
SPOOKY

Montana

*Tales of Hauntings, Strange Happenings,
and Other Local Lore*



RETOLD BY S. E. SCHLOSSER

Illustrated by Paul G. Hoffman

SPOOKY

Montana

Also in the Spooky Series by S. E. Schlosser
and Paul G. Hoffman:

Spooky California

Spooky Campfire Tales

Spooky Canada

Spooky Maryland

Spooky Massachusetts

Spooky Michigan

Spooky New England

Spooky New Jersey

Spooky New York

Spooky North Carolina

Spooky Oregon

Spooky Pennsylvania

Spooky South

Spooky Southwest

Spooky Texas

Spooky Wisconsin

SPOOKY

Montana

*Tales of Hauntings, Strange Happenings,
and Other Local Lore*

RETOLD BY S. E. SCHLOSSER

ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL G. HOFFMAN



Guilford, Connecticut

To buy books in quantity for corporate use
or incentives, call **(800) 962-0973**
or e-mail **premiums@GlobePequot.com**.



Guilford, Connecticut

Text copyright © 2009 by S. E. Schlosser
Illustrations copyright © 2009 Paul G. Hoffman

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission should be addressed to The Globe Pequot Press, Attn: Rights and Permissions Department, P.O. Box 480, Guilford, CT 06437.

Project editor: Jessica Haberman
Text design: Lisa Reneson, Two Sisters Design
Layout: Joanna Beyer
Map: M.A. Dubé © Morris Book Publishing, LLC

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Schlosser, S. E.

Spooky Montana : tales of hauntings, strange happenings, and other local lore / retold by S.E. Schlosser ; illustrated by Paul G. Hoffman.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-7627-5123-5

I. Ghosts—Montana. 2. Haunted places—Montana. 3. Tales—Montana. I. Hoffman, Paul G. II. Title.

BF1472.U6S323 2009

398.209786--dc22

2009007037

Printed in the United States of America
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For my family: David, Dena, Tim, Arlene, Hannah, Emma, Nathan, Ben, Deb, Gabe, Clare, Jack, Chris, Karen, Davey, and Aunt Mil.

And for Mary Norris, Paul Hoffman, Erin Turner, Jess Haberman, and all the wonderful folks at Globe Pequot Press, with my thanks.

For Brian, Art, Renee, and Lennae, with my thanks!



Contents

INTRODUCTION	xiii
PART ONE: GHOST STORIES	
1. <i>The Watcher</i>	2
BIG MOUNTAIN/WHITEFISH	
2. <i>The Housemaid</i>	7
EAST GLACIER	
3. <i>The Camp Bed</i>	12
SWAN LAKE	
4. <i>Bad Medicine</i>	17
MARIAS PASS	
5. <i>The Merc</i>	23
MISSOULA	
6. <i>The Return</i>	28
EMIGRANT	
7. <i>Quake Lake</i>	33
GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST	
8. <i>Calamity</i>	38
LAUREL	
9. <i>The Candle</i>	46
RED LODGE	
10. <i>Knock, Knock</i>	52
BOZEMAN	
11. <i>I Want to Go Home</i>	58
GREAT FALLS	
12. <i>The Battlefield</i>	63
LITTLE BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT	

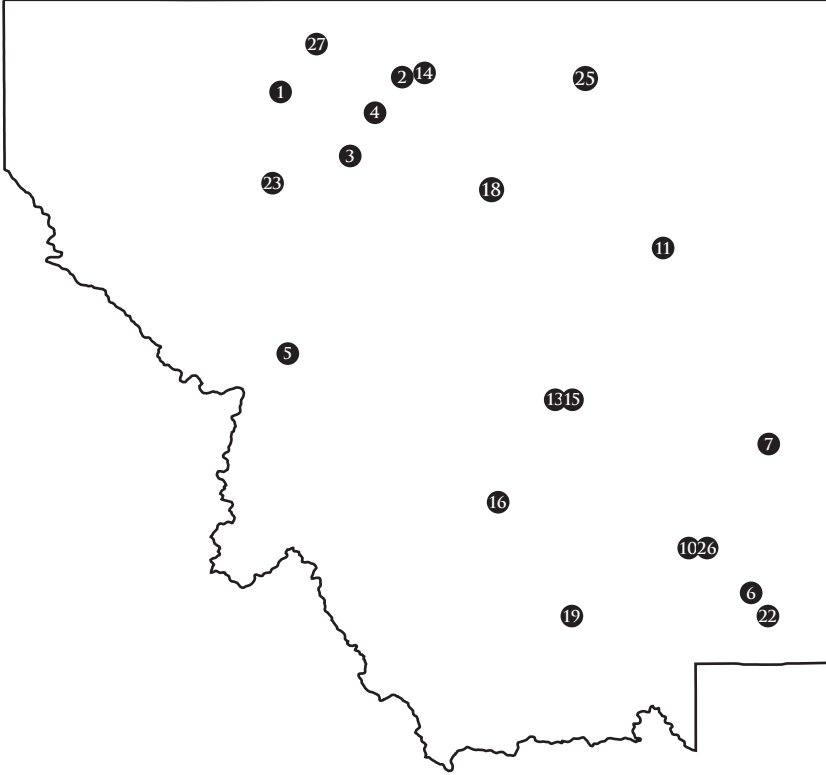
Contents

13.	<i>Pray</i> HELENA	70
PART TWO: POWERS OF DARKNESS AND LIGHT		
14.	<i>Foul Spirit</i> BROWNING	78
15.	<i>The Bleeding Sink</i> HELENA	84
16.	<i>The Flying Torso</i> BUTTE	89
17.	<i>The Cowboy's Sweetheart</i> CUSTER COUNTY	97
18.	<i>The Party</i> TETON COUNTY	103
19.	<i>Faster!</i> VIRGINIA CITY	110
20.	<i>Crop Circle</i> WIBAUX COUNTY	117
21.	<i>Rubberoo</i> BILLINGS	128
22.	<i>Grizzly</i> PARK COUNTY	137
23.	<i>Monster</i> FLATHEAD LAKE	143
24.	<i>Sacred Place</i> PRYOR MOUNTAINS	148
25.	<i>The Stone</i> SHELBY	156
26.	<i>Bloody Mary Returns</i> BOZEMAN	163

Contents

27.	<i>Snow Bird</i>	172
	GLACIER NATIONAL PARK	
	RESOURCES	187
	ABOUT THE AUTHOR	191
	ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR	192

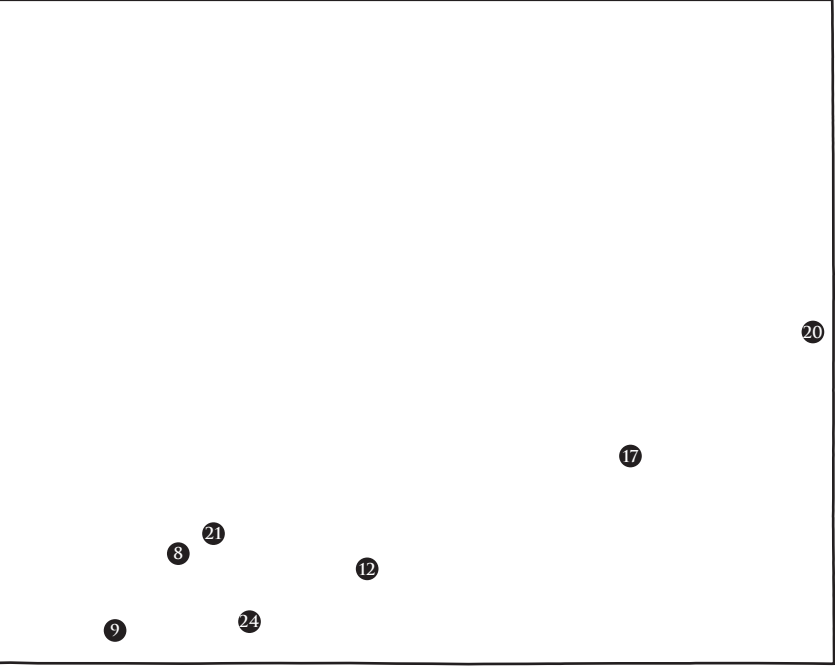
SPOOKY SITES . . .



- ① Big Mountain/Whitefish
- ② East Glacier
- ③ Swan Lake
- ④ Marias Pass
- ⑤ Missoula
- ⑥ Emigrant
- ⑦ Gallatin National Forest

- ⑧ Laurel
- ⑨ Red Lodge
- ⑩ Bozeman
- ⑪ Great Falls
- ⑫ Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument
- ⑬ Helena

AND WHERE TO FIND THEM



14 Browning

15 Helena

16 Butte

17 Custer County

18 Teton County

19 Virginia City

20 Wibaux County

21 Billings

22 Park County

23 Flathead Lake

24 Pryor Mountains

25 Shelby

26 Bozeman

27 Glacier National Park





Introduction

I wasn't sure what to expect from my trip to Montana. I was seven years old when I first visited the state, and by now my memories from that vacation were vague. I certainly wasn't expecting the sudden aerial swoop over the mountaintops and the sharp turn the pilot made when we reached Missoula (something my white-lipped seatmate, a long-time Montana resident, said was not the customary landing pattern).

And I certainly didn't expect, as I entered the shuttle that was to take me to my rental car, that I would collect three new ghost stories during the mile-long journey. Or to discover, as I wandered into a downtown department store to follow up on one of the reports, that the entire staff was on a first-name basis with the ghost ("The Merc"). "Oh, you mean Walter," said one of the saleswomen working on the upper floor. Yes, indeed. I meant Walter.

Montana was full of delightful surprises. Everyone told me the scenery there was gorgeous. They lied. Gorgeous is far too mild a term for foggy sunrises cresting over snow-capped peaks; steaming hot springs tucked into the side of looming green mountains; or winding roads that roam past glacier-strewn hanging valleys, with sheer drop-offs that made my heart pound with both excitement and gut-twisting fear. All these things and more were Montana. Gorgeous? Pah! Amazingly beautiful. Heart-wrenchingly lovely. Full of fantastic adventure. Perhaps,

Introduction



if I spin enough superlatives, I might give you some idea of what Montana is like. But I doubt it. It's something you have to experience to believe.

From Missoula, I wandered past Flathead Lake with its resident monster (be it the ultimate white sturgeon or a true Nessie, I leave it for you to decide), and on to Whitefish, where “The Watcher” stands in the old lodge on Big Mountain, glaring alternately at passing mountain bikers and skiers, depending on the

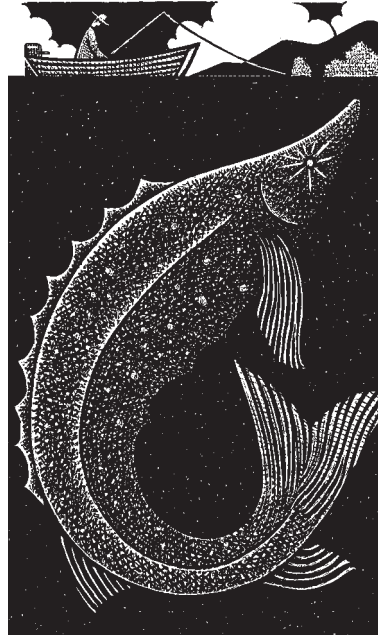
season. From there, I spent several days at Glacier National Park, meeting many wonderful people and happily collecting stories of things that go bump in the night (“The Housemaid”), haunted summer camps (“The Camp Bed”), and dark spirits that need banishing (“Foul Spirit”).

One of the defining moments of my trip came when I impulsively stopped at a rock shop in the small town of Bynum and met one of the paleontologists who worked at Egg Mountain, where the *Maiasaura* dinosaur nests were first found. He guided me through the wonderful collection of fossils in his shop, and I bought many treasures that I cherish still.

From Bynum, I wandered to Great Falls, with its fabulous Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center and

Introduction

its accident-prone ghost who haunts the road north of town (“I Want to Go Home”). Then I ventured into the state capital of Helena with its impressive historical society, its charming Carroll College campus (which has a spooky story about “The Bleeding Sink”), and its very old folktale—lost for many years—about a dying miner who avenges himself upon the dour wife who made his life a misery. This story instantly became one of my all-time spooky favorites (“Pray”).



What else can I tell you of my adventures? I spent several moving hours at the Little Bighorn, climbed up to a pictograph cave in Billings, and wandered underground for several hours in the Lewis and Clark Caverns—a must-see for anyone traveling in Montana! I drove across the Beartooth Mountains in a breathtaking journey that culminated on a snowy mountaintop where, against an amazing backdrop of snowy peaks and misty valleys, someone had constructed a rather lopsided snowman! I meandered my way through Yellowstone National Park, stayed at a haunted ranch just north of Yankee Jim Canyon, swam in the hot springs of Chico, roamed the haunted streets of Virginia City, and panned successfully for sapphires atop a mountain just north of Anaconda. During my wanderings, I collected stories

Introduction

of haunted lakes (“Quake Lake”), strange alien encounters (“Crop Circle”), amazing rescues (“Grizzly”), and murderous revenge (“Rubberoo”).

Montana is truly a haunted state! Haunted by beauty, by courage, by good cheer, and, of course, by ghosts. The next time I want to run away from the world, I’m going to Chico Hot Springs. Won’t you come with me?

—S. E. Schlosser

PART ONE

Ghost Stories



The Watcher

BIG MOUNTAIN/
WHITEFISH

Billy and I took our mountain bikes up to Whitefish Ski Resort on Big Mountain the first day of summer to ride down the Danny On Trail. We'd ridden the mountain bike trail once last summer and found it an amazing ride. We promised ourselves we'd do it often this year since we'd both gotten summer jobs in Whitefish.

We parked and picked up tickets. Then we headed over to the ski lift, chatting eagerly about the anticipated run. There were tons of trails down the mountain, and we meant to explore them all. As we passed underneath the dark chalet that loomed over the ticket office and ski lift, I happened to glance up and see a figure in the third-story window. It was just a dark shape—not fully recognizable from that distance as either a man or a woman—though my gut told me it was male. The person was staring at me intently. It was disconcerting. It—he—saw me looking at him, but his gaze didn't flicker, even for a second. I shivered and looked away.

“Come on, Jerry,” Billy called to me. He was already at the lift with his bike. Glad for the excuse to get away from the

The Watcher

strange watcher, I hurried over, and we hooked up our bikes onto two separate chairs and soon were sailing up and away over the mountain, on our way to the top. I glanced down at the chalet as I drifted upward and saw the figure in the window, still watching me intently. I shuddered and turned away.

The run down the mountain was just as amazing as I remembered. Billy and I called out to one another and paused occasionally when we spotted a particularly fine view or some wildlife. We reached the bottom in record time and hurried back over to the lift, eager to do it again. I couldn't help myself. I glanced up at the chalet as we passed. It loomed on the bluff over the lift, and the Watcher was still there, still staring at me without blinking. I glared back for a moment, chills running up and down my spine. Then I followed Billy to the base of the lift and helped him secure his bike. This time, I refused to look at the chalet as the lift rose up and above its dark roof. But I could still feel the gaze of the Watcher in the window fixed on me menacingly.

I tried to not let it bother me, but I was so preoccupied wondering about the Watcher and his hateful glare that I failed to heed Billy's call of delight and almost smashed into him when he stopped suddenly to point to a black bear that was ambling away into the bushes on a slope below us. "Watch what you're doing, Jer," Billy called sharply as my bike skidded on the dirt and gravel and I almost fell over. By the time I regained control, the bear was gone. "Sorry," I said to Billy. But I still couldn't put the Watcher out of my mind. I wondered if he would still be standing in the third-story window when we reached the bottom of the mountain. Somehow, I thought he would.



THE WATCHER

The Watcher

And he was. Just a dark figure, not noticeably male or female. Standing in the window, staring at me with malice. Daringly, I waved jauntily to the figure, and Billy looked at me in surprise. “Who are you waving to?” he asked, glancing up at the looming chalet in the bright sun of the summer afternoon. “The man in the window,” I replied, gesturing upward. “What man?” Billy asked. The figure was plain to my eyes, but even when I pointed it out, Billy couldn’t see it. That really freaked me out.

I was shaking as I loaded my bike onto the lift, and the shaking didn’t cease all the way back down the mountain. Billy noticed in the end. “Dude, you don’t look too good,” he said, as, white-faced, I dismounted from my bike at the bottom of the trail. We were nearly on top of the chalet here, but the figure wasn’t visible from the front. Thank God. I only saw him at the back window.

“I don’t feel too good,” I admitted, something I would never have said under normal circumstances. But having a dark figure invisible to everyone else glaring at you from the top of a haunted chalet was far from normal, in my book. We had to walk right under the chalet one more time to get to the car, and the Watcher glared at me all the way. I could still see him peering from the window as we drove away down the mountain.

At home, I phoned my girlfriend, who had a job up at the resort. I brought the conversation casually to the old chalet, and my girlfriend mentioned that several staff members believed the old building was haunted. When the building became a restaurant, the third floor was closed down to help insulate the lower two floors, and no one—not even security—had a key. Yet people swore up and down that they saw a figure standing in the third-floor window. Creepy. No one knew exactly who