

Fall into Halloween
October 28, 2007

The month of October, with its crispness in the air and colorful palette of autumn leaves, signals the arrival of Fall, and the anticipation of Halloween. As children (and perhaps the child in all of us) anxiously await the arrival of All Hallows Eve, it seems the ghost stories come out of the woodwork, so to speak. Almost every person you speak to has one. There are timeless tales, like Ichabod Crane's Headless Horseman, urban myths, local mystery and those stories we'd like to dismiss as impossible... but after hearing them, can't seem to let them go.

Hackettstown and the surrounding areas, with their ancestral cemeteries, Revolutionary and Civil War heroes, historic buildings, and Victorian homes are rich in stories of the unexplained. Charlie Brown's Restaurant, housed in the Hackettstown's landmark building located at 109 Grand Avenue, is well known not only for great food, but the great stories from its more than 100 year history. The story of Tillie Smith, the young domestic murdered on the grounds of Centenary College in 1896 lives on today, as does her



spirit some say. CCI as it burned on Halloween night, 1899 Ironically, the original CCI Building burned to the ground in a fire late on October 31, 1899.

History has often "come to life" in nearby Waterloo Village, and not just as costumed interpreters retelling the fascinating history of the Morris Canal. The five mile long Shades of Death Road was once inhabited by Native Americans who claimed to see their ancestors in the wispy pillars of mist. The road served as a stagecoach route and was a prime location for thieves and murderers. Even today, it challenges the imagination when the Great Meadows fog rises up over the water, appears to take on human form and travels with you down the road.

So remember the history and mystery of our area this October 31st, especially if the costumed neighbor you see on the darkened road suddenly disappears.....