

Killer Collector

By Linda Guyan

col·lec·tor noun \kə-'lek-tər\

A person who collects certain things as a hobby.

“I shuddered to think how completely the insane were in the power of their keepers, and how one could weep and plead for release, and all of no avail, if the keepers were so minded.”

—Nellie Bly, aka Elizabeth Jane Cochrane

Journalist, novelist, inventor

1864–1922

Ten Days in a Mad-House

Prologue

*Greystoke Valley, California
Wolf Lodge*

*Journal of Dr. Oliver Carlton Greystoke I
Thursday, April 30, 1795*

What better way to study defective humans than by collecting them?

Dr. Oliver Greystoke I paused only briefly as he held the pencil, his next thoughts ready to commit to paper as he continued writing in his fine hand with a flourish.

The various maladies of defective humans are myriad.

What better way than under the guide and care of a psychiatric doctor to poke and prod, examine and study their reactions under a variety of situations and environments?

Murder, insanity, lunacy, madness, torture, suicide, crime and violence—our aristocratic family may be rich and well received but that does not dismiss the fact that our bloodline is tainted by all of these maladies. Our ancestors can be traced as far back as the twelfth century in England and France. Our lineage of insanity and the blood of our victims have trickled down to us, their descendants. Credit must be given to our ancestors for they have tried, without success, to find a cure or at least a reason for our afflictions.

Proving that even aristocratic families go mad.

Murder and madness was—and is—the Greystoke legacy.

Oliver sat back in his leather chair, thinking. As he did, he absentmindedly stroked the silk scarf tied loosely around his neck. Spotting a speck of lint on his brown velvet jacket, he picked it off and dropped it into the ashtray. Not a tall man and not unattractive, he was of average appearance. Neat and tidy dark brown slightly wavy hair, parted in the middle, brushed the nape of his neck, as was the style. Big brown eyes were set into his heart-shaped face set off by thick brows. What was lacking in his personal appearance, Dr. Oliver Greystoke I made up for in expensive and luxurious clothing. At twenty-two, he had already made his mark in the family business – insanity – following in the footsteps of his ancestors in the pursuit of understanding why the Greystoke family has been cursed with this legacy of lunacy. Oliver looked around his large office, not seeing it. His mind was elsewhere. He knew his historical facts when it came to lunacy. As Oliver often did, he allowed himself a leisurely mental journey over family facts as well as historical facts in an attempt to understand the torments of his family curse. He puffed on a cigar as he relaxed in his chair and let his mind wander.

Insanity and murder prevailed in the Greystoke dynasty. After years of suffering these afflictions, in the seventeenth century the Greystokes began to study their own diseases, opening clinics in their own homes. It was not long before they came to realize that collecting specimens of similar eccentricities for their studies was the key to discovering the answers they sought.

The Greystoke obsession in understanding their lunacy and murderous traits became their passion, their mania.

Many had come before him with their own pursuit of lunacy

and murder. Some to cure, some to study, and some to torture. One hospital stands out among all the rest, becoming known for all of those – where studying and torture were more prominent in their goals and curing patients of much less importance. But before it was a hospital, it began as a priory. In 1247 during the reign of Henry III, a priory was founded for the sisters and brethren of the Order of the Star of Bethlehem. Becoming a hospital in 1330, it did not begin admitting mentally ill patients until 1357 when its first patient was committed to the Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem in London. It became a unique institution for the mentally ill, later becoming known as Bethlem. Of the early thirty-one patients – one of them a Greystoke – it is said that the noise was so hideous that it was enough to drive a man mad, if he was not already. Violent and dangerous patients were manacled and chained to the floor or wall. By 1557, the hospital was controlled by the City of London. Day-to-day management was in the hands of a keeper, receiving payment for each patient from their parish – even their own relatives. By 1598 an inspection showed neglect and the cesspit, called the “Great Vault,” was sorely in need of emptying. There were twenty patients, one of whom had been there for more than twenty-five years.

Bethlem Royal Hospital became famous, as well as infamous, for its brutal ill treatment of the mentally ill. In 1700, the lunatics were first called “patients.” Between 1725 and 1734, “curable” and “incurable” wards were opened. Bethlem became known for its atrocious conditions. Cruelty and inhumane treatment to their unbalanced patients was the norm.

In the eighteenth century, the public could pay a penny to see the lunatics. They could peer into their cells and view the freaks, called the “show of Bethlehem.” For that same penny, they could laugh at them and poke the caged patients with a long stick.

Entry to this “freak show” was free on the first Tuesday of the month.

For generations the Monro family of fathers and sons had served as physicians at Bethlem Royal Hospital, beginning with James Monro in 1728. It was the beginning of what Oliver believed would become a Monro dynasty of physicians at Bethlem. After the death of James Monro in 1752, his son John stepped into the footsteps of his father. When John died, his son Thomas took over in 1787. The office of physician was predominantly an honorary one with a nominal salary. Their services were intermittent, requiring them to open their own private practices. And so it was with the Bethlem physicians who maximized their association with Bethlem, earning their income in the lucrative profession of lunacy. And so these physicians and others established their own madhouses. “Cold bathing” being merely one of the horrors that the Monro physicians inflicted upon their patients.

Bethlem came to be called by many names. It was not long for this house of horrors to develop one particular name for itself – a name that remains synonymous with Bethlem Hospital today – a word meaning uproar and confusion – that word, in fact, is often used in place of Bethlem.

Oliver Greystoke tamped the ashes off his cigar, uttering that word aloud.

“Bedlam.” The epitome of the term “madhouse.” And numerous members of the Greystoke family in England spent time in the Bedlam madhouse. Many of them died there.

On the other side of the world, in the United States, my father Dr. Oliver Greystoke, Jr. had built his own madhouse in 1773 in Greystoke Valley, California.

But Oliver Jr. believed wholeheartedly that perception was more important than reality. So his new asylum did not look like one. In fact he was adamantly against the name that the world personified as synonymous with a madhouse. He forbade any inference to the word asylum as it conjured up images of evil and a long succession of unspeakable horrors. Instead he insisted on images of a pleasant and refreshing private retreat, not of a private hospital for the mentally unbalanced.

More akin to a massive rambling ranch, the main quarters was a large three-story rustic-looking house. Atop a beautiful hill in heavily wooded Greystoke Valley, Oliver Greystoke Jr. chose the location because it had been an old copper mine from 1702 to 1728 and later a prison from 1732 to 1761. After that, it sat empty for a dozen years. Disguised as a lavish retreat, very few would know that Wolf Lodge Private Retreat housed some of the worst psychiatric patients in the country – lunatics, killers, and psychotics alike.

“This is a lodge,” he had vehemently reiterated many times through the years. “Any other word leaves a bad taste in my mouth. This is Wolf Lodge and never forget it! It is a private retreat. It is even a hospital. But it is never a psychiatric

facility. And it is *never* an insane asylum. And I am the keeper of Wolf Lodge. I am the collector.”

Dr. Oliver Greystoke I stubbed out his cigar and picked up his pencil. His mind was back on the words he wanted to commit to paper, and eagerly he continued writing in his journal.

Over time, Wolf Lodge lost its glamour as a luxurious retreat for the mentally ill. The lush woodlands that surrounded the Lodge came to hide most of it from view. But all that beauty could not hide what lied beneath. I have elaborate plans to greatly expand what my father built, Wolf Lodge. Many unique changes will be made in order to better house the “residents.” Some say that Wolf Lodge and its keepers became collectors just as their ancestors did in order to continue their legacy of studying the insane.

For all of his good intentions, Wolf Lodge became synonymous with that old asylum in London—the madhouse—where the first Greystoke—Olivier Etienne—was admitted in the fourteenth century. Bedlam.

Oliver paused for a moment to think of how he would end his journal entry today.

I am now the keeper of Wolf Lodge. I am the collector.

And I have a vision for the future unlike any Greystoke who came before me.

Dr. Oliver Greystoke I completed his journal entry for the day with his usual salutation.

Signed this day: OGI

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Bedlam: “A madhouse by any other name is still a jail!”

— Author unknown

Part One

Wolf Lodge

“The rattling of Chains, the Shrieks of those severely treated by their barbarous Keepers, mingled with Curses, Oaths, and the most blasphemous Imprecations, did from one quarter of the House shock her tormented Ears while from another, Howlings like that of Dogs, Shoutings, Roarings, Prayers, Preaching, Curses, Singing, Crying, promiscuously join’d to make a Chaos of the most horrible Confusion: but the Violence of this Uproar continued not long, it being only occasion’d by the Entrance of the Keepers into the Cells of those Wretches who were really Lunatick...”

—Eliza Haywood, aka Elizabeth Fowler
English writer, actress, publisher
1693–1756

The distress’d orphan, or Love in a mad-house
A fictional play based upon Bedlam, 1726 AD

Chapter One

Friday, July 16, 1802

Greystoke Heights, Northern California

“That is quite a collection of dead bodies you found, Lionel!”

The young and tanned construction worker leaned on his shovel and pointed downward as he stood in the pit alongside his coworker.

“That is a whole lot of dead people in one spot,” Clarence White replied as he wiped the sweat from his brow with the back of his hand and gazed at the pile of skeletons below. “I think this is called a mass grave.”

Lionel Baum shook his head in awe. “Never have I seen so many dead folks in one spot before. I mean we have found bodies before building other houses, but nothing like this.”

“Maybe it has something to do with being right by the cemetery,” Clarence offered. “What do you think?”

“You might be right,” Lionel agreed. “It might be a pauper’s grave.”

“Funny place for Dr. Greystoke to want to build a house for his mother, the first one in this newfangled city of his. The cemetery will practically be in her front yard.”

“How many do you think there are down there?” Lionel asked as he leaned over, ignoring the comment.

“Looks like a whole lot of dead people to me,” Clarence said, stating the obvious. “What do you think? Fifty of ‘em maybe?” But Lionel was not listening. “Wait,” Lionel said, his voice tenuous as he edged a little closer and bent over for a better look into the pit. “Clarence! Not all of them are skeletons! Someone has been using this place as a dumping ground — ”

Lionel turned to tell Clarence what he had figured out, but he was too late. The shovel in his coworker’s hands was already mid-swing. Lionel Baum was nearly decapitated by the blow.

Clarence smiled as he watched Lionel fall into the pit on top of the other bodies.

Now Lionel Baum was the most recent — and the last — to be added to the dumping site of the murderer, Clarence White.

“There are plenty of other places to dump the bodies,” Clarence mumbled with a sigh as he looked at the cemetery behind him and the vast expanse of land all around him for nearly a hundred miles. “Finding a new location here is not going to be a problem. And, as far as Dr. Greystoke is concerned, I will tell him Lionel took off and never returned, that I never trusted Lionel in the first place.”

Clarence could see the other laborers working in the distance, oblivious that anything untoward had just occurred. He was satisfied that no one would ever know what happened to Lionel Baum. And no one would ever

know what was buried under the new house of Lavinia Greystoke.

Clarence was an expert builder and so he got on with his good-paying job for his employer, Oliver Greystoke I. He refused to let a little murder get in the way of getting paid his wages. He was looking forward to the long-term job of helping to build an entire city, as well as the extended pay that should set him up enough to move out of this place. Building a city would take many years, especially the way Dr. Greystoke wanted it. Then it would be time to move on.

"Dr. Greystoke sure has some crazy ideas for this new city of his," Clarence said as he kept working under the blazing summer sun. The sweat and dirt on his skin gleamed under the glare.

"Hey, any you guys seen Lionel?" Clarence asked during their lunch break. "He took off a while back and did not come back. Dr. Greystoke will not be pleased."

Everyone agreed that they had not seen Lionel Baum.

Hours later, Clarence stopped to rest, the end of the day in sight as the sun was beginning its descent, the heat of the day drawing to a close. He looked up at the mansion on the hill where his employer lived and worked.

"Wolf Lodge." Clarence shook his head. "Glad I am out here and not in there."

"Clarence!" a burly man with a deep voice and dark skin called out as he walked up the dirt path that would eventually become a street. "Any word from Lionel?"

“Nothing, Ivan,” Clarence replied, acting like he was worried. “Do you think we should be concerned?”

“Nah,” Ivan Barusco said in his Hungarian accent that he had not shed since he and his brother Curtis immigrated a dozen years ago. “Many men try this work but they cannot handle it. It is too hard but they will not admit, so they run off. This work is not for everyone. Lionel will not be the first or the last to run off. Come on, it is time to go home. Lionel will be replaced. Tomorrow you will have a new man to work with. There are many laborers hungry for a job like this.”

“Thank you, Ivan,” Clarence told him, sounding as grateful as he could manage when all he really wanted to do was work alone. “I appreciate it.”

“No one is going to work alone,” Ivan told him as he threw a muscular arm around the shoulders of Clarence White. “We work in pairs. This job is much too dangerous and we have many years ahead of us to build this Greystoke city.”

“Beers at the saloon first!” Curtis Barusco exclaimed, sounding eager to end their hard day of work with some relaxation. The large group of construction workers cheered loudly, raising their muscular arms to the sky.

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With Clarence White and the Barusco brothers leading the way, the laborers trekked the short distance up the hill to Wolf Lodge in Greystoke Valley. Courtesy of Oliver Greystoke I, they were being housed in the east wing of the Lodge for the length of the construction project called

Greystoke Heights, a subdivision of Greystoke Valley, a large city unto itself. The men who lived their lives as day laborers had caught a lucky break for this long-term job. Dr. Greystoke was adamant in his orders that they were to follow his instructions to the letter and take as long as they needed to get it done properly. Building a new city would take a dozen years or more. As the oldest men with the most experience, the Barusco brothers were made foremen.

As the barrage of fifty-three men, filthy and thirsty from their long day of work in the hot sun, entered the saloon, two of the other men – Luigi Cavanno, an Italian immigrant, and his German friend, Johannes Heim – kept to themselves, talking quietly. They drank beer out of a stein and enjoyed the camaraderie with their new friends and coworkers. The work was hard, the wages were good. Luigi and Johann had nothing to complain about. But as grateful as they were for the work and lodging from Dr. Greystoke, they and some of their other friends could not set aside their superstitions. The men told themselves it was normal that Dr. Greystoke would not hire anyone that was married or had any family. Being a laborer was not the type of work that went well with marriage and family so all of the men were single. And lying about it to get the job did not work with Dr. Greystoke. He checked. If he caught you in a lie, he made sure you would never work in this part of the state ever again. Some of the men that were more superstitious than they were wondered what would happen to them at the end of the job. They were all forced to sign a paper stating they would never discuss anything about the building of Greystoke Heights to anyone outside of the work group.

More superstitions arose around the Lodge itself. You did

not have to be born around here to know about the horror stories of Wolf Lodge – the inhumane acts performed on patients in the name of a cure. But it was the other talk that frightened Johann and Luigi the most. Some said that Dr. Greystoke was not looking to cure his patients, that he was using them for experiments. He was collecting them for his studies.

Even though the workers' wing of the huge building was far from the patient wings and main quarters, they could still hear the screams at night. At night, the Lodge should have been sleeping and quiet in the dark of night. Instead, it came alive. What made no sense to any of the men was the fact that the screams came from below them where no patients were supposed to be.

It was easy to see how Wolf Lodge got its other name, the two words that could only be whispered, never to be spoken in the light of day and certainly never in the presence of Dr. Oliver Greystoke or any of his staff.

Luigi Cavanno and Johann Heim never spoke the words aloud. It was safer that way.

The Madhouse.