

Ghost Sarah

tales vary,

all spooky

By NANCY NEFF

Staff Writer, The Sentinel
Fulton County has a ghost.

One need only mention the name 'Sister Sarah' to prompt any one of a variety of stories about the ghost that haunts a Henry Township home on Fort Wayne Road, east of County Road 825 East.

Some people say she was a nun who killed orphans. Others will tell you she was a witch. There are any number of tragic variations on the tale — that she was unwed and pregnant when she jumped from a second-story window of the home, that she was an unfaithful wife carrying another man's child and jumped from the window to escape a fire set by her jealous husband.

Be all that as it may, there is a grave of a Sarah McIntire in the small Daniel M. McIntire family cemetery near the home.

The Wayne Arnett family has lived in the home for eight years and members have yet to see signs of a ghost, but former resident Bob Bradway has.

"We knew the stories before we moved in," said Mrs. Arnett. "The people who have lived here didn't just move in and out. We moved here in 1981 and have been here since."

"I know that when we first bought the house, I thought, 'Ooh, gee,'" she said. "But there's always a reasonable explanation for things."

For instance, she said that when they first moved into the home, the garage door closed on its own, or so it seemed. She said that when they walked into the garage, they noticed that a broom had slipped against the garage door control button.

Bob Bradway firmly believes there is a ghost. It might not be Sarah McIntire's ghost, but there is one, he says.

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Sarah

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Bradway says he has seen the apparition twice, and the family named it Sister Sarah from the name Sarah McIntire on a gravestone in the old cemetery behind the house.

"Whether she really is Sarah, that's something only the ghost would know," says Bradway. "We named her Sister Sarah because she was one of us, part of the family."

Which story is true about Sarah, Bradway and the McIntire family are uncertain.

"I have no way of knowing the truth about Sarah," said Bradway. "I have no idea whether the stories about Sarah are true or not. It was told to me that she was a McIntire girl that wasn't married and was pregnant."

Bradway, who says he would take a lie detector test to prove his truthfulness, said he saw "Sister Sarah" twice, once when his wife also saw her and another time when he was alone.

He said that one night he and his wife were asleep in bed and were awakened.

"One night — you know how you sense things — it was late at night and me and my wife had been asleep and all of a sudden we woke up," he said.

There, staring at his wife and him was an apparition with long hair and a light-colored robe. He said he could not see her facial features and admitted that the only way he knew it was a female was the long hair. He said he could not identify the color of the ghost's hair.

"She didn't really glow," he said. "She was an image. She was a shadow, and yet she wasn't. Within an instant, she was gone. We never moved, just looked at Turn to page 2

her, and she floated out the door."

The other time Bradway said he saw "Sarah" was after he heard noises from upstairs late at night at a time his five daughters were to be in bed asleep. "I heard a noise — the upstairs door always squeaked. I thought I'm going to catch the girl that's up."

Just then, Bradway said, "I've heard stories about Sarah locking doors and loud noises — that never happened when we lived there," Bradway said. "She paced the floor upstairs. It wasn't an old house's floor creaking, we heard footsteps."

"None of us were ever alarmed or afraid. I'm not afraid of ghosts. We never had any real problems with her and we never left lights on because we were afraid," he added.

He said the only times Sarah acted up was when she overturned a Christmas tree one night because it was in "her territory" and when she would sometimes turn pictures face down on a shelf.

Bradway said that when the Christmas tree was overturned, he at first thought his dog had done it, but the dog had been chained outside all that night. And the girls all had been in bed asleep.

"Those are the only disturbances we ever had," he said. "She never did anything to indicate she was harmful to us. We just sometimes felt the presence of something there."

Alonso McIntire, who offered family records in tracing information, about Sarah McIntire, noted that the information is contradictory. He added that he "does not believe there is a ghost."

According to family records, there were at least three Sarahs: Sarah McIntire, daughter of Daniel McIntire's son, Richard, and Thomas, married women named Sarah. And Elliott and Leah Woods, McIntire, named a daughter, born in 1862, Sarah. Although Bradway said he had been told Sarah was not married, legend has it that the Sarah who jumped to her death was Sarah Hoover, who married Richard McIntire, on June 17, 1855. She died on Nov. 4, 1873 at the age of 35.

One Sister Sarah version has it that she was pregnant with another man's child. When the child was born, Richard killed it and then set the house on fire. Sarah escaped by jumping out of the upstairs window. Richard supposedly was killed in the fire. However, seven years after his wife's death, Richard remarried and fathered children from that marriage, according to the 1880 U.S. Census.

But another version depicts Sarah as not marrying. Supposedly, she killed her mother. Her father then dates another woman. Sarah stabs the other woman, the father sets the house on fire and again Sarah is killed from a jump from the window to escape the blaze.

This story also contradicts records since Sarah, daughter of Elliott McIntire, died at the age of 57 in 1917 in Athens. In 1877, Sarah McIntire and Adam Barrie applied for a marriage license, according to the July 21 edition of the Rochester Sentinel that year. Here is a list of other Sister Sarah stories:

- Call her name and she appears in a puff of smoke;
- She haunts her grave;
- She walks around carrying a candle at night;
- Pour a glass of water over the grave and return a half hour later to find a glass full of blood;
- People don't live on the property very long;
- Brush grows incredibly fast around things there.

Bradway admitted he never told anyone about seeing Sister Sarah until the family moved from the house. "Back then, if you talked like that, people thought you were ready for the looney bin. Now I don't care what people say. If they want to believe it, fine. If not, that's fine too."