WEEK 3 · NOVEMBER 2026 · FROM THE SAVAGE ENERGI TEAM

Chasing the Chills

Veterans Day is this week. We are not turning it into a theme. Here is the documented history of wartime spiritualism, and how a careful investigation starts with a baseline.

WELCOME

Hey, Chill Chasers

Wednesday is Veterans Day. We are not going to treat that as a spooky date on the calendar, and we are not going to turn remembrance into a theme.

What we can do, carefully, is look at a real historical pattern. After the Civil War, and again after World War I and the 1918 influenza pandemic, many grieving families tried to reach people who had not come home. That history is documented. It belongs to the families who lived it. It is also part of why people still ask us how to tell a careful investigation from a noisy night out.

This week: the record, and the method.

LORE & TRADITION

Lore and Tradition: When Grief Filled the Seance Rooms

It did not start with a holiday. National Geographic traces modern American Spiritualism to 1848, when Maggie and Katie Fox of Hydesville, New York, said mysterious rappings in their home came from spirits, and that they could interpret the noises. The movement grew in a country already used to long mourning.

The Civil War made the need personal. On February 20, 1862, 11-year-old Willie Lincoln died of typhoid fever in the White House. National Geographic reports that Mary Todd Lincoln turned to mediums, and that historian David Herbert Donald, using surviving documents, calculated she may have held eight seances there. One, in December 1862, was with the medium Nettie Colburn in the Red Room. Earlier, in 1853, First Lady Jane Pierce had invited the Fox sisters to Washington after the death of her son Bennie in a train accident.

Those are records of grief, not proof that a spirit was in the room.

World War I and the influenza pandemic brought another wave. A HISTORY.com article by Greg Daugherty, last updated October 21, 2026, describes the surge. World War I ended in November 1918, with a worldwide death toll of 20 million soldiers and civilians, according to one estimate cited there. The influenza pandemic of 1918 to 1920, the same article says, took at least 50 million lives, many of them young. Spiritualism saw a sudden resurgence in the United States, Great Britain, France, and elsewhere. A February 1920 headline in the New York Sun, quoted in the piece, read: "Riddle of the Life Hereafter Draws World's Attention."

Two well-known British figures gave the movement a public face, and both had lost sons. Sir Oliver Lodge, a physicist known for work with radio waves, lost his son Raymond to a shell fragment in Belgium in 1915 and later published *Raymond, or Life and Death* (1916), describing purported contacts through mediums who used automatic writing and table tilting. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, lost his son Kingsley, who had been wounded in France in 1916 and died of pneumonia in 1918, likely brought on by influenza. Doyle also lost his younger brother to the flu in 1919. In a 1919 seance, Doyle later wrote, he believed he heard from his son: "Yes, I am so happy."

Skeptics were part of the same moment. Harry Houdini spent those years exposing fraudulent mediums. HISTORY.com notes that in 1919 alone he claimed to have attended more than 100 seances, none of which convinced him. In his 1924 book *A Magician Among the Spirits*, he wrote that nothing had been revealed to convince him that communication had been established between the dead and the living. In 1926 he testified before a Congressional committee considering a bill to outlaw mediums, clairvoyants, and fortune tellers in Washington, D.C. National Geographic covers the same hearings and notes that spiritualism's public hold faded by World War II.

The point for us is not to mock people who were in mourning. It is to remember two things at once: the hunger to hear from someone you love is human, and a crowded room full of hope is a hard place to collect clean evidence.

Sources: National Geographic, "Seances at the White House? Why these first ladies turned to the occult" (April 24, 2024) · HISTORY.com, "Talking to the Dead: How the 1918 Pandemic Spurred a Spiritualism Craze" (published April 21, 2020; last updated Oct. 21, 2026)

METHOD

How We Investigate: Start With a Baseline

A public ghost hunt and a controlled investigation are not the same job.

A baseline is the boring first pass. Before anyone calls a sound a voice, you learn what the building already does. The HVAC cycles. A pipe ticks as it cools. A streetlight throws a moving shadow. Someone's phone buzzes. A floorboard flexes in the same spot every time a person walks down the hall. If you skip that step, every ordinary noise becomes a story.

Public events have a place. People get curious, they pick up a device, they spend a night in an old building. They can also be loud, crowded, and full of borrowed gear passing from hand to hand. That is a difficult setting for evidence. Too many footsteps. Too many whispered conversations. Too many chances for a reading to belong to the living people in the room.

This is not a knock on any one host or team. It is the same question we ask of our own work: what else could cause this?

An Ohio example from the archives, not from our case files: William W. Coblentz was an Ohio farm boy who became a physicist at the National Bureau of Standards. A Library of Congress manuscript blog (August 28, 2025) describes how, starting in 1910, he attended seances and wrote them up the way he wrote up lab work. His March 30, 1911, notes on a seance in Washington, D.C., include a detailed diagram of the space and a careful description of who was there. He collected advertisements for magicians' tools, talked with magicians, and read books that claimed to explain "how 'perhaps' it is done." He saved pages of automatic writing from 1915. The blog does not ask readers to accept his conclusions. It asks them to look at the documentation and judge it. That is the habit we want: notes first, claims second.

Source: Library of Congress, "Inside a Physicist's Investigations of the Spiritual World: William W. Coblentz and His 'Automatic Writing'" (Aug. 28, 2025)

HAUNT NEWS · NORTHEAST OHIO

Haunt News: Close to Home

A Youngstown brewery announced an overnight investigation

Mahoning Matters reported on November 3, 2026, that Penguin City Brewing in Youngstown is hosting an overnight paranormal investigation with G.E.E.P. Paranormal Investigators on Saturday, November 14, from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. The article says the property's history stretches back to the mid-1800s, from a horse farm to hotels, breweries, saloons, steel manufacturing, and offices. Event organizers, the paper reported, said a recent trial run produced "loads of unexplained activity" throughout the warehouse and offices. That claim is theirs, not ours. We have not investigated the building.

If you go, check the brewery before you do. Listings change. A night with a lot of guests is a good time to practice the baseline habit above, not a reason to treat every sound as evidence.

Source: Mahoning Matters, Nov. 3, 2026

THIS MONTH

Go Chase Some Chills (Lake County)

These dates were still listed on the Lake County Historical Society's Eventbrite organizer page on November 7, 2026. We are not listing ticket prices. Check the organizer before you go. Times can change.

- **Lantern Tour,** Lake County History Center. Tuesday, Nov. 17, 8:00 PM.
- **Public Ghost Hunt,** same building. Saturday, Nov. 21, 7:00 PM.
- **Lantern Tour,** Tuesday, Nov. 24, 8:00 PM.

Eventbrite: Lake County Historical Society

THE CREW

From the Team

- **Savagely Paranormal Shorts:** quick hits on @savagelyparanormal.
- **Full investigations:** long form lives on @savageenergi.
- **The crew:** April (Founder and Chief Executive Savage), Megan (Lead Investigator), Tessa (Evidence Analyst), Tabby (Historical Researcher), and Teagan (Tech Specialist).

GET INVOLVED

Your Turn

Have a historic place in your town that people whisper about? Hit reply and tell us, especially if you know the documented history behind it. The best notes (with your OK) might end up in a future issue.

Something going on at your place? Investigations are always free. Requests go straight to April and the team through savageenergi.com/contact, and we reply within 24 hours.

If you'd like to say thanks, give directly to Lake Humane Society in Mentor. No money ever goes through Savage Energi.

Know someone who loves this stuff? Send them to savageenergi.com to sign up for Chasing the Chills.

Stay curious,

April and the Savage Energi team

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SOURCES (CHECKED NOV. 7, 2026)

1. National Geographic, "Seances at the White House? Why these first ladies turned to the occult," by Parissa DJangi, published April 24, 2024. https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/seances-at-the-white-house
2. HISTORY.com, "Talking to the Dead: How the 1918 Pandemic Spurred a Spiritualism Craze," by Greg Daugherty. Originally published April 21, 2020; last updated October 21, 2026. https://www.history.com/articles/flu-pandemic-wwi-ouija-boards-spiritualism
3. Library of Congress, Unfolding History, "Inside a Physicist's Investigations of the Spiritual World: William W. Coblentz and His 'Automatic Writing,'" posted by Josh Levy, August 28, 2025. https://blogs.loc.gov/manuscripts/2025/08/inside-a-physicists-investigations-of-the-spiritual-world-william-w-coblentz-and-his-automatic-writing/
4. Mahoning Matters, "First ever paranormal sleepover experience at Penguin City Brewing," staff report, November 3, 2026, 10:00 AM. https://www.mahoningmatters.com/news/local/article317883890.html
5. Lake County Historical Society events (Eventbrite organizer page, checked November 7, 2026). Upcoming listings included lantern tours on November 17 and November 24 at 8:00 PM and a public ghost hunt on November 21 at 7:00 PM. https://www.eventbrite.com/o/lake-county-historical-society-7949019341
6. Lake Humane Society, Make a Donation. https://lakehumane.org/get-involved/make-a-donation/