

The Legend of the Bell Witch

Take from the Travel Channel's, "Mysteries of the Museum"



Adams, Tennessee, population 634. This former depot town is located along the rail



root that once Chicago to Miami. Within the town's former high school is an institution dedicated to preserving Adam's royal traditions, an institution known as the Bell Willet Museum. On display is Mississippian Indian pottery, a child's bicycle from 1890 and a farmer's

battery powered radio but it's an artifact located just behind the museum that hold's this town's darkest secrets. It's made of yellow poplar and maybe some chestnut. It is very old and believed to be around 1800 or a little earlier. It may look like just any old



log cabin but it once played a part in a terrifying encounter with a sinister and other worldly being. The legend is one of America's most famous haunting. It's a chilling tale that unfolded in a modest farm cabin.

1817, North Tennessee, Elizabeth Bell and her parents and siblings live in a farm in a two-story log cabin. They had a normal frontier life. They raised tobacco, they milked cows, had a farm

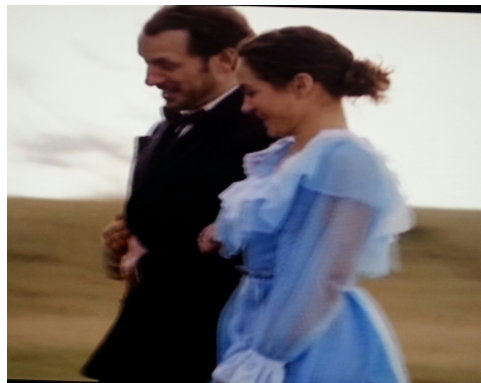
and were hard working people. Then one night in 1817, the Bell's peaceful farm life took a bizarre turn. The Bells began to hear banging's, noises, clawing, and sounds like limbs were being scraped across the outside logs of their cabin. Elizabeth woke up and dashed to the door to see what was caused the terrifying sounds but she and the family saw nothing or found anything. But the disturbing noises continued and night





after night they are awakened. Then one evening to their great shock, a new sound filled the halls. It's the first time they had heard a voice. It was a weak feminine voice that said, "I am a spirit and I have been disturbed." The Bell family is terrified and confused. They didn't know who this female spirit was or why she was haunting them. Though soon it becomes clear that this visiting spirit has one target in particular, Elizabeth Bell. One night

she woke with a start. Elizabeth's face looked like it had a handprint on it. The spirit was not only taunting them, it was now physically assaulting them. Why was it tormenting Elizabeth? The spirit never said why, but it was as if it just was enjoying it. Elizabeth and her family are scared out of their minds. They wanted this spirit removed from their house and away from their household. What is plaguing the Bell family and what is it after and how can it be stopped?



It's now 1820 in Tennessee and for 3 years now, Elizabeth Bell and her family have lived in terror as a ghostly presence lurks in their farm house verbally and physically taunting them. Elizabeth still appears to bear the brunt of its abuse. So who are what is haunting the



Bell family and why? The torment shows no signs of letting up. The family got used to not being able to sleep after dark. Then Elizabeth turns to her boyfriend and classmate Joshua Gardner for comfort. The couple is able to find some joy amidst

the terror. It was just before Easter and Joshua asked Elizabeth to marry him and she accepted but their happiness only lasted for a short moment. As they were walking back to the Bell house, they both hear a voice saying, "Please Betsy, please don't marry Joshua Gardner, please Betsy please." Elizabeth is devastated as she is left in an impossible position to either break off the engagement or continue to be harassed by the spirit. So she tells Joshua that she can't marry him and the broken-hearted Joshua ends up moving away.



Elizabeth's wrenching decision however has seemed to appease the ghost. At that point things then seemed to have started to settle down and in the summer of 1821 it



appeared as if the spirit had finally left the Bell house. Elizabeth recovers from the trauma and grief, finding comfort from her neighbor and former teacher, Richard Powell. A few years later they married and life settled back to normal on the Bell Farm but the seeds were sown for a legend so strong that years later people still wonder what it was that haunted the Bell Family. Some theorized that the farm was settled on an American

Indian burial ground. The children were looking for arrowheads and found some but they also got a skull of an Indian. But if it were the skull of an American Indian, why would it take an interest in Elizabeth's romantic life? This led many to believe that the cause of the haunting wasn't the cause of some Native American restless spirit but was in fact the work of Richard Powell, the Bell family's neighbor and Elizabeth's teacher.

The Powell theory is that Richard moved close by and saw that the Bell family was wealthy and he wanted to marry into the family but of course there was Joshua, Elizabeth's former boyfriend/fiancé so maybe he was trying to scare Joshua off. Because he was highly educated, some neighbor's suspected that he had ties to the occult but Richard denied



this accusation adamantly so still to this day the truth is unknown. This uncertainty however is what has made the legend of "The Bell Witch" endure in Tennessee for nearly 200 years. Some folks have claimed to see dark forms, shadows and some hear voices and claim the Bell Witch is still there in the cabin. This cabin is still on display in Adam's Tennessee and is an ominous memorable to Elizabeth Bell's fateful romance and the mystery behind one of American's famous hauntings.