



# Legends and Lore of Illinois

## Bachelor's Grove, Midlothian

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Written by Michael Kleen



### Your Letters

In subsequent issues, we hope to print your letters commenting on what you have read. Only the best (shortest) letters will be published. Here are two examples of the kind of letters we're expecting:

Legends and Lore of Illinois,  
Your electronic serial is an inspiration to us all. Your word usage is amazing. I am personally going to wallpaper my cell with it.  
Bud, Joliet State Prison

Legends and Bore of Illinois,  
The only thing that keeps your electronic serial from actually being crap is the fact that I printed it out and used it as toilet paper.  
Annoyed in Cicero

Please e-mail your letters to thefallen2@gmail.com and we will try to publish them. Also, we will read your personal experiences, but we do not publish unsolicited experiences.

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### A Short Message From the Author

Welcome to the first issue of *Legends and Lore of Illinois*, the heir to the mildly successful *Legends and Lore of Coles County, Illinois*. Before real life ghost investigating became popular, in other words before Cable TV channels discovered they could make a profit off of it, ghost hunting used to be what happened after you and your friends got bored of playing Vampire the Masquerade and went to the local cemetery, afterwards discussing at White Castle how scared you had gotten. Now anyone who can afford to have their own t-shirts made is a professional investigator, hoping for their five minutes of fame on the local news. This newsletter is an attempt to recapture that original feeling.



The Bachelor's Grove necroscape.



*A long view of the cemetery from the SE corner.*

Ursula Bielski, author of *Chicago Haunts*, the cemetery itself was originally named Everdon's. Its first burial was in 1844, and the cemetery eventually contained eighty-two plots.

In the early half of the twentieth century, the Midlothian Turnpike ran past the cemetery, over the stream, and beyond. Today, the broken road appears to end at the cemetery gates, but closer inspection of a long ridge across from the stream reveals a roadbed that has been nearly reclaimed by the forest. The road was closed in the 1960s. Some say that was when the trouble started.

According to the Chicago Tribune's Jason George, the body of a teenage girl was found in the woods in 1966, and in 1988 a man, who had been murdered by a former girlfriend, was found in the cemetery. Aside from those gruesome incidents, grave desecration regularly occurred. Bodies were dug up, animals were sacrificed, and headstones were moved or stolen.

Then the ghosts came.

One of the most controversial sightings involved a phantom house. In the 1970s, Richard T. Crowe, a local ghost enthusiast, collected stories from dozens of eyewitnesses who claimed to have seen a white farmhouse complete with a glowing light in the window at various places in the woods alongside the trail. However, "there is no house on the property, nor anywhere near the site," Ursula Bielski wrote. "No property records exist to suggest that there ever was." (*Haunts*, pg. 59) She does mention "most anyone familiar with the area will offer to show you the foundations of a house that they claim did exist." (*Haunts*, pg. 61) Indeed.

## A Quick and Dirty Guide to Bachelor's Grove

Bachelor's Grove has been a south side enigma for over three decades. But like most such locations, it started out with a mundane existence. Over one hundred years ago, picnickers dressed in their Sunday best lounged under oak trees in the park-like atmosphere of the cemetery. Two of the grove's neighbors heated their small homes with coal burning stoves and drew water out of their brick wells, while horse drawn buggies trotted down the dirt road. It was a much different scene from today.

Much of the origins of Bachelor's Grove have been obscured by the passage of time. Even the name is a mystery. Some say it was named after a group of single men who settled in the area around the 1830s, but a family named Batchelder already owned the land. According to



*The pond, where strange creatures roam.*

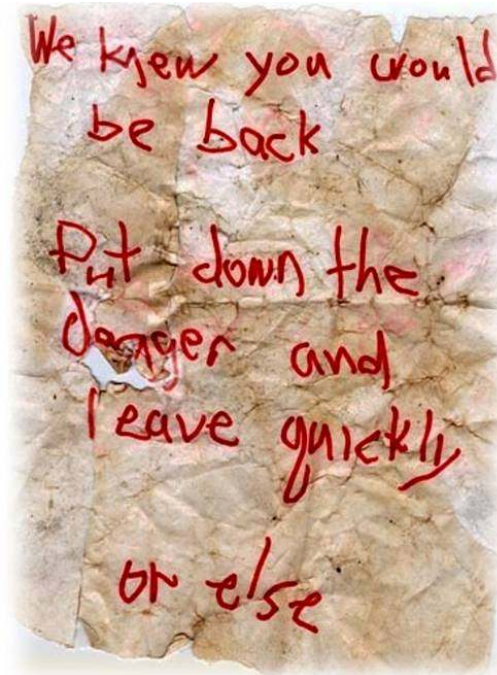


*The infant daughter's grave.*

“Claim” is an interesting choice of words, since there are in fact two separate foundations, one east of the cemetery and one west of it, although the two are hidden in plain sight. Both of them are very real. As [www.bachelorsgrove.com](http://www.bachelorsgrove.com) has well documented, there also exists two wells near these foundations. Hundreds of visitors have probably seen these and later reported them as “houses.” Time and imagination took care of the rest.

Another popular ghost is the White Lady, or Madonna of Bachelor’s Grove. Cemeteries in the Chicagoland area are overpopulated with these women, who are almost always searching for their lost infants. Bachelor’s Grove contains a monument to an unnamed ‘infant daughter,’ which has become a shrine for visitors and adds fuel to the story. This ghost, or one very much like it, was supposedly captured on a now famous photograph taken using infrared film. Unfortunately, the ‘ghost’ casts a shadow on the headstone she sits upon, suggesting that she is not very transparent; at least not in the way ghosts tend to be.

Visitors also commonly report seeing orbs or ghost lights, a staple of haunted locations everywhere. These bright *will o’ the wisps* are patriotic, appearing in red, white, and blue colors. Although I have been



*An amusing note left by some visitors.*



*Evidence of grave desecration abounds.*

that he personally witnessed two of these phantom automobiles.

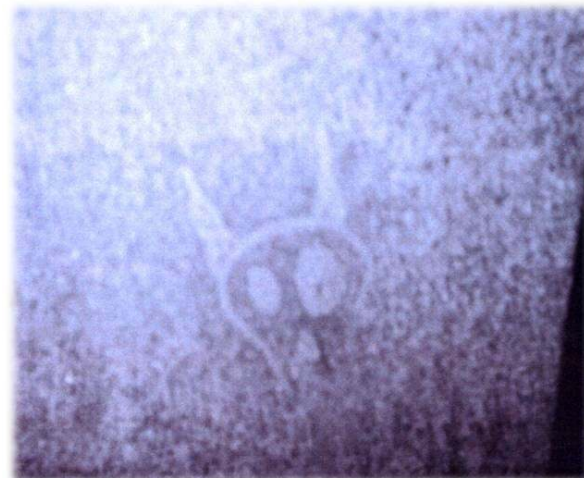
Although the number of visitors to Bachelor’s Grove has declined, and vandalism has trickled off (there isn’t much left to vandalize), the curious still routinely travel to Midlothian to snap pictures, leave cryptic notes, or place offerings at the stone of the infant daughter.

The mystery of Bachelor’s Grove may never have been cracked had it not been for the timely release of the investigation files of *The Fallen*, a secretive team of paranormal investigators only equaled in their knowledge of the esoteric by their unyielding quest for the truth. Not much is known about the group, but their research has yielded some of the most exciting information hitherto unavailable to the public. What follows is an actual account put together from their private files.

to the cemetery nearly a dozen times, I have yet to see one.

The pond adjacent to the cemetery has its own share of legends. Stories say it was one of the hundreds of places scattered around Illinois where mobsters dumped their victims during the roaring ‘20s. One of these victims apparently grew a second head and occasionally crawls out of the water. A policeman reportedly saw the apparition of a horse, followed by a man and a plow, walk out of the pond and cross 143<sup>rd</sup> Street. The ghost is said to belong to a farmer who drowned in the pond when his horse decided to take a swim one day.

Disappearing cars, sometimes sleek, black 1920s and 30s style, or the sounds of car doors slamming, have been reported along that stretch of 143<sup>rd</sup> Street. Richard T. Crowe has written



*A ghostly face has been traced in the dirt on the back of this granite headstone.*

## The Fallen — Investigation file 001

The five walked stealthily down the cracked cement road under a canopy of barren oak trees. At their head stood a stout man in an oversized, black trench coat. His piercing eyes scanned the tree line as he swept the glass lens of his VHS-C video recorder from moldy trunk to moldy trunk.

Emmer, the tallest and leanest of the group— the skeptic— was the first to speak. “What are we looking for again?” he asked with a slightly sarcastic laugh.

“Evidence of a house,” Mike, at the head of the group, replied. He stopped walking and zoomed in on the depths of the woods. “People keep seeing a phantom house out there. If there was a house, we should find some evidence of it.”

“But all the books that mention Bachelor’s Grove say there’s no evidence that a house ever existed here,” Davin, the youngest of the five, interjected through chattering teeth. “Why would they *lie* to us?”

“I don’t know,” Mike replied. “Are you sure we read everything carefully? They had to have said something else about it.”

Aurelia, or Aura for short, rolled her eyes and folded her arms across her chest. She was short, with tightly tied back, charcoal hair. She wore a long, black skirt and heavy, platform combat boots. Her fox like gaze barely hid her contempt.

“Hey guys,” Greg interrupted, waving his cane through the air. “This is the fourth time we’ve been here. Maybe it’s somewhere we’ve never looked before?” Greg never parted from his cane, which he had bought at a voodoo shop in New Orleans. He was a head shorter than Aurelia, and he always wore cargo shorts no matter what the temperature.

“Maybe it’s down this trail we pass all the time,” Emmer suggested while he pointed to a small deer path that diverged from the main road to the cemetery. “We’ve never looked there before.”

“Good idea,” Mike announced. He swung himself around and marched into the woods with his camera leading the way. The four followed him while Davin shivered and rubbed his hands together.

“It’s really cold,” he said, but the only response he received was a sharp kick to the shin by one of Aurelia’s boots.

Not more than three yards down the trail, Mike stopped dead in his tracks. “Holy crap!” he yelled. “Hey,

guys, come look at this!” He zoomed in on a twenty square foot hole in the ground, littered with rocks, old branches, and ceramic dishes of every kind. Rusted, metal pipes jetted from the ground. It was obvious to the trained investigator’s eye that this was a house foundation.

The four, who had lagged slightly behind, picked up their pace and joined Mike at the edge of the foundation.

“I don’t believe it,” Davin exclaimed when he saw the debris. “Oh man. This is unbelievable!”

“I don’t get it,” Mike said as he kicked a frosted bottle out of his way. “How could no one have found this before?”

Investigation File:  
Bachelor's Grove  
Midlothian, Illinois  
January 3, 2007

Time: 3:15pm  
Temperature: 28F  
Weather: Clear w/snow flurries

Reported Sightings:  
Lady in white, vanishing house,  
pond monster, hooded figure,  
ghost lights, man and plow

Our Findings:  
Evidence of a house  
Some mist in the pictures...  
possibly from the cold air  
We think Davin caught the flu





*A small sample of the debris in the house foundation.*

Emmer thrust a stick with an old, red tank top dangling from the end of it into the group, who jumped back in surprise.

"Call me crazy but I don't think we're the first ones to have found this place," Emmer said. He tossed the stick aside and kicked an empty can of Ice House at his friends.

Mike was speechless. He shook his head and walked around the perimeter of the depression, making sure to film all the pieces of ornamented plates, cups, saucers, old glass bottles, and metal pipes he could find.

"Maybe there's more further down the trail," Greg ventured, and walked down the winding path.

His friends caught up after taking one last look at their amazing find, but on their way down the path the

five heard another group of people heading towards them. The crash of underbrush was distinctive.

"Hold up," Greg said, and held out his cane.

Two kids, a boy and a girl who looked like they were locals, soon joined the Fallen. They passed by with nervous smiles. "Hey," the boy said. "If you guys want to see a well, there's one just around this bend."

"Thanks," Mike muttered, and waited until the two were out of earshot to curse. "What is this, a theme park?" he asked rhetorically. "Everyone knows about this place."

"Look on the bright side," Davin said in between violent sneezes. "At least we're not in our nice, warm houses watching TV in the loving embrace of Jack Daniels."

Aurelia aimed a frustrated sigh at Davin, while Mike marched down the worn trail, over collapsed logs and through piercing, wild raspberry bushes looking for the well. Just as they had been told, it loomed a few feet off of the path. Constructed of stacked, moldy bricks, it was slightly asymmetrical.

"This is the last straw," Mike grumbled. "I'm never believing anything I read anymore."

"I told you all of this is crap," Emmer scolded him. "The only reason I come on these trips is because I would be sitting on the Internet doing nothing all day if I didn't."

"Hold on," Greg protested. "It's obvious this is a place locals know about, but you can't expect writers to know everything. I mean, they have book signings to go to. They don't have the time to come out here."

"Let's get out of here," Davin said. "It's freezing. I think I'm getting sick."

The five agreed, snapped some pictures, and slogged back to the main trail where they ran into the members of the Pan-Continental Paranormal Research Society, who were unpacking boxes full of equipment on the cracked cement.

"Look at them," Mike grumbled, "they have their own t-shirts and everything."

"Don't bother going down that trail guys," Greg said as the two groups passed each other. "There's nothing there, we already checked."

The professionals shot the Fallen dirty looks. "Get out of here," one shouted. "You're disrupting the energies."

"Whatever," Mike muttered under his breath. "Do they follow us everywhere we go?"



*One of two distinctive wells in the woods around Bachelor's Grove.*

*To be continued...*



*Orbs and mists are somewhat common photographic occurrences at Bachelor's Grove.*

You might not believe this experience! My boyfriend and I were cycling through the Rubio Woods Forest Preserve in Midthoathian when we ran out of trail at 143<sup>rd</sup> Street. But my boyfriend noticed that there was another trail across the road near some kind of tower. After we crossed the street, we found that the trail was closed. But my boyfriend, he always wants to get us in trouble! He suggested we go anyway.

So we went down the trail and suddenly we came upon this cemetery. Immediately I said we should leave. I have a bad feeling, and my pastor had told me that bad feelings are Jesus' way of telling us that God disapproves.

Bret, I mean, my boyfriend, insited though. The hairs were sticking up on the back of my neck and I had goosebumps! I knew something evil happened here! I insisted that we should turn around and we did. I know something bad would have happened if we stayed!

Carol, 34, Oak Forest

I went to Bachelor's Grove a couple of years ago and absolutely nothing happened, although we did find a bunch of notes someone left there and a sweet Disney gift card. It had \$50 on it! Can you imagine? Someone just left it by one of the grave stones!

Derrell, 23, Franklin Park

## True! Amazing! Unbelievable! Personal Experiences

Me and a couple of my friends had read about Bachelor's Grove in a few books and wanted to check it out, so we drove an hour or so to Midlithian, but it turns out the place was harder to find than we thought. We wound up walking through several forest preserves until we got directions from a jogger.

The wait was worth it! The sun was just going down and there was a high energy in the air, a static energy like when you dry your clothes without dryer sheets. Anyway, we ignored the "closed at sunset" sign and walked down the trail expecting anything. Lukily we were prepared and brought some brewskies. After we downed those near the gate, we saw something really strange.

There was a light in the woods beyod where the trail ends and that stream is, so me and my friends decided to check that out instead of the cemetery. Besides, we were too scared!

Well, get this, the closer we got to that light the more we realized that it was a porch light, and that we were looking at the legendary house of Bachelor's Grove! We got really quiet and decided to sneak up on it. I don't know how far away it must have been, but it took us a while to get there.

But this is the crazy part, we actually got up to the house and almost knocked on the door! But before we did, an old man came out and yelled "get off my porch, white trash!" We never went back!

Steve, 19, Portage Park



*A possible ghostly image dominates the upper right-hand corner of this undated photograph taken by the Fallen.*