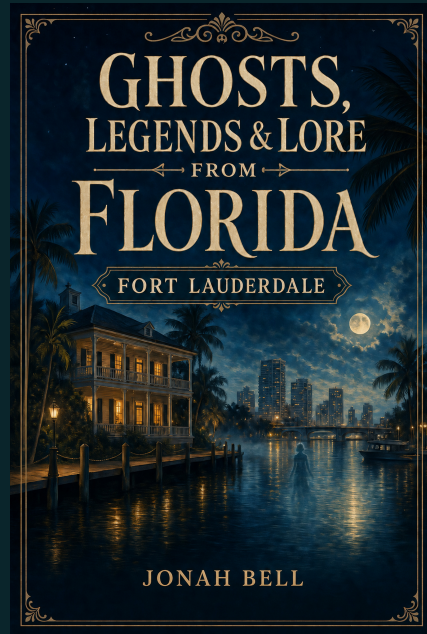


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Ghosts, Legends & Lore from Florida: Fort Lauderdale

The Disputed Spirits of Stranahan House

One complete chapter by Jonah Bell

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The Disputed Spirits of Stranahan House

Location Guide

Where the story takes place: Historic Stranahan House Museum, 335 SE 6th Avenue, beside the New River in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

A good place to begin: Take the regular history tour. The museum no longer offers ghost tours and says they will not return.[45] This chapter concerns claims attached to guest rooms, the former gift-shop area, and other parts of the house, but room uses have changed over time.

What to look for: Notice the original windows and doors, uneven temperatures, old floors, glass-covered pictures, river-facing walls, and sounds carried through a wooden building. The house sits in a busy, windy setting where boats, visitors, air movement, and street noise can produce surprising effects.

Access and cautions: Do not leave candy, move books, provoke named family members, request an overnight investigation, or enter closed areas. This is a museum and the former home of real people, not a supernatural laboratory.

A Book Falls in the Gift Shop

Let us say a book falls from a shelf.

Nobody sees it happen. A staff member hears the sound, walks into the room, and finds the book on the floor.

That is an event.

Now someone remembers that Augustus Cromartie, Ivy Stranahan's father, once slept in this part of the house. The room has felt cold before. Augustus had the reputation, at least in later stories, of being stern.

The event becomes an explanation.

Augustus threw the book.

That small step is where most of the Stranahan House ghost family comes together. Real people lived here. Several died here. Years later, visitors experienced a noise, scent, chill, shadow, voice, or misplaced object. A story connected the two.

The connection may feel right. It is not the same as proof.

Frank, the clock, and Ivy have their own chapters. Here we are going to meet the other reported spirits. More importantly, we are going to ask how anyone decided who they were.

Augustus and the Cold Room

Augustus Cromartie was a real person, not a character invented for a tour.

He was Ivy's father. After the death of his wife Sarah, Augustus and several of his children moved to Fort Lauderdale. He later lived in Stranahan House and died there in 1932 at the age of eighty.[45]

The ghost version of Augustus is less dignified.

He is called grouchy, cantankerous, stern, and annoyed by visitors. Books fall or fly from shelves. Objects move. The room turns cold. The reason, storytellers say, is that Augustus resents strangers entering his old bedroom.

Detailed forms of this story circulated through Fort Lauderdale's paranormal tours and investigations by the 2000s. John Marc Carr included Stranahan House in his 2008 book *Haunted Fort Lauderdale*. An online video about the house appeared in 2009. By 2014, CBS News was repeating that Augustus threw books to show his displeasure.[46][47][48]

What we have not found is the beginning.

Who first saw a book move? When? Was it thrown across a room or did it slip from a shelf? How was the room being used at the time? Had anyone handled the book? Did the witness identify Augustus, or did a guide make that connection later?

Without those answers, Augustus is not the explanation. He is the name attached to the mystery.

The museum's current staff offers a less dramatic view. Original doors and windows create drafts and temperature differences. Wind from the river can jostle parts of the old building. No current employee, the museum says, has witnessed an unexplained object moving.[45]

That does not solve every fallen book. It does put the burden back where it belongs.

We need evidence before blaming Augustus.

Albert Gets a New Personality

Albert Cromartie was Ivy's younger brother. He died in the house from tuberculosis at twenty-seven.[45]

Popular ghost accounts turn him into the family's supernatural troublemaker. He knocks over objects, closes doors, yells at people, makes rooms warm for women and cold for men, and flirts with female visitors.

Some pages build a full biography around that behavior. They claim Albert lived wildly and caught tuberculosis from a sex worker or at a party.

No reliable historical source found for this chapter supports that story.

Tuberculosis was a widespread infectious disease. A young person could encounter it at home, at work, in public, or through ordinary contact with someone carrying the illness. Assigning Albert a scandalous sexual history because a supposed ghost behaves flirtatiously reverses the normal order of evidence.

The haunting creates the biography, then the invented biography is used to prove the haunting.

We should not repeat it.

It also changes how readers see Albert. Instead of a young man who died from a devastating disease, he becomes a joke who pinches women after death. That may entertain a tour group, but it is not history.

Pink and the Baby

Ivy's sister Pink also died on the property.

The museum says Pink died in 1926 at age forty-one. It acknowledges that many stories surround her death, then points to the available death certificate, which gives pneumonia as the official cause.[45]

The ghost version is much more elaborate.

Pink endured repeated pregnancy losses. Her husband was unfaithful. Shocking news caused premature labor. She delivered a stillborn child and died, depending on the version, in the house, parlor, or hospital. Her apparition now holds the baby she could not raise in life.

This story asks us to turn a woman's private grief into a permanent pose.

Perhaps archival records will confirm portions of her medical or family history. At present, the popular versions outrun the evidence. The museum itself warns that few details have been substantiated.

Some paranormal accounts offer photographs of two bright circles as Pink and her baby. Round spots in a flash photograph are not enough. Dust, moisture, or small particles close to a camera lens can reflect the flash and appear as white circles. Canon describes this as a normal photographic effect.[49]

Before a photograph identifies two people, we would need the original file, camera settings, flash information, comparison frames, witness positions, and a careful review of reflections and motion.

No such documented photo series was found.

The Child Without a Name

The most troubling story at Stranahan House concerns a young Seminole girl.

There is a strong, well-documented Seminole history here. Families traveled the New River by canoe, traded at Stranahan's post, camped nearby, and maintained relationships with Frank and Ivy. Seminole sources describe the post's role in that living history.[50]

Across the river, a bronze sculpture called Florida, A Seminole Girl honors Native presence along the New River. The Seminole Tribune reported on its dedication and explained that the child represents that wider history.[51]

She is not a monument to a girl who died in Stranahan House.

That distinction matters because the ghost story has become attached to almost any image of a Seminole child near the property.

The museum currently says there are rumors that an ill Seminole girl came to the house seeking help and died inside before anyone could save her.[45]

Rumors.

No name, family, clan, date, death certificate, burial place, newspaper notice, Stranahan diary entry, or Seminole oral account surfaced in this research. Until one does, we should explicitly reject the child's death as verified history.

An older paranormal page shows how quickly a missing identity can be manufactured. The page first called the spirit Sarah, an elderly Seminole woman who supposedly died of a heart attack while buying a cooking pot. After an investigation, the story changed. A recording was said to contain a young voice. Investigators used dowsing rods and produced a name rendered as "Lucpel." The page then said historical research confirmed

that a young girl died near the back door.[47]

It did not show the research.

A name obtained through dowsing rods is not an archival identity. It should not be placed in a history book or presented as a Seminole name.

Later versions give the child a sweet tooth. She steals candy from Frank's desk, hides it in the attic, sings, chants, and appears when visitors bring treats. CBS News repeated parts of that story in 2014.[48]

The museum now says no candy has been found in the house or attic. Staff once found a wrapper, but thousands of visitors and schoolchildren pass through the property. Ordinary litter is a better starting point than an invisible child.[45]

There is also a question of respect.

This unnamed girl has been reduced to candy and "chanting," two details offered for spooky effect. She has no family, language, community, or history because none is known. The story takes the broad idea of a Native child and turns her into a museum attraction.

That is not harmless local color. It replaces documented Seminole presence with an invented death.

The real history is richer. Families arrived in canoes. Adults negotiated trade. Children learned, played, traveled, and grew into members of a living Tribe. They were not props waiting to become ghosts.

When a Camera Finds a Face

Photographs seem like stronger evidence because a camera feels impartial.

At Stranahan House, visitors have been encouraged to look for apparitions, partial faces, or glowing orbs in pictures. A curtain folds into something that resembles a cheek. A reflection in glass looks like a pale figure. A circle of light floats near a portrait.

Once a guide tells you six spirits live in the house, every uncertain shape has six possible names.

The museum says there is no visual proof for the apparitions and orbs reported on the property.[45]

A convincing photographic claim would need more than one cropped image. We would need the original file and surrounding frames. We would need to know where the photographer stood, whether a flash fired, who else was present, and what windows, mirrors, framed pictures, insects, or dust lay near the lens.

Without that information, a strange photograph is still strange. It is not Augustus, Albert, Pink, or a Seminole child.

Why the Ghost Tours Ended

For many years, Stranahan House offered ghost tours.

It no longer does.

The museum's explanation is unusually direct. Stories circulated during roughly forty years of museum operation, but nothing was proven. Current staff have not seen objects move without explanation. Drafts account for temperature changes. Wind can cause noises. Orbs have no confirmed visual evidence. The candy story has no physical support.[45]

The museum also makes a larger point. Death represents only a small part of each person's life and of the house's history.

That may be the best way to leave these disputed spirits.

Augustus was more than a cold room. Albert was more than a flirtatious voice assigned to him decades later. Pink was more than a woman forever holding a dead child. Seminole history on the New River is far greater than an unnamed girl with candy in an attic.

If a book falls during your visit, tell the staff.

Then check the shelf, the floor, the windows, and the wind.

Leave the dead out of it until the evidence invites them in.

Chapter Notes

- 45. Historic Stranahan House Museum, "Ghosts and Ghost Tours at Stranahan House," accessed July 16, 2026. □
- 46. Lewis Powell IV, "Florida Hauntings, County by County, Part II," Southern Spirit Guide, September 9, 2017. This page cites John Marc Carr, *Haunted Fort Lauderdale* (History Press, 2008), and two 2003 Sun Sentinel articles. □
- 47. The Haunted Chronicles, "The Stranahan House," undated paranormal-investigation page. It is used only to trace changes in the folklore, not to verify a death or spirit identity. □
- 48. Ilyce Glink, "6 of the Most Haunted Homes in the U.S.," CBS News, October 25, 2014. □
- 49. Canon Support, "There Are White Circles in Captured Images," explaining flash reflection from airborne dust and dirt. □
- 50. Florida Seminole Tourism, "Seminole Spaces: Trading Posts," August 24, 2023. □
- 51. Eileen Soler, "'Seminole Girl' at Home on New River," The Seminole Tribune, April 7, 2015. □

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