

The Gilchrist Guardian

A Ghost Story

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The Bartiks, Gary and Janet, overseers of the Gilchrist Gallery, believe it is haunted.

“We think the ghost is that of a very faithful servant of Mary Gillette who lived in the house with Mary,” Janet believes. “Mary was almost 100 years old when she died and this woman was with her at the time of her death.” Feeling her task to protect Mary and the house is incomplete, the servant woman still lingers. Her presence is most felt in the third floor because it was there that servants would have lived. There are three passageways from the third floor into what had once been the main living areas of the house, built in 1836. It’s in the landing that connects all three that the cold air rises and falls, like faint breathing. Warm on one step above and one step below, only this one portion of the landing in an enclosed private staircase radiates. “This is where she is,” says Janet, her hand carefully resting on a banister, her footsteps cautious, and her voice low. “She’s here now. Do you feel that?”

Mary Gillette had left her husband, an heir to the eventual Gillette razor company fortune, and moved

back into the house with her children in 1894. A single mother, Mary never remarried. Records indicate she and her husband never officially divorced.

The Bartiks believe the servant, whose name they do not know, befriended Mary and helped her raise her son and daughter. One of the doors the Bartiks finds open every morning, without fail, is one that had led to a child’s nursery. The ghost may be still checking on the child who used to sleep there. It would have been so much a part of her daily routine to open the doors in the morning that the Bartiks feel the woman continues to do it even in death. “I think whoever it is in the house is very happy being here. It’s a comfortable pleasing situation,” says Gary, as he locks a second floor door behind him, knowing full well that come morning, it will be wide open.

But yet the ghost, reportedly now pleased with the direction the house has taken, stays out of the way of crowds.