





The areas that were looked at were the main lodge and the "stable" behind the main Lodge.

The investigation started at 7:00 in the evening and was concluded at 2:30 a.m.

The evening was very cold. The inside temperature was between 20 and 35 degrees. The outside temperature was in the teens.

The investigation started with an expedition to the "Stable" where there has been reported activity such as strange knockings, full apparitions, and people reporting the feeling of being touched. The Stable was a standard Horse Stable on the main floor including all of the equipment that one would find in any stable; however we discovered that in the attic of the Stable there is a full Bar including several Pool tables and a dance floor.

The visit to the stable was not conclusive; however we did hear an odd knocking from a seating , but it was so cold outside that the area was almost unbearable to work in.

The investigation continued inside with the different teams checking out different locations in the main Lodge.

There were 5 - I/R cameras located throughout the building. (The main entrance, the Dining hall, the 2nd floor hallway, the main area on the 1st floor, and room 107. There was also a microphone placed in the guest room.

Throughout the evening we monitored the different areas with other equipment as well. We used mini I/R Digital video cameras, EMF meters, and a Thermal Camera.

The only noticeable oddities during the investigation (before going over the recordings) were a noticeable temperature drop in the dining area (The average temperature was 20 degrees and the measurements were as low as 10 degrees. This was attributed to the extremely cold temperatures outside the building and the lack of insulation and amount of windows in the room.

In the Dining room there were some odd sounds that were eventually credited to the sounds of mice in the walls.

A two separate times with two different teams there was the shape of a person seen in the Dining room while using the Thermal camera. This image was discovered to be an arrangement of statues and a lamp that were mounted to a wall near a door.

We will see what all of the recording turn up when they are examined at a later date, however the evening was a great experience for all of us and hopefully we will be able to work together in the future.



### **History of the Lodge:**

Mr. W.E. James settled the property in 1875. He had tried to homestead the property earlier, but through a "technicality" he lost the first attempt.

Mr. James was in the cattle business and the original purpose of the property was for a cattle ranch. Mrs. James started taking in boarders and the main focus of the business became the Lodge and not the cattle.

Upon the death of Mr. James, the management of the Lodge was continued by his wife and two sons. Eventually Howard P. James and his sister Mrs. Peter Hondius took over Management.

Some of the unique original features of the Lodge were a Candy Kitchen where children could hold "Taffy pulling parties", A Billiards room and a secluded parlor. At the time of Mr. James' management the Lodge was featured in the local newspaper because of the major remodel that was taking place. "There are now 22 bedrooms with private baths, each room containing a lavatory with hot and cold water. And the walls done in pleasing restful tints. A large outdoor balcony gives guests the opportunity to sit out and enjoy the beautiful mountain scenery. A card room, billiard and dance hall on the first floor and three features of the addition, all in mission style, hung with burlap and finished with old English oak with mission style elecctorllers, etc. The card room is in green and brown effect: the billiard hall is red and brown, with an immense brick fireplace having huge seats built on either side. The dance hall 47X31, with a continuous mission high backed seat around it, and a color scheme of canary yellow with old English oak, under the glow of brilliant electric lights. Will be a drawing card to those who love beautiful surroundings during the Mazy waltz. The dining room has been enlarged to accommodate 90 more guests and has much better light through the addition of several windows, than the old dining hall. The old casino has been transformed into sleeping apartments."

A fire broke out at the Elkhorn once. The fire was discovered by Fred Waber of the R.M.P.T. Co. He was making a delivery to the Lodge and saw a cloud of smoke "pouring from the roof". The Estes Park Fire Department responded, and within 15 minutes had the fire under control. The only damage was to the roof of the main lodge.

The Elkhorn's Main Lodge represents one of the larger mountain structures built in Colorado during the period 1888-1902. The Main Lodge pillow count is approximately 65-70, depending on the number of beds in the various rooms; each room is different in terms of décor, number of beds, etc. All are rustic; there are no TV's, phones, and limited electrical outlets in each room. All but one room has its own bathroom.

Actually the Lodge was started earlier as a small cottage; and then as tourism increased during that period, the Main Lodge went through 3 major phases of construction.

The first phase was the addition of the South Wing, which included a second story of some 8 sleeping rooms and the first floor was additional lobby area with pool and card playing tables, and two large fireplaces. At that time the James Family started purchasing Stickley furniture for the lobby area and some of the finest Stickley furniture today remains in the Elkhorn's lobby area - serious Stickley investors are sent here by the Fort Collins modern-day Stickley furniture store to see the Lodge's collection - and, after a century of use, that furniture is as good today as it was when constructed. The Stickley Museum has offered to purchase some of the Lodge's furniture.

The second phase was the addition of the East-West Wing comprising an additional 12 second floor sleeping rooms, and Northern Colorado's first dance hall (presently called the Ballroom); the Hunt Room with a large fireplace, one of Colorado's grandest billiards table (now missing), and additional lobby space.

The third phase was the Northern Wing adding an additional 8 second floor rooms and the 200 person plus Main Lodge dining room for the summer season.

The Elkhorn Lodge & Guest Ranch received its first guests in 1874. Prior to that it consisted of the old lodge and a barn. The 'old lodge' dating back to 1871 is still in use. It is the oldest continually occupied structure in Colorado. The James family started a cattle ranch but determined that lodging for Estes visitors, hunting elk and transporting the meat to Denver was more profitable. From the 1870's to the early 1900's this practice decimated the elk population.

In 1913 the Elkhorn, with others, arranged to have 40 specially built wagons created to transport elk to Estes Park to regenerate the elk herds - which had become essential to the continued flow of tourist to the area.



In a building now called the Woodshed, the Elkhorn operated the first ice house in Estes. During the winter months large blocks of ice would be cut from the fall river and stored in the ice house for use during summer months. Some of our more senior regular guests recall their experiences of working at the Elkhorn and cutting and transporting the ice by horse wagons - hard and difficult work.

When you tour the Elkhorn some historical highlights include Estes' first school house [1886]; Estes' first church; the original stage terminal the coach house; and the Elkhorn's hospitality was recognized throughout the world. Prior to the start-up of the Stanley Hotel [early 1900's], the Elkhorn was the premier lodge in the area with a dining room seating over 200 and remains today

as it was 100 years ago. The Elkhorn's popularity was such that tents were erected each summer to accommodate guests.

Elkhorn's guests came from around the world. One of the most prominent, Pieter Hondius, related to a royal European family even married a James daughter. From that time the Hondius name has become an institution within the Estes Valley.

The Elkhorn's land holdings increased and included more than 3,000 acres in the Horseshoe Park area which was transferred to the Rocky Mountain National Park in the 1930's; that area is one of the more popular locations for wildlife viewing. Elkhorn's guests would routinely ride Elkhorn's horses from the Lodge to Horseshoe Park over Deer Mountain for picnics and enjoy the views.

Doctoral history students visit the Elkhorn in order to experience the early life of Teddy Roosevelt, who visited and traveled the area and, many years later after his political life, started his own ranch named the Elkhorn.

The Elkhorn Lodge & Guest Ranch was designated a National Historical District by the US Congress in 1977

During the 1980's a book was being written about the Stanley Hotel (just down the road from the Elkhorn) but the author realized that while the Stanley did have some wonderful ghost stories, they did not have enough to complete a "Ghost" book. The author was a friend of the owner of the Elkhorn and they asked if they could "borrow" some of the ghost stories for the Stanley. So many of the rumored ghosts at the Stanley Hotel were taken from the stories of the Elkhorn Lodge.

Since the location was shown on the episode of Ghost Hunters the interest in the "Ghosts" of the Elk Horn Lodge has increased. While it is nice that there is a new interest in the location we have seen many new stories created by "Ghost Hunters" that are only going to damage the history of this beautiful location by adding fabricated stories and inaccurate research to this wonderful place.

Some of the examples of rumors and bad investigation at the lodge are:

Teams on the internet making claims like: "'Door opens by itself at Haunted Elkhorn Lodge", "Window hit by something unseen at Haunted Elkhorn Lodge" "Camera bag moves at Haunted Elkhorn Lodge". These are typical pieces of "evidence" that are being put forward by people who are looking for ghosts without any real investigating of the past paranormal claims.

### **We did get an interesting story from a past guest at the lodge:**

I believe it was in 1996 that we stayed at the lodge. We had planned our entire vacation on the internet which was, at that time a bit of a novelty and very challenging as there were much fewer websites.

On the day we arrived, we'd planned to take a dinner trail ride but it was raining and cold and we were re-scheduled for a morning breakfast ride. We checked in and I remember standing at the counter waiting to be handed a key. When I asked to which room in the lodge we'd been assigned, I was told to take any room to which the door was open. We walked up the staircase, down the hall and looked in several open rooms, all very similarly furnished, finally selecting one on front side of the lodge. We unpacked, inspected the bath (equipped with a claw-foot bathtub with shower and pedestal sink) and headed into town for shopping and dinner.

When we returned, we first noticed that the floor in our room, and all

rooms on that side of the hallway, sloped toward the outer wall. For my wife and I, that meant that when we were in bed our feet would be lower than our head. Another bed, used by our daughter, had to be re-made so that her head would not be below the level of her feet. We liked the charm of the place and found small things like this to be part of the character.

That night, while my wife read in the room, my daughter and I ventured downstairs to the lobby. To the best of my knowledge, there were not any other guests in the lodge that night - although most of the cabins were full. There was a fire in the fireplace downstairs and we wandered down the hall to a small room with a pool table. Although there were not enough balls to fill the rack, we played a game of 8-ball and headed upstairs to bed by 10:00 PM.

We had not been in bed 30 minutes, still talking about the fun events of our day, when we heard water running in the room next door - one room back toward the staircase. It ran for about 30 minutes. Finding that unusual, especially since we knew no one else was staying at the lodge, my daughter and I got up to check that room. The door was closed and I knocked on it, asking, and "Is anyone there? Do you need help?". Getting no answer, I opened the door a crack and repeated myself. The room was dark and there was no evidence that anyone had occupied it. The beds were made and there were no suitcases. We walked to the bathroom door and the light was on inside. Again I knocked and offered assistance. There was no response. We pushed open the bathroom door and found that the hot water faucet in the tub had been completely opened and the water was running at full blast. We shut it off and returned to our room.

That night we lay in bed and made up lots of silly stories about who could be in that room and why they turned on only the hot water. However, to this day, we really don't know the answer. We heard nothing more and saw nothing else unusual during our stay. In the morning we had a wonderful horseback ride up to an outdoor kitchen in the Rockies that was fully-stocked for our breakfast. With no explanation how a crusty, old faucet handle in a claw-foot tub could turn on by itself, we have nothing else to believe than the place is haunted. But if we went back to Estes Park, we'd probably stay there again....maybe in a cabin this time.