coast: Photographs and Voices from the Country's Best Ghost Investigators."

What makes the club different, said Guess, is that they are just as interested in history as they are in parapsychology. This makes Jonesborough a picture-perfect spot for digging up stories and legends that can make your skin crawl.

What follows here is a sampling of haunted places that the Haunt Masters Club shared with the Herald & Tribune.

Boo Alley, located next to The Wedding Loft at 119 East Main Street downtown, gets its name from the word "Boo" which is written on the brick in the alleyway. It is said that every time the word is painted over, the "Boo" somehow bleeds through the old paint.

Central Christian Church, 106 Fox Street is also said to be haunted. A mysterious shadow has been seen walking near the church, and is attributed to the ghost of a bootlegger who was killed in 1928. His body was rumored to have been left on the curb in front of Central Christian Church. The young men tried for his murder were acquitted.

Christopher-Taylor House, 124 West Main Street is associated with a few ghosts. The cabin is the oldest house in the city, even though it was not built where it now stands. The two-story log cabin was built by Christopher Taylor, a man sent by North Carolina to help protect locals from Indian attack. President Andrew Jackson reportedly stayed in the cabin, before he was president. His ghost apparently found the cabin after it was moved, and he has been allegedly sighted there many times.

Jonesborough Courthouse has reportedly scared a few inmates. One inmate in particular was "forgotten" and left in the upstairs holding cells overnight some years ago. When officers arrived the next morning, they found the man pale and

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quivering, begging to be let out. Apparently he and other inmates have often reported hearing odd sounds, voices and sounds of misery and woe in the cells.

Gammon-Sterling House is a privately-owned residence with a past. Some believe that this house, currently occupied, is haunted. If so, the hauntings are blamed on horrifying event from the past. In the 1970s', a girl was found hanged in the house. Everyone suspected it was a suicide until examiners found river water in her lungs.

Hawley House Bed & Breakfast, 114 East Woodrow Avenue has a giggling ghost. Apparently, as confirmed by owner Marcy Hawley, only men can hear the strange voices of giggling ladies, slamming doors and unnatural footsteps on the second floor. This lends itself to the theory that the home was once a brothel. Although Hawley has never heard the voices herself, men who have stayed overnight have reported events to her. Hawley stressed that the spirits in the Hawley House are "good spirits" who have always been nothing but friendly.

The former Jackson House has reports of of hauntings as far back as 1875. In 1875, the Jonesborough Herald & Tribune reported the accounts of a haunting in the house. Nathan Morrell and his wife were renting the home and it seemed as soon as they moved in they noticed something invisible lived in the house with them. When they were seated in the parlor, they could hear what sounded like a man with a cane walking on the second floor. The phantom footsteps would descend the stairs, then return back upstairs. the family believed the tortured souls of soldiers resided in the home. The house was torn down at the Turn of the Century, but some report hearing a woman wailing on the hill where the house once stood.

But, the most haunted place in all of Jonesborough, according to Guess, is the Cranberry Thistle. According to proprietors Jo Storie and Nancy Colburn, their ghost-lady has followed them from their original location to the new cafe just down Main Street. Whispering in waitresses ears and calling people in other's voices are just a few of the hauntings attributed to this ghost.

In all, the Haunt Masters Club has investigated more than 50 hauntings, many in private residences across Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. They do investigations free of charge, and provide historical and paranormal information for a wide range of sites in this area. For more information, point your browser to [www.hauntmastersclub.com](http://www.hauntmastersclub.com)

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