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Autobiographical Sketch

My name is Zackery Youngblood. I am a senior here at BYU studying Psychology with a minor in Creative Writing. I was born and raised in the southern United States. While my family moved around a lot within the Southeast, we sent a majority of our time in Southern Appalachia. Between northwest Georgia and northeast Tennessee, much of my life has been spent in the shadow of those beautiful mountains.

Growing up, I had a distinct feeling of gratitude for the culture and history unique to that part of the country. The stories from olden times ignited my young imagination and helped shape me into who I am today. As I have grown older, my appreciation for this region has only grown as I have travelled throughout the United States for various reasons. While I have a great respect for all portions of this wonderful country, Appalachia will always feel like home.

It is with this appreciation in mind that I set out to collect Appalachian Ghost stories. Initially, I wanted to find stories connected to all parts of Appalachia, but, given my limited resources, I eventually narrowed my focus to that of Southern Appalachia. I hope that something in what I have discovered in this project will serve to inform and inspire those interested in Southern Appalachian culture.
Introduction

Southern Appalachia starts in northeast Alabama and northwest Georgia and stretches through portions of Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and the Carolinas.¹ This is an area rich in culture, history, and lore. As one of the oldest settled portions of the United States of America, any historian could dedicate much of their life to studying this region. With a knowledge of this, I elected to study only a small portion of the lore surrounding this area. Of particular interest to me was the Ghost Lore of the area. I firmly believe that a thorough study of the lore surrounding ghosts and ghost stories can help shed light on important nuances within a culture.

In setting out to study Southern Appalachian ghost stories, I wished to find how these ghost stories helped reflect the general Ghost Lore of Southern Appalachia. I collected items from several family members and friends who lived in northeast Tennessee. As I collected ghost stories, I discovered that ghost stories generally shared several things in common, including a sense of place, some Native American influence, and a certain degree of respect (or even fearful respect) for those who have passed on. I suggest that these commonalities between ghost stories make up the essence of Southern Appalachian Ghost Lore.

A Sense of Place

In collecting stories from various individuals living in Southern Appalachia (primarily northeast Tennessee), I found that each story was grounded in a place. Usually, these places were described very specifically. None of the stories I obtained were of hauntings or ghosts that were more general or followed individuals around. Instead, each story had a grounded real-world location with which it was associated. For instance, several of my items came from two family

members who both described their own experiences with ghosts who are believed to dwell in their house.\textsuperscript{2} Even some of the more broad legends and stories, such as the legend of the wendigo,\textsuperscript{3} are grounded in a general place such as a forest. This sense of location and place gives a distinct realness to the ghost stories through grounding them in a physical location. The house mentioned in items 1, 11, 12, and 13 is one I have been to many times. As I listened to the ghost stories, I could see the house in my mind, thus giving more weight to the stories themselves.

This tendency to ground the ghost story in a specific place seems common amongst stories from Appalachia. For instance, most of the stories found in William Montell’s book, \textit{Ghosts across Kentucky}, start with the narrator of a given story setting the stage for the story itself.\textsuperscript{4} Indeed, Nancy Roberts’ book, \textit{Ghosts of the Southern Mountains and Appalachia}, also begins each of its stories by specifying the location.\textsuperscript{5} I feel that this sense of place helps the listeners for every story to gain a sense of relatability to the experience, often because the locations mentioned are fairly close or well known. This physical proximity of the ghost story helps the story to hit closer to home so to speak.

For instance, with my own remembered account of the haunting at the Rotherwood mansion,\textsuperscript{6} I know generally where the Rotherwood mansion is and thus the story itself seems a bit more frightening because there is less emotional distance there. Similarly, I was familiar with the location of each of the other places mentioned in the other accounts. In this way, a ghost story told to those living in Southern Appalachia is more likely to have an effect on the listener than if the same story were told to those unfamiliar with the region and its geography.

\textsuperscript{2} See Appendix items 1, 11, 12 & 13  
\textsuperscript{3} See Appendix item 2  
\textsuperscript{6} See Appendix item 10
Native American Influence

Another common trend I noticed was the tendency for many to mention Native American legends when asked about ghost stories, whether that be a passing mention of the wendigo, or the legend of Spear Finger. Several major Native American tribes once called this region their home, including the Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole tribes. To this day, there is a reverence that I have experienced in regards to the Native Americans who once occupied the area. I find it interesting that the story of Spear Finger, which claims to be an old Cherokee legend, is still passed around even today. I submit that the presence of this story in the modern ghost lore of Southern Appalachia represents a persistent respect for the Native tribes that once lived there.

Many in the area still view Native Americans with a sense of supernatural fear. Evidence of this can be found in the story of the first ghost of Bristol, Tennessee as relayed by my mother. In the story, a woman is confronted by a Native American ghost who she believes was there to warn her and her husband not to proceed with their plans of digging a well. When they eventually dug the well despite the woman’s protests, they found the remains of a Native American man. I have heard many similar stories while growing up in Appalachia late at night around the campfire.

In Renée L. Burgland’s book, The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects, Burgland states, “For more than three-hundred years, American literature has been haunted by ghostly Indians… Many of America’s most prominent authors seized on the figure of the spectral Native as central to their attempts to develop a uniquely American national
literature…” I believe that these ghost stories that focus on Native Americans are a modern reflection of that same trend. Native American legends and ghost stories are unique to the United States, and are an integral part of Appalachian Ghost Lore.

**Reverence for the Dead**

Also common amongst the stories I heard was a distinct sense of reverence or respect for the dead. In the story of the old tuberculosis hospital, I got the sense that while the hospital workers looked at the haunting of the location as a sort of interesting tourist location (as shown through their former practice of selling tickets during Halloween parties), there was also a sense of respect for those spirits who might dwell in that place. When talking with Carrie Filetti regarding her experiences with the ghosts in her family home, I felt the reverence and fascination that she had for those ghosts, despite the somewhat frightening nature of the experiences.

In each case, the sense of reverence remains. Even in the story of the Rotherwood mansion, there is a sense of respect for the deceased (even if that respect takes the form of fear). I believe this respect is indicative of the larger sense of respect found in the Southern United States. Growing up, we were frequently instructed to reply with respect to anyone of authority. I once was even identified as a Southerner outside my home state, not due to my accent (I have never had much of an accent), but due to my use of the words “sir” and “ma’am” when speaking with those I deemed to be in authority. Perhaps the respect those in Southern Appalachia feel towards ghosts and spirits comes from a sense that these individuals have a

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12 See Appendix item 4
13 See Appendix items 11, 12, & 13
14 See Appendix item 10
sense of authority over the world of the dead. While merely a theory, this may help explain somewhat as to why there is such a sense of fear and reverence surrounding ghosts and haunted locations.

Though fear is certainly the feeling most often associated with ghost stories (and the stories I received are no different), I also detected that each story seemed to act as a sort of warning or lesson. As an example, in the story of the ghost boy, the warning seems to be not to joke regarding those who have passed on. In the story of the ghost lights, the strange malevolent orb only reappears when the camp counselor is discussing the event with his coworker. In each of these stories, the lesson or ‘moral’ seems to contradict the telling of the story itself. Luckily, I was not subjected to a power outage or malevolent orb of light when hearing the stories, however, I believe the lesson is still valid as it sets up a sort of reverence around the telling of such stories. In telling the stories, there is also a hint of fear that is produced as the topic seems almost taboo or dangerous given the events told within the story. Larry Thacker states:

“Tales of spirits of the deceased roaming the halls of our family properties and wandering the low valleys and long hollows of our countryside are not told in our part of Appalachia merely to entertain groups of wide-eyed children around late night campfires or on Halloween nights. These tales are inherently woven into our communities and remain there ready to reinforce morals and lessons when necessary, ready to tug at the conscience when someone walks the thin line between acceptable and damnable activity.”

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15 See Appendix item 1  
16 See Appendix item 3  
All this being said, it is important to note that this reverence and respect for ghosts does not preclude individuals from showing a genuine interest in the supernatural. Many of those I spoke with showed both a sense of fear and a desire to hear more regarding the topic of conversation. These two feelings exist in tandem with one another in a unique blend of emotion that I have found only in ghost stories.

Conclusion

In researching this topic, I believe I have gained a new appreciation for and broader sense of Southern Appalachian Ghost Lore. I found that in each interaction with those who shared their experiences and knowledge of ghost stories, I gained a sense of connection with each individual. The most poignant stories I found were those related to me by those who had first-hand experience with the supernatural. In those cases, I felt that the respect for the dead and grounded sense of place were the most common aspects in first-hand stories. In those stories which had been passed on through constant retelling, I found that Native Americans featured more prominently. In conclusion, this region’s ghost lore is composed of many different aspects, but especially a grounded sense of place, a touch of superstition regarding the Native Americans who once occupied the region, and a healthy respect for the dead.
Appendix

Item #1
March 13, 2022
Collected via Zoom Interview
Genre: personal narrative, non-religious supernatural legend
Title of item: Ghost Boy

Contributor Data:
Name: Forrest Filetti
Gender: Male
Age: 23
Home region: Northeast TN (Bristol)
Contributor’s relationship to collector: friend

Social Data: The atmosphere was pretty casual between us as we discussed some of Forrest’s personal experiences and things he had heard about legends and ghost stories in the area.

Cultural Data: Bristol, TN is a small, old town right on the border between TN and VA. It lies right in the middle of southern Appalachia. The house mentioned in this particular narrative is an old house that sits in the woods a little ways off the main road that runs through the town (Hwy 394).

Collection and Transcription Methods: Transcribed from video conferencing interview. Ums and ahs were removed and some wording was cleaned up for clarity and brevity.

Text:

So, we’ll give a little history of the house to start: It was owned by Tennessee Ernie Ford’s uncle, who [meaning Ernie Ford] was a famous folk singer back in the early 1900s. He worked on the farm as a boy for a while, so he like lived in my house for a while which is pretty cool. Then, I don’t know what happened until the… seventies, I think it was, but there was a family of three that moved in, like a mom, dad, and their little boy who was eight to twelve I think. So they lived there, and the dad was an electrician and he was really good at what he did, like our house has a lot of weird electrical stuff that he did himself. Like there is a barn on our property that is technically wired, and it needs work, but you could theoretically have electricity in there. It’s pretty cool. Anyway, they’re living there and one day the little boy was riding his bike out in the street or somewhere and he got hit by a car and died. And so the family was pretty heartbroken, and living in the house was too much for them so they moved. And so the house was bought by none other than Brother Daniels [a neighbor who acted as our landlord for a while]. His daughter moved in with her family, but they ended up moving out because they found a snake in the house – that’s not very relevant, but yeah that’s what happened. So they moved out and the house sat there for like twenty-ish years until Brother Daniels decided to fix it up. So he and my dad fixed it up together, and I think Brother Wangsgard as well. So they fixed it up and then we moved in.

So, in the house there’s a little closet/cupboard thing under the stairs and one day my mom was just doing some cleaning. We were using that space for storage and she was taking out the boxes when she found a little piece of paper (see item #12, fig. 1, 2, & 3) in the corner of the closet. She pulled it out and it was a little kid’s doodles and on the back was a treasure map with a whole ‘X marks the spot’ and all that. My mom was really intrigued by it, like “Oh, this is so cool, a little kid left their thing here.” So, she asked Brother Daniels’ daughter if it was any of theirs and they said, “No, that’s not ours. It’s not my handwriting and I’ve never seen it before.”
So we determined it must have been the boy who lived here before them, it must have been his and he hid it in the corner or something. So it was just a cool little thing we found, like “Oh, wow it’s the ghost boy!” and stuff.

Around this time, we had known a bit about the legend, but we didn’t know all the details so we called Brother Daniels and he told us the story about how the dad was an electrician and what had happened to the boy and that they moved out and he bought the house after that and all that. So, that’s all fresh in our minds and this is where the experience comes in for me. So the story is fresh in our minds and we’ve been talking about it for the past few days and I was working a late shift one night and didn’t have a car so my mom had to come pick me up. So she comes and picks me up and we’re driving back and we’re walking up to the porch – the front door – to go inside. And I turn around and it looks like my dad’s car’s headlights were on. Well, it didn’t look like they were on, it just looked liked they were just glowing a little bit and I pointed it out to my mom. I was like, “Mom, do you see that? What do you think that is?” And she was just like, “Oh, I don’t know, that’s weird.” All this time we’re unlocking the door. So, my mom opens the door, and I say, just kind of as a joke, “Maybe it was the ghost boy.” And as soon as I said that, I step inside and the power went out. As soon as I said that! And it was really creepy because the dad was an electrician and he had done all the wiring in the house and all this stuff. The next day, I go to work and I ask this guy who lived just down the street from us, “Hey, did your power go out last night?” And he was like, “No, we were fine.” So it literally was just our house where the power went out. And I kid you not, it was as soon as I said that. So, yeah, that’s my story. So, if you come to my house, don’t mock the ghost boy.

Submitted by: Zackery Youngblood, 24, male
Winter 2022, ENGL 391
Dr. Christopher Blythe
Submitted on: March 26, 2022
Item #2  
March 13, 2022  
Collected via Zoom Interview  
Genre: non-religious supernatural legend  
Title of item: The Legend of the Wendigo  

Contributor Data:  
Name: Forrest Filetti  
Gender: Male  
Age: 23  
Home region: Northeast TN (Bristol)  
Contributor’s relationship to collector: friend  

Social Data: The atmosphere was pretty casual between us as we discussed some of Forrest’s personal experiences and things he had heard about legends and ghost stories in the area.  
Cultural Data: Bristol, TN is a small, old town right on the border between TN and VA. It lies right in the middle of southern Appalachia.  
Collection and Transcription Methods: Transcribed from video conferencing interview. Ums and ahs were removed and some wording was cleaned up for clarity and brevity.  

Text:  
I don’t know a whole lot, and I know that in some areas of the arctic, they have their own version of the Wendigo, but from what I understand, the Appalachian version of the Wendigo is like a forest spirit. It’s kind of like the guardian of the forests and it’s there to make sure that people don’t desecrate the forests or the life that lives there. Like I said, I don’t know a whole lot of the details, but I think at one point it was a human, but it got turned or cursed to be the wendigo and it would patrol the forest and stuff like that. It looks kind of like a deer, but it walks on two legs I believe. I think some versions say that it drinks blood. Like I said, I don’t know a whole lot about it, I just know it’s a pretty famous legend.

Submitted by: Zackery Youngblood, 24, male  
Winter 2022, ENGL 391  
Dr. Christopher Blythe  
Submitted on: March 26, 2022
Item #3
March 13, 2022
Collected via Zoom Interview
Genre: personal narrative, non-religious supernatural legend
Title of item: Ghost Lights
Contributor Data:
Name: Forrest Filetti
Gender: Male
Age: 23
Home region: Northeast TN (Bristol)
Contributor’s relationship to collector: friend
Social Data: The atmosphere was pretty casual between us as we discussed some of Forrest’s personal experiences and things he had heard about legends and ghost stories in the area.
Cultural Data: This story was heard by the contributor at Scout Camp from a camp counselor. The camp happened in the Appalachian region.
Collection and Transcription Methods: Transcribed from video conferencing interview. Ums and ahs were removed and some wording was cleaned up for clarity and brevity.
Text:

Basically, the story goes that somewhere in the area, like Greeneville or somewhere in that area, there was a party that was going to happen. Ike a bunch of teenagers were gonna go up on the hill and just have a party and a big bonfire. So, all this is happening and someone notices that there is this orb that is kind of flying towards them, just like a clear orb I guess. And so it starts flying towards the group and everyone stops what they’re doing and are kind of just enthralled by this orb. And it just keeps coming closer and closer. So the person who tells the story felt like they needed to get out of there as the orb starts getting closer, so they start running down the mountain. And all of the sudden they hear screaming and all like people are being attacked. And it’s him and this guy who are running down the mountain and they hear this that sounds like people are being murdered and screaming and all this crazy stuff. So they run all the way to their cars, get in their cars, and drive to the police station to tell them what happened. And I think the story goes that when they got back to the mountain with the police, there was nothing there. Like everyone just disappeared. And then, the camp counselor, one day, he was telling this to one of the other camp counselors out by the lake, since they were telling what legends they knew, and they noticed an orb floating above the lake. And they ran back to their cabin.

Submitted by: Zackery Youngblood, 24, male
Winter 2022, ENGL 391
Dr. Christopher Blythe
Submitted on: March 26, 2022
**Item #4**
March 15, 2022
Collected via Zoom Interview
Genre: personal narrative, non-religious supernatural legend
Title of item: Knoxville Tuberculosis Hospital

**Contributor Data:**
Name: Ryan Youngblood  
Gender: Male  
Age: 46  
Home region: Northeast TN (Bristol)  
Contributor’s relationship to collector: father  
Social Data: The atmosphere was pretty casual between us as we discussed some of my father’s personal experiences with ghosts of the region.  
Cultural Data: Knoxville is one of the biggest cities in eastern TN. It is very old and has a lot of old buildings and such. My father worked as a nursing home administrator for a while which is how he came into this particular experience.  
Collection and Transcription Methods: Transcribed from video conferencing interview. Ums and ahs were removed and some wording was cleaned up for clarity and brevity.

**Text:**

I do know all about the tuberculosis hospital just north of Knoxville, TN – Hillcrest Manor or whatever it is – Hillcrest something. That place is haunted and I’ve had firsthand experience with that one. So I can tell you the story behind that if you want.

[I replied in the affirmative]  
So, Hillcrest used to be a tuberculosis hospital, and they bought the property and built a nursing home right next to it. They connected the two to save on resources, and they basically only used the kitchen in the old tuberculosis hospital, but everything else goes unused – the entire building goes unused. So, literally every day, the only people who are over in the old tuberculosis building are kitchen staff, right? And that’s on the main floor, that’s on—basically in the basement of the building. So, rumor has it that it’s haunted by children who died there with TB and that staff are there also – the staff that died are there and they came back to take care of these kids. So, here’s the interesting thing: when I was there, I had to go there, I had to go because of training. They always say that you can hear kids’ voices, and here’s the creepy thing about the place: all of the hallways are curved, so you can’t see anything all the way down the hallway because the building is built in kind of a moon-shape. So you look down the hall and you can’t see the end of the hallway. So it’s got tons of shadows.

So, when I was there, I was there for a financial training. I told the administrator, I said, “Look, I really want to go into the old TB hospital if that’s okay.” And they were like, “Yeah, yeah we’ll take you over there on your last day. We’ll give you a tour.” And I was like, “Alright.” So – Ha, it’s creepy man – we get in and we go over to the kitchen area and say hi to everyone. Then we go to get on the elevator, and I can’t remember if it’s five or six floors, but we get on this old elevator and I say, “let’s try to start on the top floor if we can.” So, we get in the elevator, go to the top floor, and on the way up, the elevator stops on the third floor and the doors open and like this gust of wind blows into the elevator while we’re stopped there. And we’re all like, “why did we stop on the third floor?” There’s nobody in the hospital, why did we stop on the third floor? So we’re just staring at each other. So, then we just wait and the doors shut and we make it to the fifth floor, and you can’t see around the corners, and so we go around
and on the fifth floor, they have the incinerator where they would literally cremate bodies. So, we go down there, then we go down to the fourth floor and we’re looking down the hallway, and we hear this really low toned kids voice. You could barely make it out, and she’s [one of the people I’m with] just like, “sometimes you think it’s the wind and sometimes you think it’s a kid.” So, I’m freaked out and we go all the way down to the main lobby after touring the rest of the building and there are these massive busts of the people who founded the hospital still sitting in the main lobby. And it is creepy. There’s tons of shadows because there’s no real lighting. Like, they have power, but they don’t turn the power on to the whole building since they don’t want to waste money on rooms that aren’t being used. So, anyways, super creepy. That was my experience.

They say that it’s old tuberculosis patients and old staff members. They say that they’ll go up there and old gurneys will be moved around, furniture will be moved so it faces to look out the window. Staff members say that when they leave in the evenings sometimes, they’ll see people standing in the windows, like really weird stuff. It’s one of the creepiest places I think I’ve ever been in my entire life. And that was in the middle of the day; it was right after lunch. They used to hold Halloween parties there. They would charge a cover charge to get in, and I’m like, that’s, no thanks.

Submitted by: Zackery Youngblood, 24, male
Winter 2022, ENGL 391
Dr. Christopher Blythe
Submitted on: March 26, 2022
Item #5
March 13, 2022
Collected via Zoom Interview
Genre: non-religious supernatural legend
Title of item: Spear Finger
Contributor Data:
Name: Ryan Youngblood
Gender: Male
Age: 46
Home region: Northeast TN (Bristol)
Contributor’s relationship to collector: father
Social Data: The atmosphere was pretty casual between us as we discussed some of my father’s personal knowledge and research of ghosts in the region.
Cultural Data: Tsali is a recreational area in North Carolina where my father would occasionally go mountain biking. This is around the area where my father heard these things took place.
Collection and Transcription Methods: Transcribed from video conferencing interview. Ums and ah’s were removed and some wording was cleaned up for clarity and brevity.
Text:
So, you know where I used to go mountain biking? It’s up by the Nantahala area… Tsali Recreation Area? So, Tsali is an old Cherokee area, like Cherokee Indians had tons of homesteads out that way. And there’s this legend called, “Spear Finger.” It’s this old Cherokee woman and the Cherokee would tell their children this story so that they wouldn’t wander off into the woods. They said that Spear Finger was out there. What they said she would do is – she literally had a finger that was a knife and she would take the form of any close loved one or someone like that. She would take their form, and imitate them to get them to come closer, then she would take her finger and shove the spear through the back of their throat, through the back of their neck, and kill them and then would eat their livers. It’s terrifying. And they say that she would have to maintain that form until she was out of sight from people. She would always be an old lady or something like that. The legend says that even though she took that form, she couldn’t be destroyed. They’d shoot arrows at her, and the arrows would be like they were hitting stone. Then, once she escaped, she would take the form of another person or animal and run off. So, yeah that’s pretty crazy. That’s over by Tsali and the Nantahala area.

Submitted by: Zackery Youngblood, 24, male
Winter 2022, ENGL 391
Dr. Christopher Blythe
Submitted on: March 26, 2022
**Item #6**
March 13, 2022
Collected via Zoom Interview
Genre: non-religious supernatural legend
Title of item: Annalisa Netherly
**Contributor Data:**
Name: Ryan Youngblood
Gender: Male
Age: 46
Home region: Northeast TN (Bristol)
Contributor’s relationship to collector: father
Social Data: The atmosphere was pretty casual between us as we discussed some of my father’s personal knowledge and research of ghosts in the region.
Cultural Data: This story takes place in Chattanooga, TN, another old city in eastern TN. Chattanooga lies right on the Tennessee River and has a lot of old historical buildings.
Collection and Transcription Methods: Transcribed from video conferencing interview. Ums and ah's were removed and some wording was cleaned up for clarity and brevity.

Text:

So, there’s the story of Annalisa Netherly and it is totally creepy. So, when I worked at Alstom [a French nuclear power company that operated in Chattanooga for a while], we would put people – expatriates that would come from Germany and all these other places to work – we’d put them up in the Reed House because it’s a really swanky hotel in downtown Chattanooga. So, the story goes that the Reed House is haunted, but specifically Room 311. They say that men can’t stay in room 311. And the reason that men can’t stay in room 311 is because Annalisa Netherly was in that room with – and this part was true – so what happened was that she was in that room with her lover and her husband found out where she was and she was in the bathtub. And he slit her throat so deeply that it took her head off in that room, in room 311. So, any guy that stays in there, they say that they’ve heard a woman scream, that they’ve heard a woman cry, that anytime a man stays there alone, that’s when she comes out. She does not like having men in that room. They say that sometimes the phone will just start ringing and people pick up the phone and no one is there. So, that’s room 311 at the Reed House. And if men smoke, that’s another thing, because her husband smoked, so if men smoke cigars, you go in that room and if you’re a smoker, she recognizes it and that’s when she gets violent.

Submitted by: Zackery Youngblood, 24, male
Winter 2022, ENGL 391
Dr. Christopher Blythe
Submitted on: March 26, 2022
Item #7
March 13, 2022
Collected via Zoom Interview
Genre: non-religious supernatural legend
Title of item: Bristol’s First Ghost
Contributor Data:
Name: Diana Youngblood
Gender: Female
Age: 45
Home region: Northeast TN (Bristol)
Contributor’s relationship to collector: mother
Social Data: The atmosphere was pretty casual between us as we discussed some of my mother’s personal knowledge and research of ghosts in the region.
Cultural Data: Bristol, TN is a small, old town right on the border between TN and VA. It lies right in the middle of southern Appalachia.
Collection and Transcription Methods: Transcribed from video conferencing interview. Ums and ahs were removed and some wording was cleaned up for clarity and brevity.
Text:
There’s this one that I read about online called the ‘First Ghost of Bristol.’ So, like in the 1850s, there’s this man by the name of John Moore who owned a store and a small smokehouse in Bristol. And they were preparing to open a new store it says and the family had made arrangements to dig a new well. So, one morning, his wife goes out to the smokehouse with a butcher’s knife and was shocked to see a ghost. It was a Native American ghost who moved towards her like it was going to attack her, but then it disappeared and was never seen again. And the knife also disappeared after the incident it says, the knife that she had. But it says that she protested the digging of the new well, saying that the spirit she saw was warning her not to disturb the area. And then, her husband was like, “Oh, it’s just superstition,” so they went ahead and dug the well, and when they dug it, they found the remains of a Native American grave. So, that was apparently the first ghost of Bristol.

Submitted by: Zackery Youngblood, 24, male
Winter 2022, ENGL 391
Dr. Christopher Blythe
Submitted on: March 26, 2022
Item #8
March 13, 2022
Collected via Zoom Interview
Genre: non-religious supernatural legend
Title of item: The Gentleman in the Basement and the Ghost Cat
Contributor Data:
Name: Megan Youngblood
Gender: Female
Age: 16
Home region: Northeast TN (Bristol)
Contributor’s relationship to collector: mother
Social Data: The atmosphere was pretty casual between us as we discussed some of my sister’s personal knowledge and research of ghosts in the region.
Cultural Data: This item comes from a story told to my sister from her friend who lives around Tri-Cities, TN (comprised of the cities Bristol, Kingsport, and Johnson City).
Collection and Transcription Methods: Transcribed from video conferencing interview. Ums and ahs were removed and some wording was cleaned up for clarity and brevity.
Text:

So, Polly told me her house was haunted, but just in the basement. Apparently there was this ‘gentleman’ – that’s how she referred to him – that he lived in the basement and that’s where he died. I’m not sure how he died, I don’t remember. But he was trapped down there and couldn’t come up. But every once in a while they’ll hear these big, loud footsteps from his work boots on the stairs and they’ll hear him put down his briefcase and knock on the door, and they’ll open the door, but no one will be there.

There’s also this ghost cat in the area. So, she has a dog, right? And her dog will just start barking at nothing, and they’re like, “what’s going on?” And then, Polly says she’ll be laying in bed and she’ll see these tiny little indentions in the comforter like tiny little footprints, like kitty-prints.

Submitted by: Zackery Youngblood, 24, male
Winter 2022, ENGL 391
Dr. Christopher Blythe
Submitted on: March 26, 2022
There’s another [story] here that I found called, ‘The Brown Mountain Lights,’ and apparently there’s these lights that you can see at night on Brown Mountain and they didn’t know where they were coming from. So, then they did an investigation on it and they said that it must have been like car lights or train lights or lantern lights, and they’re like, “Yeah, I can see that now, but like it dated back to the days of covered wagons. People saw them back then and they didn’t have trains in that area or automobiles at that time.” But they were like, “There’s actually something to it because that happened even before there were those things.”
When I was in high school, I had a teacher that told us about the Rotherwood mansion and some of the hauntings that happen around there. Apparently there was this guy who was just the worst kind of person and something happened to where he got sick. Anyways, he was really sick and in bed, and apparently a swarm of flies suddenly appeared and flew down his throat, suffocating him. So, he died and they went to hold his funeral, but for some reason, the wagon carrying the casket wouldn’t move. The horses strained and they looked over the wheels and all that. There was nothing obstructing the wagon, it simply wouldn’t move. But then, suddenly, this big black dog comes bounding out of the woods and through the gathered crowd, and as soon as the black dog crosses the funeral procession, the wagon starts moving again. My teacher told us that some think the black dog was sort of like the man’s spirit and that some report seeing a big black dog around the Rotherwood mansion even today.
Item #11
March 13, 2022
Collected via Zoom Interview
Genre: personal narrative, non-religious supernatural legend
Title of item: The Old Ford Farm (Part One: The Tobacco Man)

Contributor Data:
Name: Carrie Filetti
Gender: Female
Home region: Northeast TN (Bristol)
Contributor’s relationship to collector: family friend, mother of friend
Social Data: The atmosphere was pretty casual between us as we discussed some of her and her family’s personal experiences with ghosts.
Cultural Data: Bristol, TN is a small, old town right on the border between TN and VA. It lies right in the middle of southern Appalachia. The house mentioned in this particular narrative is an old house that sits in the woods a little ways off the main road that runs through the town (Hwy 394). See Item #1.
Collection and Transcription Methods: Transcribed from video conferencing interview. Ums and ah’s were removed and some wording was cleaned up for clarity and brevity.

Text:
So, [this house] is called the Ford Farm, and the Ford Farm was, you know the country singer Tennessee Ernie Ford? His song was ‘Sixteen Tons and what do you get? I sold my soul to the company store.” After this, look up Tennessee Ernie Ford, ‘country store’ or something like that. It’s about coal mining. Well, anyways, he was a big country singer in the area; he’s famous in this area. So, his uncle owned this farm and all the area around where we all live. It’s called ‘the Ford Farm.’ But the original house was the Ford’s home. So, Tennessee Ernie Ford, the country singer, worked on this farm when he was a little boy. So that’s kind of cool about this house. So, anyways, in the sixties, a family came in and they bought the Ford Farm. From what I understand, it wasn’t a huge place, it was just a little farm house. But he was an electrician, and his name – I called Brother Daniels for some information – his name was… the Penick’s. The Penick’s bought this house from the Fords and in the sixties they built around the little house. So, the downstairs of our house, that area, was the original house. In the sixties, the Penick’s came and built the living room and the kitchen. They built a balcony around where the boys used to sleep. We call it the Weasley’s house because it’s just really weird. So, there’s a lot of cool history to this house. When we first moved here, Sister Bailey, Brother Daniel’s oldest daughter, she used to live here and she said there was always a ghost, an old ghost who lived in the bottom part of the house. So, we always thought that was one of the old Fords, you know? You could smell him: he carried a tobacco smell. It would come and go, you know, but he didn’t like people down there. But when we moved in, he ended up leaving.

Submitted by: Zackery Youngblood, 24, male
Winter 2022, ENGL 391
Dr. Christopher Blythe
Submitted on: March 26, 2022
Item #12
March 13, 2022
Collected via Zoom Interview
Genre: personal narrative, non-religious supernatural legend
Title of item: The Old Ford Farm (Part Two: The Penick Boy)

Contributor Data:
Name: Carrie Filetti
Gender: Female
Home region: Northeast TN (Bristol)
Contributor’s relationship to collector: family friend, mother of friend
Social Data: The atmosphere was pretty casual between us as we discussed some of her and her family’s personal experiences with ghosts.
Cultural Data: Bristol, TN is a small, old town right on the border between TN and VA. It lies right in the middle of southern Appalachia. The house mentioned in this particular narrative is an old house that sits in the woods a little ways off the main road that runs through the town (Hwy 394). See Item #1.
Collection and Transcription Methods: Transcribed from video conferencing interview. Ums and ahs were removed and some wording was cleaned up for clarity and brevity.

Text:
The Penick’s had a son and a daughter, and where [the girls] used to sleep was their daughter’s room, and then the top-top story of our house where the three boys used to stay was their son’s room. And, the house used to have a balcony around the top story, that’s why all the doors are there. And the stairway that goes to nowhere, that all used to be a balcony up there. So, they were building that big top bedroom for their son. From what I understand, they were going to put a bathroom up there, and he’d have access to come in and out from the outside if he wanted to when he got older. And he always wanted a bicycle, but I guess back in the sixties even the roads here were pretty dangerous -- people would speed down the roads -- so his parents were like, “No, sorry you’re not gonna get a bike. Where are you gonna ride it, in the field?” So, he would always ride bikes at his friend’s house and the story goes that he was at his friend’s house, riding bikes with his friend and got hit by a car and died.

So, when we moved in, we felt him here. We didn’t know any story about a boy who died. We didn’t hear about that until… oh, years later. I actually was at a yard sale down Big Hollow road and I got talking to a lady and she was like, “Oh, you live in the house where the boy died!” And I was like, “What?” And she said, “Yeah, yeah, he was out on the road on his skateboard and got hit by a car.” And I was like, “Oh, wow, that’s awful!” And so I went back and asked Brother Daniels and he said, “No, he got hit by a car on his bike, and it was at a friend’s house.” So I went to another yard sale at the gem mine and they said, “You live in the house where the boy died.” So I asked, “Okay, what did you hear?” And they said, “He got hit by a car outside your house.” But again, Brother Daniels said “I don’t think it was outside his house, I think it was at a friend’s house.”

So anyways, we have felt him, and the kind of spooky part about it is we moved the boys up there when we first moved here, and kind of made it their fun little place. It was a huge room, I’m sure you remember it. But in the middle of the night, those boys would come out of that room. They rarely slept in that room. I’d be like, “Boys, what’s going on?” you know? I’d trip over them or something since they’d all be sleeping in the hallway, or they’d go in the girls’ room to sleep. And I asked them today, “Can you give me anything about why you didn’t like
“it?” And they said, “Well, you know, even before we knew about this boy, we just didn’t feel right. Like somebody didn’t want us in the room.” While our ghosts come and go, even to this day there is still some kind of weird energy there with him. We think he’s still around, and we honestly think he kind of haunts the outside of our house around where the old porch, the balcony, used to be. Because we’ve seen things, like, “Oh, what was that?” you know? Just stuff at the corner of your eye you see something. So it’s almost like he’s running around the house. And sometimes when you go up into the room, you’re like, “I’m just in here getting a box, okay. That’s it.” That room is sort of like the storage, eBay room, [so we get what we need] and then we get out. But that’s his space and kind of our little ghost story of the house. He doesn’t bother us, but we feel like there are times when he’s like, “Get out. Get out of my room. I don’t want you here.”

I always believed – he grew up in the house as a little boy, but I asked Brother Daniels if he knew how old he was when he was killed, and he said, “I think he was about fifteen or sixteen.” And I always understood he was younger. I actually have a little fun fact for you. So, you know the cabinet under the stairs going up from the downstairs? There’s this little closet and under the stairs we would put boxes. One day I was cleaning that out because when we first moved in we had just shoved boxes in there, we never even swept it out. So I was like, “This is gross, I’m sweeping it out.” So, I took everything out, and from the top, this* fell down. It’s this little boy’s treasure map, and all these little doodles. And I called the people who lived here before since there were two little girls and a boy who lived here and I asked them if it was one of theirs and they were like, “No.” So, it was his, these were his. It has some little boys’ names on here. Like, Ramsey. The Ramsey’s are kind of famous in the area. There’s a Thomas Ramsey who’s an attorney up in Knoxville and it would be kind of cool if this was one of his friends back in the day. So yeah, it’s probably where [the boy] used to have his little clubhouse up in there.

*Fig. 1, 2, & 3:
Submitted by: Zackery Youngblood, 24, male
Winter 2022, ENGL 391
Dr. Christopher Blythe
Submitted on: March 26, 2022

Item #13
March 13, 2022
There’s supposedly a little girl. I haven’t seen her, but Mike [Carrie’s husband] has seen her. He was in the kitchen and she came running from the upstairs and went downstairs. He came up and went, “I don’t believe in ghosts, I don’t believe in ghosts, I don’t believe in ghosts.” And I was like, “What happened?” And he told me. Yeah, so we don’t know who she is, but it seems like her and the boy come when there’s fun things going on. Like Christmas, we can kind of like, “Ah, there’s somebody else here during family prayer.”