

UW-Marathon County Library Restroom Reader

Below are some bizarre and mysterious tales from Wisconsin

Delavan—This region is haunted by a werewolf, or so residents claim. The werewolf is said to have a broad chest, human hands, and a wolf's head. It travels on four legs at a time, and at other times walks erect on two legs. While there are a few timber wolves in northern Wisconsin, there are none in the area around Delavan. At about the same time that the werewolf sightings began in 1988, a burial ground filled with the mutilated bodies of domestic animals were found here suggesting cult activity.

Devil's Lake—Nearby Baraboo is said to be haunted by the ghosts of elephants (dating back from the time when Baraboo was headquarters for the old Ringling Brothers Circus). Campers at Devil's Lake have complained of shadowy forms, lake monsters and a phantom canoe on the lake. August Derleth, editor of *H.P. Lovecraft's* chilling horror tales, chose to live in nearby Sauk County because of its eerie atmosphere.



Lake Mendota, Madison—In 1917, students from the University of Wisconsin claimed to have seen a long, snakelike head emerge from the lake. Mendota is one of the Madison Four Lakes, and monster sightings have also occurred in two of the other three lakes.



Washington Island—The *Griffon* (a ship) was last seen here before it mysteriously disappeared in September 1679 in the waters of Lake Huron. Its ghost still drifts about on some foggy nights. During its construction at Niagara, NY, the *Griffon* was considered by Iroquois as an affront to the Great Spirit, and was cursed. On her maiden voyage, the ship loaded fur at Washington Island in August 1679, and set out to return to Niagara. It never arrived, but "sailed through a crack in the lake," as seamen say about ships that vanish in the dangerous waters. In 1900, a wreck believed to that of the *Griffon* was discovered off Bruce Peninsula in Lake Huron. The identity of the wreck was announced in 1955 after historical evidence had been examined; however, others have disputed the claim, and the true identity of the wreck remains unconfirmed.



Waukesha—On April 24, 1978, two young men from Menominee Falls sighted a kangaroo in tall grass near the intersection of Highways SS and M. They snapped two pictures with a Polaroid SX-70 camera. One of the pictures clearly shows a kangaroolike animal, apparently the same one that had been spotted before in the area. These animals, known as phantom kangaroos, have often been reported, mainly in the Midwest. The usual official explanation given is that the animal escaped from a zoo or circus—but, invariably, no zoo has any missing kangaroos, and there is no circus around. While there are known to be several populations of wallabies (small kangaroo animals) living wild in Britain (they escaped from country estates), there are no such known groups of kangaroos living free in North America.

Mineral Point—Graceland Cemetery is haunted by a tall vampire with a white face and a black cloak. In March 1981, a police officer saw the vampire and gave chase, but it escaped.

