

Children's Department (Basement)

The story of the Grey Lady began on a cold morning in 1937. A custodian was alone in the dim basement of the library when he walked toward the furnace room with a flashlight. In the shadows near the hallway, he almost ran into a strange figure—a woman in a long dress with a grey veil. When he looked at her in shock, she slowly faded into the darkness.

Margaret Maier, the library's Children's Librarian, said she also saw the Grey Lady several times. During renovations in the 1980s, she believed the spirit even followed her home for a time.

At one point, a former director tried to stop people from talking about the Grey Lady. Not long after, a patron asked about the ghost. The staff member doing as she was told said "If there was a ghost it isn't here now." The book "Betsy's Wedding" flew across the room like it was thrown and crash to the floor.



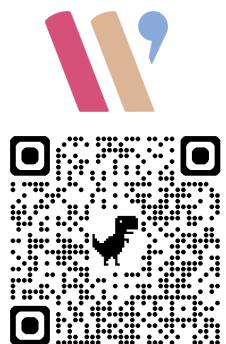
Miss Margaret Maier



Fake



Real



Website



Ghost Tours



Online Store



Discuss all
things Willard



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Episode 9



Features

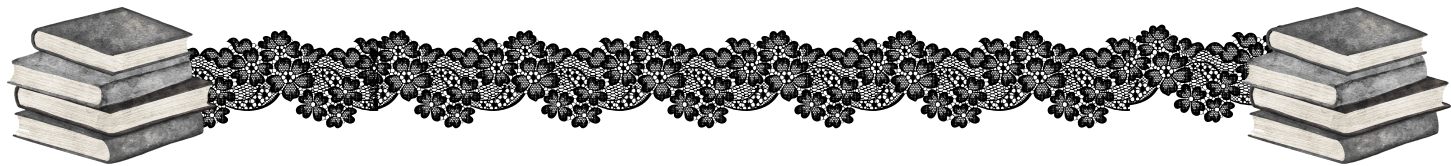
The Grey Lady

of

Willard Public Library

Feel free to capture photos and explore!





Brief History of Willard Library

Founded in 1885 by local philanthropist Willard Carpenter, Willard Library holds the distinction of being the oldest continuously operating public library in the state. Carpenter, who played a key role in shaping Evansville through his business and civic efforts, originally planned to establish a women's college. When financial challenges arose, his peers encouraged him to instead create the extraordinary library we know today.

Designed in the Victorian Gothic style by architects James and Merritt Reid, the library was built with a powerful vision: to be “for the use of the people of all classes, races, and genders, free of charge forever.”

More than 140 years later, that mission remains at the heart of everything the library does—and will continue for generations to come.

Who is the Grey Lady

On the first floor, above the copy machine, hangs a portrait of Louise Carpenter, the daughter of Willard Carpenter. Some believe the ghost could be her, though there are many different theories. Staff and patrons have their own ideas, but the truth may remain a mystery, unless she chooses to reveal it herself.



Louise Carpenter

NOT THE GREY LADY!



Marie Elise Euler
Beloved Patron

Unexplained Encounters

- In the library, patrons occasionally sense a ghostly touch on their hair or jewelry.
- The Grey Lady has a peculiar fondness for chairs. She delights in pulling them out from under tables, and a few have felt a presence while seated.
- Her presence carries a potent fragrance, often described as a blend of lilac, lavender, and an old-fashioned perfume.
- Many have heard phantom footsteps echoing through deserted aisles and witnessed books tumbling from shelves.
- Night shift workers at Amcor have frequently spotted the elevator mysteriously moving up and down throughout the night.
- Lightbulbs that flicker and flash even when they've just been replaced.

Special Collections

(Second Floor)

One morning, Jeff Lyons, Chief Meteorologist at WFIE, ventured into Willard Library with his cameraman and a pair of librarians. They ascended to the top floor, where Lyons casually requested to prepare for a shot. Before the librarians could respond, several books inexplicably slid off the shelf, shattering the silence.



Jeff Lyons

Listen to his story, in his words!



Adult Services Department

(First Floor)

There haven't been any Grey Lady sightings reported on the first floor, but there have been several unexplained experiences over the years.

Multiple staff members have noticed the smell of perfume, heard the sound of someone walking on the wooden floor boards, the sound of pages being turned in empty spaces, and witnessed books falling from the shelves.

Bayard Room (Second Floor)

One night, our security alarm summoned police and the library's former Director to Willard. One officer was stationed outside while the others investigated inside. As the lone officer watched from the parking lot, he spotted a figure in the Bayard Room window—an apparition of a woman, with a shadowy figure beside her. When his colleagues emerged, he asked if they had seen them, but they found no trace of anyone inside. The Director calmly suggested it might have been the ghost. Bewildered, the officer denied it, admitting he'd never heard of the Grey Lady before that night.

Elevator

One early morning, a custodian found himself stuck on the first floor elevator. He voiced his frustration aloud, demanding to descend. Miraculously, the elevator obeyed his command.

Shortly after being hired, a library assistant bravely addressed the Grey Lady while alone on the Adult Services Floor. She politely asked not to be frightened and suggested the ghost communicate in gentler ways. Moments later, the elevator doors opened unexpectedly, the call light illuminated despite no one being inside. The assistant approached cautiously, finding the elevator empty. She believed this encounter was the Grey Lady's response, welcoming her to the staff.

Archives Reading Room/ Browning Gallery

(Lower Level)

In the year of 2015, as the new addition took shape, so too did the newly minted bathrooms. A haunting phenomenon began: the toilets began to flush of their own accord, incessantly. Plumbers were called into to investigate, yet they couldn't find a cause.

Another incident involved the new projector that was installed after the completion of the Browning Gallery. The projector would move on its own accord, up and down. Technicians were called in to investigate, but they had no solution for the odd occurrences.