

THE WHISPERING HOLLOW GAZETTE

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HISTORY REPEATS AT HOLLOWBROOK HOUSE

Margaret Hollowbrook Vanishes Under Mysterious Circumstances

Eerie Similarities to 1939 Disappearance

In a chilling echo of events that occurred nearly 44 years ago, Margaret Hollowbrook, great-niece of inventor Edgar Hollowbrook, vanished yesterday from the recently renovated Hollowbrook House under circumstances that have left local authorities deeply puzzled.

The 28-year-old artist and engineer was last seen on Monday afternoon by local delivery driver Frank Wilson. "She seemed really excited about something," Wilson reported. "She kept talking about a breakthrough and mentioned something about 'bringing him back.' I assumed she was talking about commissioning a portrait of her great-uncle for the mansion's front hall - she'd been asking around town for old photographs of him."

Police Chief Michael O'Connor reports finding the mansion in a state of disarray eerily similar to that described in the 1939 police reports following Edgar Hollowbrook's disappearance. "Papers were scattered throughout the study, and several electrical

devices appeared to have been recently in use," O'Connor stated. "Like her great-uncle's case, there are no signs of forced entry or foul play."

Neighbors reported seeing unusual lights from the observatory tower around 11:30 PM Monday night. "It was like déjà vu," said longtime resident Martha Thackeray, daughter of Eleanor Thackeray who witnessed similar phenomena the night Edgar Hollowbrook disappeared. "The same strange lights, the same blue glow from the tower. I immediately called the police."

"Like her great-uncle's case, there are no signs of forced entry or foul play."

According to Detective Sarah Reynolds, a journal found in Margaret's study contained increasingly erratic entries over the past month. The final entry, dated June 15, reads in part: "I understand now. Edgar was right. The veil is thin, and I can cross it. I'm going to find him and bring him home."

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Thomas Hollowbrook, who had transferred ownership of the property to Margaret just fifteen months ago, expressed shock at the disappearance. "Margaret was brilliant, like our great-uncle, but she'd seemed perfectly rational in our recent conversations. She was excited about some old research materials she'd discovered during the renovation, but I never imagined..."

The Whispering Hollows Historical Society has offered to assist police by providing access to their extensive

archives relating to the original Hollowbrook disappearance. "The parallels between the two cases are uncanny," said Society President David Clarke. "We're making all our records available to investigators."

Police have cordoned off the property and are conducting a thorough search of the house and grounds. Chief O'Connor has requested that anyone with information about Margaret Hollowbrook's whereabouts contact the police department immediately.

TFZALYF JVKL

Deciphering Strange Letters: A Look at Caesar's Secret Code

On the anniversary of Julius Caesar's assassination in 44 BCE, we examine one of his lesser-known legacies — a simple yet effective method of encoding secret messages.

The Caesar cipher, named after the Roman leader who reportedly used it in his private correspondence, involves shifting each letter in a message a fixed number of positions down the alphabet. With a shift of 3, 'A' becomes 'D', 'B' becomes 'E', and so on, with letters at the end of the alphabet cycling back to the beginning.

"It's remarkable for its simplicity," notes Dr. Eleanor Marshall of Whispering Hollows Community College. "Anyone can learn it quickly, yet it provided adequate security in ancient times."

To illustrate: the title of this article, "TFZALYF JVKL," uses a shift of 7 to encode the words "MYSTERY CODE." To decode any Caesar cipher, one

simply needs to know the shift value used or try all 25 possible shifts until finding one that produces coherent text.

While modern cryptography has far outpaced this ancient technique, the Caesar cipher remains popular in puzzles, educational activities, and as a starting point for students of code-breaking.

Interestingly, variations of the Caesar cipher have appeared throughout history. During the American Civil War, the Confederate Army used a modified version called the "Vigenère cipher" for battlefield communications. Even in the age of computers, these simple substitution methods remind us that sometimes the most enduring solutions are also the most elegant.

The Whispering Hollows Library will host a workshop on historical ciphers this Saturday at 2 PM.



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