



# Bumps in the Night!!!!

## Famous Haunts

February 2017

### The Lizzie Borden House

*By Joan Camper, TnT Paranormal Investigators LLC - IL Chapter and Tim Camper*

The Lizzie Borden House is a Greek revival home built in 1852 by Charles C. Trafton. Just Fifty years after its construction, it became the scene of one of the most notorious murders of the day. Situated at 92 Second Street, Fall River, Massachusetts, it was the home of the Borden Family. The family consisted of Andrew Borden, a banker, his second wife, Abby, and Andrew's two daughters Lizzie and Emma. Also living in the home was Bridget, the family's maid. Although the Borden family was very wealthy, they lived in a modest part of town close to Andrew's office.

Andrew was known to be very overbearing and controlling. He had few friends, and was extremely unpopular. He was also known for being very tight with his money. Abby appears to have been forced into the marriage for the sake of convenience. She was Lizzie's and Emma's stepmother, and by all accounts the family didn't get along.

According to researcher Arnold Brown, a man named "William" showed up shortly before the murders claiming to be Andrew's illegitimate son. He wanted to be officially recognized as such, and become an heir to his estate. One account claims that Andrew changed his will; leaving his estate to Abby's family and charity. This change totally cut out Lizzie, Emma, and "William". In the end, Lizzie and Emma inherited everything because nobody could find the allegedly changed version of the will. This has often been cited as the most likely motive for the crime.

On the morning of August 4, 1882, between 9:00 and 10:30AM, an unknown perpetrator attacked Abby in the guestroom with a hatchet. She was struck approximately 20 times. She died face down on the floor. Andrew came home early that morning (he reportedly didn't feel well) and laid down on the sofa to rest. Between 10:30 and 11:00AM, Andrew was attacked from behind by the same assailant. He was struck 11 times in the head and face. Both were clearly crimes of passion.

Forensic science was in its infancy back then, so the following police investigation was fumbling and weak by today's standards. Lizzie was arrested for the murders and spent 10 months in jail. However, a jury of her peers found her innocent, and her trial ended in acquittal. She had some of the best lawyers of her time, as well as an all-male jury that probably found it hard to believe that a proper woman could commit such a heinous crime. Those reasons, combined with the lack of proper forensic evidence, are probably why she walked away free.

Who really killed the Bordens? As with any famous murder, there are plenty of theories. Lizzie's lawyers claimed that the crime was perpetrated by a stranger. They argued that an unknown male entered the house and committed both crimes. Their argument was enough to create reasonable doubt. It has been argued that if any man had motive, it was "William". It is more popularly believed that Lizzie and Emma conspired to commit the murders, or that Emma turned a blind eye. Others believe that "William" was the more likely conspirator. Emma had a solid alibi for the time of the murders and was cleared. Ultimately, most people believe that Lizzie killed her father and stepmother. After the trial, Lizzie and Emma bought a newer, larger house in Fall River. Eventually, the "Lizzie Borden House" received a new address: 230 Second Street.



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Lizzie Borden died of pneumonia on June 1, 1927, at the age of 66.

In 1996, the home was remodeled to look just as it did that fateful day in August 1882, and turned into a bed and breakfast. And if you're wondering, yes, you can stay there overnight. The most popular room is the very room Abby was murdered in.

It will come as no surprise that there are many paranormal claims associated with the house. EVP's of a male have been caught, and are popularly thought to be Andrew Borden. Staff and guests have reported seeing a female apparition in the basement, and lights turning on and off. Additional claims include the sound of doors opening and closing, footsteps, cold spots, disembodied voices, shadow people and the sensation of being touched. Shortly after all the remodeling work was finished, staff and guests reported seeing an indentation on the bed in the guest room where Abby was killed, as if someone was lying on the bed. Staff have also heard cries in the guest room. Investigator Thomas D'Agostino has an EVP of someone screaming "Ma'am come quick!" It seems likely that this is the voice of the maid, Bridget Sullivan. Yet another popular claim is the sighting of two child apparitions in the house. These have been connected to two children who allegedly drowned in the cistern prior to the Borden's purchase of the home. Many people claim to have pictures of entities in various rooms.

Lee-Ann Wilber, the owner of the property, claims that people have run out of the hotel in the middle of the night. She frequently claims to have heard floors creak and a floral scent around the house. Other guests claim to have seen a woman in a Victorian dress dusting the furniture and making beds. Finally, many have claimed to have heard the voice of a woman weeping.

The stars of the TV show *Ghost Lab* recorded an EVP they believe to be Andrew. The investigator asked, "Did Lizzie kill you for your money?" A male voice then replied "You got that right!"

The Lizzie Borden house has been on several TV shows: *Ghost Hunters*-Season 2, episode 12; *Ghost Adventures*-Season 5, episode 5; and *The Dead Files*-Season 2, Episode 2 are but a few.

Guests of the Bed and Breakfast can tour the home, watch annual reenactments of the crime, and even eat the Borden's final breakfast. The Lizzie Borden Bed and Breakfast Museum has tours 7 days a week, 363 days a year. Tours are every hour starting at 11:00AM until 3:00 PM. Each tour lasts 50 minutes.

If you're interested in more information on the Lizzie Borden Bed and Breakfast go to:

<https://www.lizzie-borden.com/>

There are some excellent videos on YouTube if you want more information on the crime. Search for:

"Lizzie Borden Forensics", "Lizzie Borden Sightings", "Arnold Browns Theory of the Lizzie Borden Case".

### Sources:

"Haunted Places-The National Directory", by Dennis William Hauck. [www.hauntedhouses.com](http://www.hauntedhouses.com)

"Haunted Massachusetts" by Thomas D'Agostino.