

Scott Lefebvre reviews 'Ghosts of Long Island: Stories of the Paranormal'

'... a must-have book for those living on Long Island with even a passing enthusiasm for the paranormal'

Recently I found myself unexpectedly contracted to write a book about paranormal happenings in the Long Island area. While doing exploratory research for my book, I was told about two authors to contact to obtain books for research and review.

It seems that Mrs. Flanagan Brosky found her way into the realm of the paranormal by a sideways path. The author relates how she does presentations culled from her extensive knowledge about the unique and interesting history of Long Island. She shares how often the most popular parts of her presentations were those anecdotes relating to Long Island's surprisingly rich history of folklore and paranormal happenings. Often attendees of her presentations would approach the author afterwards and share their own stories of paranormal experiences, both those which they had heard of through folklore and urban legend, and those which they had experienced themselves.

In addition to being a respectably knowledgeable historian, Mrs. Flanagan Brosky is also an accomplished photographer. Her book is illustrated with sixty-four beautifully rendered black and white photos, as well as several additional photos culled from her research. The author and photographer has an excellent eye for composition clearly exhibited in her photography.

Mrs. Flanagan Brosky shares the credit for this book with paranormal researcher Joe Giaquinto whose acquaintance she made after one of her presentations for the Huntington Historical Society in 2005. This is not Mrs. Flanagan Brosky's first foray into the exploration of Long Island's haunted history. This book is preceded by her book, 'Huntington's Hidden Past' (Maple Hill Press, 1995).

The book begins with two explanatory lists. One, a glossary of paranormal terms titled 'Ghost Hunter's Terms and Definitions,' is relatively unnecessary, especially when contrasted with the second listing addressing the 'Ten Types of Ghosts' culled from Peter Underwood's 'Ghosts and How to See Them' (1993), which I hadn't previously known of, but am grateful to have discovered included herein.

The majority of the book consists of brief stories about the haunted history of Long Island accompanied by the author's

photographs obtained during the author's research of and exploration of the featured sites. The brief but richly detailed and captivating chapters make this book readily accessible both to those with brief attention spans and those that are enthusiasts of reading through anthologies as if they were novels.

For those unfamiliar with the geography of the United States, Long Island exists below New York State, running almost the length of its neighboring state Connecticut. Long Island has a long folkloric history of paranormal happenings harkening back to its Native American origins, and this history is exemplified by the wide array of interesting architecture remaining as a reminder of its past. This architectural history is impressively enriched by Long Island's attractiveness as a resort destination for the legendarily wealthy of New York, many of whom built palatial vacation homes that have been restored and maintained as enduring examples of their excesses in life, surviving them after their often tragic deaths.

The author selects a satisfyingly representative sample from Long Island's supernatural history ranging from Indian folklore to present day happenings. Mansions, defunct mental hospitals, windmills, lighthouses, graveyards, haunted private residences, bed and breakfasts existing in buildings converted from days past, and a haunted lake all are colorfully covered, including a prerequisite chapter on Long Island's most famous paranormal happening, the 'Amityville Horror,' portrayed proliferately in a series of films and novelizations.

Of particular note, aside from the aforementioned chapters, are the chapters reflecting the authors' unique experiences – one of which about Mr. Giaquinto's impressive collection of haunted dolls, and the other concerning a child's imaginary friend named Irving, which may not have been imaginary at all.

In conclusion, this book is both a valuable reference and a pleasurable read. Attractively illustrated and durably bound, it is perfect for paranormal enthusiasts and a must have book for those living on Long Island with even a passing enthusiasm for the paranormal.

Scott Lefebvre reviews books for several magazines and online publications. He can be reached at Scott_Lefebvre@hotmail.com