

### A Stairway Up to the Past and Present

Following a blood trail one hundred and nine years ago that lead to an antique tub, one guest of Miss Molly's Bed and Breakfast found a woman stabbed to death, lying helplessly in a pool of her own blood. Refusing to shut the bed and breakfast down, the innkeeper of that time covered up this secret. However, the public soon found out about it and still to this day believes that this bed and breakfast, down a cobblestone road in the historic Stockyards of Fort Worth, is haunted by the angry spirit of the helpless woman who lay dead in the inn's bathtub as well as other spirits. Miss Molly's is deemed haunted by many of the guests that stay there due to their personal encounters with the supposed paranormality and historical, spine-chilling atmosphere, thus leading the community of Fort Worth to define this location as haunted as well.

Hooves of cattle and horses could be heard roughing up the streets miles away in the early 1900s, as cattlemen lead their livestock through the Stockyards of Fort Worth, Texas and to Fort Worth's Chisholm Trail. During this time, many of the cattlemen would stop in the Stockyards for entertainment and a stay at the Palace Rooms, a former boarding house known as Miss Molly's today. However, according to Jeff Belanger's *Encyclopedia of Haunted Places*, Miss Molly's was turned into a speakeasy in the 1920s known as "The Oasis." Later in the 1940s this boarding house was known as the Gayatte Hotel, a violent bordello. Many women were forced to work as prostitutes, and some were murdered violently or died due to botched abortions, including one female who died in one of the bathtubs. Due to the deaths of young girls during the early 1900s, many guest and paranormal specialists, such as Henry Bailey, have promulgated Miss Molly's as a place of paranormality. Therefore, two friends of mine, Mackenzie and Sidney, and I took a visit to Miss Molly's to feel out the supposedly haunted bed

and breakfast. Not to mention, we stayed the night in the room that Miss Molly's employees and guests declare the most haunted, the "Cattlemen's" room.

In the late afternoon of Friday, February fifteenth, my friend Mackenzie and I drove down to Miss Molly's after class. As we walked around the stockyards in broad daylight, we were quite frustrated; we were having trouble locating this little inn. Our Google Maps repeatedly told us that we have arrived at our destination, but we did not see our destination. Being annoyed by our maps, we asked a couple of Fort Worth residents if they knew where Miss Molly's was located and they pointed us down the street. When we reached Miss Molly's, we were confused as to why the outdated pink door would not open. I peeked into the window of the door to see a weathered, maroon velvet staircase leading upwards. Within the first twenty minutes of being in the Stockyard's, due to its secretive, high up location I could see why some guests say that this place gives off questionable vibes. After calling the Innkeeper, she had us wait outside thirty minutes until she was finished getting ready for the day before leading us inside.

Looking up at the top of the overwhelmingly steep staircase from the bottom, I felt infinitesimal and that my presence could be preyed on. We reached the parlor where we were immediately immersed in the dated atmosphere of Miss Molly's. It felt as if we were taken back to the 1900s. Mackenzie and I were anxiously gazing our eyes all over the place as the innkeeper was checking us in. However, all three of us stared at the room we were to stay in because the innkeeper said she needed to straighten the mirror and paintings due to the air conditioning that moved it. I did not think she was trying to frighten us, as she was speaking in a monotone voice. After she gave us our key and disappeared into her room, Mackenzie and I began to investigate; my inner Nancy Drew was ready to explore. As we walked around the parlor, a couple carried

their suitcases up with the owner of Miss Molly's; the couple was quiet and whispered "hello." However, the inn owner just glanced at us and did a half smile, with widened eyes, and then swiftly continued carrying the couple's belongings to their room. This place is well kept for how outdated it is, but everyone who we had encountered at this point had walked past us with a strange manner. It almost felt as if the staff was aware and cautious of something that the guests were not. As Mackenzie and I looked around in the foyer, we stumbled across a "guest journal." There were about a couple hundred stories signed in there, most of which the guests claimed they had experienced something paranormal.

Going back to my reflections on the journal entries from previous guests, I read some of their personal testimonies. Some believe spirits lurk there due to their personal encounters, while some, who did not experience anything with the paranormal, question if Miss Molly's is actually haunted. One person wrote about how she and her husband stacked pillows in the corner of the room to see if they would move and woke up surprised to find mysterious handprints on them. Another person wrote about seeing a dark shadow of a woman figure in the middle of the night, claiming this to be the spirit of the once murdered inn-keeper, Miss Josie. On the other hand, one guest wrote about staying there for two nights in a row and not experiencing anything, but felt uncomfortable staying in the creepy setting, leading her to not decide whether the place is haunted or not.

Later that night, Mackenzie, Sidney, and I returned to see if we could have a paranormal experience like the other guests did. The dimly lit place was so silent you could hear the water dripping in the kitchen. On our way to our room, I stopped in my tracks. I looked over to my friends and said, "Guys! Look at this!" Right outside our door was an antique baby doll resting in a highchair. I bent down and stared right into its eyes...they were black and desolate. This place

was not only hair-raising due to the outdatedness, but also due to the antique furniture and decorations that were apparent in every room. According to the Miss Molly's website, some of the furniture is from the original days of the inn. If the hotel were to be refurbished, the authenticity of the place and the haunted vibes of Miss Molly's would be taken away. My friend Sidney believes that the place is not haunted, but is definitely unsettling due to the historic, outdated atmosphere. However, my friend Mackenzie was too frightened to stay the night and drove home at 2:00 am. She does not know if the place is haunted, but definitely did not want to test it by staying overnight; she believes it definitely could be haunted just by sensing the atmosphere for the three hours she was there for. According to Dallas Observer writer, Karen Gavis, she claims to have felt the presence of spirits and has pictures of "orbs" in the hotel to back up her claims. Feeling eerie vibes in the bathroom and experiencing the water pressure changing, I feel like the place could be haunted, but I personally need more evidence.

Due to the outdated atmosphere and the macabre series of murders that occurred at Miss Molly's, many of its guests who have had encounters with the supposed spirits claim the place to be haunted, thus leading the community of Fort Worth to define this location as haunted as well. The journal, antiquated furniture, and the location of Miss Molly's, has lead me to believe that Miss Molly's could possibly have paranormal activity, but I am not for sure. Most of the community considers Miss Molly's to be haunted, whether having experienced something paranormal or not. Whether the inn is actually haunted or not will always be up to the discernment of the guest. Take a trip up the creaky staircase to the era of the 1900s and see for yourself if there really are spirits that lurk around Miss Molly's or if their presence rest still in the desolate eyes of the antique dolls.



Pictured: antique baby outside of door at Miss Molly's.

Works Cited

Belanger, Jeff. "Miss Molly's Bed and Breakfast." *Encyclopedia of Haunted Places*,  
Readhowyouwant.com Ltd, 2011, pp. 206–207.

Gavis, Karen. "Is Miss Molly's Hotel in the Fort Worth Stockyards Haunted?" *Dallas Observer*,  
28 Sept. 2016.

"Miss Molly's." *Miss Molly's Hotel A Fort Worth Bed and Breakfast*, 2017.