



ARGYLE WINERY

The Story Behind Spirithouse Wines

The ghost of a troubled Dundee woman is said to inhabit the former Dundee City Hall, now home to Argyle Winery.

"It isn't Halloween but some believe a ghost is present in a Dundee building, the ghost of a woman who died by her own hand.

Lena Elsie Imus died in 1908 in the building now serving as the tasting room for Argyle Winery at 691 Highway 99W in Dundee. The old house, turned commercial dwelling, was the home of Dundee City Hall from the late 70's until 1989.

The legend of Imus' ghost started with two former city employees: Molly Davis, then the city recorder, and Chris Culver, former city clerk. The two women started to notice strange occurrences in the building.

"I kept saying there's something strange going on here, so I started asking people" said Davis, who now works for the city of Gervais.

She asked several people in town about the incidents, including Emil Sander, a long time Dundee resident. Sander told Davis the story of Imus. Sander was about 9 years old at the time of Imus'



death and he was either home or nearby when she was found after she has apparently ingested carbolic acid in a suicide attempt.

Davis also heard from other sources that two young men had died in the house after Imus, but



the city employee concluded that the ghost couldn't be male; she said the flowery smell had to have come from a woman.

The sweet smell that Davis and Culver mention would usually be accompanied by a puff of air passing by.

"I'd go around (saying) 'Is anybody wearing cologne?'" she said. "No one was wearing anything."

Tod Miller, assistant public works superintendent for the city of Dundee, also worked in the old City Hall building. He said that he too had experiences with Imus' ghost.

"Lights would go on by themselves. They'd hear people walking around upstairs when there was no one up there," he said.

Miller said that according to the story, when Lena was 25 years old she became pregnant. The father of the baby said he was going to leave Lena so she became depressed and killed herself, or so the legend goes.

Her obituary in the Dec. 24, 1908 edition of the Newberg Graphic said Imus died Dec 18 from ingestion of carbolic acid. The notice states that she was unconscious for 10 hours then became conscious for 24 hours before she died.

The obituary said that just before her ingesting the acid she became "despondent and (thought) she had nothing to live for." It does not mention anything about the alleged pregnancy.

Lena is buried in Dundee's Pioneer Cemetery with her parents and two brothers. Her tombstone reads "Not Dead, But Gone Before" and Miller said the inscription raises the hairs on his neck.

Miller said at first he teased Davis and Culver about believing in the ghost until one day he was in the old building the day after Thanksgiving. Only he and Culver were in the building and he heard noises from upstairs.

"It sounded like somebody was upstairs," Miller said. "I looked out the window and realized that there were no cop cars outside and there were no cops upstairs."

Culver then asked him if he had heard noises upstairs. He acknowledged that he had and didn't razz the two city employees anymore about believing in Imus' ghost.

And one time a service technician was in the building to service the city's photo copier. Miller said he had a briefcase full of tools and it was unexplainably dumped out onto the floor. When asked what had happened, the city employees just said, "Oh, that's just our ghost."

Both Davis and Miller said that the repair man was frightened by the event and never came back to the building.

"Lena must not [have] liked him or he was a relative of the guy that got her pregnant," Miller said.

Once some of the city employees played a practical joke on Culver and Davis, trying to scare them on Imus' birthday.

Someone had found an empty bottle of carbolic acid and he or she filled it with liquid and left it near the coffee pot for the two women to find. Davis said she already knew about the joke, but Culver was pretty shaken by the prank.

"That's the fun we had," Davis said. "(We weren't scared) - not any more than anybody else would be in an old house. Besides, she wasn't mad at women; it was the guys that she was mad at."

"This is just a ghost story," Davis added. "But it's our fun ghost story that we've enjoyed for years."

Rollin Soles, winemaker and general manager of Argyle, said that people working at the winery had heard a few unaccounted for noises and witnessed some lights turning off on their own. People think there is something there, but they don't get scared about it, Soles said, adding that Imus' ghost is a good spirit.

"I think it adds a great depth of fun and story to Dundee to have a ghost like that involved around here," Soles said. "It's a nice heritage piece."

FROM: A Tale of Death, Ghosts and Wine

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