Carroll County is a land rich in tradition and folklore. Its countryside and bustling towns have drawn settlers and opportunists since before the Civil War. This wide variety of people, from traveling actors to Civil War soldiers and rich plantation owners, have left their mark upon the land. Some, they say, still make their presence known. But who believes in ghosts? Even the most skeptical must pause at the cracked grave of Legh Master, an evil furnace owner who used his fire to melt more than iron ore. Kind or evil, bewildered or mischievous, seldom has one area played host to such a diverse and interesting array of local ghosts and specters. And even if your tastes and inclinations run more toward the enjoyment of the architecture and quaint shops along the Ghost Walk, don’t be surprised if a whispered Shakespearean phrase or falling picture sends the hair on your arms standing. It’s just the wind...Isn’t it....

Soon after the murder, the town drunk reported seeing a spirited figure gesturing with his hand and mouthing wordless monologues in the backyard of the hall. No one believed him—except those who visited the theater that Saturday night. The mime show they experienced was no laughing matter!

One such performer was Marshall Buell of Alabama. Dressed in a carpetbagger’s outfit, Buell kept the audience laughing with his jokes about President Grant and other government officials. Some folks, however, were not amused. Before long, a rock was thrown onto the stage. A second rock caught Buell in the neck. Shaken, Buell quickly finished his performance and exited the stage. Refusing the sheriff’s offer of protection in the jail overnight, Buell explained he’d be on his way to Hagerstown for his next performance. As he saddled his horse behind Odd Fellows Hall, Marshall Buell was attacked. He was discovered, lifeless, in the backyard of the Hall, his throat cut ear to ear.

The Carroll County Historical Society now occupies Dr. Collgate’s house. Many people visit the administrative offices and library at the Historical Society. The Carroll County Visitor Center, housed in the front of the building, greets thousands of visitors each year. Among those visitors is said to be one of Dr. George Collgate’s patients, still waiting to see the doctor after more than 150 years!

Master built a fine mansion and named it after his furnaces: Furnace Hills. Rambling around the large house, he longed for his dead wife. He turned his attention to a young slave girl, who was horrified by his advances. She was betrothed for his dead wife. He turned his attention to a young slave girl, who was horrified by his advances. She was betrothed to another slave, Sam. Enraged by her rejection, Master had Sam bound and thrown into the fiery furnace. The young slave girl was not seen again, but rumors quickly spread that she had been bricked up, alive, in the kitchen oven.

Despised by the townspeople and feared by his slaves, Legh Master finally died at the age of 80. No one mourned when his body was buried under six feet of earth, but even the ground would not accept him. On three occasions his bones rose to the top of the ground. Finally his remains were moved to Ascension Church and placed under a large stone slab.

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1. The Kimmey House
   The Patient Patient
   210 East Main Street
   Dr. George Collgate expanded his Main Street home to create office space for his medical practice. This small town doctor had many a loyal patient, and it was not uncommon for his waiting room to be full to overflowing. Perhaps a few patients waited too long.

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2. Opera House Printing Company
   An Odd Fellows Comedian
   140 East Main Street
   In the 1800s the Odd Fellows Hall provided respite and relaxation for the town’s business people, farmers, and their families. All would gather on a Saturday night to enjoy an evening of comedy, music, or drama graciously presented by visiting comedians, minstrels, musicians, and actors.

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3. The Ascension Church
   Legh Master’s Soul
   23 North Court Street
   Legh Master was a rich man, but a cruel one. After the death of his wife, Master left England, eventually settling in Carroll County. He made his fortune mining iron ore and establishing one of the best iron furnaces in the area. He worked his slaves hard and was quick with punishment. Needless to say, he was not well-liked amongst the slaves.

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The well-known Dr. Zollickhoffer was summoned to the town. One day, Big Tom took his life, slitting his throat. On Christmas Day, Big Tom became distraught. Big Tom overheard the sheriff’s conversation and mused. Big Tom said to the sheriff, “I should be sent to the Baltimore Penitentiary, the sheriff said. But the jail could not hold Big Tom for any length of time. Perhaps I should be sent to the Penitentiary.” Big Tom was no stranger to the jail, this being his fourth trip where Big Tom Parkes was held.

In the morning, 50 or so residents decided to visit their incarcerated loved ones bringing tears and joy to the prisoners.

The jail on Christmas Eve 1844 was quite dismal. Families visited their incarcerated loved ones bringing tears and joy to the prisoners. Today, a ghostly remnant of an era blooms in the courtrooms and hallways. Who’s cooking? Many a trial was interrupted by the smell of food cooking over small fires in the basement. The aroma would permeate the courtroom, and the lunch or dinner recess would be called sooner than planned. Today, a ghostly remnant of an era blooms in the courtrooms and hallways. Who’s cooking?

The large stone in the cemetery is split as if the tormented spirit is trying to break free. It is said that on dark, windy nights, his ghost rides the hills between New Windsor and Westminster. Residents of this area watch for a dark grey horse, breathing fire, led by an imp carrying a lantern and dancing maddily before him, as Legh Master roams endlessly, crying out and searching for his lost soul at Furnace Hills.

Did you say you don’t believe in ghosts?

The Ghost of Cockey’s Tavern is sometimes heard climbing the stairs at night. When shouted at to stop, the loud boot steps promptly cease. Until the restaurant closed, he was known to rattle the glasses and bottles in the bar when no one was around. The ghost’s real affinity seemed to be with pictures. When a visitor from Baltimore joined a friend for lunch in 1981, she exclaimed, “I don’t believe in ghosts!”

The waitresses here loved the ghost and treated him with respect. Late at night they would feel an eerie prickle as if something was about to happen. One night about midnight, as they were closing up, the waitresses went from room to room and put out all the candles. A few minutes later, they turned in the hall to leave, and looking back, the candles on the mantel were lit again.

Legh Master, still may be seeking forgiveness for his lost soul. The large stone in the cemetery is split as if the tormented spirit is trying to break free. It is said that on dark, windy nights, his ghost rides the hills between New Windsor and Westminster. Residents of this area watch for a dark grey horse, breathing fire, led by an imp carrying a lantern and dancing maddily before him, as Legh Master roams endlessly, crying out and searching for his lost soul at Furnace Hills.

4. Courthouse

Cook’s Night Out

“Old Courthouse”, Court Street

In 1838, the Carroll County Courthouse was built to allow circuit court judges to conduct trials for thieves, murderers, and other criminals of the day. While justice was carried out in the courtrooms above, the poor and homeless took shelter in the basement, protected from the heat and humidity of Maryland’s summers, and the chill and snow of her winters.

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5. Old Jail

Headless Jailbird

98 North Court Street

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