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Ghost Walls: The Story Of A 17th-Century Colonial Homestead



Synopsis

In 1638, John Lewger made a home in the wilderness of the New World, in a place called Maryland. He named his house St. John's, and for nearly eighty years, it was the center of an ambitious English plan to build a new kind of community on American soil. Men and women lived and worked within its walls. Babies were born. Last breaths drawn. St. John's walls witnessed the first stirrings of the great struggles that would dominate the continent for the next three centuries: The unimaginable wealth of the New World's crops and natural resources. The promise of religious tolerance under a new model of government. The injustice of slavery. The betrayal of native peoples. The struggle for equality between men and women. If St. John's walls could have talked, they would have spoken volumes of American history. And then the walls crumbled. One hundred years after it was built, St. John's House had been abandoned. The buildings slowly deteriorated, returning to the Maryland soil to be plowed under by generations of Maryland farmers. St. John's walls were silent for more than two centuries, little more than ghosts haunting the historical and archeological records. But they weren't lost. Not entirely. Award-winning author Sally M. Walker tells the story of how teams of scientists and historians managed to hear the ghostly echoes of St. John's House and, over the course of decades of painstaking work, made them speak their stories again.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sally M. Walker has been a children's book writer for over 20 years. Most of her books are

nonfiction and present various science topics to young readers. Fossil Fish Found Alive is the story of the hunt for the elusive fish called the coelacanth. Sally also enjoys combining science investigation with historical topics. Her book Secrets of a Civil War Submarine, which won the 2006 Robert F. Sibert Medal, tells about the history, loss, and re-discovery of the first submarine to sink an enemy ship in battle. Written in Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland takes readers on archaeological expeditions, where the forensic analysis of colonial settlers bones helps us to understand their lives. Sally especially enjoys writing narrative nonfiction that captures the reader's attention with a true story.

great book! fast shipping

First off, this isn't about ghosts, hauntings or anything of that nature. I'm fascinated by what a riveting, fast-paced, interesting non-fiction history book this is. Ms. Walker has an excellent storyteller's voice and writes as if she is with the reader telling you first hand a fascinating story she is enthusiastic about. Peppered densely with quotes from contemporary sources such as letters, diaries and court records this book is a history lover's dream. In the beginning the topic was only of general interest to me. My interests in archaeology, architecture and early settlers pointed me towards this book but my main interests lie in the 19th century, while this book tells us the history of 17th century Maryland. A topic I never thought I'd be so enchanted by, the author's skill in research and obvious love for her topic make the reader join her enthusiasm. While the book is recommended for Gr. 4-8 by the publisher, I honestly would not hesitate to say the writing style is mature enough for any teen or adult to thoroughly enjoy. I've added St. John's House to my "list of places to visit someday" and am checking the library for more of Sally M. Walker's books.

As usual with Sally Walker's work, the subject is fascinating and the prose is clear and compelling. GHOST WALLS looks at American history through the story of a colonial homestead. The book is a wonderful mix of history, science, and technology, and shows how many different kinds of evidence -- old public records, chemical tests, excavations, and comparisons of physical objects -- are used to uncover the past and understand the lives of people who vanished long ago. Highly recommended.

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