

# A Dream Consumed by Fire



Burned Out-Remains of Snyder's Folly

Robert Snyder made a fortune in natural gas in Kansas City in the late 1800s. His wealth afforded him all the luxuries of his day – a fine home, an automobile, obedient servants, tutors for his children, and enough money to pursue his dream of retiring to a castle in the Ozark mountains. But there was one problem: there were no castles in the Ozarks. But as cash was no concern, the determined Snyder hired a team of Scottish artisans to come to Missouri and build his dream: a three-story castle fit for the highlands of the old country.

But money could not protect him from an untimely end: Snyder died in a car crash in 1906. His children finished their father's dream home, but the fine castle itself later burned to the ground, the result of sparks from the fireplace. Or so they say. The family never rebuilt the castle and all that remains today are the foundations, walls, and rumors. Some say that old man Snyder's ghost visits in death the castle he never saw in life.

Why did the Snyder want to build this castle? Why did his children complete it? What really caused it to burn to the ground?

**Be forewarned:** This story is based on Kansas City history, but we've made it . . . *weird*. Want to know more? Visit [KCHistory.org](http://KCHistory.org) to discover the truth behind the tale.

# Madness in the Hospital Rubble



Demolition of the old General Hospital, 1990

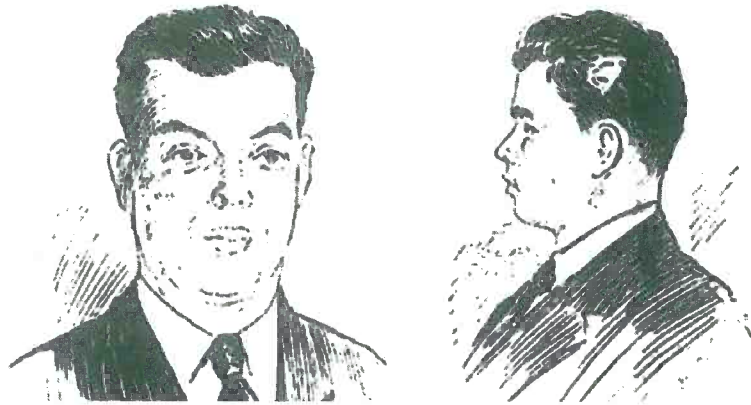
Jamar didn't mind doing demolition work, generally, but taking a sledgehammer to the old psychiatric wing of the General Hospital felt weird. He couldn't shake the feeling that someone was watching him, even though he knew that he was the only worker assigned to this area. Oh well, he thought, and brought up the sledge and let it drop. The hammer crushed a bit of tile in the floor. As he prepared for another swing, he noticed something poking out of the rubble. It was a paper notebook crammed into a gap between the old tile and the subfloor. From the looks of things, it had been hidden there for decades, sometime after the hospital was built in 1908.

Curious, he picked up the notebook, undid the metal clasp, and opened it. The spine's old leather cracked and flakes fell to the floor. As he flipped through the pages, Jamar noticed that what started out as a regular looking set of medical notes got stranger and more chaotic with each passing page. The handwriting became less orderly and what started out as playful doodles grew into dark drawings of creatures – imps, gargoyles, and demonic faces that . . . began talking to him. Disturbed, Jamar slammed the book closed, but as soon as he did, he felt dizzy. As he fainted, he dropped the book. When he awoke, Jamar was surprised and shocked to find . . .

Why was the doctor's notebook hidden in the psychiatric wing? What did Jamar discover when he awoke?

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# The Unknown Traveler



Police sketch of the Body Found in Room 1046

Tim Lester was quiet and did not speak to anyone in the hotel. He checked in on a sunny Sunday in 1943 and booked a two-night stay in room 1046. The second day, hotel staff saw him with another man who looked shockingly like him. In fact, one of the staff jokingly suggested that they were twins, but neither Tim nor his friend so much as smiled.

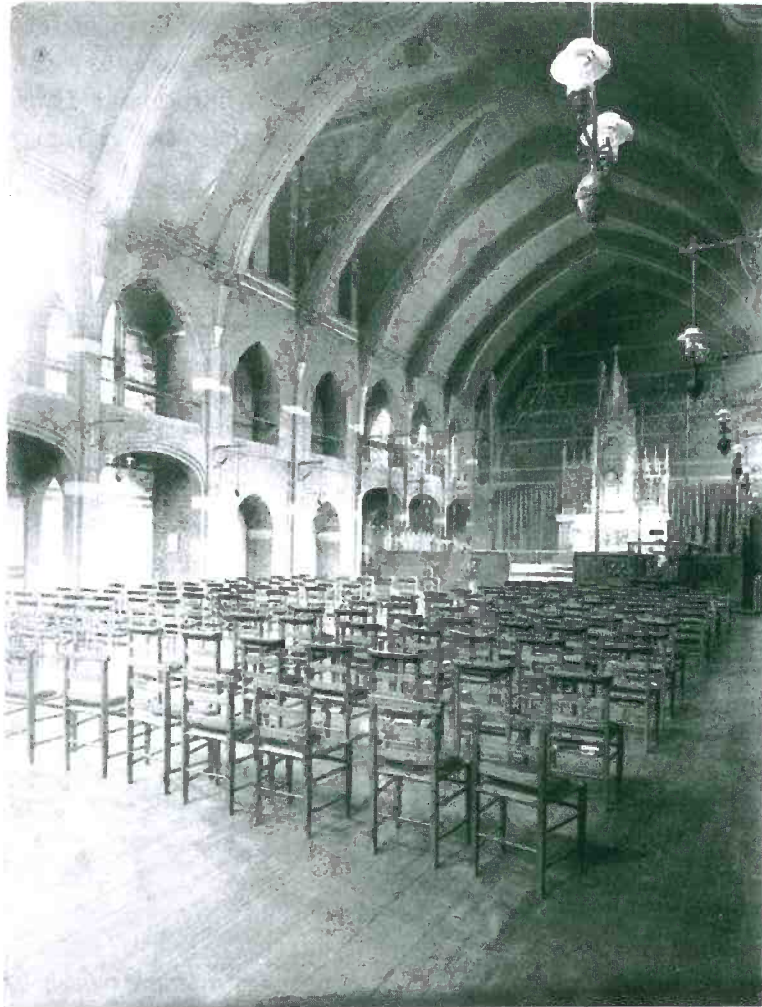
Three days after Tim checked out of the hotel, maids entered the room to prepare it for its next guest. A stench hung in the air, but nothing seemed amiss. Then the maid noticed a single shoelace sticking out from where the mattress met the box-spring. With a heave she lifted the mattress and stifled the urge to gag. Decay hung in the room as she looked down on body that looked shockingly like Mr. Lester, but without any hint of moisture. His skin, eyes, and lips were leathery and blistered, as if he had been left in the desert for weeks without water.

Police later found a note tucked underneath the lamp near the phone. The note said, "I'll be seeing you, my friend, the next time the lights shine from the sky like crimson diamonds." An artist made the sketch above from the description of the staff who saw Mr. Lester. Police showed it to his family in far off Manitoba in an effort to confirm his identity. But the Lesters were shocked because while this person looked just like Tim Lester, their dear Tim had died in an ice-fishing accident about a decade a decade earlier. Confused, the police arranged for Lester's casket to be exhumed and opened it.

What happened to the man in room 1046? What do the police find when they open Tim Lester's grave?

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## What Will it Take for Father Jardine's Soul to Rest?



**St . Mary's Episcopal Church, Special Collection 206, MVSC**

The rattling started at night, when parishioners heard an invisible chain scratching the floor and echoing through the Gothic arches at St. Mary's Episcopal Church at 13<sup>th</sup> and Holmes. Father Jardine had returned – but not in body, only as a restless spirit. Jardine took over the church in 1879 and died seven years later of an apparent suicide after his parishioners accused him of “immoral” behavior and a passion for strange rituals. The same parishioners discovered his body at the church, a chain welded around his waist and a bottle of chloroform in his hands. Rumors circulated the Father Jardine did not take his own life, but was murdered, and then scene was staged to look like a suicide.

What really happened to Father Jardine and how will his eternal soul find its final rest?

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## A Road Trip to the See the Spooklight. . .



The Spooklight as seen from the Devil's Promenade outside of Joplin, MO.

Aliah and Cindy had driven down to Joplin on a dare. As freshmen roommates at UMKC, the two young women were happy to discover that they shared a love of scary stories. Cindy, from out of state, had never heard of the Joplin Spooklight – an unexplained orb of light that appears near the tri-state border of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri. Full of energy one Friday after classes, Cindy and Aliah decided to get a look at this mysterious light themselves. Pulling into Joplin a few hours later, they stopped for a burger and then followed Google's directions to the spot where legend has it you can see the Spooklight best.

At first, they saw nothing. Then a pin-prick of light appeared on the horizon. Excited, Cindy pulled out her binoculars and started looking towards the light. As she peered at the light it started to grow, bigger and brighter, until she had to drop the binoculars. Once her eyes adjusted, she couldn't believe what she saw. The light had become so bright that it looked like a small sun, and it appeared to be daylight out, even though it was close to 11:30pm. Concerned, Cindy glanced over to see what Aliah made of all this – only to discover her friend was nowhere to be seen. The light kept getting brighter and brighter until she had to close her eyes and cover them with her hands.

What did Cindy discover when finally removes her hands and opens her eyes? What happened to Aliah?

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## Encore!



Memorial Hall was built in 1923 to honor the soldiers from Wyandotte County who served during the First World War (which at that time was the only World War). Just shy of forty years later, Patsy Cline, the powerhouse country singer who helped pave the way for women in the genre performed her final concert on March 5, 1963. The weather wasn't great that night or the next day and friends tried to encourage her to make the trip to Tennessee with them in their car, but Patsy and a couple of others determined to set out home by plane. They never made it to their final destination. The plane got caught up in the turbulence of the storm and was found the next day in a wooded piece of land, nose down, all of the inhabitants killed in the crash.

Some visitors to Memorial Hall say they've heard Cline crooning her iconic "Walking after Midnight" just before that magical hour in the Hall's auditorium all these years later. Followed up by the prophetic "I Fall to Pieces," the encore keeps echoing through the hall.

Could it be that the soldiers commemorated by the building of Memorial Hall, the ones who never made it back home, decided that Cline's soulful singing was just the thing to bring them some peace? What song might help Patsy Cline's soul finally find its eternal rest?

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