

# Take a walk on the dark side

Keewatin's historic Mather Walls House comes complete with a ghost or two ... or three

**SARAH PETZ**  
The Holidayer

Strange voices when no one's at home. Moving furniture no one touched. Feeling like you're being watched when no one is there. These are some of the things visitors to Keewatin's Mather Walls House have reported for years, making it one of the area's most legendary haunted houses.

The house was commissioned by John Mather in 1889, a prominent business man during the early days of Keewatin. Mather originally built it with the intention of housing his workers, though his son David also lived in the house until 1901. The house was then purchased by the Walls family in 1906.

The Mather family contributed greatly to the community of Keewatin, introducing the Presbyterian Church, the telephone and sawmills to area. Though bought and restored by Ontario Heritage Board in the 1970s with intention of

giving a window into the history of Northwestern Ontario, the house has become notorious for its alleged hauntings, which landed it a spot on the Canadian television series *Creepy Canada* in 2003.

Rumour has it the house is inhabited by three ghosts, whose identities are hard to pin down. Some believe that one of the ghosts is one of Mather's sawmill employees, who killed himself after the death of his wife, who is also believed to haunt the house.

The third ghost is said to be the ghost of a little girl, though there are no records showing the death of a young daughter in either the Mather or Walls families.

"There's some believers and then there's some skeptics but it's very hard to tell who they are," explained Jillian Stajkowski, student summer manager of the Mather Walls house.

Some say the ghost of the sawmill employee has a habit of moving things around, such as tea cups in the house's

tea room. A painter who was working in one of the bedrooms upstairs reportedly found his tools had been moved from the back of the room to the front, though he claimed he hadn't touched them.

He also reported seeing the worker in the home, though no one could place a man being in the house during that time.

"We've had a few guests say that they felt that strange aura that there's someone watching them," Stajkowski said. Though a skeptic herself, she went on to say a fellow staffer had reported hearing voices in the house last year.

Despite the stack of creepy stories, Stajkowski said that the house's hauntings may have a perfectly logical explanation. Most of sightings could be attributed to the way the house is built, she said. The house has an asymmetrical design that was built to allow the Mather's family servants to slip in and out of the house without disturbing anyone.

"You'll notice that you'll cut around the corner and your shadow will already be in the room," she said.

"It's really based on the layout of the house, which plays tricks with people sometimes."

Being quite large, the house naturally makes a lot of noise, she said, which could attribute to the bumps in the night that tend to spook people. Considering the house is close to the Lake of the Woods, the voices her co-worker reported hearing could have easily been carried across the lake, Stajkowski speculated.

Whether you're a skeptic or not, the Mather Walls house is definitely worth the visit to explore a page of Keewatin's history and find out for yourself whether ghosts really do exist.

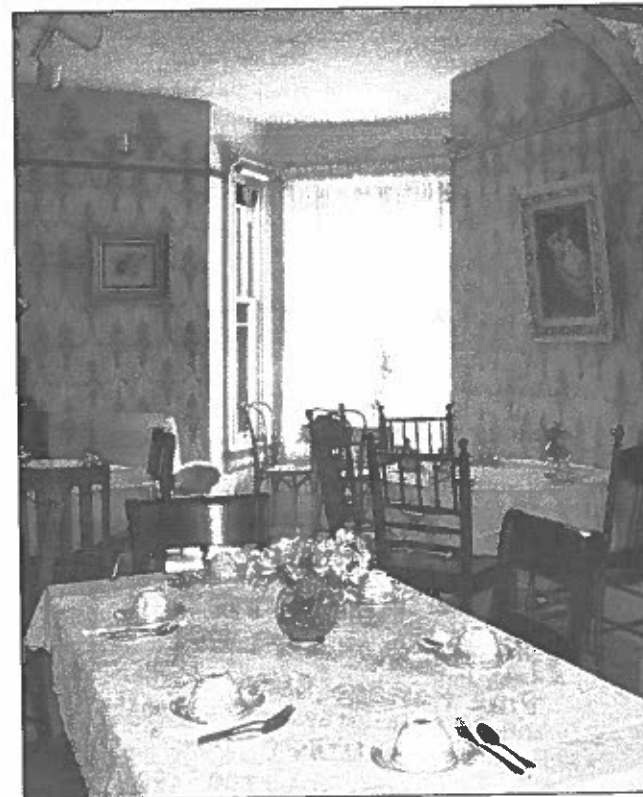
The house is located at 1116 Ottawa Street in the neighbourhood of Keewatin. open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. from Monday to Saturday. Tours are available upon request.

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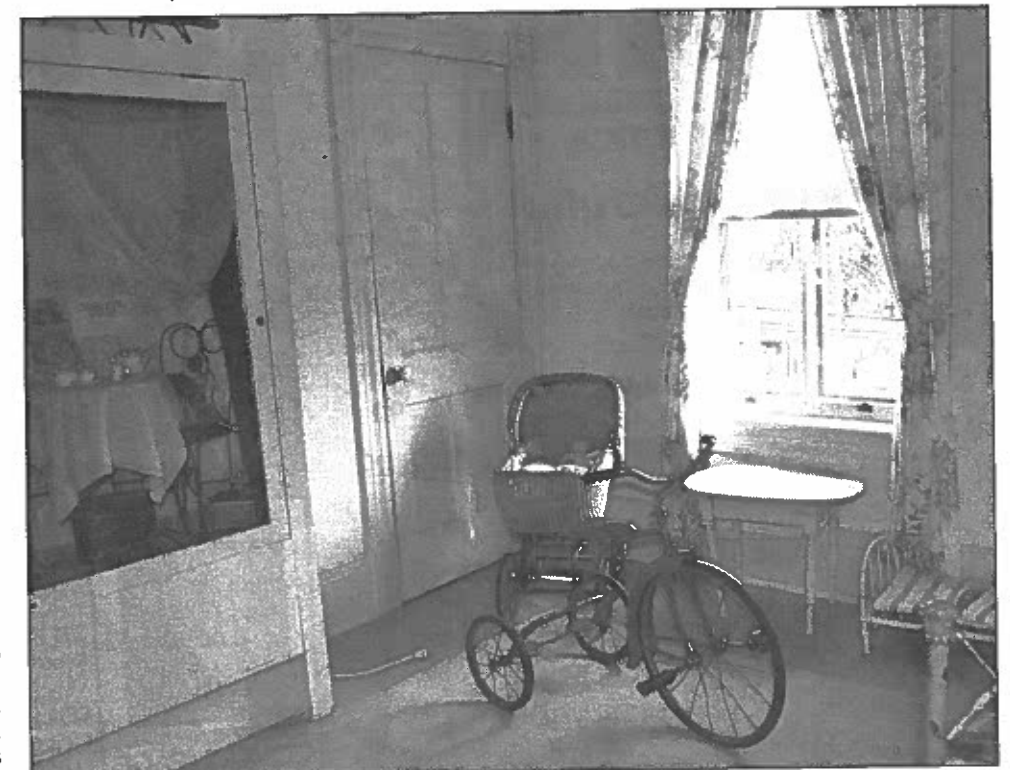
SARAH PETZ/THE HOLIDAYER

The Mather Walls house in Keewatin has made a name for itself as being one of the area's most haunted places.



SARAH PETZ/THE HOLIDAYER

One of the three ghosts that is believed to haunt the Mather Walls house has a habit of moving tea cups in the home's main salon.



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A painter who was working on the building's restoration allegedly found that his tools had been moved, though he never touched them, in this room of the Mather Walls house.