

The Elkhorn Lodge



This was part of a taping for the TV show Ghost Hunters



Bryan with the Ghost Hunters Crew

We were approached by the Ghost Hunters team about a location in Colorado that would be good for an episode of the show. It had been suggested by one of our sources that we look into the Elkhorn Lodge.

The history of the lodge includes some ghost stories, but some of them no longer reside at the Lodge. Several years back there was a book being written about the Stanley Hotel. When the author discovered that there were not a lot of ghost stories at the Stanley, they quietly “borrowed” some from the Elkhorn.



A historic look at the Elkhorn Lodge

In 1875 Mr. W.E. James settled the property. He had tried to homestead it earlier but was unsuccessful.

Mr. James was a cattle rancher and had decided this was where he wanted to locate his business. Over time, Ms. James started taking in boarders and the focus of the business moved from cattle to people. As time went on there were multiple additions to the Lodge.

The first guests visited in 1874



The crew greeting Bryan as they arrive to the location

After Mr. James death, his widow and two sons continued the operations

There was once a fire at the Lodge. Fred Waber discovered it. He was making a delivery to the Lodge and saw smoke “pouring from the roof.” The only damage was to the roof of the main lodge.

Bryan discussed this with the production company and the investigation was arranged.



The investigation:

- The areas being investigated:
- The Main Lodge
- The Stable
- The “haunted” guest room 107

The investigation started at 7:00 pm and was concluded at 2:30 am

The average temperature in the Lodge was 20-35 degrees the outside temperature was in the teens.

The Lodge does not have a source of heat other than a few fireplaces scattered throughout the building, so we were not able to stray from the headquarters for long periods without needing go back for warmth.



The investigation started with a visit to the Stable where there has been reported activity such as strange knocking, full apparitions, and the feeling of being touched. The stable was a standard horse stable on the main floor, but the second floor had been converted to a bar including several pool tables and a dance floor.

The visit to the Stable was inconclusive but we did hear some odd knocking coming from the seating area. The conditions were so cold that it was almost unbearable to try to work.

On the way back to the main Lodge from the Stable, we did see some glowing eyes towards the mountain. On further investigation we discovered that it was a herd of elk.

Equipment:

- 1 – Video camera located at the main entrance
- 1 – Video camera located in the dining hall
- 1 – Video camera located in the main room on the first floor
- 1 – Video camera located in room 107
- 1 – Microphone located in room 107

Throughout the investigation, we monitored the different areas manually using hand held recorders, EMF meters and a Thermal Camera

The only noticeable oddities during the investigation were an extreme drop in temperature in the dining hall. The temperature dropped from 20 degrees to 10 very quickly. This was most likely due to the presence of mostly windows instead of walls and bad insulation in the walls

that were there. We discovered the insulation issue when we heard odd sounds coming from the exterior walls. Upon further investigation, we discovered there were mice in the walls.

While in the dining hall on two occasions, we noticed what looked like a person standing near the main door the room when using the thermal camera. The second time it was noticed we discovered that this was an optical illusion caused by an arrangement of a couple of statues a lamp and a table next to the door.

We received an interesting e-mail from a past guest of 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 fewer websites.

On the day we arrived, we had 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, 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 the front side of the Lodge. We unpacked, inspected bathe (equipped with a claw-foot tub) 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 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 like the charm of the place and found small things like this are part of the character.

That night, while my wife read I 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 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 towards the staircase. It ran for about 30 minutes. Finding that unusual, especially since we know 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 not 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 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 the 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 to an outdoor kitchen in the Rocky's that was fully stocked for our breakfast. With no explanation of 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. However, if we went back to Estes Park, we would probably stay there again.... Maybe in a cabin this time.