

Children's Department (Basement)

The legend of the Grey Lady originated on a cold winter morning in 1937: As was his custom, the library's custodian came in at 3 am to fire up the furnace for the day. The furnace was located in the basement, near what is today the junction of the hallways on the bottom floor. Using a flashlight and looking down to see where he was going, the custodian headed for the furnace room. On his way he nearly bumped into a figure. When he looked up, he saw a female wearing a long dress and a grey shawl. As he stared at her, then she seemed to fade into the darkness.

Long time Children's Librarian Ms. Margaret Maier (below) had the most experiences with the Grey Lady. While the Children's area was being remodeled in the 1980s, the Grey Lady followed her home where she stayed until the renovation was completed. Ms. Margaret believed she and the ghost had formed a special bond, but she still didn't like the Grey Lady following her home.

There are a number of stories about books falling off the shelves. A former Library Director once instructed employees to no longer tell patrons about the Grey Lady, or even acknowledge that she existed. A few days later, a patron asked the Assistant Children's Librarian about the Grey Lady, in which she replied, "If she was here, she's not here anymore." Immediately a book called Betsy's Wedding fell off the shelf.

The psychic medium, Lorraine Warren visited the library in the 1970s. Once she reached the Story Pit she fell into a trance. She claimed that she had a vision of a woman looking into water and that she felt the ghost was tied to the land instead of the building.

Prior to the basement remodeling, a former Special Collections Librarian entered the basement restroom, locked the entrance door and entered a stall. She heard the two faucets running water into the sink. Opening the stall door, she went out and turned off the faucets, but no one else was in the restroom and the door was still locked.

Learn more about Willard Library and the Grey Lady:

www.willard.lib.in.us

- Facebook
- TikTok: WillardPublicLibrary
- Instagram: willardlibrary_ev
- Youtube :The Willard Library Channel: Virtual Ghost Tour

Ghost Cams

<https://www.willardghost.com/>

Books containing Stories about the Grey Lady

(Available for Check out on the Adult Services Floor)

- Haunted Indiana by Mark Mariment
- Haunted Travels of Indiana by Mark Mariment

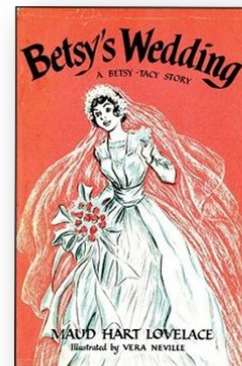
Books about Willard Library

(Available for Check out on the Adult Services Floor)

- Where there is a Willard

TV Appearances

- Discovery Channel's Real Ghost Hunters
- Syfy Channel's Ghost Hunters (AKA TAPS)



*The
Grey Lady
of
Willard Library
Evansville, Indiana*

*Feel free to roam about,
snap photos, or ask questions!*



History of Willard Library

Founded by a local philanthropist Willard Carpenter in 1885, Willard Library is the oldest public library building in the state. Willard Carpenter wanted to leave a lasting legacy in Evansville. A town he had helped build through his political and business involvement. His original dream was to build a Willard College for women, but he had lost so much of his fortune through some unfortunate business investments, he was encouraged instead to build this amazing library.

Designed by James and Merritt Ried, the Victorian Gothic library was intended "for the use of the people of all classes, races, and sexes, free of charge forever." For more than 135 years it has served that purpose, and will continue to do so for many years to come.



Who is the Grey Lady?

A picture of Willard Carpenter's daughter, Louise Carpenter, hangs on the first floor above the copy machine. Although we don't know who the ghost is, some people suspect it might be her, others have their own theories. One time, two young ghost hunters came in to seek the Grey Lady. They stopped when they saw Louise's picture and one commented that she wasn't very attractive. Later, the same person said she felt quite unsettled during the rest of her visit at the library-possibly because she insulted Louise!

Many Patrons and even Staff have their own theories, but I guess we will never know until she tells us herself!



Unexplained Encounters

Ladies will sometimes experience the feeling of someone touching their hair or earrings while in the library

- The Grey Lady seems to like chairs. She likes to pull them out from under tables and a couple of people have even felt her cold presence while sitting in a chair.
- Has very strong scent that some has described as lilac, lavender, or an old lady type perfume.
- Many people have heard footsteps when no one is around, or books falling off the shelves when it seems impossible for them to fall.
- Before the shelves blocked the view of the elevator, night shift employees from Berry Plastics would often report seeing the elevator going up and down all night.

She is known by her chilly atmosphere.

Bayard Room (Top Floor)

One day our security alarm went off in the middle of the night. Two police officers and the library's former Director arrived at the library at the same time responding to the alarm. One of the policemen and the Director went in to scope out the scene. Following normal procedure, one officer remained in his squad car to watch in case anyone exited the building. While he waited, he saw a woman in the upstairs Bayard Room window and what he believes was a man standing behind her. When the Director and the other officer came out, he asked them if they caught the people. They insisted no one else was in the building. The Director suggested that he may have seen the ghost. The officer didn't assume it was a ghost because said he had never heard of the Grey Lady before!

Special Collections (Top Floor)

Jeff Lyons (Below) the popular Chief Meteorologist at WFIE in Evansville, experienced an encounter with the Grey Lady. He came to Willard Library early one morning with his cameraman and a couple of librarians. They went up to the top floor and Lyons asked if they could "set up" a shot. As the librarians were telling him that they would not set up a pre-staged event, several books slid off the shelf!



Adult Services Department (Main Floor)

There haven't been any Grey Lady sightings on the first floor, but there have been a couple of very interesting unexplained experiences.

Staff has noticed a strong smell of perfume that seems to move around the floor and then disappears. The sound of someone walking on the wooden floor boards, books falling off shelves, unexplained sounds. These all have happened when there are no Patrons on the floor and all staff is accounted for or staff has been left alone.

Elevator (Main Floor)

A former Custodian got on the Elevator on the first floor early one morning and pushed the button to go down, but nothing happened. He tried a couple more times, but nothing worked. Frustrated, he said out loud, "I want to go down!" And that worked!

A library assistant shortly after she was hired decided to introduce herself to the ghost while working alone on the Adult Services Floor. She nicely explained to the Grey Lady that she didn't like to be scared and if the ghost would like to make herself known to her, it could be expressed in non-scary ways. Shortly after, the elevator door opened and no one was coming out. The library assistant walked over to the elevator thinking it was a patron who needed assistance to exit the elevator. Once she approached the open elevator no one was there. What made this particular startling is that the call light for the elevator was lit, and that button only lights up when it has been pushed. The library assistant said that she felt this was the Grey Lady Ghost complying to her request and welcoming her to the staff.

Archives/Reading Room/ Browning Gallery (Basement)

Along with the new addition being built in 2015, so were new bathrooms complete with automatic flushers. After they were installed the toilets would continually flush. Plumbers were called into to investigate, yet they couldn't find anything that would make them constantly flush like that. Over time it slowly died down but every now and again you will hear toilets constantly flush yet there in no physical person in there.

Another incident involved the new projector that was installed after the completion of the browning gallery. For no known reason the projector would move on its own accord, up and down. Technicians were called in to investigate, which they too ended up having no solution to the odd occurrences.