

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:25,000

I always knew the stories about the curse of Lickloneer.

2

00:00:30,000 --> 00:00:33,000

It's always been the creepy, like the haunted lake.

3

00:00:33,000 --> 00:00:35,000

You know, you're brave if you go there.

4

00:00:35,000 --> 00:00:39,000

But I was kind of skeptic, so I didn't really think anything of it.

5

00:00:39,000 --> 00:00:44,000

And then in 2020, my family, you know, we were hanging out at the lake.

6

00:00:44,000 --> 00:00:50,000

We tried to catch some fish and it wasn't really active.

7

00:00:50,000 --> 00:00:52,000

So we were like, let's go into water.

8

00:00:52,000 --> 00:00:54,000

You know, you're brave if you go there.

9

00:00:54,000 --> 00:00:55,000

It's a challenge to go there.

10

00:00:55,000 --> 00:00:58,000

So ever since I was little, basically, it was very cold.

11

00:00:58,000 --> 00:00:59,000

Like very, very, very cold.

12

00:00:59,000 --> 00:01:02,000

With the kids that we had with us, we were playing Marco Polo.

13

00:01:02,000 --> 00:01:04,000

Marco Polo!

14

00:01:04,000 --> 00:01:08,000

And we started drifting out more and more.

15

00:01:08,000 --> 00:01:10,000

Marco Polo!

16

00:01:10,000 --> 00:01:15,000

As I was out there in the deeper waters, I noticed my feet couldn't touch the ground, but I could swim.

17

00:01:15,000 --> 00:01:19,000

As I was swimming, I saw something at my foot.

18

00:01:19,000 --> 00:01:22,000

I thought it was a fish, because you know, you're in the lake.

19

00:01:22,000 --> 00:01:25,000

And then I felt something grab around my ankle and yank me real fast.

20

00:01:25,000 --> 00:01:29,000

And the water completely went over my head.

21

00:01:29,000 --> 00:01:31,000

I started freaking out.

22

00:01:31,000 --> 00:01:34,000

It happened with a span of a few seconds, but it felt like a tourney.

23

00:01:34,000 --> 00:01:36,000

And then I shot back up.

24

00:01:36,000 --> 00:01:39,000

But when I did, because of my asthma, I couldn't breathe.

25

00:01:39,000 --> 00:01:45,000

My little brother saw me and he swam out there and got me.

26

00:01:45,000 --> 00:01:48,000

I didn't think people would believe me when I got to the shore.

27

00:01:48,000 --> 00:01:52,000

And so I didn't tell anybody at first.

28

00:01:52,000 --> 00:01:59,000

And then I found it was very common for other people to feel like they're getting pulled under.

29

00:02:06,000 --> 00:02:09,000

As they said by angry spirits.

30

00:02:14,000 --> 00:02:17,000

I haven't been in the lake since.

31

00:02:17,000 --> 00:02:22,000

I know it sounds crazy, but it's not normal lake at all.

32

00:02:36,000 --> 00:02:41,000

30 miles outside Atlanta, Georgia lies a lake shrouded in mystery.

33

00:02:41,000 --> 00:02:44,000

Some say it's haunted.

34

00:02:44,000 --> 00:02:47,000

Others say it's cursed.

35

00:02:47,000 --> 00:02:52,000

But its true story in history may be even more unsettling.

36

00:03:03,000 --> 00:03:13,000

The numbers of times that linear dive recovery gets called to come find a wallet, a phone, a wedding ring, keys.

37

00:03:13,000 --> 00:03:17,000

37 wedding rings to date. Can you believe that?

38

00:03:17,000 --> 00:03:22,000

Lake Linear is a man made lake and one of the largest man made lakes in the country.

39

00:03:22,000 --> 00:03:25,000

It has 692 miles of shoreline.

40

00:03:25,000 --> 00:03:29,000

Deepest part of the lake is 156 feet deep.

41

00:03:29,000 --> 00:03:32,000

The lake was originally built for power generation.

42

00:03:32,000 --> 00:03:39,000

Back in the late 1940s, the Corps of Engineers was commissioned to come out here and to design and lay out the lake.

43

00:03:39,000 --> 00:03:44,000

The biggest town in the south is Atlanta, a capital of the state of Georgia.

44

00:03:44,000 --> 00:03:46,000

Atlanta was growing exponentially.

45

00:03:46,000 --> 00:03:53,000

I think it jumped up something from like 14,000 people to 200,000 people within just a few short years.

46

00:03:53,000 --> 00:03:59,000

So they needed a place to get the water resources that the city was going to need.

47

00:03:59,000 --> 00:04:04,000

Lake Linear is fed by two primary rivers, the Chattahoochee and the Chess City Rivers.

48

00:04:04,000 --> 00:04:11,000

And when they built the lake, there were a lot of roads, bridges, there were a lot of single family homes, mostly farmers.

49

00:04:11,000 --> 00:04:14,000

And those people moved to other places.

50

00:04:14,000 --> 00:04:18,000

Most wanted to do it because of the development that it would provide.

51

00:04:18,000 --> 00:04:27,000

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers started buying up a lot of the land and ground was broke in 1950.

52

00:04:27,000 --> 00:04:35,000

And the dam was finished around 1954 and then the lake was officially filled around 1957.

53

00:04:40,000 --> 00:04:46,000

This is a beautiful, beautiful lake and it has so much to offer, which is why we have so many people that come and visit every year.

54

00:04:49,000 --> 00:04:53,000

There are over 10 million visitors that come to Lake Linear every year.

55

00:04:53,000 --> 00:04:58,000

They're expecting even more this year, so there are a huge number of people coming in.

56

00:05:01,000 --> 00:05:07,000

The lake has now become the go-to spot for Atlantans looking to cool off from the summer heat.

57

00:05:07,000 --> 00:05:12,000

But as its popularity grows, so do the rumors.

58

00:05:13,000 --> 00:05:19,000

Before working for the Corps, I've never really heard any folklore about Linear outside of it existing.

59

00:05:19,000 --> 00:05:24,000

But within 30 seconds of having an office there, they immediately got all kinds of stories.

60

00:05:24,000 --> 00:05:27,000

The main stories were the drownings.

61

00:05:27,000 --> 00:05:32,000

11 people have died in drowning or boating accidents on Lake Linear this year.

62

00:05:32,000 --> 00:05:34,000

Crews are working to recover two men from Lake Linear.

63

00:05:34,000 --> 00:05:35,000

They reported drowning.

64

00:05:35,000 --> 00:05:37,000

Another drowning yesterday afternoon.

65

00:05:37,000 --> 00:05:40,000

Two more deaths at Lake Linear over the holiday weekend.

66

00:05:40,000 --> 00:05:45,000

And it wasn't normal drownings, like someone messed up and that's just their demise.

67

00:05:45,000 --> 00:05:47,000

It was, you know, a creepy vibe.

68

00:05:47,000 --> 00:05:49,000

He jumped into the water, but he never came up.

69

00:05:49,000 --> 00:05:52,000

She disappeared after jumping off a boat into the lake.

70

00:05:52,000 --> 00:05:55,000

He went under and so far hasn't resurfaced.

71

00:06:00,000 --> 00:06:07,000

Even though it is large, when you hear almost 20 people die in a year in one particular spot,

72

00:06:07,000 --> 00:06:12,000

then, yeah, rumors and folklore do kind of start to fly.

73

00:06:12,000 --> 00:06:20,000

The folklore centers around the paranormal and questions whether or not ghosts may be responsible for the deaths.

74

00:06:35,000 --> 00:06:40,000

Since the inception of Lake Linear in the late 1950s,

75

00:06:40,000 --> 00:06:47,000

there have been something like 700 people that died and more than 200 people since 1990.

76

00:06:47,000 --> 00:06:51,000

And there are supposedly some bodies that have never been recovered.

77

00:06:51,000 --> 00:06:55,000

It's a place and source of controversy over the years.

78

00:06:55,000 --> 00:06:59,000

And when I first moved here, I was involved with the Ghost Walk.

79

00:06:59,000 --> 00:07:06,000

Where storytellers told stories of paranormal activity that goes on around the lake.

80

00:07:06,000 --> 00:07:08,000

And that was very popular.

81

00:07:08,000 --> 00:07:11,000

Mine in particular was the Lady in the Lake.

82

00:07:18,000 --> 00:07:24,000

There have been many stories of people having seen an apparition on the Highway 53 bridge.

83

00:07:24,000 --> 00:07:30,000

A lady wandering around there wearing a blue dress.

84

00:07:31,000 --> 00:07:40,000

And they thought that perhaps that the apparition was related to a young woman's body that had been found

85

00:07:40,000 --> 00:07:44,000

right beside the bridge in the blue dress.

86

00:07:44,000 --> 00:07:46,000

At the time, they couldn't figure out who she was.

87

00:07:46,000 --> 00:07:56,000

But people speculated that it might have been Delia Young who disappeared with Susie Roberts about 18 months earlier.

88

00:07:57,000 --> 00:08:06,000

They were both young mothers and they were going to go over to this nightclub over on the Forsyth County side of the lake

89

00:08:06,000 --> 00:08:09,000

and dance the night away.

90

00:08:13,000 --> 00:08:17,000

So they went over there and they had a big time evidently.

91

00:08:17,000 --> 00:08:23,000

Delia in her borrowed blue dress that she thought was so pretty.

92

00:08:24,000 --> 00:08:30,000

And they left to go home and get back in time to take care of their families.

93

00:08:32,000 --> 00:08:36,000

They stopped for gas at a gas station on the way back.

94

00:08:36,000 --> 00:08:40,000

And that was the last anybody saw of them.

95

00:08:43,000 --> 00:08:46,000

After they turned up missing, people looked along the road there.

96

00:08:46,000 --> 00:08:49,000

But they really didn't find anything.

97

00:08:49,000 --> 00:08:54,000

And so it just seemed to be that they disappeared in the thin air.

98

00:08:54,000 --> 00:09:05,000

I think it was Delia Young's brother who said that when the body was found, about 18 months after their disappearance,

99

00:09:05,000 --> 00:09:10,000

he felt something pass over him and he knew it was his sister.

100

00:09:11,000 --> 00:09:17,000

We are on location where the lady in the blue dress is supposed to have haunted these waters.

101

00:09:17,000 --> 00:09:21,000

And a lot of people claim in the early morning hours or the fog and stuff,

102

00:09:21,000 --> 00:09:24,000

they see a woman walking across the bridge in a blue dress.

103

00:09:24,000 --> 00:09:27,000

And I've spent lots of nights out on the lake and I've never seen her.

104

00:09:27,000 --> 00:09:29,000

Yeah, I've never seen her either.

105

00:09:29,000 --> 00:09:34,000

So then they were working on the bridge in 1990.

106

00:09:34,000 --> 00:09:38,000

As I recall, as they were setting some of the pilings down, they ran into something,

107

00:09:38,000 --> 00:09:42,000

sent divers down and sure enough they found the car and there was Susie Roberts.

108

00:09:46,000 --> 00:09:50,000

Apparently they had gone to a party and as they were coming back,

109

00:09:50,000 --> 00:09:54,000

the car ran off the road, both drowned in the car.

110

00:09:54,000 --> 00:09:57,000

And as far as we're concerned, mystery solved.

111

00:09:57,000 --> 00:09:59,000

And they were looking for a car.

112

00:09:59,000 --> 00:10:04,000

Both drowned in the car and as far as we're concerned, mystery solved.

113

00:10:07,000 --> 00:10:10,000

So when Susie Roberts was identified in 1990,

114

00:10:10,000 --> 00:10:15,000

they realized that the body that had been found many years before was D.O. Young.

115

00:10:18,000 --> 00:10:23,000

But she was really identified by default and that's a tragedy in and of itself.

116

00:10:24,000 --> 00:10:27,000

I have heard people saying, like, oh yeah, we were on a lake at night.

117

00:10:27,000 --> 00:10:29,000

I was all laid in blue dress.

118

00:10:29,000 --> 00:10:34,000

I personally haven't seen the lady in blue dress, but after what happened to me, I don't doubt it.

119

00:10:43,000 --> 00:10:46,000

There have been many cases of people camping out around the lake,

120

00:10:46,000 --> 00:10:49,000

having seen paranormal activity, ghost activity.

121

00:10:50,000 --> 00:10:53,000

People losing things that they couldn't really explain

122

00:10:53,000 --> 00:10:58,000

and having people show up around their campfires that they seem to be there and then not.

123

00:11:00,000 --> 00:11:04,000

If you go on any sort of social media, like TikTok, YouTube, Facebook,

124

00:11:04,000 --> 00:11:07,000

you'll see plenty of comments about how Lake Lanier is haunted.

125

00:11:08,000 --> 00:11:09,000

What's this about Lake Lanier?

126

00:11:09,000 --> 00:11:11,000

That sucker's haunted and cursed.

127

00:11:11,000 --> 00:11:13,000

You know anything about Lake Lanier?

128

00:11:13,000 --> 00:11:14,000

You know this is haunted.

129

00:11:14,000 --> 00:11:18,000

The lake is literally full of dead bodies.

130

00:11:18,000 --> 00:11:20,000

There are several stories like that.

131

00:11:20,000 --> 00:11:25,000

And people speculated about the fact that when the lake was formed,

132

00:11:25,000 --> 00:11:27,000

it covered all these cemeteries.

133

00:11:27,000 --> 00:11:31,000

I think there are 20 cemeteries that are covered up.

134

00:11:31,000 --> 00:11:35,000

Some of the bodies are moved, but just like Baltergeist, not all of them.

135

00:11:35,000 --> 00:11:38,000

I could not. You don't get in Lake Lanier.

136

00:11:38,000 --> 00:11:42,000

I don't even believe in ghosts and stuff, but that is such a no for me.

137

00:11:43,000 --> 00:11:47,000

One of the questions that I get asked frequently is, are there graves under Lake Lanier?

138

00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:51,000

And I have dove over 5,000 different dives on this lake.

139

00:11:51,000 --> 00:11:53,000

I have seen every corner of it.

140

00:11:53,000 --> 00:11:54,000

I've seen the bottom of it.

141

00:11:54,000 --> 00:11:57,000

I probably have seen more of this lake than any other human being ever.

142

00:11:57,000 --> 00:11:58,000

Cover down.

143

00:11:59,000 --> 00:12:05,000

Well, I can assure you all of the known graves that were here at Lake Lanier were exhumed.

144

00:12:05,000 --> 00:12:09,000

Now I say that because if we go back to the Native American times,

145

00:12:09,000 --> 00:12:12,000

this was a very popular place because of the rivers.

146

00:12:12,000 --> 00:12:16,000

And there are certainly some unmarked graves from that time.

147

00:12:16,000 --> 00:12:19,000

So some of those remains will still be here in the lake.

148

00:12:25,000 --> 00:12:28,000

According to some myths and lore,

149

00:12:28,000 --> 00:12:32,000

disturbing a Native American burial site can lead to misfortune.

150

00:12:32,000 --> 00:12:38,000

In the case of Lake Lanier, multiple spiritual areas were flooded.

151

00:12:38,000 --> 00:12:42,000

Now some wonder if that has cast a dark cloud over the lake.

152

00:12:46,000 --> 00:12:56,000

A lot of people believe that the spirits are angry.

153

00:12:56,000 --> 00:12:58,000

And that's why they keep taking people under.

154

00:12:58,000 --> 00:13:04,000

I don't want to say they won't revenge because I don't think they gain anything from it.

155

00:13:04,000 --> 00:13:11,000

It could even be them reaching out for someone trying to get help, but taking lives instead.

156

00:13:11,000 --> 00:13:17,000

Most paranormal activity is usually attributed to tragic situations that have occurred.

157

00:13:17,000 --> 00:13:22,000

And this area was associated with the Trail of Tears.

158

00:13:22,000 --> 00:13:28,000

Both the Cherokee and the Creek Indians lived in that area,

159

00:13:28,000 --> 00:13:33,000

and they were made to leave everything behind and walk to Oklahoma.

160

00:13:34,000 --> 00:13:41,000

In 1830, Congress passed an act which forced the Native Americans of the Deep South

161

00:13:41,000 --> 00:13:45,000

to relocate to reservations in Oklahoma.

162

00:13:45,000 --> 00:13:53,000

The grueling journey that followed took the lives of roughly 15,000 Indigenous peoples,

163

00:13:53,000 --> 00:13:58,000

which is why one chief deemed it the Trail of Tears and Death.

164

00:14:04,000 --> 00:14:10,000

This was basically the last stop for the Trail of Tears.

165

00:14:12,000 --> 00:14:18,000

My family is traced back to the Trail of Tears, both sides of my family.

166

00:14:18,000 --> 00:14:24,000

And I have childhood memories of my family passing down the horror of those stories.

167

00:14:24,000 --> 00:14:33,000

It's heartbreaking when you stop and realize that they made that trip and in the winter months.

168

00:14:35,000 --> 00:14:40,000

And how difficult it must have been going a thousand miles

169

00:14:40,000 --> 00:14:44,000

and leaving everything behind other than what they could carry.

170

00:14:47,000 --> 00:14:53,000

I knew that it started in Georgia, and I couldn't even imagine how they ever made it.

171

00:14:55,000 --> 00:14:57,000

To Weber's Falls.

172

00:14:59,000 --> 00:15:02,000

It was a terrible, terrible tragedy.

173

00:15:02,000 --> 00:15:05,000

The loss of their heritage, their lands.

174

00:15:05,000 --> 00:15:12,000

And supposedly there are cases of people seeing Native American apparitions around the lake.

175

00:15:15,000 --> 00:15:20,000

You would think that the more people are told that it's haunted, they would stay away from it.

176

00:15:21,000 --> 00:15:25,000

But nowadays, people are drawn by that.

177

00:15:28,000 --> 00:15:32,000

I went to Lake Lanier. I just wanted to see it for myself.

178

00:15:41,000 --> 00:15:44,000

I'm from the Bronx, New York, home of hip-hop.

179

00:15:44,000 --> 00:15:52,000

I came to Atlanta in 1994, and I picked up boating in 2015.

180

00:15:54,000 --> 00:16:00,000

Boating is cool, man. And I think there's a lot of barriers to entry already.

181

00:16:00,000 --> 00:16:06,000

And folks shouldn't just be deterred because they say the lake is haunted, you know? No.

182

00:16:07,000 --> 00:16:10,000

Like, haunting is there's ghosts.

183

00:16:11,000 --> 00:16:13,000

I ain't seen no ghosts up here.

184

00:16:14,000 --> 00:16:17,000

I think we gotta deal with the facts.

185

00:16:19,000 --> 00:16:24,000

You can't come to Lake Lanier and just hop on a boat and think that you're gonna get home that night.

186

00:16:24,000 --> 00:16:27,000

Without no boat or safety or no training.

187

00:16:27,000 --> 00:16:32,000

Every time someone dies on this lake, nine times out of ten is because they didn't have a vest on.

188

00:16:32,000 --> 00:16:35,000

Right? They're partying, they're drinking.

189

00:16:35,000 --> 00:16:40,000

They're not reading the Coast Guard seaman ship manual.

190

00:16:40,000 --> 00:16:42,000

You know what I mean?

191

00:16:45,000 --> 00:16:51,000

I've had to rescue people on my jet skis, grown men that were out of shade or they're drunk.

192

00:16:51,000 --> 00:16:55,000

So that's not being haunted, right? That's poor decision-making.

193

00:16:55,000 --> 00:16:59,000

People need to take this place seriously. This is a dangerous lake to boat on.

194

00:17:02,000 --> 00:17:05,000

We're gonna be down more than 20 minutes. I'm setting the maximum.

195

00:17:05,000 --> 00:17:07,000

Robert's in charge of safety today.

196

00:17:07,000 --> 00:17:08,000

Yep.

197

00:17:08,000 --> 00:17:10,000

Alright. Dive her down.

198

00:17:10,000 --> 00:17:11,000

Dive her down.

199

00:17:15,000 --> 00:17:18,000

So many people come to me thinking that the lake is haunted.

200

00:17:18,000 --> 00:17:22,000

When I travel to other cities even, they say, oh, you're at Lake Lanier.

201

00:17:22,000 --> 00:17:24,000

Wow, you know, that place is haunted.

202

00:17:24,000 --> 00:17:29,000

And I can assure you with 100% certainty, it's not haunted, it is not cursed.

203

00:17:29,000 --> 00:17:34,000

Unfortunately, one of the things that happens here on the lake is we do have people that drown.

204

00:17:34,000 --> 00:17:39,000

Accidents do happen. This is one of the most dangerous lakes in the entire country.

205

00:17:40,000 --> 00:17:46,000

When you get down below where there is no light at all, it's so hard to see.

206

00:17:46,000 --> 00:17:48,000

And it is very eerie.

207

00:17:49,000 --> 00:17:52,000

We run into some of the strangest things when we're out there.

208

00:17:53,000 --> 00:17:56,000

There's all kinds of things that can pop up.

209

00:17:59,000 --> 00:18:03,000

The building is right here going this way. I'm right over the top of it.

210

00:18:04,000 --> 00:18:09,000

Here's the dwelling that they're diving into here with multiple rooms.

211

00:18:13,000 --> 00:18:16,000

There are a lot of things like this that are in Lake Lanier.

212

00:18:16,000 --> 00:18:19,000

There are lots of old bridges. There are some remnants of old buildings.

213

00:18:22,000 --> 00:18:25,000

There are some full grown trees down there on the bottom of the lake.

214

00:18:25,000 --> 00:18:29,000

Their trees are just like this. They are full grown, full standing.

215

00:18:29,000 --> 00:18:32,000

Anything below 30 feet in water, you run into the trees.

216

00:18:34,000 --> 00:18:38,000

A number of years ago, there was a drought. The lake went down 21 feet.

217

00:18:38,000 --> 00:18:42,000

And you can see all kinds of stuff come up that people have never seen before.

218

00:18:42,000 --> 00:18:45,000

There are literally old speedway stands.

219

00:18:45,000 --> 00:18:47,000

But the speedway was a dirt track.

220

00:18:47,000 --> 00:18:50,000

And that dirt track is just a little bit of a mess.

221

00:18:50,000 --> 00:18:54,000

There were so many boating accidents that happened that year. It was unbelievable.

222

00:18:54,000 --> 00:18:57,000

And I think we had one of the highest number of drownings that particular year.

223

00:18:57,000 --> 00:19:01,000

Because people were hitting these rocks and trees and things in their boats.

224

00:19:01,000 --> 00:19:03,000

And having fatal accidents.

225

00:19:08,000 --> 00:19:10,000

I got you some souvenirs.

226

00:19:10,000 --> 00:19:12,000

What is that? A wheelbarrow handle?

227

00:19:12,000 --> 00:19:14,000

That's from a door frame.

228

00:19:14,000 --> 00:19:16,000

I got you some souvenirs.

229

00:19:16,000 --> 00:19:18,000

I got you some souvenirs.

230

00:19:18,000 --> 00:19:20,000

That's from a door frame.

231

00:19:20,000 --> 00:19:22,000

And that's a brick from the house.

232

00:19:29,000 --> 00:19:33,000

Unfortunately, we do get called out for having to do a drowning victim recovery.

233

00:19:33,000 --> 00:19:36,000

And it's one of the sadder things that we do here at the lake.

234

00:19:36,000 --> 00:19:39,000

We always try to bring closure to the families.

235

00:19:39,000 --> 00:19:42,000

Things like that happen. It's very, very sad.

236

00:19:42,000 --> 00:19:46,000

But if more people took better boat or precautions, I think we'd have much safer lake.

237

00:19:49,000 --> 00:19:52,000

I thought about a lot what's under there.

238

00:19:52,000 --> 00:19:56,000

I always like explaining things scientifically or try to get a reason for it.

239

00:19:56,000 --> 00:19:59,000

But I did get grabbed that day and pulled under the water.

240

00:19:59,000 --> 00:20:02,000

And I don't have any explanations for it.

241

00:20:02,000 --> 00:20:05,000

It does get frustrating.

242

00:20:05,000 --> 00:20:07,000

You know, when someone doesn't believe you.

243

00:20:07,000 --> 00:20:11,000

Sometimes I don't believe myself either, but it happened.

244

00:20:11,000 --> 00:20:15,000

The truth is, if you are on the waters, even with a life jacket,

245

00:20:15,000 --> 00:20:17,000

you just don't feel comfortable.

246

00:20:23,000 --> 00:20:28,000

Could the high number of drownings simply be a result of human error?

247

00:20:28,000 --> 00:20:32,000

Or is there a more supernatural explanation?

248

00:20:32,000 --> 00:20:37,000

Some locals point to another historic tragedy buried deep at the bottom of the lake

249

00:20:37,000 --> 00:20:40,000

as the reason for these tragic deaths.

250

00:20:40,000 --> 00:20:44,000

Some people would suggest we're at Lake Lanier.

251

00:20:44,000 --> 00:20:47,000

Some people would say we're Gainesville.

252

00:20:47,000 --> 00:20:51,000

But in actuality, we're in Oscarville.

253

00:20:51,000 --> 00:20:54,000

It's literally underneath our feet.

254

00:20:54,000 --> 00:21:00,000

Growing up, the kids try to scare each other about what's on the bottom of Lake Lanier.

255

00:21:00,000 --> 00:21:03,000

It's just a little bit of a shock.

256

00:21:04,000 --> 00:21:09,000

Growing up, the kids try to scare each other about what's on the bottom of Lake Lanier.

257

00:21:09,000 --> 00:21:14,000

It's trying to creep you out and like, oh, just let me know if you go in the lake,

258

00:21:14,000 --> 00:21:16,000

you're swimming on top of a city.

259

00:21:16,000 --> 00:21:20,000

Which, I thought it was a joke at first, but turned out to be the truth.

260

00:21:20,000 --> 00:21:25,000

It had churches, schools, banks of some sort.

261

00:21:25,000 --> 00:21:29,000

But there's no marker for the historical value that was there.

262

00:21:33,000 --> 00:21:38,000

Oscarville was a safe haven for African Americans in Forsyth County.

263

00:21:38,000 --> 00:21:41,000

Black people live there and white people live there.

264

00:21:41,000 --> 00:21:45,000

I think as long as people stayed in their place, friendly to their neighbors,

265

00:21:45,000 --> 00:21:48,000

they were able to have their farms, they were able to work in the cities,

266

00:21:48,000 --> 00:21:51,000

everybody could get along just fine.

267

00:21:53,000 --> 00:21:57,000

When you look at Oscarville, there's not a lot I haven't found.

268

00:21:57,000 --> 00:21:59,000

So we try to gather the materials that we can.

269

00:21:59,000 --> 00:22:01,000

And then we do lean on oral history.

270

00:22:01,000 --> 00:22:04,000

And then you put it all together and you come up with something that says,

271

00:22:04,000 --> 00:22:07,000

maybe this is the whole story that needs to be told.

272

00:22:12,000 --> 00:22:17,000

My mother told me the story about Oscarville.

273

00:22:17,000 --> 00:22:22,000

My grandfather, Bird, he formed land over there.

274

00:22:22,000 --> 00:22:27,000

They had some stores, black zones, some stores there.

275

00:22:27,000 --> 00:22:30,000

And it was a good place to live.

276

00:22:30,000 --> 00:22:35,000

Oscarville was a town where the African Americans had what they needed.

277

00:22:35,000 --> 00:22:39,000

They were able to start their families and make a living there for themselves.

278

00:22:39,000 --> 00:22:42,000

And they would help each other.

279

00:22:42,000 --> 00:22:47,000

You know, if you're harvest, what coming in right where you can come and get some hours.

280

00:22:47,000 --> 00:22:51,000

That's how they got along before the incident happened.

281

00:22:52,000 --> 00:22:55,000

Things changed in 1912.

282

00:22:58,000 --> 00:23:02,000

One woman woke up and said she saw a black man standing over her bed.

283

00:23:02,000 --> 00:23:04,000

That alarmed the white community.

284

00:23:04,000 --> 00:23:08,000

A few days later, another young woman was found beaten and raped.

285

00:23:10,000 --> 00:23:12,000

Her name was May Crow.

286

00:23:12,000 --> 00:23:14,000

I think she was 19 years old.

287

00:23:14,000 --> 00:23:18,000

And for some reason, it may have just been the habit of the times,

288

00:23:18,000 --> 00:23:19,000

which it seems like it was.

289

00:23:19,000 --> 00:23:24,000

If something like that occurred, the first place people went to investigate was to black community.

290

00:23:24,000 --> 00:23:27,000

Now, there was no evidence. She never regained consciousness.

291

00:23:27,000 --> 00:23:30,000

So how do you know whom to blame?

292

00:23:30,000 --> 00:23:34,000

And so they blamed three young African American males.

293

00:23:34,000 --> 00:23:38,000

And one they took and they lynched even before there was a so-called trial.

294

00:23:40,000 --> 00:23:44,000

And with that whole narrative of black men attacking white women,

295

00:23:44,000 --> 00:23:48,000

white people decided that they had to cleanse the county.

296

00:23:48,000 --> 00:23:53,000

And so they told black people to get your things together and get out.

297

00:23:54,000 --> 00:24:01,000

And they hung one of the men in town and they would just shoot at him throughout the day.

298

00:24:01,000 --> 00:24:04,000

Great-granddaddy Bird did see all of this.

299

00:24:04,000 --> 00:24:12,000

So you knew the danger of not leaving because something like that could possibly happen to you.

300

00:24:13,000 --> 00:24:14,000

And so people had to leave.

301

00:24:14,000 --> 00:24:16,000

They didn't have time to pull things together.

302

00:24:16,000 --> 00:24:20,000

It was a matter of get out in the dead of night and leave Forsyth County.

303

00:24:21,000 --> 00:24:24,000

The lake didn't exist at the time. It was the Chattahoochee River.

304

00:24:24,000 --> 00:24:28,000

And they drove some of them to the riverbank and said,

305

00:24:28,000 --> 00:24:29,000

swim for your life.

306

00:24:29,000 --> 00:24:33,000

If you can cross that river, Chattahoochee, you can do whatever you want,

307

00:24:33,000 --> 00:24:34,000

but you have to get out of here.

308

00:24:35,000 --> 00:24:39,000

That was a bridge, but they weren't allowed to cross it.

309

00:24:39,000 --> 00:24:43,000

You swim or drown. That was what they let them do.

310

00:24:44,000 --> 00:24:51,000

Some went north and some went south, but Bird, my grandfather, came to Gainesville.

311

00:24:53,000 --> 00:24:55,000

Some of them didn't make it.

312

00:24:57,000 --> 00:25:01,000

I'm not sure how many African-Americans were even there at the time,

313

00:25:01,000 --> 00:25:04,000

but I hear a lot of heart-wrenching stories.

314

00:25:04,000 --> 00:25:09,000

Everybody in this area knows about some family that had to leave in the dead of night,

315

00:25:09,000 --> 00:25:13,000

who lost children, who lost brothers and sisters crossing the Chattahoochee.

316

00:25:15,000 --> 00:25:22,000

When I think about it, I do get emotional because Bird Oliver's first wife and his two kids

317

00:25:22,000 --> 00:25:26,000

died when he was fleeing Oskaville.

318

00:25:30,000 --> 00:25:34,000

And you cannot go back to get them, so he had to keep going.

319

00:25:40,000 --> 00:25:47,000

My grandmother told me that he sometimes would go out into the woods and sit by himself.

320

00:25:47,000 --> 00:25:56,000

And maybe this was the time he was thinking about the law system, what he had to really go through.

321

00:25:58,000 --> 00:26:03,000

And I'm sure he thought about, I had a house. I had always. Now I've got to start over.

322

00:26:04,000 --> 00:26:11,000

And from what I understand, he wasn't angry. He probably looked at it well.

323

00:26:12,000 --> 00:26:18,000

If I sit here and be angry about this matter, tomorrow I'm still going to be angry.

324

00:26:18,000 --> 00:26:20,000

I had to be a house.

325

00:26:22,000 --> 00:26:26,000

So I tried to look at things in a positive way. That was nasty. It was awful.

326

00:26:27,000 --> 00:26:29,000

But look at what came out of it.

327

00:26:30,000 --> 00:26:35,000

You know, all these people was my family.

328

00:26:46,000 --> 00:26:53,000

Everyone has their different perception of Lake Lanier. Those that have that true connection may feel something

329

00:26:53,000 --> 00:26:55,000

versus those that hear the story.

330

00:26:56,000 --> 00:27:04,000

I remember renting an Airbnb off of Lake Lanier. And it was right there on the water.

331

00:27:04,000 --> 00:27:09,000

And as I walked down, it was a different type of feeling.

332

00:27:10,000 --> 00:27:16,000

It was like you knew something happened and you could, you can just feel it in your soul.

333

00:27:17,000 --> 00:27:23,000

I have come up on this hill sometimes and just sit and you can feel certain things.

334

00:27:23,000 --> 00:27:29,000

So I'm not going to argue the fact that there's not spiritual things on that lake.

335

00:27:29,000 --> 00:27:31,000

And I can't prove it either.

336

00:27:33,000 --> 00:27:37,000

When you talk about places that are haunted, Lake Lanier always comes up.

337

00:27:37,000 --> 00:27:42,000

And when you Google Lake Lanier, you will come to Oscarville.

338

00:27:42,000 --> 00:27:48,000

So it's hard to separate the two. And I don't think it's anything that's going to go away anytime soon.

339

00:27:51,000 --> 00:27:59,000

I think this story is becoming more prevalent when it comes to social media and, you know, the TV show.

340

00:27:59,000 --> 00:28:01,000

Atlanta even talked about it.

341

00:28:02,000 --> 00:28:04,000

I just feel like I was being pulled.

342

00:28:06,000 --> 00:28:08,000

It probably was.

343

00:28:09,000 --> 00:28:11,000

It probably was.

344

00:28:12,000 --> 00:28:14,000

By what?

345

00:28:15,000 --> 00:28:17,000

It's a whole town underneath us.

346

00:28:18,000 --> 00:28:25,000

This is really how people see it. They really see it as the ancestors are the spirit coming to take you under.

347

00:28:25,000 --> 00:28:32,000

So it was a little comical, but at the same time, do your research so you can see the whole truth.

348

00:28:33,000 --> 00:28:39,000

The history of Lake Lanier will always be clouded in tragedy.

349

00:28:39,000 --> 00:28:46,000

Whether or not those tragedies have cursed the area will always remain a mystery.

350

00:28:46,000 --> 00:28:51,000

I would say if I didn't know the history of it, I would just think it was just a normal lake.

351

00:28:51,000 --> 00:28:54,000

And people just love the scary stories to tell.

352

00:28:54,000 --> 00:29:00,000

But after all that happening to me, I would say, yeah, if any place to be haunted, it would be Lake Lanier.

353

00:29:03,000 --> 00:29:14,000

The fact that people say that they see these sightings and stuff, and I'm like, what do I believe that you saw something unusual like a piece of trash, you know, floating through the air, you know, during a storm?

354

00:29:14,000 --> 00:29:20,000

Sure. But in terms of people claiming to be dragged down to the bottom, they felt something pulling on their leg.

355

00:29:20,000 --> 00:29:23,000

No, it's just silliness, absolute silliness.

356

00:29:24,000 --> 00:29:38,000

I do believe that the dark history of Lake Lanier has a great deal to do with people's perception of perhaps paranormal or odd activity that goes on around the lake.

357

00:29:38,000 --> 00:29:43,000

This atmosphere lends itself to those sorts of feelings.

358

00:29:43,000 --> 00:29:51,000

I'm not going to buy into the whole haunted house thing, lady in the lake, you know, I'm just being real as to what it is.

359

00:29:51,000 --> 00:29:55,000

Like this is a historical archaeological site.

360

00:29:55,000 --> 00:30:06,000

If you're just going to drive over this lake, over Oscarville and not, you know, acknowledge that, there's going to be a problem.

361

00:30:06,000 --> 00:30:10,000

Professionally do I think it's haunted? No, I don't.

362

00:30:10,000 --> 00:30:16,000

But I have been told that the ancestors have long memories.

363

00:30:16,000 --> 00:30:19,000

And sometimes things happen.

364

00:30:19,000 --> 00:30:23,000

Some of the drownings at Lake Lanier, they're accidental.

365

00:30:23,000 --> 00:30:29,000

But so much has happened that people are beginning to think, I wonder if that place is haunted.

366

00:30:29,000 --> 00:30:33,000

Girl, you know what they did to Oscarville? That's probably coming back to get them.

367

00:30:33,000 --> 00:30:36,000

So I think there might be a little truth in that.