

The Ghost in Brush Strokes Salon

By Barbara Glakas

In little wood framed building at 711 Pine Street is a business called Brush Strokes, a salon that has been in business at that location since 1998. The building dates back to circa 1900, possibly a little older.

Former Mayor, Elisha Dyer, once owned that property in the late 1800s. Dentist, Dr. Ben Detwiler, bought the property from Dyer in 1888, and then he sold it to his brother, Dr. Edwin L. Detwiler, MD, in 1893. Dr. Ed had also previously bought the property next door (now the Herndon Clock and Watch Co.) in 1886. It is not clear which years Dr. Ed may have lived in these buildings – as he later lived in a house on 3rd Street - but he ultimately ran his medical practice out of the Brush Strokes building.

Unfortunately, the beloved Dr. Ed came to an untimely demise in 1916, when the deranged son of a patient shot and killed the doctor while he was on a house call. The building on Pine Street was later sold to the Wheeler family, who lived in it for many years. Later, the building was occupied by Dr. Finley's Family Eyecare business, until he moved into an adjacent newer building.

Once the Brush Strokes business moved into the building in 1998, the owner set out to decorate the salon to make it bright and cozy. The interior was painted with soothing colors and decorated with lace curtains and beautiful antique furniture. It looked very quaint and old fashioned. She also displayed a photograph of Dr. Edwin Detwiler prominently in the front foyer room.

The week she had an open house for the newly opened salon, the owner entertained many visitors, one of them being Roberta "Bobby" Keys, the granddaughter of Dr. Ben Detwiler and the grandniece of Dr. Edwin Detwiler. Mrs. Keys was a senior citizen by then, in her 80s. Mrs. Keys told stories to the owner how, as a young girl, she would play in her uncle's office. She often played on the floor in the front lobby room of the office. The owner gave Mrs. Keys a tour of the new salon. Mrs. Keys, approving of how the salon had been newly decorated, said to the owner, "I love what you've done with the place!" Mrs. Keys passed away a few years later.

Over the years, the Brush Strokes owner says that a few of her clients have indicated that they have "felt a presence" in the salon. She says that these clients were not necessarily psychics, per se, but were those who described themselves as having certain sensitivities. No one described the presence as being negative, but rather a presence with a positive energy.

One such client came into the salon a few years ago to have her hair cut. Along with the client was her 20-year-old daughter, who sat waiting for her mother in the front lobby room. While

waiting, for an unknown reason, the daughter suddenly got up and left the building. Her mother did not know why the daughter left.

The daughter later told her mother why she suddenly left the building. The daughter, known to be a person with special senses, explained the situation to her mother: While the daughter was waiting in the front lobby room, the daughter suddenly felt an overwhelming feeling of strong energy come over her, then a little girl appeared to her, sitting on the foyer floor. The little girl turned to look up at the daughter and said, "I love what you've done with the place."

About this column: "Remembering Herndon's History" is a regular Herndon Patch feature offering stories and anecdotes about Herndon's past. The articles are written by members of the Herndon Historical Society. Barbara Glakas is a member. A complete list of "Remembering Herndon's History" columns is available on the Historical Society website at www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org.

The Herndon Historical Society operates a small museum that focuses on local history. It is housed in the Herndon Depot in downtown Herndon on Lynn Street and is open every Sunday from noon until 3:00. Visit the Society's website at www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org, and the Historical Society's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/HerndonHistory> for more information.

Note: The Historical Society is seeking volunteers to help keep the museum open each Sunday. If you have an interest in local history and would like to help, contact HerndonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com.