

SEPTEMBER 2022

HERITAGE is the newsletter for Pabst Mansion, Inc., a historic house museum dedicated to the restoration of the Pabst Mansion and the preservation of the Pabst family legacy.

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## GABLES & GOBLINS: VICTORIAN MANSIONS AS HAUNTED HOUSES

BY DAVID ZEH

When picturing a haunted house, what comes to mind? A dilapidated Victorian mansion sitting ominously on top of a hill during a violent thunderstorm, perhaps? Such an image may seem natural, as many popular films and TV shows like *Psycho*, *The Addams Family*, and *Scooby Doo* have all used Victorian mansions to convey a sense of terror and dread. But where did this idea originate and why did Victorian homes, like the Pabst Mansion, become associated with ghosts and all things creepy?

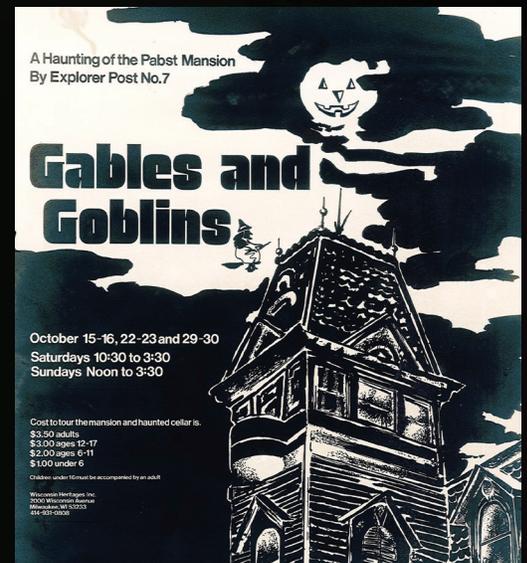
At the turn of the twentieth century, American culture began to change rapidly and many from the younger generation who had grown up during the Victorian era started to resent the culture and lifestyle of that period where millions of Americans lived in extreme poverty while the rich built elaborate mansions showing off their immense wealth. As broader cultural movements during the 1920s began to tout progressivism, Victorian styles came to be viewed as symbols of Gilded Age disparity and social taste makers began to label them as gaudy and simply un-American.



Beyond aesthetic preferences, American architectural historian Sarah Burns posits that Victorian structures became a symbol of fear and dread as artists began incorporating them in literature, artwork and theater after the First World War. For example, Edward Hopper's eerie painting *House by the Railroad* (at left) looks almost identical to the Bates Mansion from Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*. As a result, many Victorian homes across American cities were torn down to make way for newer modern structures and remaining Victorian houses stood out as markedly different.

Sadly, in this way most Victorian mansions on Grand Avenue in Milwaukee were torn down throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The Pabst Mansion itself was not immune from this trend, nearly becoming a parking lot in the mid-1970s. After the Mansion was saved from demolition by a group who saw the value in its preservation, the next step for the newly-formed organization was to begin working on restoring the home to its former glory. With the need to begin repaying loans for purchasing the home and the long restoration ahead, fundraising became an immediate priority for which creative solutions were devised.

Beginning in the early 1980s, the Pabst Mansion partnered with a local Boy Scout troop, Explorer Post #7, and created an annual haunted house to help raise funds for both organizations. Originally called Gables & Goblins, the haunted house attracted hundreds of curious visitors during the weekends leading up to Halloween.



A Haunting of the Pabst Mansion  
By Explorer Post No.7

### Gables and Goblins

October 15-16, 22-23 and 29-30  
Saturdays 10:30 to 3:30  
Sundays Noon to 3:30

Cost to tour the mansion and haunted cellar is:  
\$3.00 adults  
\$2.00 ages 12-17  
\$2.00 ages 6-11  
\$1.00 under 6  
Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult

Wisconsin Heritage, Inc.  
2000 Wisconsin Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53233  
414-487-0800

An advertisement for the Gables & Goblins event.

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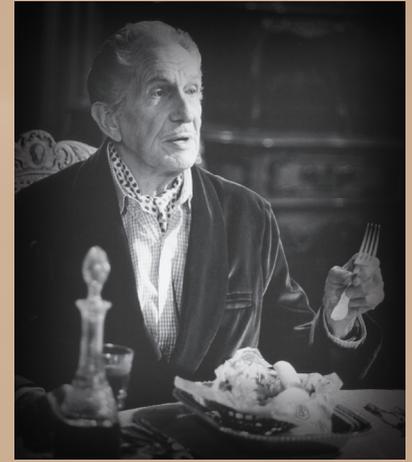
# GABLES & GOBLINS

*continued from page 1*

A few years later, Gables & Goblins morphed into the Mystery Mansion where guests would walk from room to room encountering an array of scary figures such as werewolves and mummies, as well as classic horror movie themed rooms. Riding on this spooky trend, in 1985 Cousins Subs even decided to film one of their earliest commercials inside the dining room at the Pabst Mansion with “the master of the macabre,” Vincent Price, featuring in the commercial. While the Pabst Mansion no longer hosts the Mystery Mansion, the spirit of getting in touch with darkness during the Halloween season is again celebrated with the new Illuminating the Darkness Tours, now in its second year.



*Couple next to the “Wolfman’s Den” and the “Wall of Faces” in the basement.*



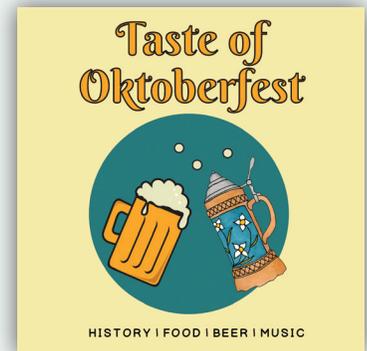
*Vincent Price at the Pabst dining table.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND SPECIAL TOURS

### TASTE OF OKTOBERFEST

*September 30 & October 1, 5pm – 8pm*

Herzlich Willkommen, Oktoberfest! Join the festivities at the Pabst Mansion as we celebrate German heritage with tastes, tunes and tales. Enjoy samples of beloved German specialties like Currywurst and Bienenstich Kuchen, and drinks like Oktoberfest Bier and sweet Rieslings during a guided tour examining Milwaukee’s and the Pabsts’ German history. Taking the fest outside, the beer garden will also be stocked with plenty of imported German beer and live German music. With gemütlichkeit abound, we invite you to prost like good old Captain Pabst!



### ILLUMINATING THE DARK TOURS

*Thursday – Saturday Evenings in October & Halloween Day!*

This specialty afterhours tour will take place in a dimly-lit Mansion where themes of darkness and the revealing of unseen spaces will be explored, offering visitors an opportunity to see the Pabst Mansion in a ‘new light.’ Visitors will be guided by candlelight as they explore the *dark*, in areas varying from literal light sources in the home, to approaching the darkness of loss, to viewing hidden compartments and seldom-seen lower-level spaces.

### BEHIND-THE-SCENES TOURS

*May – October on Fridays and Sundays at 1:30pm*

Ever wonder what’s beyond a classic Pabst Mansion tour? Here is your chance to explore the areas behind the ropes and closed doors. This in-depth look at the home, all the way from the basement to the attic, is for those who just want to see it all!

*\*Please note this tour lasts approximately two hours and involves stairs, uneven floors, narrow doors, and constant standing/walking.*



# Mrs. Pabst's Sitting Room Receives New (Old) Furniture!

In late spring, Ray Edwards donated this beautiful cherry wood cabinet that looks strikingly similar to the one that once sat in the southwest corner of Mrs. Pabst's sitting room. With a gap in provenance, we are not certain if it is the original piece, or still astonishingly the same style and maker. In either case, we are thrilled that visitors can now see the cabinet on display in the exact corner as it was in Mrs. Pabst's day.



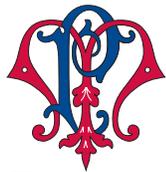
*(Left) View of Mrs. Pabst's sitting room in 1897 with view of the cherry wood cabinet. (Above) Ray Edwards standing next to the cherry wood cabinet shortly after it was placed in the historic corner.*



Around the same time that the cabinet arrived, another piece of furniture was welcomed into Mrs. Pabst's sitting room, a bookcase now placed where one had been during the time of the Pabsts' residence. Not a "Pabst original," this butternut bookcase has a history with another brewing family in Milwaukee, as it once belonged to Alfred Uihlein of the Schlitz Brewing Co. Although of different wood types, the geometric pattern on the bookcase closely matches that on the cherry wood walls of the sitting room. We thank Mary K. Stone for her donation of this stunning piece!



*(Left) Alfred Uihlein's bookcase now located in Mrs. Pabst's sitting room. (Right) View of Mrs. Pabst's sitting room in 1897 showing where her bookcase once stood.*



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2000 WEST WISCONSIN AVENUE  
MILWAUKEE, WI 53233-2043

414-931-0808  
WWW.PABSTMANSION.COM



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*Honey*  
from the Land of Pabst!

The Pabst Mansion now carries local Highlands Honey, named for the apiary located in Washington Highlands – the historic location of Pabst Stock Farm in Wauwatosa.  
How sweet is that?

**PABST MANSION**  
*tours & admission*

**DAILY CLASSIC TOURS**

**GUIDED**  
Monday-Saturday 10am, 11am, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm  
Sunday 11am, 1pm, 2pm 3pm

**SELF-GUIDED**  
Daily noon-1pm  
Adult: \$15  
Senior/Student/Military: \$13  
Child (6-17): \$8  
Child (5 and under): Free  
Member: Free  
*Prices and hours subject to change.*

**SPECIALTY TOURS**

The Pabst Mansion has an array of year-round and seasonal specialty tours.  
Visit [pabstmansion.com](http://pabstmansion.com) to learn more!  
*Located on 20th and Wisconsin Avenue.  
Limited parking is available. Wheelchair accessible.*