

10-30-1998

## Pemberton Hall's ghost - urban legend?

Daily Eastern News

Follow this and additional works at: [http://thekeep.eiu.edu/pemberton\\_hall\\_ghost](http://thekeep.eiu.edu/pemberton_hall_ghost)

---

### Recommended Citation

Daily Eastern News, "Pemberton Hall's ghost - urban legend?" (1998). *The Pemberton Hall Ghost*. 18.  
[http://thekeep.eiu.edu/pemberton\\_hall\\_ghost/18](http://thekeep.eiu.edu/pemberton_hall_ghost/18)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Pemberton Hall at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Pemberton Hall Ghost by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact [tabruns@eiu.edu](mailto:tabruns@eiu.edu).

# Pemberton Hall's ghost – urban legend?

By Tammie Sloup  
Staff editor

Mattresses line the dark, dust-covered hallway on the fourth floor of Pemberton Hall along with boxes and various pieces of furniture. Among the heap of furniture looms a piano. The same piano "Mary" is said to have been playing when she was supposedly murdered.

The stories about the "Pemberton Ghost" or "Pemberton Mary" vary from student to student.

"I heard Mary was the housemother and during breaks, some students didn't go home. Two girls that lived upstairs made a deal that if one of them left the room, the other one would look through the peephole when she came back so she could let the other one in," said Kristen Wooden, a freshman English major.

One of the girls went upstairs to play the piano and was stabbed by a custodian who escaped from an insane asylum, Wooden said. She made it downstairs and knocked on the door but her roommate couldn't see her because she was on the floor under the peephole.

The girl made it downstairs and Mary felt so guilty about the stabbing she went insane, she said. Mary supposedly watches over all

## Eastern's campus isn't the only one haunted by stories of ghosts, spirits

the women in Pemberton now because she wants to protect them.

"Mary" is said to be the culprit of doors locking by themselves and televisions and stereos being turned on and off without the help of a Pemberton Hall resident.

The fourth floor, the alleged location of Mary's gruesome murder, is supposedly where her ghost dwells. But the floor remains unoccupied and is said to be a fire hazard.

Another story told on campus over and over again basically entails an Eastern student named Mary who was restless one night and decided to relax and play the piano on the fourth floor. While playing, a crazed janitor bludgeoned her to death and escaped, never to be found.

Mary forced herself to crawl to her friend's door and that is where her friend found her the next day, fingernails pressed against the door.

The stories have been passed down for about 80 years but there was never any murder in Pemberton Hall. There was in fact a Mary Hawkins though, who was head of

Pemberton Hall from August 1910 to March 1917.

Hawkins died in the Kankakee State Mental Hospital on the night of Oct. 29, 1918. She had been a patient for nearly a month and was found dead during the patient-check the next day.

The popularity of the story grew after the legend was published in 1994 in Michael Norman and Beth Scott's book "Haunted America," which features ghost tales from all 50 states.

Pemberton residents recall several strange happenings that they attribute to the so-called ghost.

"Our VCR clock wasn't set one time when me and my roommate left and it was set when we came back," Wooden said.

She said many of the women aren't afraid of "Mary" though.

"She's a nice ghost; we all love Mary," she said.

Melissa Meyers, a sophomore communications disorders major, said she recalls a story about a doll that was found sitting up on

a resident's bed with a poster laying on top of it.

"The doll was sitting up but it was top-heavy," Meyers said. "She couldn't get it to sit back up (after she found it)."

Wooden also recalled a time when piano music was heard coming from her room when no one was in it.

"Five different people said they heard it," she said.

When she entered her room, no music was playing.

But Eastern isn't the only campus that possesses its own ghost tale, the stories of supernatural happenings at Sweet Briar College in Sweet Briar, Va. are still being circulated throughout the campus.

The location of the campus used to be owned by the Fletcher and Williams families and most of the family members are buried on Monument Hill, which rises above the college. The presence of the families are most strongly felt here and some of their spirits are known to wander and frequent other areas of the campus.

Indiana Fletcher Williams founded the college in memory of her daughter Daisy, who died in 1884 at the age of 16. "Miss Indie" supposedly continues to make her

to hire a contractor to perform a project instead of using the physical plant, the problem is if anything goes wrong, the university can't repair it for one year.

Jorns said he agrees with the proposed bylaw changes that would remove the president as the presiding

ty's committee structure which might appear more prominent than other bodies equally as important, such as Faculty Senate or the Council on Academic Affairs; and the president is not a voting member of the council and not a member of the executive committee.

them," he said.

Jorns also commented on the facilities planning and management report regarding renovations and alterations.

The report resulted from a suggestion presented in the council, "though matters of this sort are gen-

## Ghosts

from Page 1

presence known in small ways at her college.

According to stories written by Ann Marshall Whitley, curator of the Sweet Briar College Museum, there have been sightings of "Miss Indie" and Daisy and also a "dancing cloud."

When the college was first built, many of the faculty members stayed in the Sweet Briar House because there was not enough housing. Faculty members reported "visits" from "Miss Indie" and Daisy several times.

One night, an instructor was sitting in the west parlor and electricity had been installed in the house by that time. Oil lamps were used previously but a large overhead chandelier had been wired for electricity. The instructor was using a floor lamp when the chandelier began to light up and turn off by itself.

The instructor called out: "Daisy, stop playing with the lights!"

"And the activity ceased immediately. Daisy was known to have been a very obedient child," according to Whitley's story.

Another occurrence that happened at the Sweet Briar House was reported by another instructor in 1931.

One afternoon, the professor was adjusting her hat in front of one of the "lovely pier mirrors" in the house, Whitley wrote. The house has been known the mirrors in the parlors and they were a "delight" for the children who were invited to the house to play with Daisy.

The professor thought the mirror was cloudy and just needed cleaning but the cloudiness vanished only to return moments later.

"The cloud seemed to move across the glass like a mist, disappear, and then the mirror cleared,"

Whitley wrote. "She said it looked as though the cloud was dancing."

K e r r i Rawlings, assistant director of the alumnae association at Sweet Briar College, also recalls an incident that occurred in the summer of 1996.

Rawlings, her roommate and two male friends were visiting Monument Hill, where a statue of Daisy stands, just to take a look at it.

Rawlings said she was explaining to the men why the girls from the college went up to Monument Hill and she was hearing a "smart-alec about it."

Immediately after the group was joking around, Rawlings' car began to move by itself.

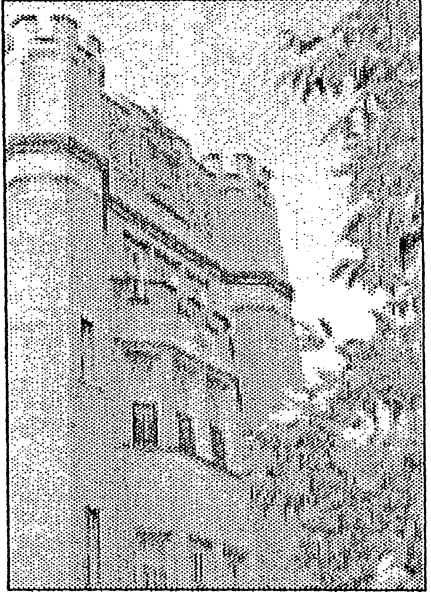
"It was shifted into drive and it was heading toward the edge of a hill," she said. "I had it in park and had the emergency brake on (when she left the car)."

Luckily, one of the men caught the car in time.

Rawlings also said Daisy is a friendly ghost and would never harm anyone.

"She died when she was 16 so she has mischievous ways," she said.

At Western Illinois University, the top floor of Simkins Hall is said to have been haunted for a number of years. Windows and doors open and close by themselves and lights flicker on and off by themselves.



Deanna McInlyre / photo editor

Pemberton Hall is the home of the alleged ghost Mary, who is just one of many ghosts which haunt the stories on college campuses.

Typewriters type out ghostly messages at night with no one at the keyboards. The ghost has been named "Harold" by students and staff members.

Lewis and Clark Community College, located in Godfrey, is said to be haunted by the spirit of a former headmistress for the past 20 years.

Harriet Haskell has been responsible for elevators operating by themselves, haunting footsteps and the smell of perfume in hallways.

At Morton College, located in Cicero, a fog resembling vapor appears in classrooms from time to time. Students and custodians have reported seeing it and hearing footsteps in empty corridors.

\* The last three stories courtesy of the website:  
[www.geocities.com/Area51/](http://www.geocities.com/Area51/)