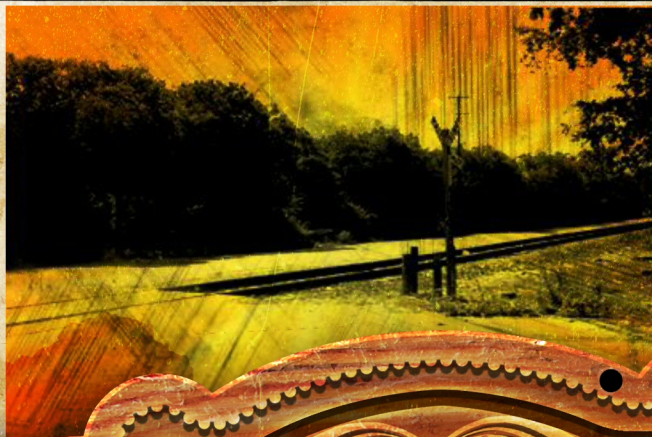




REPORT

SAN ANTONIO GHOST TRACKS

INVESTIGATION



*San Antonio
Texas*

TX023

SOUTHWEST GHOST HUNTERS ASSOCIATION



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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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1. The Myth

Just south of San Antonio, Texas, in an unremarkable neighborhood not far from the San Juan Mission is an intersection of roadway and railroad track that has become somewhat famous in the catalog of American ghost lore. The intersection, so the story goes, was the site of a tragic accident in which several school-aged children were killed - but their ghosts linger at the spot. And the curious from all over the country come to this section of railroad track to



witness firsthand the paranormal phenomena they've heard takes place there.

The story is at least 20 years old and its details vary from person to person.

Back in the 1930s or 1940s, a school bus full of children was making its

way down the road and toward the intersection when it stalled on the railroad tracks. A speeding train smashed into the bus, killing 10 of the children and the bus driver. Since that dreadful accident many years ago, any car stopped near the railroad tracks will be pushed by unseen hands across the tracks to safety. It is the spirits of the children, they say, who push the cars across the tracks to prevent a tragedy and fate like their own.

2. Reported Phenomena

A car in neutral gear rolls toward the tracks at an uphill angle. Off to one side, a group of local teen-agers was sitting on the tracks, running their hands back and forth down the smooth rail, absorbing the atmosphere, and waiting. They knew all about the ghost children. When asked, the kids supplied additional details, mostly concerning track etiquette. For one thing, you don't just sit on the

crossing that will not work. You have to go about 20 feet beyond the track, put your car in neutral, turn off the lights and wait. This twenty foot distance is to accommodate for the length of where the back of the bus would have been located. According to the locals, you will feel a sudden lurch and the car will glide down the street and across the tracks, pushed occasionally as necessary. Most importantly however, the car must be headed west; the same direction the bus was going when it was hit by the train.

The second half of this legend is that if a light powder, like talcum or baby powder is sprinkled over the car's trunk and rear bumper, tiny fingerprints and handprints will appear. Supposedly these are the prints of the ghost children's hands pushing the car. Many who have tried it swear that indeed they can see the evidence of small children's handprints in the powder.

3. The Investigation

San Antonio's "ghost tracks" are nothing more than an optical illusion. The mysterious movement of vehicles at that crossing is the result of a slight incline at the site, which works to roll vehicles that have been slipped into neutral off



Figure 1: In this photo the incline of the hill is clearly visible.

the tracks. As for the nearby streets supposedly christened in memoriam to the children who died, they were actually named in honor of a developer's grandchildren.

The story behind the tracks does have a odd basis in truth. In December 1938, twenty-six children, aged 12 to 18, lost their lives when the school bus they'd been travelling in stalled

on the tracks and was struck by a freight train. No similar accident took place in San Antonio, but in 1938 that city was subjected to about ten days' worth of

gruesomely detailed coverage in its local newspaper, memory of which afterwards served to convince later generations the tragedy had taken place locally.



Although the city of San Antonio has long claimed this folk tale as its own, pointing to the railway crossing where Villamain Road becomes Shane Road where cars seem to behave strangely and a set of nearby streets named after children (Bobbie Allen, Cindy Sue, Laura Lee, Nancy Carole, and Richey Otis), the bus accident took place in Salt Lake City, a city more than a thousand miles away.

What of the fingerprints and handprints? The logical explanation is that a light powder reveals prints that are already there; in fact, that's the basis of fingerprint detection in police work. "Latent fingerprints can be lifted from some objects years after they are made. The oil from fingers and hands slowly

absorb the powder, shrinking in size as they do. The result are handprints the size of a small child's.

It should also be noted that there are power lines along the road which throw off A/C electromagnetic fields up to 200 feet on both sides of the road. The tracks themselves give off a slight D/C electromagnetic field of 2 nt.

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