

## Legends of Freeborn County

### Seventh in a monthly series of Freeborn County Legends - October 2000

This is a true story of a farmhouse in rural Freeborn County. Information has been gleaned from the book The Haunted Heartland and from family interviews.

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#### Who's There?

Written by B. Jackson.

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It's a rambling farmhouse  
with peaks and porches,  
on a Minnesota hilltop  
where a log cabin stood.  
Surrounded by trees,  
more than a hundred years old  
the land grant was signed  
by Abraham Lincoln.

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It's a large old house,  
with many rooms,  
perfect place for family,  
and neighbors, and friends,  
A quiet country home,  
somewhat isolated.  
Most people only lived there  
a short time. Why?

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When Annie and Bill  
decided to buy the place  
it had been standing empty  
for three long years.  
The paint was peeling,  
the windows broken.  
The porches were sagging.  
It stood alone deserted.

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It had fourteen tenants  
in eighteen years.  
What was the reason?  
The family wondered.  
Local farmers didn't say.  
They quietly questioned,  
when Annie and Bill moved in  
with their nine children.

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They worked really hard  
to fix up the place.  
They painted, and pounded,  
and windows replaced.  
It was scrubbed top to bottom,  
all that they could do,  
to make it a home -  
comfortable and true.

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One day when Annie  
was in the yard,  
she and her sisters-in-law  
were working hard,  
they looked and spotted Grandma  
on the upstairs porch.

They waved and called to her -  
glad she'd come for a visit.

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They hurried inside,  
glad to set a spell;  
but Grandma wasn't there -  
nor anyone else.  
The southwest room was empty,  
so was the porch.  
WHO had they seen?  
What did THIS mean?

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Seven months later,  
in the upstairs hall,  
a younger lady appeared  
in the dim evening light  
Wearing a flowered, long dress,  
and a faded apron,  
the children said she seemed  
to be looking for something.

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They first thought she was their mother,  
but were terrified when she cried,  
"HELP ME. PLEASE, HELP ME."

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They plunged down the stairs.  
Mom was in the kitchen.  
She was not wearing a dress -  
nor an apron.  
And she had NOT been upstairs.

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The younger woman appeared,  
again and again.  
Several children saw her -  
or felt her.  
They described her as tall,  
and very thin,  
and maybe about  
thirty-five years of age.

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One night young Liz  
felt a cold breeze,  
and the covers lifted  
UP, off of her bed.  
She grabbed for the sheet,  
and peered over its edge.  
She saw a woman  
enter the closet and dissolve.

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When her sister shared the room,  
they both awakened,  
to see a lady  
in a flowered, long dress  
and a faded apron,  
standing by a light in the closet  
THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THAT CLOSET.

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Another sister liked to read,  
in that quiet bedroom;  
and often a cold hand  
would encircle her foot.  
If she continued reading,  
it would go away;  
but if she tried to pull away,  
it would encircle and jerk.

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One night young Tom  
had gone to bed early.  
Nothing scared him -  
seventeen years old,  
lanky frame, six feet, six inches tall,  
self confident, tough guy,  
No problem.

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Someone bounced on his bed,  
and he blamed his brother.  
"Hey! Cut it out," he yelled.  
He straightened out,  
and pushed with his foot;  
and SOMETHING PUSHED BACK.

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Tom jumped from his bed,  
and he ran downstairs screaming.  
He never again slept in that bedroom.

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Did Bill and Annie's family  
have lively imaginations?  
Or had someone else  
shared these experiences?

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In 1893, Mr. Jensen  
built that home  
on the site of a cabin  
where a young mother died.  
In the southwest upper room,  
he felt a presence;  
and in the fifty-three years  
his family lived in that house,  
they never used that room.

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During the depression,  
a neighbor worked on that farm.  
He got room and board  
and a dollar and a quarter a week.  
When he slept in that room,  
a lady OFTEN appeared;  
and she pulled the blankets  
up over his shoulders.

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After this happened four different times, he decided to walk home each night, even though it  
meant walking three miles home and three miles back to work in the morning.

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Then eighteen years

of renters said,  
"We saw the lady,  
and we didn't use that room."

□

One day when Annie was  
in the kitchen,  
an old lady appeared -  
the grandma on the porch.  
She was non-descript  
and not frightening,  
and she stepped into the spot  
where the party had been.

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In spite of these stories,  
Bill was unconvinced.  
He thought the family  
was just having fun.  
But one day when he and Annie  
were alone in the house,  
footsteps were heard  
and a light fixture rattling.

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"Who's there?" Annie called,  
but no one answered.  
SILENCE POUNDED LIKE A HEARTBEAT  
THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE!

"Who's there?" she called again,  
with no response.  
Bill tried to explain -  
a neighbor drilling nearby?

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"Who's there?" Annie called.

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Grandma who died  
in the rambling farmhouse,  
in the countryside?

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The young mother who died  
in the old log cabin?  
Is she still returning  
to care for her children?

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"Who's there?" Annie called.

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And she called again,  
"WHO'S THERE?"

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