



Investigation Summary Report

Waverly Hills Sanatorium Louisville, KY



HISTORY

How Waverly got the name?

The land that is today known as Waverly Hill was purchased by Major Thomas H. Hays in 1883 as the Hays Family home. Since the new home was now so far away from any existing schools, Mr. Hays decided to open a local school for his daughters to attend. He started a one-room schoolhouse on Pages Lane, and hired Lizzie Lee Harris as the teacher. Miss Harris loved her tiny school nestling against the hillside, and remembered her fondness for Walter Scott's Waverley novels, so she named her little school house "Waverly School". Major Hays liked the peaceful-sounding name, so he named his property "Waverly Hill" and the Board of Tuberculosis Hospital kept the name when they bought the land and opened the sanatorium. It is not known exactly when the spelling changed to exclude the second "e" and became Waverly Hills. However the spelling fluctuated between both spellings many times over the years.

Original Sanatorium

In the early 20th century, Jefferson County was severely stricken with an outbreak of tuberculosis. There were many tuberculosis cases in Louisville at the time because of all the swampland, which was perfect for the tuberculosis bacteria. To try to contain the disease, a two-story wooden sanatorium was opened which consisted of an administrative/main building and two open air pavilions, each housing 20 patients, for the treatment of "early cases". "In the early part of 1911, the city of Louisville began to make preparations to build a new Louisville City Hospital, and the hospital commissioners decided in their plans that there would be no provision made in the new City Hospital for the admission of pulmonary tuberculosis, and the Board of Tuberculosis Hospital was given \$25,000 to erect a hospital for the care of advanced cases of pulmonary tuberculosis".



On 22 Aug 1911, all tuberculosis patients from the City Hospital were relocated to temporary quarters in tents on the grounds of Waverly Hills pending the completion of a hospital for advanced cases. In December of 1912 a hospital for advanced cases opened for the treatment of another 50 patients. And in 1916 a children's pavilion added another 40 beds making the known "capacity" around 130 patients. This report also mentions that the goal was to add a new building each year to continually grow so there may have even been more beds available than specifically listed. It is a common misconception that the hospital made for 40 was over packed with well over 100 patients, but this is just a miscalculation due to lack of information, with only one major exception which is mentioned above.

Sanatorium Expansions

Due to constant need for repairs on the wooden structures, need for a more durable structure, as well as need for more beds so that people wouldn't be turned away due to lack of space, construction of a five-story building that could hold more than 400 patients began in March 1924. The new building opened on October 17, 1926, but after the introduction of streptomycin in 1943, the number of tuberculosis cases gradually lowered, until there was no longer need for such a large hospital. The remaining patients were sent to Hazelwood Sanatorium, which was also located in Louisville, and Waverly Hills closed in June of 1961.

LEGENDS

Room 502

Located on the fifth floor of Waverly Hills, Room 502 was made infamous by local legends about two suicides that occurred in the room. [citation needed] In 1928, a Waverly Hills nurse, Mary Hillenburg, supposedly hanged herself from a fixture in the room after becoming pregnant out of wedlock. Other stories say that she became pregnant by a doctor that was already married and the doctor performed an abortion that went wrong. When the nurse had died the doctor allegedly had staged her suicide.



The KY death index reveals that only two people by the name of "Hillenburg" have died in Kentucky. Both died significantly later than the rumored date, and in fact well after Waverly Hills closed.

While a former employee of the facility seems to corroborate the hanging, none substantiate the nurse jumping from the roof. Although there are no documented deaths to these two suicides, as confirmed by the SciFi Channel series Ghost Hunters, it has not stopped those with EMF meters and other ghost-hunting equipment from claiming that there are spirits haunting this infamous room. These two suicides have caused many different tales to be circulated throughout the years.

Death Rate

Estimates vary wildly of how many died at Waverly. Some put the total at 63,000; however, that number is believed to be for statewide deaths.

Additional Facts

Evidence suggests that the worst total of deaths at Waverly was 152, which would make the overall death count considerably less than the legend. This information was found in the autobiography of Assistant Medical Director Dr. J. Frank W. Stewart, who states that the worst time for deaths was at the end of the Second World War when many soldiers were returning from overseas with very advanced cases.

Draining Room

One of the more eerie legends of Waverly Hills was a place known as "The Draining Room." Located near the morgue of the hospital, this room was created in an effort to rid the dead bodies of infected fluids and to make the bodies lighter for transport in the "death tunnel." After a patient died, doctors would hang the dead on tall poles in the room with drains at the bottom. They would then cut the bodies from sternum to groin so that the bodily fluids would drain from the body. Jefferson County townspeople didn't want bodies brought to the town for fear of infection, so this was the alternative. From the draining room, they were placed on gurneys and escorted down the death tunnel.

Additional Facts

However this legend is completely untrue. The room in question is clearly labeled as the Transformer room on the 1924 AND 1962 mechanical drawings. The large metal door is clearly stamped with "Fire Protection". There are openings in the wall between this room and power distribution next door where electrical wiring passed through the wall. Also, hospitals do not, nor did they ever have anything to do with preparing the bodies in any way. That job would be completed by the funeral director hired by the decedent's family, or if no family existed, the funeral director contracted by the county.

TREATMENT

FRESH AIR AND BED REST



Since they did not have antibiotic pills back in the early 1920's to treat tuberculosis...they had to rely on natural remedies for treating tuberculosis. Doug Steele told me from first hand experience that a lot of bed rest daily out on the solarium porch ways was on top of the list as the first and foremost item of importance in treatment. The patients spent most of their stay at the sanatorium out on these "porches." This included all four seasons. Yes, even in the winter time the patients were kept outside in their beds. I have been told that electric blankets were developed with sanatoriums such as Waverly in mind. Also, you will notice that the solariums had very large windows, which I might add, were NOT glassed in! These window openings were only screened in. This was for the purpose of allowing tons of fresh air to circulate through the hospital to carry away the germs as patients would exhale, sneeze, or cough. Fresh air would

replenish whatever they exhaled. This was supposed to be very effective in helping the body get rid of TB.

HELIO THERAPY



These young children are receiving natural ultraviolet treatment from the hot sun called heliotherapy. Sun treatment was used in the treatment of tuberculosis of the bones, joints, skin, eyes....and so forth. There were several reasons for the use of heliotherapy. First of all, the sun acts as a bactericide killing the tubercle bacillus organisms which cause the disease. When a patient is exposed to moderate hot temperatures for extended periods of time...it is sufficient to kill the bacteria and clear up infections. Also, ergosterol (crystalline steroid alcohol), which is present in the skin is converted by the sun's rays into vitamin D, which was believed to do further damage to the tubercle bacilli and help to destroy it.

PNEUMOTHORAX & THORACOPLASTY



At Waverly, they had two basic minor surgical procedures to help the patients recover. Artificial Pneumothorax was one of these techniques, as you see in the archive photo above. It was a way of collapsing, or deflating a portion of the lung.... thereby giving that part of the lung a chance to heal. Another benefit of collapsing the lung in certain areas is that it would close off any holes that may have been caused by the disease.

Thoracoplasty was a more involved procedure. It involved actually opening up the patient's chest area and perhaps removing up to several rib cage bones. This was also done to collapse the lung when deemed necessary by the doctor. Most patients on the average would require the removal

of 7-8 ribs, and the surgeons felt it safe only to remove two or three ribs at a time, which meant that sometimes patients had to endure several surgeries before the thoracoplasty was completed! There were some cases which involved literally cutting out a diseased part of the lung. This procedure was called Lobectomy, and is still used today in some cases of lung cancer. It might be noted however that thoracoplasty was only performed as a "last ditch" effort to save a patient if all the other forms of treatment did not help.

INVESTIGATION

What an investigation!! Finally investigating the famous Waverly Hills TB Sanatorium was truly a dream come true, as it would be for any paranormal investigator! The trip took months to plan, yet the entire event went off without a hitch. 15 LaSpirits members and 3 TxSpirits members traveled the 1,500+ miles, dragging every bit of equipment we had, which consisted of 4 complete DVR systems, 20 IR cameras, a plethora of voice recorders, digital cameras, emf meters, and as an added bonus, a THERMAL CAMERA! We were determined to capture some type of evidence in, what is claimed to be, the most haunted place in America!

We arrived at Waverly around 9pm and were in awe at the site of the massive hospital. We were promptly greeted by our chaperone/security guard for the night, Donnie, who was an awesome guy! In turn, he was equally impressed with us, stating that the only group to ever bring more equipment into Waverly was TAPS themselves! After a brief intro on the hospital, we signed the proper liability waiver forms and were ready to begin setting up our equipment. Quickly, we found out that this task was going to be a little harder than expected due to the fact that there was only one working power outlet in the entire 5-story structure! We nervously began to think of a way to get around this obstacle. After some thought, we decided to put a DVR system on floors 1-4 in the sun room. We would then run extension cords out of the sun room windows, down the exterior building walls, and into the second floor containing the one active power supply. The 5th floor, which was only a partial floor, was simply covered with handheld cameras on tripods. Thirty minutes later, we had the entire building covered and ready to go "lights out"!

Prior to the actual investigation, we decided to have a group meeting in the adjacent guest building. While the group cleared the hospital, Brandon and I proceeded to the 5th floor to setup a handheld camera. While there, we placed childrens' toys on the floor for the known young spirit, "Timmy", to play with. By this time, the entire group cleared the hospital, leaving Brandon and I completely alone in the 5-story hospital. As we made our way to the 4th floor stairwell, we got a brief EMF spike. As we stopped to check it out, we began hearing very heavy footsteps above us, as if multiple people were running back and forth! I will be the first to say that this was one of the first times I really got spooked! I knew right there that this was going to be one hell of an investigation!!

The most common type of reported activity are the infamous "shadow people". As always, I was quick to try and debunk this activity, wondering if it could simply be matrixing mixed with eye trickery. Little did I know that I would soon find out that these shadows would not be so easily explainable! During the entire night, I think every single member of the group saw, what they feel, were these "shadow figures". The most memorable time was when Brandon, Raymond, Tiffany, Elissa, Andie, and myself were all sitting in one of the hallways and we saw, plain as day, what looked like the black figure of a young girl in a dress. There was no transparency to the figure, as we could not see through it! There were several other reports during the night of figures peaking in and out of the patient rooms.

One of the more interesting rooms was the original morgue on the first floor, which contained an autopsy table and body storage drawers. The common thing to do is to lay on one of these drawers and be pushed completely in the storage unit. While in there, it is said you can see shadows above you and voices can be heard. Of course, we had to try it! What was interesting was both times that Brandon and I were in there, we each got brief EMF spikes!

Another common occurrence reported through the night were the audible sounds of unknown voices, primarily the laughter of children. Several members heard what sounded like children's laughter. In one incident, as I bent down to pick up a toy ball, Brandon and I both heard a very loud "shhhhh", right behind us. Of course, no one was there when we turned around.

The rest of the night went on similar: with strange noises, EMF spikes, and plenty of BATS!! We officially wrapped up around 6:00 am, breaking down and packing up all the equipment. Donnie then took us on a brief tour down the "Death Tunnel", which I can personally tell you, is absolute torture when climbing back up the 500+ ft of the inclined ramp! We then graciously thanked Donnie, and sadly left Waverly Hills. After we made the long trek back home, we were very eager to begin going over the evidence.

We never want to be too certain that we will come up with evidence at any given investigation, but we were pretty hopeful that we would at least obtain 1-2 EVPs and possibly a photo or two. We had no clue that the investigation was going to produce the most high quality EVPs ever obtained at any single night investigation!! Below you will find these EVPs, all of which range from Class A, B, and C. Some of them are simply chilling, while others, such as the children voices, strike a nerve. In addition, several interesting photos were obtained as well, which you will see below.

In closing, this was without a doubt, the most enjoyable investigation we have ever done. To say we had the entire building completely to ourselves for an entire night and had enough equipment to cover the entire building was truly an impressive feat for us. We are definitely considering making Waverly Hills a yearly trip for LaSpirits.





