

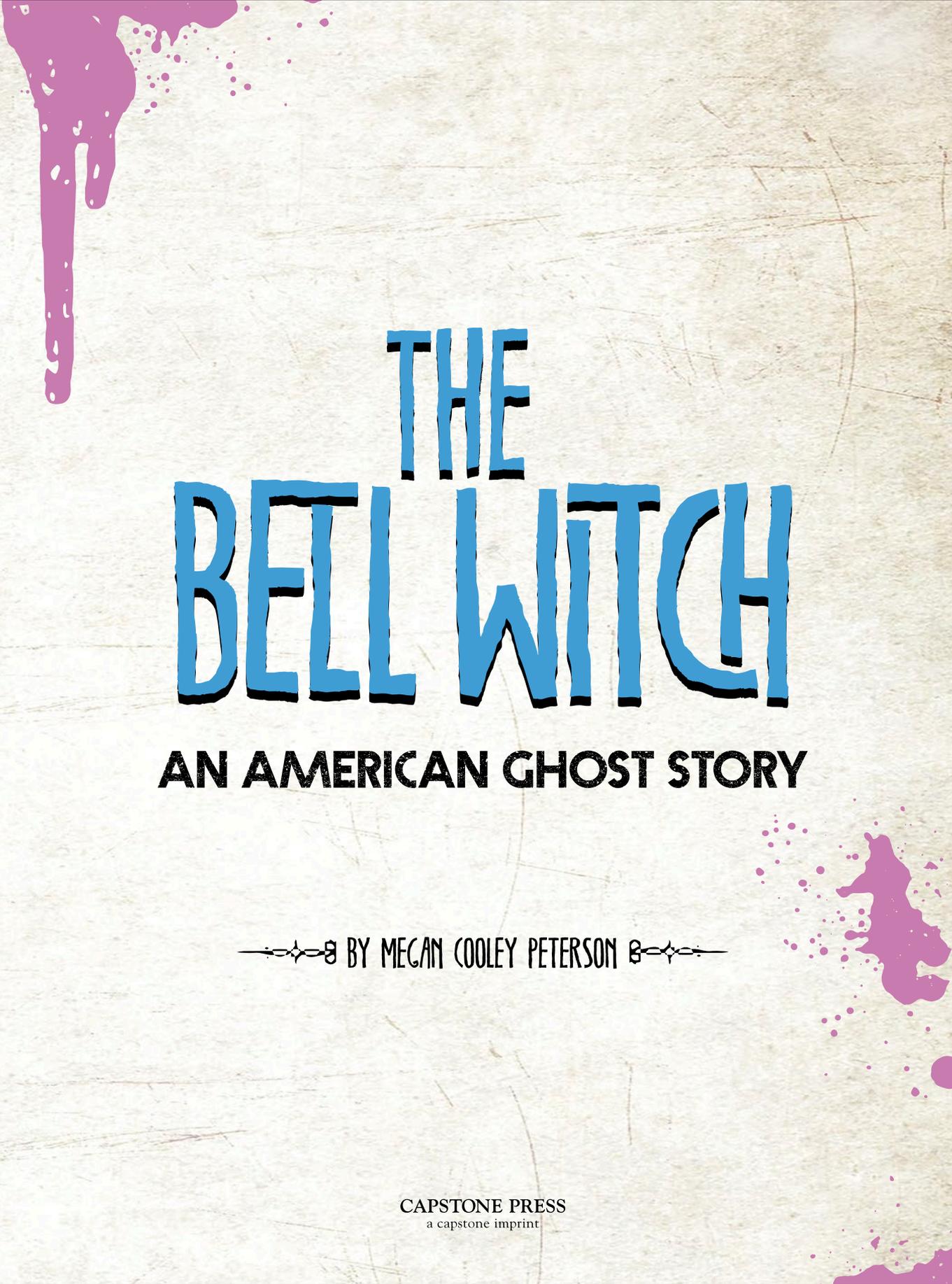
REAL-LIFE GHOST STORIES



**THE
BELLWITCH**

AN AMERICAN GHOST STORY

++ BY MEGAN COOLEY PETERSON ++



THE BELL WITCH

AN AMERICAN GHOST STORY

— ✦ — BY MEGAN COOLEY PETERSON — ✦ —

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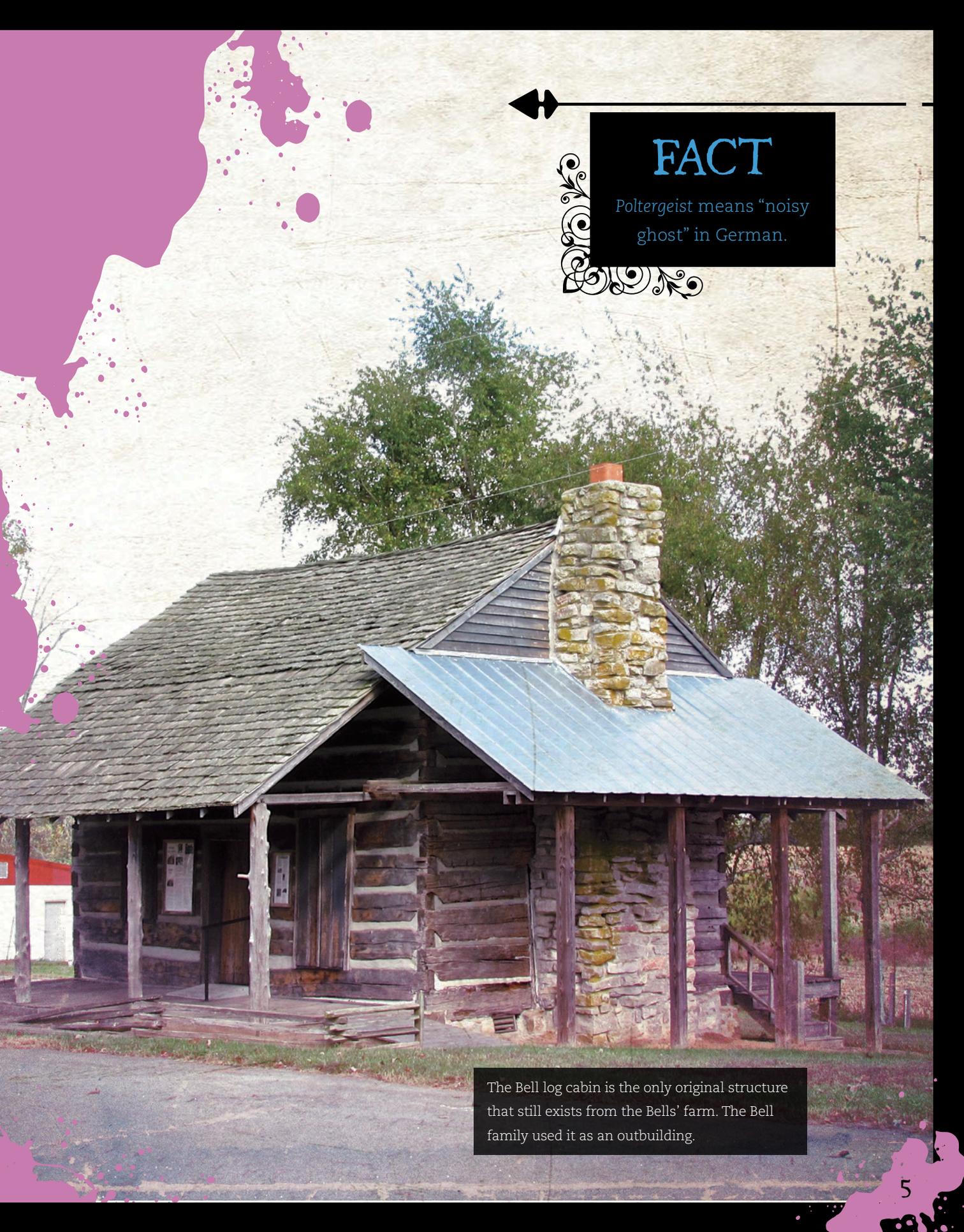
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INTRODUCTION

AFRAID OF THE DARK

The Bell family from Adams, Tennessee, feared the dark. From 1817 to 1821, a **poltergeist** haunted the family every night. It pulled their hair and overturned furniture. It threw back bedsheets and choked the children. The ghost, nicknamed the Bell Witch, even **allegedly** killed one member of the Bell family.

The Bells were, by all accounts, a normal family. John and Lucy married in 1782 and had nine children. The family attended church and school. They were friendly with their neighbors. So what made this ghost haunt them? And was there really a ghost at all? Some **skeptics** believe the Bells invented the ghost for attention. Other people believe the haunting actually occurred.



FACT

Poltergeist means “noisy ghost” in German.

The Bell log cabin is the only original structure that still exists from the Bells' farm. The Bell family used it as an outbuilding.

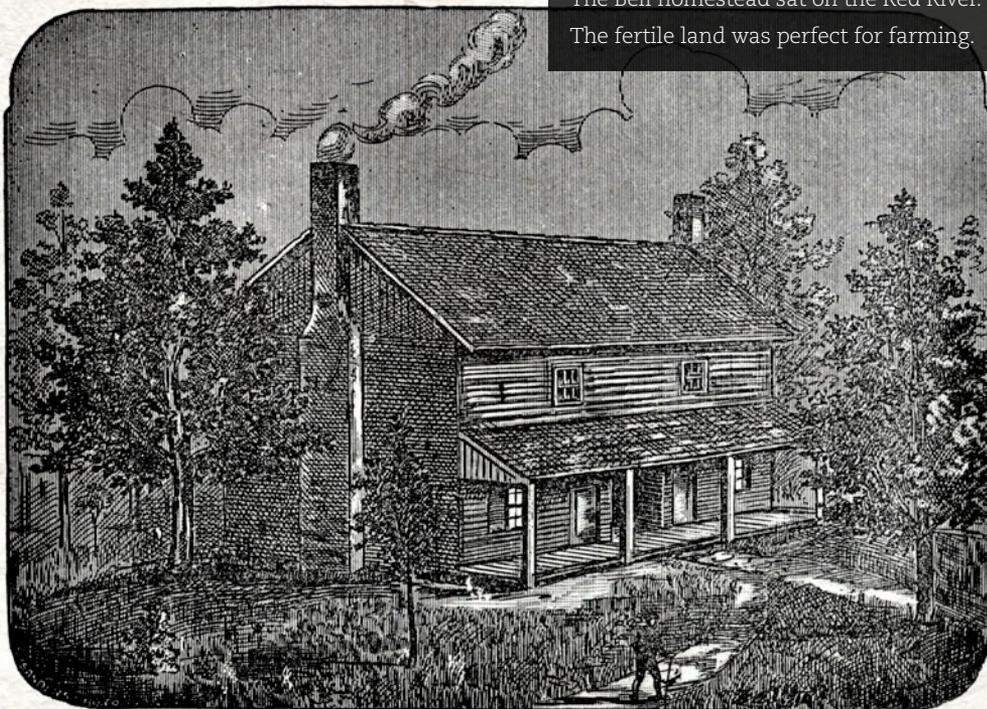
CHAPTER ONE

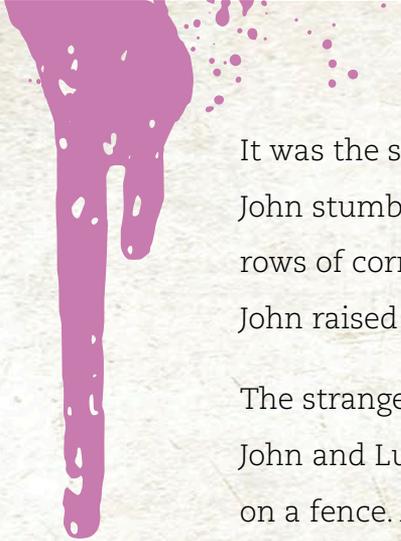
THE TROUBLE BEGINS

In 1804, John and Lucy Bell and their children moved from North Carolina to Tennessee. They had heard of the area's rich farmland and dense forests. They purchased property on the Red River, which included a house and barns. John cleared some of the land and started farming. Life in Tennessee seemed perfect.

Until the trouble began.

The Bell homestead sat on the Red River.
The fertile land was perfect for farming.





It was the summer of 1817. While working in the field, John stumbled upon a strange animal sitting between two rows of corn. It looked like a dog with the head of a rabbit. John raised his gun and shot at the creature, but it ran off.

The strange sightings didn't end there. A few days later, John and Lucy's son Drew spotted a large turkey perched on a fence. As Drew approached the bird, he saw that it wasn't a turkey at all. The bird flapped its large wings and took off. Drew had no idea what kind of bird it might be.



Betsy, the youngest daughter, went for a walk in the woods near the house around this same time. She saw a girl in a green dress climbing one of the oak trees. She had never seen this girl before and found it strange.

A few days later, one of the Bells' **enslaved** workers reported seeing a large, black dog in the road. This dog followed him every night when he went to visit his wife. She was also enslaved and lived with a different family. As soon as the man arrived at his wife's door each night, the dog ran away.

Little did the Bells know, these odd events were about to take a terrifying turn.





WITCHES AND FAMILIARS

Is it possible that the Bells' strange animal sightings had something to do with the **paranormal**? According to **folklore**, witches had animals called "familiars." These animals could assist a witch in her magical workings. A familiar could spy on people, steal from them, and even attack them. Black cats were said to be favored by witches. But other animals could also serve as familiars, such as toads, dogs, and other small animals.