October 31, 2026

A Daufuskie Halloween Edition

Recently, after presenting a story from Daufuskie's rich history, I was asked about ghost stories on Daufuskie, and whether I knew of any hauntings. I answered that I wasn't aware of any.

Well, as with most history issues, all it takes is a little research and voila, you have a new story. This special Halloween edition of our Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation postings presents a couple of stories story about the reported haunted locations on Daufuskie. Following those stories, we'll return to our purpose and add a discussion of legends from the Gullah cultural heritage on the island.

Maggie Comer



Our first story has several versions and centers on a young woman named Maggie Comer and the Haig Point Lighthouse

The Haig Point Lighthouse was built in 1873. The first lighthouse keepers were Patrick Comer and his wife Bridget. Patrick was born in Ireland and was hired at $560 per year, with Bridget hired as assistant keeper at $400 per year.

The Comers had a young daughter named Maggie who lived with them at the lighthouse. There was an older sister named Mary Ellen, who will enter back into the story when we cover the "real" events surrounding Maggie.

In the first version of our story, Maggie meets a visiting naval engineer and falls deeply in love. When he leaves, never to return, Maggie dies of a broken heart.

In a variant of the first story Maggie falls for a young man from Michigan who has been hired by the Navy to work on lanterns. He supposedly kept a diary where he states that he has become enraptured with Maggie's "sweet face". In a later entry, he states he will never be able to return. It appears this young man was married, and that may have been the factor that ended the affair. Her death follows, and in some tellings, Maggie hung herself from the lighthouse platform. (This could be the origin of some versions where she leapt to her death from the platform.)

Yet a third version of Maggie's life circulates where the Comers arrive on Daufuskie in 1873 as a childless couple. Maggie is born after they begin their assignment as lighthouse keepers and leads an idyllic life. Tragedy arrives in the form of the Charleston earthquake in September 1886, which floods the island and weakens the lighthouse walls, collapsing some. Mosquitoes flourish after the quake with all the flood water, Maggie is bitten and contracts malaria and dies shortly thereafter. Her father, Patrick, is devastated and confined to his bed for the remaining five years of his life. Bridget disappears from the narrative and is absent from the others as well after Maggie's death.

Whichever version of her death unleashes Maggie's spirit, later reports have her spirit harassing and startling workers as they restore the lighthouse. Allegedly, the supervisor has a heart-to-heart talk with Maggie and she stops. (We have a reliable source who tells us the supervisor swears it was Bridget's, not Maggie's spirit.) Other reports have Maggie's spirit remaining at the lighthouse waiting for her lover to return, wandering around the rooms and greeting visitors warmly. And, visitors have reported a whiff of honeysuckle scent on moonlit nights, a rocker on the front porch gently moving back and forth, loud noises from within the lighthouse, and wine glasses moving unassisted across the table. We also have first-hand reports of a "presence" in the bedrooms.

These stories make great fodder for spooky late-night stories while sitting on a porch overlooking Calibogue Sound. However, sometimes facts get in the way. The Comers did arrive on Daufuskie in 1873 with two daughters, fifteen-year-old Mary Ellen and younger sister Maggie. Six years after their arrival, Captain Walter John Thompson visits the island and courts Mary Ellen. They marry and move to Savannah, where they have five children, two of whom died young. Mary Ellen dies in 1895, and four years later Maggie, not a spirit but a real flesh and blood individual, marries Captain

Thompson and raises her sister's three remaining children. Maggie dies in 1930 at age 65 and is buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery in Savannah.

But wait, there's more. Bridget, Maggie's mother, died in 1885 while still resident at the lighthouse. There are some that believe it was she, not Maggie, that leapt to her death from the lighthouse, and it is her spirit that inhabits the lighthouse (as the supervisor of the restoration tells us). So maybe she is the one in the rocker on the lighthouse porch. As with Maggie's story, there is a variant of Bridget's which has her surviving through the Charleston earthquake in 1886, surviving in a boat with another person for a couple of days at sea before being rescued. The trauma supposedly contributed to her later death. Note, however, she is reported to have died in 1885, one year before the earthquake.

There is also a story of a man, not a woman, falling to his death from the lighthouse. In the 1930's the lighthouse was a hunting lodge after being sold by the Federal government. At a party at the lodge, a man became intoxicated and went up to the light chamber, leaned against the wood railing, and it gave way .....

And a story of a male spirit, not a woman, who had been killed by a shotgun going up the lighthouse steps.....

Whatever version you may prefer, if you get a chance to stay at the Haig Point Lighthouse just be aware that you might be sharing the space with one or more spirits .....

The Indian Warriors at Bloody Point



In a previous post, we discussed the origin of the name Bloody Point on Daufuskie. According to our history resources, the name came from the 1728 massacre of colonials at the hands of the Yemassee Indians raiding from the St. Augustine area.

But the very first skirmish at the outset of the Yemassee war in 1715, which came to be known as the Daufuskie Incident, involved an ambush planned by Hilton Head settlers. Armed men were landed on Daufuskie beaches near Bloody Point, and boats full of

others retreated into Mungeon Creek waiting for Indian war canoes to return to the Savannah River/Tybee after raiding Hilton Head. When the armed boatmen intercepted the canoes, the Indians leapt into the water and swam towards the beach, where they were met by the waiting forces. All but two of the warriors were killed.

The legend that arose from this encounter is that the fallen warriors still wander the beaches around Bloody Point, keeping watch over their native lands. On a full moon night, you can see the spirits running from the water and slowly moving through the dunes.

Haints



The story of the haints represents a return to telling the story of Daufuskie history. Unrelated to Halloween, the story of haints and spirits reflects part of Gullah Geechee culture and folklore, which is a significant part of the history of the sea islands and certainly Daufuskie history.

The Gullah people were devout Christians and the church served as the most important institution on many islands. Their acceptance of Christianity, however, did not mean they abandoned their African heritage and spirituality. They accepted that the two could exist and blend into their belief system. Gullah people believed that the spirits of the dead could travel, visit with you, perform mischief, and even haunt you.

One example of the blending of Christian and African spirituality is presented in the spirits known as haints. Haints are often considered to be malevolent or mischievous spirits, caught between worlds after death. Most often, they are invisible, rarely seen, and when they are visible, appearing as regular people with a pale, ghostly look. They generally remain around the area where they lived or died (like battlefields) or following a person with whom they were associated. Their presence might be indicated by objects moving on their own, unexplained voices, footsteps or sounds, or a sudden

feeling of someone nearby. Air movement or a sudden chill, or the feeling of breath on your neck might also be an indication of a haint.

There are other spirits that may be associated with any discussion of haints:

- Boo-hags - a human-form creature with glowing red eyes and clawlike fingers that removes its skin at night, slips into houses, sits on a victim's chest and drains their breath or energy.
- Plat-eyes - shapeshifting creatures that can appear as glowing-eyed figures, strange animals, or shifting lights near gravesites.
- Riding hags - Sprits that weigh down a sleeper's chest, terrorizing and paralyzing the victim.

Some describe these other spirits as haints, others consider them to be different, limiting the term haint to being more of a malevolent ghost.

Regardless of how broad the haint definition runs, the traditional protections against harm or even death are also a part of Gullah lore. In the case of haints, the common belief was that they could not cross water. Gullah homes have their porch ceilings, doors and window frames painted a pale blue color, sometimes referred to as haint blue, to mimic the color of open water, which prevents the spirit from entering.

Another custom is the bottle tree. The belief is that placing blue bottles on tree branches will trap a haint or spirit. The color and clink of the bottles will attract the spirit at night and trap it until daylight, when sunlight will destroy it. Or the bottle can be taken to water and disposed of. Putting lard in the bottleneck is supposed to ensure the haint remains trapped.

Another way to protect yourself from haints is to place brooms or grains of rice near the door. Haints are supposedly distracted by repetitive tasks, like counting the rice grains or broom bristles. Another trick is to line the walls with newspapers. The haints won't be able to finish reading the papers before sunrise. You can also hang a mirror on the wall, distracting the haint with its own appearance.

In the case of boo-hags, if you find their shed skin, put salt and pepper on it to prevent them from returning to human form.

If you buy a new home, burn sage in every room and then mop all the floors with pine and camphor before moving in. Sprinkle salt across the doors, windows and corners of your house. And be sure to paint the doors, window frames and porch ceilings haint blue. This will clear the house of any existing haints and ensure they don't return.

We have painted the Daufuskie Island History Museum front doors and porch ceiling haint blue. Whether or not this provides protection for our museum (we don't sleep there!), we respect the heritage and traditions that are part of Daufuskie history.



Happy Halloween from The Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation!

If you have enjoyed these stories and learning about Daufuskie, please consider joining the Daufuskie Island Historical Foundation, or donating to our efforts. You can join or donate online at:

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