

HAUNTED CANADA 10

MORE SCARY TRUE STORIES

JOEL A.
SUTHERLAND

Illustrations by
Mark Savona

Scholastic Canada Ltd.
Toronto New York London Auckland Sydney
Mexico City New Delhi Hong Kong Buenos Aires

Scholastic Canada Ltd.

604 King Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5V 1E1, Canada

Scholastic Inc.

557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012, USA

Scholastic Australia Pty Limited

PO Box 579, Gosford, NSW 2250, Australia

Scholastic New Zealand Limited

Private Bag 94407, Botany, Manukau 2163, New Zealand

Scholastic Children's Books

Euston House, 24 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1DB, UK

www.scholastic.ca

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Title: Haunted Canada 10 : more scary true stories / Joel A. Sutherland ;
illustrations by Mark Savona.

Other titles: Haunted Canada ten

Names: Sutherland, Joel A., 1980- author. | Savona, Mark, illustrator.

Identifiers: Canadiana (print) 20190215437 | Canadiana (ebook) 20190215445 |
ISBN 9781443175784 (softcover) | ISBN 9781443175791 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Ghosts—Canada—Juvenile literature. | LCSH: Haunted
places—Canada—Juvenile literature.

Classification: LCC BF1472.C3 S987 2020 | DDC j133.10971—dc23

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6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Canada 139

20 21 22 23 24

*For you, dear reader.
Ten volumes! Seven written by yours
truly, and I'm incredibly proud of each
and every one. I wouldn't have made
it here without your support. My
eternal thanks to you.*

INTRODUCTION

When I wrote *Haunted Canada 4*, my first foray into the series that Pat Hancock kicked off, I never imagined I'd someday be writing an introduction for the tenth volume. And yet, six years later, here we are. As I've researched, written and edited this book, I've been in a perpetual state of mild shock, like waking up and realizing your dream was actually your reality. But despite the shock I feel at having reached this particular milestone, it shouldn't be a surprise to me or anyone who knows me that my life has led me here.

I've always loved storytelling and have long had a particular fondness for tales filled to the brim with things that go bump in the night. *Haunted Canada 4* wasn't the first time I profited from spinning a creepy yarn. That goes back farther in time — back to the summer between Grades 5 and 6. I was at a sleepover with two friends, and as midnight approached, one of us (Can you guess who?) suggested we take turns telling scary stories.

My friends did an admirable job telling genuinely creepy tales. So when it came to my turn, I knew I'd need to step things up a notch. The specifics of the story are lost in time — I'm relatively certain it involved a hitchhiker and a broken-down car, or a bathroom mirror and a deadly curse, or a this-call-is-coming-from-within-the-house-style twist, or . . . something. I spoke with an eerie voice, I jolted my audience with chilling sound effects and I paused for dramatic effect whenever the tension mounted. It shouldn't have worked, it should have been cheesy and over-the-top, but when I finally reached THE END

and took a deep breath, one of my friends reached into his pocket, pulled out a dollar, and placed it in my hand.

“What’s this for?” I asked.

“That,” he said in a whisper, “is for telling the scariest story I have ever heard.”

I was hooked. I could scare people! I knew I’d found my calling.

Which brings us to *Haunted Canada 10*. In the following pages you’ll find something to petrify every palate. Ghosts that lurk in bedroom closets and spirits that attack the living in broad daylight. Haunted houses, forts, hockey arenas and abandoned asylums. Stories from the past and stories from the present. You’ll even find a grinning head . . . with no body.

Will one of these stories be the scariest one *you* have ever heard? There’s only one way to find out. Work up some courage, brace yourself, and turn the page. There have been nine prior volumes in the series, so you should know by now what you’re getting yourself into. And if this is your first taste of Haunted Canada, don’t say I didn’t warn you.

Frightfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel Salas". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish at the bottom that extends under the name.



NIGHTTIME IN THE ASYLUM

Sainte-Clotilde-de-Horton, Quebec

Four brave men and women stood on the steps of the abandoned asylum and wondered what awaited them within the large, imposing building. As members of APPA Paranormal, they would go on to investigate the Sainte-Clotilde-de-Horton Asylum more than fifteen times between 2006 and 2017, but their first visit was easily one of the most memorable. After months of planning, they were happy and excited that the day had come when they'd finally set foot inside. But Patrick Sabourin, one of the group's founders, was also overcome by a profound sadness. The building had a lot of history and had seen no shortage of tragedy.

Originally built in 1939 as a monastery for the Fathers of the Sacred Heart, the building was briefly used as the

novitiate of the Brothers of Christian Instruction in the 1950s. On Christmas Day, 1959, three students died when they accidentally set a fire. The building was purchased by the government in the 1960s and converted into an asylum for people with intellectual disabilities. In 1988 a patient set a fire in a central dormitory on the top floor, killing nine people.

It's believed some of the twelve souls who died in the two separate fires have remained in the asylum long after it was closed and fell into disrepair.

Patrick led his team — his wife and co-founder, Izabel Descheneaux, technical director Éric Chicoine and mental health worker Marie Josée Lamoureux — inside. Entering the asylum was like stepping into a nightmare. Just about every window was broken and boarded up. The walls were crumbling and covered in graffiti and mould. The ceiling had many holes and looked like it might come down at any moment. The floor was covered in trash and puddles of dirty brown water. Old, broken furniture had been left behind to rot. They passed an inscription that read “*Sinite parvulos venire ad me,*” which translates to “Let the children come to me.”

During his research, Patrick had uncovered several reports from people who had heard voices in the halls and screams behind walls. Some of those people had also seen ghosts drifting among the shadows. Now, seeing the inside of the building for himself, he wasn't surprised. There was no chance the asylum *wasn't* haunted. More than that — judging by its appearance and the sombre feeling that hung in the air as thick as smoke, it might have been the

most haunted building in the province.

Not much time passed before the ghosts revealed themselves to the group. Although they were alone, laughter cut through the silence — laughter that soon turned to crying. Patrick and the others paused and held their breath, trying not to make a sound, waiting for what they might hear next.

“Where are you going?” a soft voice asked.

Patrick was too shocked to answer. They moved deeper into the building, then descended into the depths of the basement.

“Help me,” a young voice said, full of sadness and fear. It sounded too close for comfort.

One of the members took a picture of the empty room. Later, when reviewing what they had captured, they saw a small boy holding out his hand. His expression was full of sorrow and pain. Although the boy only revealed himself in a picture, two other horrifying spirits appeared in person.

The first was the misty form of a human that flew past them like the wind and floated up the stairs. The second was an incredibly tall man who approached Izabel when she was alone. She turned and ran as quickly as she could, refusing to wait and see what the tall man wanted.

A few years later, in 2009, Roger Thivierge and Marie-Claude Martineau purchased the forty-three-hectare property, abandoned asylum and all. The couple thought it would be the ideal retirement project. Their plan was to start a French bulldog breeding business and raise funds to convert the asylum into a seniors’ residence. They didn’t

know they had purchased a haunted building, but they soon found out.

Within weeks, trespassing ghost hunters began to sneak onto their property late at night. Some were more destructive than others, breaking windows and damaging walls. Roger and Marie-Claude put up homemade signs that read “*Privé.*” But the signs were largely ignored, and one was written over with spray paint to read “THE DEVIL IS HERE.” Once their patience had completely run out, Roger and Marie-Claude called the police. One of the officers made an off-the-cuff suggestion: Why not cash in on the macabre interest and charge people a fee to visit the haunted asylum?



A hallway in the Sainte-Clotilde-de-Horton Asylum

The next time someone showed up to sneak onto the grounds, the couple stopped them and said they could tour the building . . . for a price. The visitor eagerly paid up. Word spread, and before long people were travelling from across the province, the country and even the world, with visitors from as far away as Europe and South America.

Patrick, Izabel and other members of APPA Paranormal returned to the site many times over the years, and they were never disappointed. But in 2017 the local fire department deemed the building unsafe, and the municipality ordered a fence to be installed around the building to keep people out. During their last visit before this happened, Patrick and Izabel spoke with not one, not two, but *three* different ghosts. Each spirit was creepier than the last.

First, they went to the basement. They thought they could hear something in the shadows and had a feeling they were no longer alone.

“What’s your name?” Patrick asked the darkness.

“James,” a young boy answered. It was the same voice they had heard many years before.

Although Patrick and Izabel were scared, they also laughed a little. To make contact with a ghost was the reason they had visited, after all. Soon they went back up to the main floor, where they heard the second voice.

As they entered a dark room, they could hear someone snickering. It sounded like another child, but this one was a girl. Izabel asked what the girl’s name was.

“Amélie,” she yelled, making Patrick and Izabel nearly jump out of their skin. They moved on, eventually reaching the top floor.

Standing in the centre of the dormitory where the fire that killed nine people took place, Patrick and Izabel tried to encourage the ghosts to come out of the woodwork. But nothing happened. That was odd, since the rest of the building had always been so active.

“If you don’t talk to me, I will leave,” Patrick finally said. He and Izabel began walking back to the staircase but were interrupted by the third voice of the night.

“Hey, where are you going?” a man’s voice boomed.

Despite their fear, Patrick and Izabel managed to hold their ground and speak a little more with the ghost. He identified himself as Gerard, which was the name of one of the people who had died in the fire. Although Gerard seemed to want them to stay, Patrick and Izabel soon left and stepped back out into the moonlight. Although they were excited by all of the incredible activity they had experienced, they were also a little relieved to have left the asylum without suffering any physical harm.

But it’s often the psychological harm that cuts the deepest, and in a place like the Sainte-Clotilde-de-Horton Asylum, maladies of the mind have a habit of lingering . . . sometimes long after death.