

# Investigation Summary Report

# The Grand Opera House Crowley, LA



## **HISTORY**

#### Courtesy of www.thegrandoperahouse.org

David E. Lyons, born in 1867, had one vision for his small town of Crowley, LA, which at the time he was reaching adulthood had only 4000 citizens. His vision was to bring culture to his beloved town and he would do so by building the Grand, a 22,000 sq. ft. second-story opera house. In 1898, at the age of 29, Mr. Lyons purchased the property for a mere \$500 and began building his magnificent opera house, which he completed two years and \$18,000 later

Mr. Lyons carefully constructed his masterpiece using virgin Louisiana cypress, pine and oak. This mostly wooden structure was accented with pressed tin tiles and hand-painted angel medallions in the four-boxed seats. The steep slope of the floor created perfect sight lines for the 1000 seats it is said to have held.

On opening night, November 23, 1901, 800 patrons went to see Harry Ward's Minstrels. The local Daily Signal wrote, "It was a pleasant surprise to all of them to know that Crowley possesses such a beautiful little playhouse." Other acts and appearances throughout the 39 years it remained open included Huey Long, Clark Gable, the great opera singer Enrico Caruso, Babe

Ruth, and Madame de Vilchez-Bisset of the Paris Opera. In addition to its use as a vaudeville house, the Grand also served as a silent movie house.

When Mr. Lyons died in 1940, the opera house was closed and left nearly untouched and, fortunately, well-preserved. Although it was hidden from the view of the public for almost 60 years, it was never forgotten by its former patrons.

#### EXPERIENCES

Never would we have imagined that an Opera House would have been home to so many establishments as well as dark events! In addition to being a gorgeous opera house, it has also been home to a store, the town morgue, a restaurant, housing quarters, saloon, gambling hall, and even a brothel!

For years, there have been reports of activity in the opera house. A photo taken in the 1920's shows, what appears to be, a figure standing in one of the box seats. Cold spots have often been felt by construction workers, shadows have been seen, and electronic devices have failed to work in certain areas.

History shows the opera house has also been home to several grizzly events as well. Two individuals were murdered upstairs, another two individuals died of natural causes, and one maintenance worker died from strangulation on the rafters above the stage. His death was never labeled accidental or a suicide.

## INVESTIGATION

We cannot thank the owners of the Opera House for allowing us to be the only group ever to investigate. The building is truly a dying part of Louisiana history and we are glad to see it being preserved to its former beauty.

Prior to going lights out, we set up eight IR cameras on two DVR systems, focusing on the stage, box seats, and the area once used as a brothel and saloon. We then conducted our base EMF and temperature readings, only to find several pockets of high EMF's in areas of old wiring that primarily ran under the wood floors.

Once the investigation began, we did receive several unexplainable EMF spikes, most of which were located on stage hand right, which coincidentally, was the exact location where the maintenance worker died from being hanged. Besides this, there were not other first hand experiences had, yet there was still tons of evidence to go over.

Evidence review proved to be rewarding, for a very interesting audio clip was recorded. Audio analysis provided a very clear EVP of a female saying, "I can hear."

Again, we cannot thank Mr. L.J. and staff of the Opera House for giving us the opportunity to investigate. Without a doubt, we intend on returning to this wonderful place.



