Winter 2-2014

Legend Tripping: Haunted Fun or Potential Juvenile Delinquency and Death

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LEGEND TRIPPING:
Haunted Fun or Potential Juvenile Delinquency and Death

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Abstract

• “Haunted Chimneys” around “Booger Hole”
  – August 7, 2013, Clay County, West Virginia
    • one juvenile was killed and 10 others were seriously injured when their truck crashed
    • These juveniles, after drinking heavily, were investigating the Appalachian legend

• Mark Twain's “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer”
  – the concept of “legend tripping” is at least this old
  – several accounts of adolescents visiting allegedly haunted houses and caves said to be the “lairs of criminals”

• Phenomenon, Extent and Dangers
  – this project examines juvenile “legend tripping” across the United States

• Many examples of cases will be given
  – Collections since 1995, over XXX sights in XX states
Definition: Legend Tripping
(name recently bestowed by folklorists and anthropologists)

An adolescent rite of passage in which a usually secret nocturnal pilgrimage is made to a site which is alleged to have been the scene of something tragic, horrific, and possibly supernatural or haunting.
Definition: Satanic Tourism

- Gary Fine and Jeffrey Victor (1994) defined “Satanic Tourism” as:
  - inherently delinquent juvenile activities at geographic sites associated with some tragic event, rumored to be supernatural or related to the occult
  - a type of legend trip characterized by juvenile involvement in pseudo-Satanic/occult behavior such as drawing pentagrams, writing epithets, and burning candles
  - A juvenile may visit a geographic location such as an abandoned church, historic graveyard, or reputedly “haunted” site, and engage in mischievous, destructive, or “ritualistic” behaviors as “rites of passage”
  - These activities, which often are relatively harmless and conducted primarily for juvenile thrills, may be perceived by law enforcement and the larger community as threatening and dangerous
Legend Trip Sites

- Graveyards
- Woods
- Abandoned buildings
- Caves
- Bridges
- Rock Quarries
- Churches
- Open Fields
- Abandoned factories
- Nightclubs
- Playgrounds
- State Parks
- Historical Landmarks
- Warehouses
- Ranger Outlook Stations
- Train Tunnels
- Roads/underpasses
Our “Sample”

- **Overall**
  - XX different states
  - 102 sites

**Information Collected**

- Description of Site
- Location of Site
- Description of Site Phenomena/Reported Occurrences
- Type(s) of Criminal Activity at Site
- Impact on Community
ISSUES

Public Hysteria/Panic
Juvenile Safety
Cost
Officer Safety
Liability
Relationships/Trust
Juvenile Delinquency
Use of Police Hours
Public Safety
Use of Scarce Resources
Juvenile Sex, Drugs, and etc...
RESULT

FEAR

POLICE FREEDOM

Individual Rights & Protections

BUT, the public accepts it!!!
Legend Trip Sights in the United States

EXAMPLES
Abandoned Buildings

“Cooper House”
Bishopville, South Carolina

“Rock House”
Greenwood, South Carolina

“The Warehouse”
Demopolis, Alabama

“The Menninger Clinic”
Topeka, Kansas

“Greenleaf House”
Jacksonville, Alabama

“Sloss Furnace”
Birmingham, Alabama

“Retirement Home”
Gadsden, Alabama
Abandoned Buildings

“Topeka State Hospital and Cemetery”
Topeka, Kansas

“Horseblock Tower”
Talladega, Alabama

“Monitor School”
Coal Grove, Ohio

“Old Meat Packing Plant”
Topeka, Kansas
Churches

“White Gap Baptist Church”
Jacksonville, Alabama

“Trinity Episcopal Church”
Topeka, Kansas

“Craigmiles Mausoleum”
Cleveland, Tennessee

“Forest Hill Church”
Mobile, Alabama

“St. John’s Baptist Church”
Lexington, South Carolina
“Green Hand Bridge”
Lancaster, South Carolina

“Spook Bridge”
Valdosta, Georgia

“Hillibee Bridge”
Gadsden, Alabama

“Cry Baby Bridge”
Anniston, Alabama
“Cold Spring Bridge”
Irmo, South Carolina

“Old State Road”
Lexington, South Carolina

“Huxman Bridge”
Topeka, Kansas
Tunnels and Caves

“Tredager Tunnel”
Jacksonville, Alabama

“The Cave”
Sullivan’s Island, South Carolina

“40 Acre Rock”
Lancaster, South Carolina

“Five Points Water Ducts”
Columbia, South Carolina
Tunnels and Caves

“Haunted Tunnel”
Ironton, Ohio

“Train Tunnel”
Greenwood, South Carolina

“Tumlin Gap Road”
Altoona, Alabama

“Weaver Cave”
Huntsville, Alabama

“The Fort”
Lands End, South Carolina
Grave Yards and Cemeteries

“Bleeding Tombstone”
Concord, North Carolina

“Glowing Tombstones”
Ragland Box, Alabama

“Tomato Cemetery”
St. Augustine, Florida

“Foter Road Cemetery”
Mebelton, Georgia
“Edgar Allan Poe’s Grave Site”
Baltimore, Maryland

“Rochester Cemetery”
Topeka, Kansas
Parks and Public Places

“Peach Tree Rock”
Lancaster, South Carolina

“Bethel at Westwood”
Ashland, Kentucky

“Burnett’s Mound”
Topeka, Kansas

“Deason House”
Jackson, Mississippi
Parks and Public Places

“Rock Quarry”
Gadsden, Alabama

“5 Points”
Birmingham, Alabama

“Etowah Indian Mounds”
Catersville, Georgia

“Jed Johnson Lake”
Witchita Falls, Texas

“Mountain Wildlife Refuge”
Lawton, Oklahoma
Any Questions?
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