



REPORT

FORT PHANTOM CEMETERY •

INVESTIGATION



Abilene
Texas
TX008

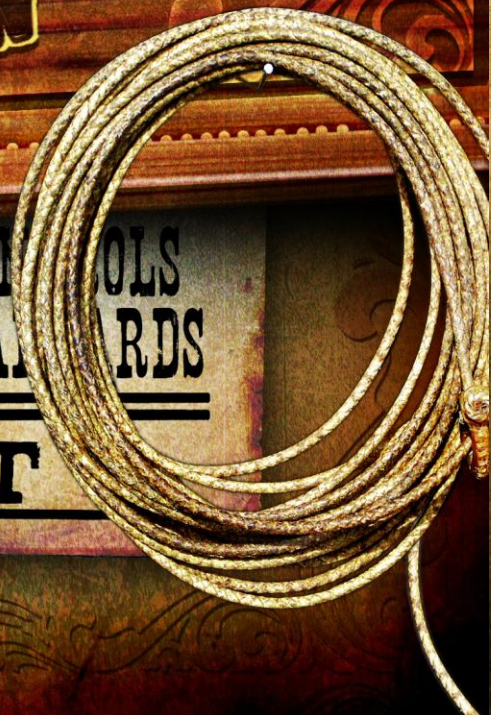
SOUTHWEST GHOST HUNTERS ASSOCIATION



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Forward

The word “investigation” is defined as
“a searching inquiry for ascertaining facts; detailed or careful examination.”

The key word here is “facts”. Do ghosts exist? No, it has not been proven.
Therefore are no facts to investigate.

What we do have is the testimony of the witnesses and this is where an investigational process will work. Investigations are often viewed as a skeptical activity because the main goal is trying to determine what the witness actually saw. Is it explainable or not? This is done through critical thinking and an event replication process developed by SGHA. This is an important concept because what defines a haunting or ghost sighting is “Multiple witnesses reporting unusual phenomena over a period of time”. If these phenomena can be explained, the witness reports are no longer validating paranormal activity as a cause and thus there is no ghost or haunting. Additionally historical research may be done in an attempt to validate facts.

It is important to understand that the goal of an investigation is not to find evidence of the paranormal but to attempt to identify any natural or manmade causes of the reported phenomena

Definition of Terms

Investigation Status: Unsolved investigations will have either an open or closed status. An investigation is given an “Open” status if:

The investigators were unable to replicate all of the witness events. Something significant remains that is still unsolved.

It is important to understand that an “open” investigation does not mean that the unsolved facts are paranormal in nature. It simply means that we have exhausted our resources and cannot solve the “open” items/events.

A “Closed” status indicates that there is insufficient data or confounding variables that prevents replication or identifying possible explanations. This often occurs when investigators do not have direct access to witnesses or some other environmental change have occurred that creates confounding variables.

Confidentiality Notice

Many of the witnesses interviewed have wished to remain anonymous in exchange for presenting their accounts of paranormal experiences. We honor that request and thus witnesses will often be identified by aliases. Any coincidence between aliases and actual persons is unintentional.

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Part 1: Location Information

Phantom Hill Cemetery
Jones County, Texas

Part 2: Location History



This cemetery is north of Abilene, Texas near the Fort Phantom Lake dam. Farm Roads 600 and 1082 intersect. From that intersection go north on FM 600 for 1.5 miles to the cemetery on the left/west side of the road.

This cemetery is sometimes referred to as Fort Phantom Hill Cemetery. It is a very well maintained cemetery. It

is situated next to a new Fort Phantom Baptist Church Building. The earliest burial with an existing stone is 1889, and the cemetery is still being used.

Part 3: Witnesses

Unfortunately there are not any real solid witnesses that we were able to find. The stories are all second and third hand accounts.

Part 4: Reported Phenomenon

The cemetery is believed to be haunted by the ghost of a woman that also haunts the lake nearby. The legend claims that there are mysterious floating lights in the cemetery along with reports of an apparition of a drowned woman (Fort Phantom Lake).

Part 5: Investigation

The catalyst for the legend does not start at Fort Phantom Hill cemetery (north of the lake) but at another cemetery close to Fort Phantom Lake called Round Mound Cemetery (east of the lake).

In 1978 a local paper ran a story about a cemetery near Ft. Phantom called the Round Mound. The story said that if one was to visit the cemetery on at midnight on October 29th, the 30th or the 31st they were guaranteed to see apparitions of some of the people buried there on Halloween night.

Update to this report (2007)

The book "Weird Texas: Your Travel Guide to Texas's Local Legends and Best Kept Secrets" contains this story;

In 1978, when I was in college at Abilene Christian University, the local paper ran a story about a cemetery outside of town near Fort Phantom Lake called the Round Mound. (I'm not kidding). The story said that if one were to visit the cemetery at midnight each night on October 29th, 30th, and 31st (Halloween), they were guaranteed to see apparitions of some of the people buried there, on Halloween night.

Not one to turn down the chance to see a ghost, I went with a couple of friends to the cemetery when instructed. The first night only a hand full of others were there to claim a spot in the 150 year-old graveyard. The cemetery had a wrought iron arch at the entrance. The headstones described many there as Civil War era veterans who protected settlers against warring American Indians. The graveyard was quite creepy.

On the 30th, there were quite a few more cars. People milled about reading the headstone's inscriptions by flashlight. An odd kind of festive feeling hung in the atmosphere of the cemetery.

On the following night, Halloween, we got there at about 11:30. The place was packed. Cars were parked in every available space in and near the graveyard. Literally hundreds of flashlight beams illuminated the area. Whatever eerie feeling one might have had by being in the cemetery at midnight just didn't happen. Our enthusiasm for this endeavor had pretty much evaporated when we saw all the people.

Midnight came and went. The laughter and excited chatter of all the kids that had come with their parents began to die down, and many people began to leave. My friends and I wandered around the graveyard resigned to the fact that we were wasting our time. Mary, one in our group, pointed out a truck that was driving around in dense growth of trees just behind the cemetery. It was a minutes or so before I pointed out that was no road back

*there. Nor was there a truck.
Just lights.*

We peered into the dark and saw that other lights were moving about the trees and hovering on the edge of the graveyard. They were not casting beams as from headlights or flashlights. Mary approached one of the lights. She looked at it closely for a few seconds, then turned and ran back to us. "Let's go", was all she said. She was, for lack of a better word, unsettled. As we were leaving we noticed that only a few people were pointing at the lights. They were the ones who had been there since the first night.

The stories from the Round Mound cemetery are important because they are the basis of the myth. After the Lady of the Lake story became popular, the phenomenon changed locations and moved to Fort Phantom cemetery.

There are no recorded sightings in Fort phantom cemetery nor any mention of it being haunted until after the story of Round Mound cemetery appeared in the paper. Round Mound was eventually forgotten and Fort Phantom then became the "haunted" cemetery.

Part 6: Conclusion

The area north of Abilene is rich in urban legends. The legend of the "Lady of the Lake" is connected to this location by proxy. With the phenomena of that legend being identified and solved, it leaves nothing to substantiate the stories coming from the cemetery.

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Part 7 : Photographs

