



## Haunted Plantations of the South

**Richard Southall**

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*Creepy and fascinating, this compilation of unforgettable stories defies explanation.*

Supernatural phenomena and fireside legend haunt the pages of this spooky history text. Richard Southall's *Haunted Plantations of the South* explores the mansions of a bygone era, visiting seven states notorious for paranormal activity: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. The institution of slavery was the primary catalyst.

An old plantation typically included farmland, slave quarters, and peripheral buildings, even family crypts. Heavy on conflict and emotion, these sites hold much more than artifacts and historical records. Walls are charged with love and hate, laughter and tears; bloodstained floors rise to meet the unsuspecting tourist. Civil War graveyards often intrude on the domestic environs, a grim reminder of battle.

Based on interviews with people who have experienced hauntings firsthand, along with tales passed from generation to generation, Southall presents a convincing collection of scary activities—holographic sightings, unusual noises, mysterious movements, and inexplicable sensations. Understated and not-so-understated poltergeists make their presence known in defiance of death. Former slaves, soldiers, and plantation owners collide with curiosity seekers and professional psychics. The human tendency to pursue ghoulish entertainment has turned these stately residences into magnets for the daring traveler looking for a quick thrill—any hand reaching from beyond the grave will do.

This book features much more than transparent young women adorned in flowing gowns. Sadly, it is the incidents of violence, sickness, and suicide as well as personal tragedies that have drawn restless spirits from a peaceful slumber. Southall's selected homes comprise a mixture of tourist attractions and private properties, some of which are not accessible to prying eyes. The somber nature of the material makes it unsuitable for children.

At the Lenoir Plantation House in Prairie, Mississippi, several field hands beat French immigrant William Lenoir in his own bed, then slit his throat. Lenoir had gotten a house servant pregnant and denied she was carrying his infant. Then he shoved her down a staircase during a dispute, killing the slave and her unborn child. He received his gruesome punishment one night, an experience that visitors have felt. "Guests who have stayed in the room where Lenoir was murdered claim that the events of that night sometimes repeat themselves. More than one guest has stated that they were awakened in the middle of the night by a loud banging or thumping on the bedroom door. This sound was soon followed by an audible heavy breathing, a gasp, and a horrible gurgling sound. Sometimes the bed springs will suddenly move for a moment at this point."

Southall is an expert on the paranormal. Creepy and fascinating, this compilation of unforgettable stories defies explanation. Even a seasoned skeptic may find it difficult to disprove the strange events that intrude on the now tranquil, regal homes featured in his book, all places that were once the focal point of war during one of the most tumultuous times in America.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (July 7, 2015)

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