



presents:

# *the Revisionists*

TM

THE MOST ORIGINAL HALLOWEEN  
EXPERIENCE RETURNS



Rockwood Museum and Park, Wilmington, DE - October, 2024

Poplar Hall™ presents: “The Revisionists: A Haunted Gothic Walk ” walked through the grounds of Historic Rockwood and its haunted history. The event is In partnership with New Castle County & Rockwood Museum and Park and the Rockwood Park Preservation Society.

The period between the 1880's to the 1920's is often considered the Golden Age of the Ghost Story. This tradition will be brought back to life and will cast a chilling shadow on the Rockwood mansions gardens and walkways. This estate will make the perfect backdrop due to its hidden and very haunted past. In the briskness of October, the mansion and its grounds may just take on an entirely different character after dark! Get ready to be immersed into a mobile theatrical experience and history lesson with a dark dollop of the Victorian & Gothic Macabre.

The haunted story walk is a guided tour that lasts close to 90 minutes, through the dark garden walkways and along the scenic country estate. This will be true traditional Victorian storytelling at its finest, from an era rife with supernatural themes and practices, including mourning, spiritualism and gentry secrets. **Gregory Shelton, Poplar Hall Founder and Event Producer,** says *“Ghost stories were actually a fireside Christmas tradition in the*

# *the Revisionists*

***mid to late 1800's. We're bringing the true ghost story back in its original form to the Fall months, where it belongs"***

The haunted walk will be led by a character known as a "Revisionist," a person that retains the innate ability to speak with the unliving, to hear what sent them, and at times help to reveal and rewrite their circumstances and untimely demise. Revisionists will lead each tour by lamplight, tell the never-before-heard stories and protect event-goers from the apparitions that find their way back from the spirit world. Viewers will hear handwritten tales mixed with acted vignettes with ghosts from Rockwood's 171 year old past as the night unfolds. **"If there is a place that's truly haunted, it must be Rockwood...the perfect setting." Shelton says.**

The event begins at the main entrance of the mansion, event-goers begin their nighttime excursion. All attendees are encouraged to wear their favorite period Victorian style garb to celebrate the season and the Fall event.

The team at Poplar Hall, just off of their highly sought after **Christmas Parade of Horses & European Christmas Market**, selected by **Food & Wine Magazine** as one of the **50 Best Christmas Markets in America**, and the perennial sell out **"A Night of Stardust" A Bowie Celebration In Philadelphia**, have created an October experience that completely reimagines the standard ghost walk.

**The walk takes place on Friday and Saturday evenings (OCT 11th/12th, 18th/19th and the 25th/26th)**

# *the Revisionists*

Thank you very much, for your consideration in sponsoring our event! Your efforts will support the team in its quest to provide a completely original theater production of the Gothic Walk. Your incredibly gracious donation will assist us in Costuming, Promotion, Marketing, Lodging & Fare for traveling actors, props and any back-end work needed to assist in making the production happen more seamlessly. In return, it will enable you (and your company) to align your brand with a team that is constantly pushing the eventing & experience envelope in the creative arts. The team at Poplar Hall are a top notch group, with a devotion to bringing new and exciting experiences to our wonderful area.

The ticket buyers and event attendees to the production are expected to be people that have a creative intellect, a full appreciation of the arts, highly educated, forward thinkers that are in an age group of between 28 - 70 years old.

## Sponsorship Levels:

### **“The Gentry”**

\$3,000 and above

Full Flagship “Main Sponsorship” level to include:

- Your company (or name of your choice) to be featured when and wherever the event’s name is located (digital and/or print.)
- Website Coverage:
  - Name & Logo featured on main page with Oct event
  - A single devoted page with your companies logo, and a highlight about you or your company (*content provided and approved by company*)
  - Your company's logo will be listed on the Event Sponsorship Page at:  
[www.poplarhall.life](http://www.poplarhall.life)
- Social Media
  - Name mentioned as “Sponsored By:” in ALL SM channels to include: Facebook, Instagram & Youtube.
  - Stand Alone post thanking you as Main Event Sponsor
  - A listing in Social Media “Thank You” message at the end of the event.

# *the Revisionists*

- Signage
  - Day off Banner/Poster/Sign in Town Hall during event (provided by Sponsor/Company)
- Email
  - Devoted Listing in email to Ticket Buyers, with customized communication...Ex: "Get your dinner reservations now at "XXXXX" to enjoy an amazing Fall weekend!"

## **"The Squire"**

\$1,000

- A single devoted page with your companies logo, and a highlight about you or your company (*content provided and approved by company*)
- Your company's logo will be featured on the Event Sponsorship Page at [www.poplarhall.life](http://www.poplarhall.life) as a Main Sponsor.
- Devoted Listing in email to Ticket Buyers, with customized communication...Ex: "Get your dinner reservations now at "XXXXX" to enjoy an amazing Fall weekend!"
- A listing in Social Media "Thank You" message at the end of the event.

## **"The Merchant"**

\$500

- Your company's name will be listed on the Event Sponsorship Page at [www.poplarhall.life](http://www.poplarhall.life)
- A listing in Social Media "Thank You" message at the end of the event.

## **"In-Kind"**

No Monetary, but providing services in place.

# *the Revisionists*

If you aren't able to provide monetary support, but would like to join the cause, that's just as nice, and we thank you!

Please give Greg Shelton a call to discuss how you'd like to assist and we'll easily work to figure it out - we'll gladly mention you as part of the sponsorship team. Thank you kindly.

**If you'd like to sponsor, but don't see an amount that fits your budget, please reach out and let me know, I'd love to talk with you about it.**

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION - CONTACT:**

**Gregory Shelton**

**POPLAR HALL**

**302-598-3087**

**[gspoplarhall@gmail.com](mailto:gspoplarhall@gmail.com)**

**[www.poplarhall.life](http://www.poplarhall.life)**

**@poplarhall #therevisionists2024**

# Out & About

GREATER WILMINGTON

## ENTERTAINMENT

### Dressed to Thrill

Gregory Shelton's Poplar Hall brings unique Halloween experience to Rockwood Museum

*By Matt Morrisette*



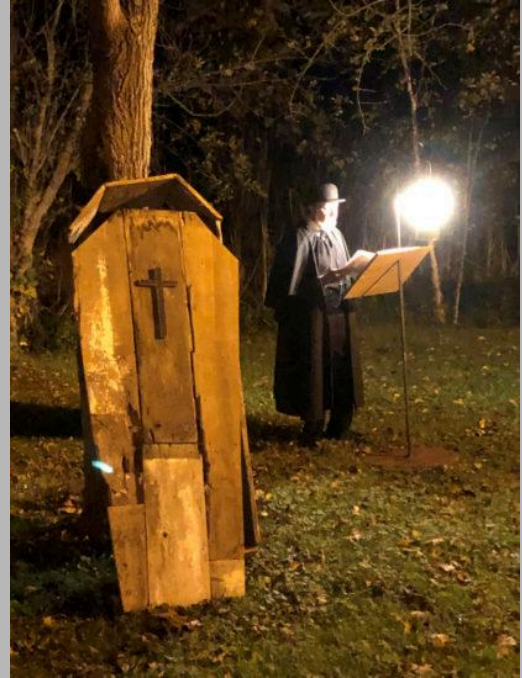
Gregory Shelton is well known in the area for his creative productions. Photo by April Lindsey.

We all have a friend, coworker or family member whose anticipation for autumn in general, and more specifically Halloween, borders on the fanatical.

You know the sort: they can be found in a hoodie and jeans sipping a high-octane pumpkin beer from the prior year around a raging bonfire on the very first evening the temperature dips to ever-so-slightly below 80 degrees in late July. In his circle of associates, it's safe to say that Gregory Shelton is this very person.

Born in Chesapeake City, Md., Shelton and his family now reside on a property in Newark that is on the National Registry of Historic Places and known as Poplar Hall. The property boasts a beautiful 18th-century home and a functioning farm; it also serves as the namesake for Shelton's marketing, branding, and event planning company, as well as a primary source of inspiration for his personal and professional passions.

Being something of a Renaissance man, Shelton has eclectic tastes and interests, and always has many irons in the fire. He is a collector and rider of vintage British motorcycles, a champion gardener, a talented artist and musician, and a passionate cook. He also somehow finds time to host a successful YouTube show called *Historic Living Modern World*, which highlights his life, interests, and the various strange adventures he finds his way into. Shelton is well known regionally for his production of the perennially sold-out David Bowie tribute concerts known as "A Night of Stardust." These concerts have taken place annually at Philadelphia's Union Transfer since the death of the glam rock legend. Closer to home, Shelton's decade-long run of Halloween parties featuring crowds in the hundreds getting their groove and scare on to the sounds of the best Philly DJs (which took place in Poplar Hall's massive barn) is the stuff of legend.



The Haunted Victorian Walk. Photo by April Lindsey.

It was towards the end of this 10-year run of parties that Shelton felt a twinge of boredom and creative restlessness. It led him to create a vision closer in spirit to his idea of Halloween.

"I yearned to create a true fall/Halloween experience that was original and could be a destination event for people 30 years old and up," says Shelton. "People that also love the true meaning of Halloween, and a great ghost story, and the chill of the fall air, and the glow of a hand-carved pumpkin — all with a dollop of the Victorian macabre."

From this vision, Shelton teamed with writer April Lindsey to create *The Revisionists: A Haunted Victorian Walk*, a storytelling event and walking tour in which several ghost stories are told from the point of view of guides (revisionists) who have an innate ability to communicate with the dead. The production made its debut to sold-out crowds and rave reviews in Shelton's hometown of historic Chesapeake City in October of 2020. In 2021, it was greeted with the same enthusiastic response and advance sellouts.

For 2022, Poplar Hall has partnered with New Castle County to bring a fresh version of the mobile theatrical experience to the grounds of Wilmington's Rockwood Park and Museum. The 90-minute event



will take participants on a lamplit tour throughout the historic gardens and walkways of the Shipley mansion property as revisionists relate six handwritten ghost tales.

The move to Rockwood Park has enabled Shelton to realize his vision on a grander scale.



Gregory Shelton as one of The Revisionists. Photo by Jeffrey Archer.

"I knew the Revisionists concept needed to be amplified at a true Gothic Mansion that would be a future destination for all Halloween lovers alike that yearn for a truly original experience," he says. "This year's production will be directed by Lisa Panzer, a professional actor and director that really understands how to bring this effort to life... or death! It will have genius lighting by Robert Cox, and some of the area's best actors.

"I'm also very excited to work with new Rockwood director Ryan Grover. Ryan already understands what we're trying to accomplish, and I believe he'll make a great partner in this production."

If one is looking for a more subtle, thinking man's version of a Halloween experience that's light on being startled by strangers manically wielding chainsaws (though that also has its time and place), Shelton's ode to the ghost story is not-to-be-missed. And for those looking for a Halloween dress-up opportunity, attendees are encouraged to dress in their favorite Victorian and Gothic-styled attire to match the actors and have a more immersive experience.

— The Revisionists: A Haunted Victorian Walk takes place on Friday and Saturday evenings (October 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29) at Rockwood Park and Museum, 4651 Washington Street Extension, Wilmington, DE 19809. Reservations are strongly encouraged. For tickets, visit [PoplarHall.us](http://PoplarHall.us)



*Photo by Jeff Archer. Words by David Howard*

<https://delawaretoday.com/life-style/people-community/this-month-chesapeake-city-plays-host-to-a-ghostly-autumn-adventure/>

*A self-titled 'experientialist' offers Delawareans The Revisionists: A Haunted Victorian Walk, an event that's part theatrical experience and part history lesson.*

---

Most marketers are hoping to sell you something, but Gregory Shelton has a far grander ambition: He wants people to have a cool experience. And folks who live in and around Chesapeake City, Maryland, will notice that the town feels a little livelier this autumn as a result.

Shelton, 50, runs Poplar Hall, a consulting firm named after the home and farm he and his wife, Dawn, own in Newark. The property is on the National Register of Historic Places, and the business is part production company, part marketing shop. But what excites Shelton most is creating exciting in-person events—something memorable that guests can take part in, even in the age of COVID-19. “I’m what I call an experientialist, which is something I came up with myself,” he says. “I’m immersed in the idea of creating experiences for people.”

This fall, Shelton will bring his brand of three-dimensional marketing to Chesapeake City, the nearby border town where he grew up and where some of his family still resides. His series of events began in August with a farmers market every Friday evening on the waterfront behind the Inn at the Canal and the town hall. The market ran through the end of September.

This month, Shelton will serve up something even more innovative: a theatrical stroll around the city titled [\*The Revisionists: A Haunted\*](#)

*Victorian Walk*. The event, which Shelton describes as a hybrid “mobile theatrical experience and history lesson,” is rooted in the period between the 1880s and 1920s that Shelton says is considered the golden age of ghost stories. “My goal is to make historic Chesapeake City the next Sleepy Hollow, and really own the month of October here,” he says.

Audience size will be limited to 10 to 15 people to allow for social distancing, and Shelton says the event will meet pandemic-related health requirements. Performances are scheduled for Oct. 23–24 and Oct. 30–31, with more to be added the week before and after those dates if they sell out. Attendees are encouraged to wear Victorian garb.

Shelton’s business relationship with Chesapeake City was forged around a European-style Christmas market that he debuted at Poplar Hall in 2017. After two years, the event outgrew his property, so Shelton relocated it to Chesapeake City. Since the event had generated significant buzz, Councilman Ed O’Hara asked Shelton to resuscitate the town’s farmers market, which had disappeared a decade prior.

Mayor Rich Taylor says Poplar Hall’s reputation for creating high-end experiences for all ages “dovetails nicely with what we’re doing with Chesapeake City in terms of being an upscale family destination.”

As a waterfront town with 693 residents, Chesapeake City has no trouble drumming up excitement during the summer, but the fall and winter have been a different story—at least up until this year. Shelton will wrap up his agenda with another Christmas market

For more about the event, visit [poplarhall.us](http://poplarhall.us)

*Published as “Walk This Way” in the [October 2020 issue](#) of Delaware Today.*

## UPDATE: Victims of Elk

CHESAPEAKE CITY — A wealthy lady buried alive. A doctor's office-turned slaughterhouse. A tentacled creature lurking in the depths of the bay.

These are just some of the eerie tales unearthed in *The Revisionists: A Haunted Victorian Walk*, a chilling tour of Chesapeake City debuting this year ahead of Halloween. Chesapeake City native Greg Shelton organized the production through his company Poplar Hall, aiming to bring fictional history to life against the town's Victorian backdrop to create a bone-chilling experience.

Rick Waterhouse, a retired teacher and actor from North East, plays lead Revisionist Arlington Mellace, a disgruntled ex-attorney from England. The stories play on the imagination of guests, he said, and will stick with them long after the tours come to a close.

"We get into what's in your own head, lying in the dark and that kind of thing," he said. "When it's nighttime, it's dark, you're going to sleep and there's a chance of dreams or nightmares — that sticks with people."

Revisionists — members of a spiritual society shrouded in secrecy — act as tour guides, gathering guests at Town Hall and leading them down to the water. They make six stops, recounting grisly stories supposedly buried in the forgotten history of Chesapeake City, and along the way encounter otherworldly spirits who tell their own tales.

Head Story Writer and Co-Director April Lindsey said she drew from the Victorian look and feel of the town to bring the stories together.

“All kinds of bad things happened in Victorian times — people were dying like crazy, there was cholera, there was the Civil War,” she said. “Out of that era came all these bizarre spiritualisms and mourning customs, because people were dropping like flies.”

Lindsey contrasted the production with a classic haunted house.

“They’re great, but it’s all about quick scares — being startled and shocked. This is not that,” she said. “We’re not trying to scare people to death. We’re trying to create a spooky atmosphere and tell some stories that are actually stories.”

Shelton recruited Lindsey to write the stories after the town approached him about revitalizing a ghost tour. After organizing recurring events such as a European Christmas market and a farmer’s market in Chesapeake City, Shelton said he was excited to do something unique for the Halloween season.

They kept the production small this year because of restrictions around gatherings, Shelton said. However, the chance to bring more visitors to the town in years to come has him thinking on a grander scale.

“I’d like to add features that would almost make this a small ghost storytelling festival,” he said. “People from statewide would come to the events, stay at the inns and get reservations for dinner.”

With 24 tours across four nights already sold out, Shelton said he plans to add five first-come, first-serve tickets to each tour, which will be available day-of. He hopes to keep the groups small — 15 to 20 guests at most, both to create a more intimate atmosphere and to minimize the risk of viral transmission.

Luckily, the tours take place entirely outside, and the Revisionists wear masks between stops. Even amid the spiritual encounters, the actors stay more than six feet apart. After months of being stuck at home, Shelton said, there's an appetite for safe, unique evening experiences.

Lindsey commended the actors for bringing the production together with limited rehearsal time. While a number of the cast are amateurs, she added, they add a chilling flair and make the tales more vivid and engaging, sometimes even interacting with guests.

For Waterhouse, the interactive aspect makes the performance a unique challenge. While the spirits may occasionally interact with guests, Waterhouse will guide guests from one story to the next and must be ready to answer questions as Arlington Mellace. "You're talking to the audience, and you're taking comments from them, and so you have to be on your toes a little bit for ad libbing," he said. "As you're walking along, you have to continue with the accent and with the demeanor of the character you've developed."

To flesh out the characters of the Revisionists, which include Waterhouse and fellow performers Lonnie James and Chris Cauffman-Cooke, Lindsey sketched out some details of the fictional Revisionist organization. But the Revisionists are just a frame



to guide guests from one spooky story to the next. While different scenes may haunt different guests, Lindsey said the third story, ‘Lightning Rolls A Double,’ is her favorite.

She explained that it’s based on a story a friend of her grandfather’s told her about ball lightning, an unexplained natural phenomenon of spheres of light forming in thunderstorms. The story, she said, is meant to deceive.

“The protagonist goes through a lot, and ends up committing suicide — or does he?” she said. “It’s terrifying.”

Shelton credited the core of the project to Lindsey’s writing, adding that reading her stories is what initially got him on board. He said he hopes the tours will bring new folklore to Chesapeake City that will endure long after the Revisionists shutter their lanterns.

“Everyone has traveled up and down the C&D canal, but there has never really been anything captured about what lives in those waters,” he said. “Executing an amazing ghost story is what this whole thing is about.”



*Published in the [October 2020](#) news of the Cecil Whig Newspaper.*