

K-STATE HAUNTS

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Alumni aren't the only ones who
don't want to leave campus ...

Call them ghosts, spirits or a myth, but by any moniker, these supernatural tales have been haunting Kansas State University's campus for years. These stories seemed mostly behind the scenes yet have often been experienced by teachers and students alike. From a supposed football player just waiting for his ride home to a *Star Trek*-loving hospital patient to a young man who died too soon, these are just a few of the tales that live strong through their camaraderie and lore.

Opposite page: Photos courtesy of Ben Stark
and taken by Leah Baus '14 and Dawn Furnas

NICK THE GHOST PURPLE MASQUE THEATRE, MEMORIAL STADIUM

Lights that shut off inexplicably, spilled paint, shattered bulbs, belongings that disappeared — these are some of the pranks credited to Nick the Ghost, who supposedly haunted the original Purple Masque Theatre at East Memorial Stadium.

Sally Bailey, professor and director of K-State's drama therapy program, said Nick is credited with many mischievous events throughout the years.

K-State began using East Memorial Stadium as a theater in 1965. Since then, unexplainable stories began popping up: lights that wouldn't turn off, recorded voices when there was no power, shadows when the theater was locked and even chairs that seemingly put themselves away, Bailey said. These events and more are all credited to Nick, the ghost who has a variation of colorful backstories, including that of a field hand to a football player who died too young. How the ghost became known as Nick is unknown.

Other instructors and countless students had their own tales about Nick, generally involving some type of practical joke or letting himself be known.

Charlotte MacFarland '77, who taught in the theater department for 40 years, said she heard stories about Nick from "rational and smart people" but didn't believe any of them were true until the 1980s. After exclaiming to a class that there was no such thing as ghosts, the coincidentally named ghost light on the stage immediately shattered above her head.

"That was freaky enough for me that [for] the rest of my time with the university, I was never alone in that theater," she said.

What makes Nick's tale even more interesting is the relocation of the Purple Masque Theatre, which has moved to West Memorial Stadium.

Bailey — among others — thinks he's gone along with the department.

"As theater people, we always keep an open mind," she said. "To the students, him not being real isn't even an option."

Legend says Nick the Ghost haunted the old Purple Masque Theatre in East Memorial Stadium (top photos).

Some even think Nick has moved to the theater's new location in West Memorial Stadium (below).

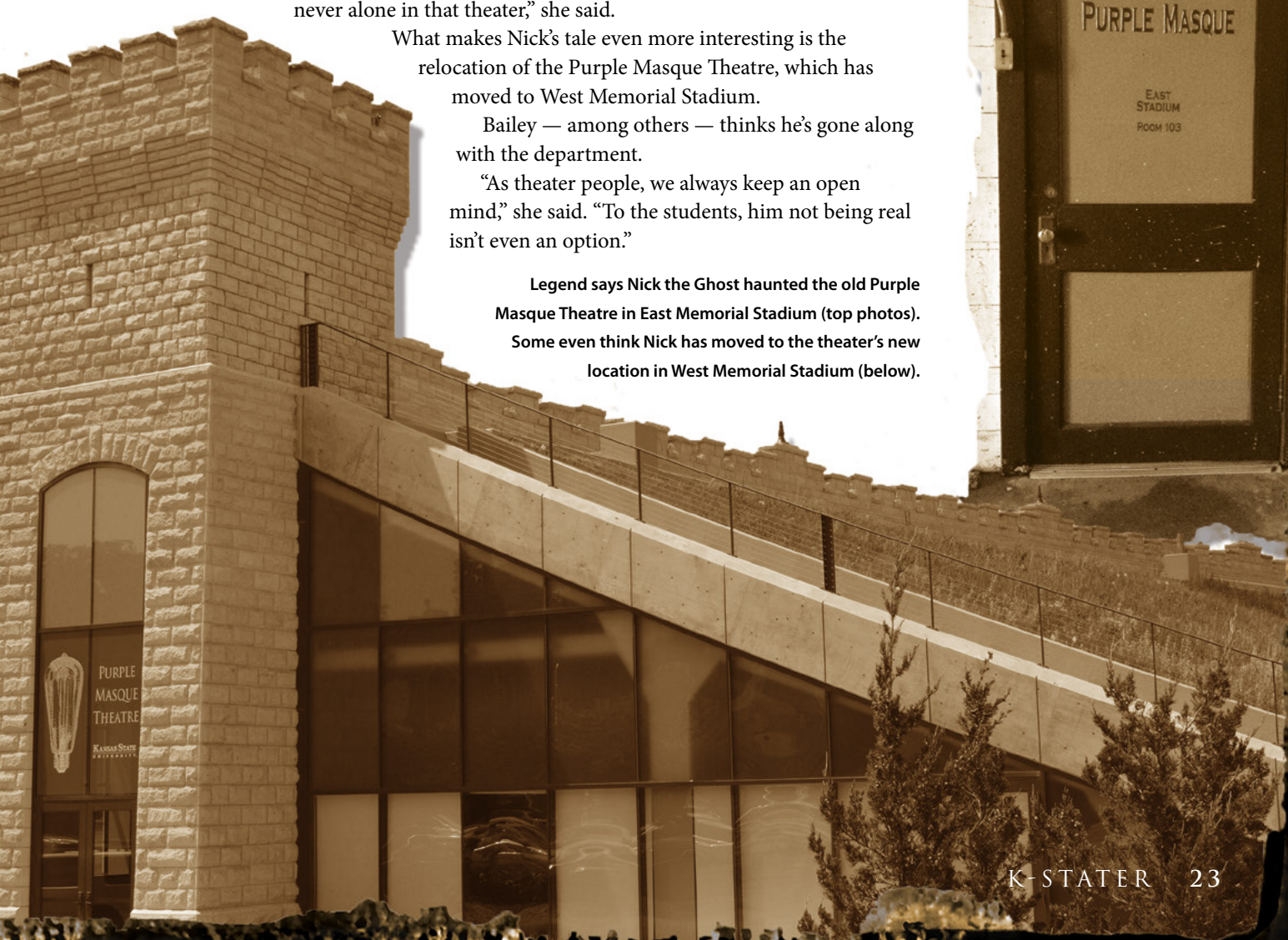
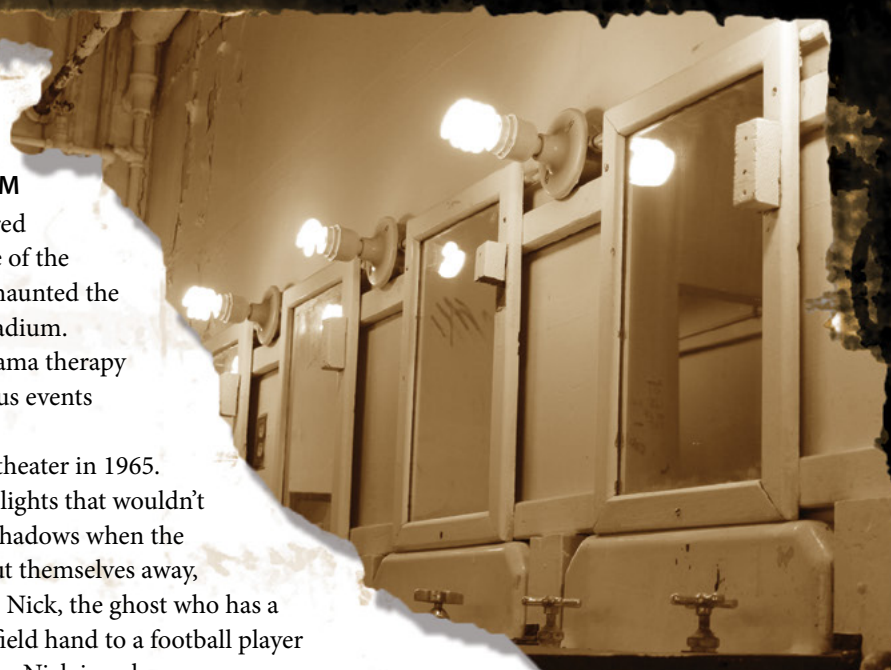




Photo courtesy of Pi Kappa Alpha

As the story goes, a few days after a Pike House photo was taken — where everyone wore a dark suit — Pi Kappa Alpha member Ben Ben Smith, or Clarence, died in a car wreck. When the photo was developed, his suit had turned white.

BEN BEN SMITH/CLARENCE SMITH SCHOLARSHIP HOUSE, 331 N. 17TH ST.

Before Smith Scholarship House was Smith House, it was the Pike House. Operated by K-State's Pi Kappa Alpha chapter on North 17th Street, the location is home to Ben Ben Smith, or Clarence, as he's called by the Pike members.

Lore states that a few days after a house photo was taken — in which everyone wore a dark suit — Clarence died in a car wreck. When the photo was developed, his suit had turned white.

The photo hangs in the Pike chapter's new location, said President Blake Stevens, Overland Park, Kansas, senior in economics.

Meanwhile, Smith House residents receive mail, such as magazine subscriptions, delivered to Ben Ben Smith. It's a name current and former residents use fondly, said Shawn Turner '09, Ottawa, Kansas, who lived in the house for four years. They even sing *Happy Birthday* to him every August. No one is exactly sure how the name of the spirit changed with the house's change in ownership.

"If you knew you were the only one in the house, you'd still hear noises," Turner said. "It's always little things: doors opening and closing or noises. It's a legend that was passed down from Pike guys, but it's still going and people see strange things."

GEORGE/NURSE (THE DELTA SIG SPIRITS)

DELTA SIGMA PHI HOUSE, 1100 FREMONT ST.

Before 1100 Fremont St. housed Delta Sigma Phi fraternity, it was St. Mary's Parkview Hospital. And when that hospital was relocating and moving patients, one man was left behind to a tragic death — at least that's how the story goes, said Hunter Post, Beloit, Kansas, senior in kinesiology and premedicine and 2016 K-State Student Ambassador.

The patient, George, is said to haunt the building to this day, with residents claiming to hear sounds, such as rattling door handles or getting woken throughout the night. George is best known for his love of *Star Trek*, Post said. During an ice storm in the '70s, the power came on every day — just long enough for *Star Trek* to play.

Legend also tells of a nurse who fell to her death in an elevator shaft.

"Guys say they will wake up and see a woman's face," Post said. "She's a super nice ghost, just waking you up to check on you. She's just doing her job."

As far as personal experiences, however, Post said he has yet to see either entity.

"I don't really believe it," he said. "I don't totally discount the stories I heard, but until it happens to me, I probably won't believe in it."

Len "Tex" Le Blanc '73, Thailand, lived in the house for three and a half years and said George was a good explanation in a big creepy house — especially one that used to be a hospital.

"Every creak, crack, crunch, noise, whatever was blamed on him. Being an old place where people had died, there was plenty of those noises," he said, in an email interview. "There was no question the place was both spooky and haunted."

Bill Felber '71, Manhattan, Kansas, said he was told the same stories of George when he came to K-State in 1969. Throughout his time in the house, members talked about their encounters. But whether fact or fiction, he said, the stories are worth having.

"It's too good a legend for the fraternity to let it die," Felber said. "If it's not true at all, it still creates bonds, and that's what fraternities are all about." 🐾

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Photo courtesy of Delta Sigma Phi

