

THE WIZARD CLIP HAUNTING

Priest Field Site Guidebook

America's Most Documented Early Paranormal Event

Welcome to Priest Field

Welcome to one of America's most extraordinary historical and spiritual locations. The land upon which you stand witnessed events in the 1790s that captivated a young nation and continue to intrigue visitors more than two centuries later. This is the site of the Wizard Clip Haunting—a three-year supernatural siege that transformed a skeptical farmer into one of early America's most devout Catholics and fulfilled a prophecy that this place would become "a great place of prayer and fasting and praise."

Whether you come as a pilgrim, a historian, a paranormal enthusiast, or simply a curious traveler, you are walking on ground that holds a unique place in American religious and supernatural history. The events that occurred here are among the best-documented paranormal incidents in early American history, witnessed by dozens of people and recorded by priests, bishops, and journalists of the era.

Today, the property known as Priest Field serves as a Christian retreat center—a peaceful sanctuary along the Opequon Creek where visitors can experience solitude, prayer, and the natural beauty of West Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. The land continues to fulfill its prophesied purpose as a place of spiritual renewal.

This guidebook will help you understand the remarkable history of this site, the people who shaped its story, and the supernatural events that brought national attention to this small corner of what was then Virginia.

Historical Context: America in the 1790s

To understand the Wizard Clip Haunting, we must first understand the world in which it occurred.

A New Nation Finding Its Way

The events at Wizard Clip unfolded during America's first decade as an independent nation. George Washington, who had personally surveyed this very land years earlier, was serving

as the nation's first president. The young republic was still defining itself, establishing its institutions, and determining how diverse religious communities would coexist.

Religious Tensions

Catholics in 1790s America faced significant prejudice. The memory of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605—when Catholic conspirators allegedly attempted to assassinate Protestant King James I of England—still fueled anti-Catholic sentiment. Many Americans viewed Catholicism with deep suspicion, and Catholic priests working on the frontier faced particular challenges.

The Jesuit order had been suppressed by Pope Clement XIV in 1773 under pressure from European monarchs, and Jesuit missionaries in the New World found themselves scattered and their missions destroyed. It was into this climate of religious tension and rebuilding that the Wizard Clip events emerged.

The Frontier

The area known as Smithfield (later called Wizard Clip or Clip Town) sat on the edge of American settlement. This was frontier country—rough, isolated, and largely agricultural. Farmers worked the land that British nobility had granted as political favors decades earlier. Communities were small, scattered, and deeply interdependent.

The Catholic Church in America

In 1789, just as the Wizard Clip events began, John Carroll became the first Catholic bishop in the United States. From his seat in Baltimore, Bishop Carroll worked to establish the Catholic Church in a predominantly Protestant nation. He sent missionary priests into the frontier territories, often with little support and amid considerable hostility.

It is against this backdrop—a new nation, religious tensions, frontier isolation, and a struggling Catholic Church—that the Wizard Clip Haunting occurred.

The Land: From Lord Fairfax to Priest Field

The Original Grant

The land that became the center of the Wizard Clip events has a complex history. King Charles II of England granted a massive tract of land to Lord Fairfax as a political reward during the English Civil War. Lord Fairfax surveyed and subdivided his holdings for speculation.

A 600-acre parcel eventually came to Andrew Mayfield, who granted 35 acres to his nephew, Alexander Mayfield. This 35-acre parcel would later become the focus of both legal disputes and supernatural revelation.

George Washington's Connection

Before becoming the nation's first president, George Washington worked as a surveyor. In his youth, he surveyed the very land where the Wizard Clip events would later unfold. This connection between America's founding father and the Wizard Clip site adds another layer to the historical significance of this location.

Adam Livingston's Purchase

In the early 1790s, Adam Livingston, a German-American farmer, purchased approximately 350 acres that included the contested 35-acre Mayfield parcel. The land ran along Opequon Creek and was bounded by Turkey Run Creek. Livingston divided his tillable land into four parcels: Creek Field (along the creek where he grew flax), Chestnut Field (named for seven chestnut trees), Fence Field (along the split-rail fence, planted with clover), and Granite Field (named for an immovable granite boulder).

The Property Today

What remains today is the 40-acre property known as Priest Field, located along the Opequon Creek in Middleway, West Virginia. The exact location of Livingston's original farmhouse remains uncertain—the passage of time and changes to the landscape have obscured its precise site. However, the land itself, particularly the northern corner alongside the creek, continues to serve its prophesied purpose.

The People: Key Figures in the Wizard Clip Story

Adam Livingston (c. 1760s–1820)

Adam Livingston was the central human figure in the Wizard Clip events. A German-American farmer, he was known throughout the region for his integrity, innovation, and skill as a farmer. He specialized in growing flax, the miracle crop of the era used for clothing, construction, and food.

Before the haunting, Adam was decidedly anti-Catholic, sharing the common prejudices of his time. He and his wife Mary Ann wanted nothing to do with Catholic priests or Catholic practices. This attitude would change dramatically.

Adam possessed what some would call a mystical gift—he experienced visions and premonitions throughout his life. He saw barn fires before they occurred, sensed the deaths of his infant children, and eventually dreamed of the priest who would save him. Initially, he dismissed these experiences, but they proved consistently accurate.

After his conversion to Catholicism following the exorcism, Adam became remarkably devout. Years later, when he traveled to Baltimore to meet Bishop John Carroll, the bishop reported that he had never met a layman better educated in the Catholic faith than Adam Livingston.

Adam died in Bedford County, Pennsylvania in the spring of 1820. He had sold his Virginia farm and moved north after the deaths of his wife and children. Though he remained attentive to his Christian duties until the end, his final illness came so quickly that he died without receiving the last rites of the Church.

Mary Ann Livingston

Mary Ann, Adam's wife, presents a more complex figure in the Wizard Clip story. She witnessed all the supernatural manifestations, attended the exorcism, heard the Voice that instructed the family after the exorcism, and converted to Catholicism along with her husband.

However, Mary Ann remained skeptical and troubled. She refused for years to allow Adam to donate the 35 acres to the Church, asserting her legal right to one-third of all property. She was publicly criticized in the Potowmack Guardian newspaper in 1798 for her attitude toward the supernatural events.

The Voice—the benevolent spiritual presence that instructed the family after the exorcism—warned Mary Ann specifically: "If she would not submit to the rules of the Roman Catholic Church, she would open up her eyes in Hell." The Voice also told her she would die in her own house. When she became ill while visiting a Quaker family, she refused to return home to prove the Voice wrong. Eventually, however, she begged to be taken back and died in her own house as predicted.

Eve Livingston

Adam's daughter Eve emerges as a figure of particular spiritual significance. Unlike her father, Eve was a devout Christian from a young age, despite her parents' hostility to organized religion. She possessed special spiritual sensitivity—she could see the "Wizard" (the demon) when others could not, and her hidden linens were protected from the supernatural clipping.

Eve converted to Catholicism along with her father and lived an exemplary Christian life of service. Until her death at a relatively young age, she continued to weave. The linens she wove and bleached were used throughout the American Catholic Church as altar cloths, corporals, purificators, finger towels, and pall covers.

The Stranger (Fr. Xavier)

The catalyst for the entire haunting was a mysterious traveler who came to the Livingston home one night seeking shelter. The Stranger was well-dressed and well-spoken, though he gave few details about himself. During the night, he became gravely ill and, sensing his approaching death, asked Adam to find him a priest.

Adam and Mary Ann refused. As anti-Catholics, they wanted no priest in their home, and they knew no Catholics anyway. The Stranger died without receiving the Last Rites of the Catholic Church. Before dying, according to some accounts, he placed a curse on the household for their refusal.

Evidence suggests the Stranger was an incognito Jesuit priest, possibly using the name Fr. Xavier, who had spent years in secret ministry among Native Americans in the far West. After the Jesuit Suppression, he was making his way east to reunite with John Carroll and other former Jesuits who were rebuilding the Church in America. He died just miles short of his goal.

The Stranger was buried on Livingston's property in an unmarked grave in the woods. After the exorcism, when Adam donated the 35 acres to the Church, the Voice instructed him to care for the grave as sacred ground.

Father Denis Cahill (c. 1766–1817)

Fr. Denis Cahill was the Irish missionary priest who performed the exorcism that ended the haunting. Robust, charismatic, and courageous, Fr. Cahill founded multiple parishes in Western Maryland and Virginia during the 1790s, often working with little support and facing considerable opposition.

Fr. Cahill had a complicated relationship with Bishop Carroll. He was independent-minded and sometimes operated without the bishop's explicit approval—a tendency that brought him into conflict with Church authority. However, when confronted with the Wizard Clip haunting, Fr. Cahill recognized the limits of his authority and traveled to Baltimore to seek the bishop's permission to perform an exorcism.

Fr. Cahill's background included time in New Orleans, where he had encountered spiritualists and practitioners of dark arts. He recognized the crescent moon symbolism in

the clipped linens as connected to ancient moon god demon worship he had seen in Louisiana.

Adam Livingston held Fr. Cahill in the highest esteem. When Adam donated the 35 acres to the Catholic Church, the deed specifically named Fr. Cahill and stated that Livingston was "conscious to bestow on the said Reverend Denis Cahill some lasting proof of his esteem for him and the religion, the principles of which he inculcates and enforces by his example."

Fr. Cahill never took possession of the land—his missionary work kept him moving throughout the region. He died in 1817, having established a lasting Catholic presence in Western Maryland and Virginia.

Father Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin (1770–1840)

Prince Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin, who used the name "Fr. Smith" during his American ministry, was a Russian prince who gave up his royal inheritance to become a Catholic priest. He was the first Catholic priest educated entirely in the United States.

Fr. Gallitzin assisted Fr. Cahill in performing the exorcism at the Livingston farm. It is through Fr. Gallitzin's writings—letters and accounts penned years later—that we have the most detailed historical documentation of the Wizard Clip events.

After the exorcism, Fr. Gallitzin established the town of Loretto, Pennsylvania, spending his considerable personal wealth to build churches and support Catholic settlers in the Allegheny Mountains. He became known as the "Apostle of the Alleghenies."

Today, the Catholic Church honors Fr. Gallitzin as a Servant of God—the first step toward possible canonization as a saint. His grave in Loretto, Pennsylvania is a shrine, located just outside the Basilica of St. Michael the Archangel, which he founded.

Fr. Gallitzin's account of the Wizard Clip ends with these words: "Your minister would laugh heartily if you should relate to him the above facts; for with wise men of our enlightened age, he has peremptorily decided that miracles, &c., are no longer necessary, and of course they have ceased. Since when I did not learn; nor did I ever find any passage in Scripture which authorizes the belief that miracles should ever cease altogether, or that evil spirits should never have it any more in their power to molest the bodies and property of men."

Bishop John Carroll (1735–1815)

Bishop John Carroll, the first Catholic bishop in the United States, authorized the exorcism that ended the Wizard Clip haunting. A Jesuit priest before the order's suppression, Carroll worked tirelessly to establish the Catholic Church in America and to secure religious freedom for Catholics.

Carroll's influence extended beyond the Church—he was instrumental in ensuring that freedom of religion was enshrined in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. He established Georgetown University and worked with many of the Founding Fathers.

When Fr. Cahill came to Baltimore seeking permission to perform an exorcism, Bishop Carroll was initially skeptical but became convinced by the evidence, including samples of the supernaturally clipped linens. He authorized Fr. Cahill to proceed and assigned Fr. Gallitzin to assist.

Years after the exorcism, when Adam Livingston traveled to Baltimore to meet Bishop Carroll, the bishop was deeply impressed. He reported that he had never encountered a layman with such thorough knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith.

Richard McSherry and Family

Richard McSherry was a wealthy Catholic landowner who sponsored Fr. Cahill's ministry in the region. Richard, his wife Anastasia (née Lilly), and their family played crucial roles in bringing Adam Livingston and Fr. Cahill together.

The McSherrys were among the few Catholic families in the area, and they supported Fr. Cahill financially when his parishes could not. Richard recognized that the physical presence of church buildings would help establish Catholic identity in the region, and he worked toward that goal despite limited funds.

Anastasia McSherry was descended from the Lilly family of Conewago, an established Catholic family with deep roots in Maryland. The McSherry and Lilly families represented the small but committed Catholic presence on the frontier.

When Adam Livingston sought help, it was the McSherrys who brought him to Fr. Cahill's Mass in Shepherdstown. They witnessed the supernatural events, supported Adam through his conversion, and were present at the exorcism. Richard co-signed the deed when Adam donated the 35 acres to the Catholic Church.

The Haunting: Three Years of Terror

How It Began

The haunting began shortly after the Stranger's death in the Livingston home. At first, the manifestations were subtle—strange sounds, unexplained movements. But they quickly escalated into phenomena that could not be dismissed or rationalized.

The primary supernatural activity centered on linen. All linen items in the house—but never cotton or wool—began to be cut into ribbons or into the shapes of crescent moons. The family would hear the distinct sound of shears cutting cloth, but no shears were ever visible. They would discover towels, sheets, and curtains shredded overnight, as if an invisible force had systematically destroyed them.

The Clippings: Physical Evidence

The clipped linens became the physical evidence of the haunting. Adam kept a sample box near the front door filled with the cut cloth, showing visitors the supernatural handiwork.

What made the clippings truly inexplicable was their precision. The crescent moons were cut with such sharpness and skill that even the finest scissors or barber's razors could not have produced them. Moreover, the edges showed no fraying—the warp and weft of the linen remained intact, which should have been impossible with normal cutting.

Fr. Cahill, upon examining the samples, noted that the crescent moons were "shockingly similar to what I have seen among the spiritualists in New Orleans. It is the same, a demon related to the ancient moon god."

Fr. Gallitzin took samples with him to Conewago after the exorcism. They became objects of intense interest until his superior ordered them burned, concerned that they had "become a distraction, if not an invitation for the influence of evil in our ministry."

The Moon Connection

Adam eventually discovered a pattern to the manifestations: they increased as the moon waned, reaching their peak during the new moon when the sky was darkest. The crescent moon shapes in the cut linens seemed directly connected to this lunar cycle.

This connection to moon phases aligned with ancient demon worship practices associated with lunar deities—knowledge that Fr. Cahill had acquired during his time in New Orleans, where such practices persisted among certain spiritualist groups.

Other Manifestations

The haunting extended far beyond the mysterious clippings:

Invisible Forces: Pottery and dishes would be pushed off shelves by unseen hands and smashed on the floor. Visitors reported feeling themselves pushed or touched by invisible presences.

Flying Objects: Fireplace stones that had been cemented in place would come loose and be thrown at visitors, sometimes catching their clothes on fire. This particular manifestation was especially terrifying—people attending the house risked physical harm.

Violent Shaking: The house itself would shake violently, as if in an earthquake. The porch would vibrate so severely that people feared it would collapse. During the later blessing by Fr. Cahill, the first sprinkle of holy water caused the porch to shake so dramatically that he thought "the wood slats would fall off the risers."

Sound of Horses and Wagons: Perhaps the most persistent manifestation was the sound of galloping horses and wagons circling the house, especially at night. The noise would keep the family awake for hours, yet nothing was ever visible outside. The thundering sound was so loud that neighbors could hear it from a distance.

Apparitions: During Fr. Cahill's initial blessing, witnesses saw "coalescing smoke in the shape of a human torso." The demon took visible form, though only partially and briefly.

The Wizard: Eve Livingston had the ability to see the entity fully. She called it "the Wizard"—a spiritual being with intelligence and malevolent intent. What she saw terrified her, though she never described it in detail.

The Psychological Toll

The sustained supernatural assault took a devastating toll on the family. Mary Ann Livingston suffered a complete nervous breakdown and spent months recovering at a friend's home miles away, unable to bear the haunting any longer.

Adam became increasingly desperate. The haunting affected not just his family's peace of mind but also his livelihood. Visitors fled in terror, laborers refused to work on the property, and neighbors grew frightened. The supernatural activity marked him as cursed, and isolation deepened his desperation.

Failed Attempts at Relief

Adam sought help from every quarter:

Lutheran Ministers: As someone of German Lutheran background, Adam first turned to Lutheran ministers. They attempted to help but fled in fear after witnessing the manifestations firsthand.

Presbyterian Ministers: Presbyterian clergy also attempted to address the haunting. They too departed hastily, unable to cope with the supernatural phenomena.

Methodist Ministers: Methodist preachers tried various approaches, including prayer and spiritual warfare techniques. None succeeded, and they too left in defeat.

The Winchester Spiritualist: In desperation, Adam sent word to a known conjurer—a spiritualist or folk magic practitioner in the Winchester mountains. This man had a reputation for dealing with supernatural problems. However, when the spiritualist heard the details of the case, he refused to come. His message to Adam was chilling: "You need a true Christian minister." The implication was clear—this was beyond folk magic or conjuring. This required genuine spiritual authority.

Every attempt failed. The haunting continued unabated for three years. Adam's situation seemed hopeless.

The Dreams

In his desperation, Adam began having vivid, recurring dreams. In these dreams, he saw a man—always the same man—with red hair and a red beard, blue eyes, and a distinctive facial structure. In the dreams, this man appeared calm, authoritative, and somehow connected to Adam's salvation from the haunting.

The dreams became more insistent. Adam felt certain that if he could find this man, the haunting would end. But he had no idea who the man was or where to find him.

It was the McSherry family who provided the answer. When Adam described his dream to Richard and Anastasia McSherry, they immediately recognized the description: it was Fr. Denis Cahill, the Catholic priest who said Mass in Shepherdstown.

The Intervention: Father Cahill Arrives

The Meeting at Mass

On a Sunday in 1797, the McSherrys brought Adam and his daughter Eve to Mass at Fr. Cahill's church in Shepherdstown. Adam sat in the back with the McSherrys, nervous and uncertain. He was an avowed anti-Catholic entering a Catholic church for the first time in his life.

When Fr. Cahill entered and greeted the congregation, Adam saw him clearly for the first time. It was the man from his dreams—exactly as he had seen him, down to the red hair, red beard, and blue eyes.

Adam could not contain himself. He stood up in the middle of the service and shouted: "That is the man who can relieve me!"

The entire congregation turned to stare. Fr. Cahill was shocked—he knew nothing of Adam Livingston or the Wizard Clip haunting. But after Mass, surrounded by trusted parishioners including the McSherrys, Fr. Cahill heard the full story.

Initial Skepticism

Fr. Cahill's first reaction was skepticism. He laughed at Adam, suggesting that his neighbors were playing pranks on him. Supernatural hauntings of this magnitude seemed far-fetched, even to a priest experienced in spiritual warfare.

But the McSherrys and other respected members of the community vouched for Adam. They urged Fr. Cahill to at least investigate. They reminded him of his calling as a priest to combat evil wherever it appeared.

The First Visit

Fr. Cahill agreed to visit the Livingston farm, accompanied by Adam, the McSherrys, and Gabriel Menghini, a trusted layman from Shepherdstown. What they would witness would convince even the skeptical priest that this was no prank.

The manifestations occurred on schedule, during the dark of the moon. Fr. Cahill saw the clipped linens with his own eyes. He heard the inexplicable sounds of shears. He felt the house shake. He witnessed pottery flying from shelves. The evidence was overwhelming and terrifying.

Fr. Cahill examined the cut linens closely. His experience in New Orleans allowed him to recognize the crescent moon symbolism. "This is the same," he said, "a demon related to the ancient moon god."

The Blessing

Though Fr. Cahill had no authority to perform a formal exorcism without Bishop Carroll's permission, he decided to bless the house using holy water and blessed salt. These sacramentals—physical objects blessed by the Church—carried spiritual power to combat evil.

The moment Fr. Cahill stepped onto the porch and sprinkled the first drops of holy water, the house erupted in supernatural fury. The porch shook violently. The walls vibrated. Inside, they heard rumbling sounds like wagons and galloping horses circling the home at tremendous speed.

Fr. Cahill and his companions moved through every room of the house, blessing each space aggressively with holy water while Fr. Cahill recited prayers in Latin. The supernatural

responses intensified—noises, vibrations, apparitions of smoke coalescing into a human torso, and the deafening sound of invisible horses and wagons.

"I was not tempted to run, but to fight," Fr. Cahill later reported. "I am a priest called by God to combat evil. That is my only job. The tools at my disposal are only those of the church, the sacraments, and sacramentals, and of course prayer and fasting."

The blessing worked—temporarily. When Fr. Cahill left that night, the house was peaceful. Adam was amazed. After three years of terror and countless failed attempts by other ministers, a Catholic priest had brought relief.

The Warning

But Fr. Cahill warned Adam solemnly: the peace would not last. The blessing with holy water and salt had calmed the demon, but it had not expelled it. Without a formal exorcism, the spirit would return "with a vengeance."

Fr. Cahill explained that he had no authority to perform an exorcism without explicit permission from Bishop Carroll. He also explained what would be required if Adam wanted a permanent solution: full conversion to Catholicism, baptism into the Church, and a life of obedience, sacraments, and prayer.

Adam agreed to everything. He would do whatever was necessary to end the haunting and protect his family. He committed to learning the Catholic faith and converting sincerely, not just as a desperate bargaining chip.

Fr. Cahill departed for Baltimore to seek the bishop's authorization.

The Exorcism: Spiritual Warfare

Seeking Permission

Fr. Cahill's journey to Baltimore was itself a crisis. He was going to plead with Bishop Carroll for permission to perform an exorcism, but his relationship with the bishop was strained. Fr. Cahill had been independent and sometimes insubordinate, operating without the bishop's explicit approval on previous occasions.

When Fr. Cahill arrived at the seminary in Baltimore, he faced not just the bishop but a tribunal of sorts—Monsignor Nagot and Professors Tessier and Garnier were also present. They were there to evaluate both Fr. Cahill's fitness for continued priestly ministry and his request regarding the exorcism.

Monsignor Nagot addressed him as "Mister Cahill," deliberately avoiding the title of Father or Reverend—a pointed reminder that his priestly status was in question.

The Evidence

Fr. Cahill presented his case. He described the three years of haunting, the failed attempts by Protestant ministers, Adam's prophetic dreams, and his own experiences during the blessing. Most compellingly, he produced the sample of clipped linen that Adam had given him.

The tribunal examined the cloth closely, turning it over, touching the edges of the crescent moon cutouts. The precision was undeniable. The lack of fraying was impossible to explain by natural means. Even these educated, somewhat skeptical Church officials had to admit: this was evidence of something genuinely supernatural.

"There is a supernatural aspect to this that I do not understand," Fr. Cahill said, "other than to say it's real and not of this world."

Monsignor Nagot asked to keep the sample to show Bishop Carroll. Fr. Cahill agreed.

Authorization Granted

After careful consideration, Bishop Carroll granted Fr. Cahill permission to perform the exorcism. The bishop also assigned Fr. Demetrius Gallitzin (Fr. Smith) to assist. Having two priests present was important—exorcisms were dangerous spiritual undertakings that required both primary authority and support.

The bishop's decision to allow the exorcism represented a significant moment. The Catholic Church in America was still establishing itself, still proving its legitimacy. An official Church exorcism would either demonstrate the Church's spiritual authority or become a spectacular failure that would confirm Protestant suspicions about Catholic superstition.

Return and Preparation

Fr. Cahill returned to the Livingston farm with Fr. Gallitzin. They found, as Fr. Cahill had predicted, that the demon had returned with renewed fury. The temporary peace following the blessing had ended. The manifestations were worse than ever—as if the demon was enraged by the previous challenge to its presence.

Fr. Cahill instructed Adam and his family in the Catholic faith, preparing them for baptism. This was not a superficial gesture but a genuine conversion. Adam, Eve, and eventually the other children committed themselves to learning Catholic doctrine and embracing the faith sincerely.

The exorcism would be performed as part of a Mass, with the baptisms incorporated into the liturgy. The spiritual rebirth of baptism would coincide with the spiritual cleansing of the exorcism.

The Exorcism Mass

On the appointed day, Fr. Cahill and Fr. Gallitzin arrived at the Livingston home, accompanied by the McSherrys, Gabriel Menghini, and other trusted Catholics. They had brought everything necessary for Mass and for exorcism—sacramental vessels, blessed water and salt, holy oils, vestments, and most importantly, the prayers of exorcism authorized by the bishop.

The Mass began. As the liturgy progressed, the supernatural manifestations intensified. The demon knew what was happening and fought back. The house shook. Objects flew. The air grew thick and oppressive.

Fr. Cahill proceeded with authority. Years of missionary work, experience with dark spiritual forces in New Orleans, and complete commitment to his calling as a priest all came together. He was fighting evil on its own ground, and he would not retreat.

The Livingston family was baptized. Water was poured over their heads. They were received into the Catholic Church. They became, in Catholic understanding, adopted children of God, marked with the sign of Christ, and under the protection of the Church.

Then came the exorcism itself—the formal prayers commanding the demon to depart.

The Demon's Confession

At the climax of the exorcism, as Fr. Cahill elevated the consecrated Host—the bread that Catholics believe becomes the literal Body of Christ—the demon manifested visibly in the corner of the room. It appeared as a swirling specter of vapor, blind and raging.

Fr. Cahill approached Adam with the Host. Adam opened his mouth and presented his tongue. Fr. Cahill reverently placed the Host on Adam's tongue—his first Holy Communion.

At that precise moment, the demon was forced to speak. In an otherworldly, strained voice, it made its confession in verse:

*Cursed this land not long ago
Stranger's mad oath neglected
Mayfield murdered now below
Toil for his soul rejected
Bones beneath the cairn lo
Eventually extracted*

*Sanctify the land and sow
His holiness requested.
I go.*

Instantly, the swirling specter exploded silently and dissolved into nothingness. The rumbling of wagons and horses ceased. The floor stopped shaking. The black vapor vanished. The oppressive atmosphere lifted.

The exorcism was complete. After three years of torment, the Livingston home was finally at peace.

The Revelation

The demon's forced confession revealed something Adam had not known: the haunting was not caused solely by the Stranger's curse. There was a second, older curse on the land itself.

The 35-acre parcel that had been disputed in the land office—the same parcel that had caused legal difficulties when Adam purchased the property—was cursed ground. Alexander Mayfield, the previous owner, had been murdered and buried there. His bones lay beneath one of the cairns on the property. The demon had committed this murder years before, cursing the land.

The Stranger's death and curse had merely triggered the manifestation of an evil that was already present, dormant in the soil itself.

Final Blessing

After the Mass and exorcism, Adam experienced a vision—a trance that lasted several minutes. He saw and heard things his companions could not. A gentle Voice spoke to him, telling him where to find Mayfield's bones and instructing him to properly bury the remains.

Adam, Fr. Cahill, and several others went to the disputed 35-acre parcel. They found the cairn the demon had referenced. Beneath it, they discovered human bones—Alexander Mayfield's remains.

They carefully removed the bones, and Fr. Cahill blessed the ground with holy water. They reverently reburied Mayfield's remains in a new grave next to the Stranger's grave in the woods. Fr. Cahill conducted a proper burial rite, giving Mayfield the Christian burial and prayers he had never received.

The land was sanctified. The curse was lifted completely. The Livingston family could begin their new life in peace.

After the Exorcism: The Voice

A New Presence

For several years following the exorcism, the Livingston family experienced another supernatural phenomenon—but this time, it was benevolent rather than malevolent.

A disembodied Voice, almost always accompanied by a bright light, began visiting them. Unlike the demon's otherworldly, strained, and terrifying voice, this Voice was gentle, kind, instructing, and filled with love.

Who Was the Voice?

The identity of the Voice remains a matter of speculation. Many believe it was Fr. Xavier—the Stranger—returned from the afterlife to complete the spiritual work that had been interrupted by his death. The Voice itself claimed to have "once been in the flesh like Adam," suggesting it had been human.

The Voice served as a catechist, teaching the Livingston family the depths of Catholic faith. It instructed them in theology, morality, prayer, and the sacraments. Under its teaching, Adam became so well-versed in Catholic doctrine that Bishop Carroll later marveled at his knowledge.

Teachings of the Voice

The Voice emphasized the supreme importance of the Mass. It told the family: "All the sighs and tears of the whole world put together were not worth so much as one Mass in which a pure God was offered up to God." It insisted that "one Mass was more acceptable to God than if the whole world was in sackcloth and ashes."

The Voice also revealed spiritual realities invisible to human eyes. It would warn the family of impending world events, the illness or death of neighbors, or when a particular person was suffering in purgatory for sins in their life. The Voice would then lead the family in prayers for hours at a time for that person's release from purgatory.

It was not uncommon for the Voice to tell Adam of people in need and urge the family to help them. Adam always complied, using his resources and time to serve others as the Voice directed.

Practical Guidance

The Voice provided practical guidance for Christian living. It taught the Livingston family how to pray, how to examine their consciences, how to approach the sacraments worthily, and how to serve others with genuine charity.

This instruction continued for several years, transforming not just Adam but his entire family into committed, knowledgeable Catholics who served as examples to their community.

The Prophecy

The Voice made one particularly significant prophecy regarding the 35 acres where Mayfield's bones had been found. It told Adam: "Before the end of time, this land will be a great place of prayer and fasting and praise!"

This prophecy would prove remarkably accurate. Today, more than two centuries later, the land serves as Priest Field—a Christian retreat center where thousands have come for prayer, fasting, reflection, and spiritual renewal. The Voice's prophecy has been fulfilled and continues to be fulfilled with each passing year.

Mary Ann's Conflict

While Adam embraced the Voice's teachings, Mary Ann Livingston remained conflicted. The Voice addressed her specifically and sternly, warning her: "If she would not submit to the rules of the Roman Catholic Church, she would open up her eyes in Hell."

The Voice also predicted Mary Ann would die in her own house. This prophecy troubled her enough that when she became ill while visiting friends, she absolutely refused to return home, determined to prove the Voice wrong. However, as her condition worsened, she eventually begged to be taken back. She died in her own house, exactly as the Voice had predicted.

Mary Ann's struggle reminds us that even witnessing miracles does not automatically transform the human heart. Free will remains, and each person must choose how to respond to grace.

The Legacy: From Haunting to Holiness

Adam's Gift

As an act of penance and thanksgiving to God for his conversion and deliverance, Adam Livingston decided to donate the 35-acre parcel to the Catholic Church. This was the same

land that had been contested in the land office, where Mayfield's bones had been found, and about which the Voice had made its prophecy.

Under Virginia law at the time, Mary Ann had to consent to the donation since she held rights to one-third of all property. Initially, she refused, as evidenced in her letter to the Potowmack Guardian in 1798. However, a few years later, she relented and the deed was executed.

The deed specifically named Fr. Denis Cahill as the recipient, stating that Adam was "conscious to bestow on the said Reverend Denis Cahill some lasting proof of his esteem for him and the religion, the principles of which he inculcates and enforces by his example."

The deed also stipulated that if no priest could reside on the land, it should be rented and the profits "applied towards building and repairing a church or chapel thereupon."

For Adam, the donation represented a 10% tithe of his total land holdings—a biblical principle of giving back to God a portion of what had been received.

Fr. Cahill's Response

Fr. Denis Cahill never actually took possession of the land. His missionary work kept him constantly moving throughout Western Maryland and Virginia, establishing parishes and serving scattered Catholic communities. He had no settled residence and could not maintain a permanent home on the donated property.

However, the gesture was deeply meaningful. The deed represented Adam's gratitude and the formal connection between the land and Catholic ministry—a connection that would endure for centuries.

The Livingston Family's Later Years

After the exorcism and years of instruction from the Voice, the Livingston family lived as devout Catholics. Adam attended Mass whenever a priest was available in the region. He continued his work as a farmer, though he eventually retired from active farming.

Eve continued to weave throughout her life. The linens she produced—made with the same craft that had once been the target of demonic destruction—were used in Catholic churches throughout America as altar cloths and other liturgical linens. What the demon had tried to destroy, Eve transformed into instruments of worship.

Both Eve and her brother Henry died relatively young but lived exemplary Christian lives of service to the Church and community.

After his wife and children died, Adam sold the remainder of his farm and moved to Bedford County, Pennsylvania, about twenty miles from Loretto where Fr. Gallitzin had established his community. Fr. Gallitzin visited Adam repeatedly, celebrating Mass in his home.

Adam died in the spring of 1820, still attentive to his Christian duties to the very end. His last illness came so suddenly that he died without receiving the last rites of the Church—a final irony given that the entire haunting had begun because he refused to find a priest for a dying man.

Public Response

The Wizard Clip haunting became widely known throughout the region. Dozens of people witnessed the supernatural events firsthand. The story spread through word of mouth, newspaper accounts, and eventually written histories.

The events proved both fascinating and controversial. Some saw them as proof of supernatural realities and Catholic spiritual authority. Others dismissed them as superstition or fraud, though the sheer number of credible witnesses made dismissal difficult.

In 1798, Rev. Lawrence Sylvester Phelan, a Catholic priest installed in Hagerstown after Fr. Cahill's removal from that parish, visited the Livingstons and wrote a critical account for the Potowmack Guardian. Fr. Phelan was skeptical of the supernatural claims and critical of Mary Ann Livingston's behavior.

This public skepticism from a Catholic priest illustrated the controversy surrounding the events. Not everyone in the Church embraced the story, even though Bishop Carroll had authorized the exorcism.

Historical Documentation

In 1870, more than seventy years after the events, Rev. Joseph M. Finotti, S.J., compiled a 143-page monograph titled "The Mystery of the Wizard Clip." Fr. Finotti gathered accounts and remembrances from anyone with knowledge of the events, creating the most comprehensive historical record available.

Fr. Finotti acknowledged the challenges: "No preface seems needed to a compilation of documents which are laid before the people without a determined intent to force a conclusion upon the mind of the reader. My aim has been, simply, to gather information about events which occurred more than three-quarters of a century ago lest they perish from the memory of the third and following generations."

The accounts Fr. Finotti compiled were divergent and sometimes contradictory—as oral histories often are. Yet the core narrative remained consistent across all sources: supernatural haunting, failed attempts at relief, prophetic dreams, Catholic intervention, exorcism, and conversion.

The Name Lives On

The town originally known as Smithfield became known as Wizard Clip or Clip Town—names that persist even today. The supernatural events so dominated local consciousness that they literally renamed the community.

This renaming represents how deeply the events affected the region. More than two centuries later, the Wizard Clip name endures, keeping the memory of these extraordinary events alive.

Priest Field Today

The Prophecy Fulfilled

Today, the 35 acres (now expanded to 40 acres) that Adam Livingston donated to the Catholic Church operates as Priest Field, a Christian retreat center. The Voice's prophecy—"Before the end of time, this land will be a great place of prayer and fasting and praise!"—has been remarkably fulfilled.

Priest Field describes itself as "a center for Christian life where people can walk with Jesus and experience Him through personal and group retreats, authentic community, and the beauty of our creek-side cedar forest in wild, wonderful West Virginia."

Location and Setting

Priest Field is located in Middleway, West Virginia, along the Opequon Creek in the Shenandoah Valley. The property features wooded trails, the historic creek that bounded Livingston's original farm, and natural beauty that provides a peaceful setting for spiritual reflection.

The exact location of Adam Livingston's original farmhouse remains uncertain. The deed description and historical records provide general boundaries, but time and landscape changes have obscured the precise site. However, the land itself—particularly the northern corner alongside the Opequon and what was historically Charles Town Road—maintains its identity and purpose.

Visiting Priest Field

Priest Field welcomes visitors for:

Personal Retreats: Individuals seeking time for prayer, reflection, and spiritual renewal can arrange stays at Priest Field. The peaceful setting and historic significance provide a unique environment for encountering God.

Group Retreats: Churches, youth groups, and other organizations can book Priest Field for group retreat experiences.

Walking Trails: The property features trails through the cedar forest along Opequon Creek, allowing visitors to experience the natural beauty of the land while reflecting on its remarkable history.

Day Visits: While overnight accommodations may require advance booking, the site welcomes visitors who wish to walk the grounds, pray, and learn about the Wizard Clip history.

Historical Connection

When you visit Priest Field today, you are walking on ground that witnessed some of the most extraordinary supernatural events in American history. You are standing where Adam Livingston's farm once stood, where a mysterious Stranger died without last rites, where supernatural forces tormented a family for three years, and where two Catholic priests performed an exorcism that delivered them.

You are on land that was cursed, then blessed, then donated to the Church, and finally transformed into a place of prayer—exactly as the Voice prophesied.

Spiritual Significance

For Catholic visitors, Priest Field represents several important realities:

The Reality of Spiritual Warfare: The Wizard Clip events demonstrate that evil spiritual forces are real and can affect the physical world. They also demonstrate that the Church's spiritual authority—expressed through the sacraments, sacramentals, and formal exorcism—has genuine power to combat evil.

The Power of Conversion: Adam Livingston's transformation from hostile skeptic to devoted Catholic illustrates the transformative power of grace. His story reminds us that no one is beyond God's reach.

The Communion of Saints: The Voice that instructed the Livingston family after the exorcism suggests the ongoing interaction between the earthly Church and those who have

died in Christ. Whether the Voice was Fr. Xavier or another blessed soul, it demonstrates the Catholic belief that death does not sever the bonds of Christian community.

Sacred Space: Certain places become sacred through the events that occur there. Priest Field is such a place—consecrated by supernatural visitation, exorcism, and prophetic promise.

For visitors of any faith tradition or no religious tradition, Priest Field offers:

Historical Interest: The Wizard Clip haunting is among the best-documented paranormal events in American history, with multiple credible witnesses and contemporary accounts.

Natural Beauty: The Opequon Creek, cedar forests, and Shenandoah Valley setting provide a beautiful environment regardless of one's interest in the supernatural history.

Reflection on Mystery: The events at Wizard Clip invite us to consider realities beyond the material world and to remain open to mystery and wonder.

Nearby Historical Sites

Visitors to Priest Field may also wish to explore:

St. Agnes Church, Shepherdstown: This Catholic church features a stained glass window depicting Fr. Denis Cahill on horseback—a beautiful tribute to the missionary priest who performed the Wizard Clip exorcism. The church continues the Catholic presence Fr. Cahill established in the region.

Shepherdstown: One of the oldest towns in West Virginia, Shepherdstown was where Fr. Cahill said Mass and where Adam Livingston first met him. The town retains much of its historic character.

Harper's Ferry: Just a short drive away, this historic town offers insights into the region's broader history, including its role in the Civil War.

Charles Town: Named for George Washington's brother Charles, this town is near the Wizard Clip site and offers additional historical context for the region.

Planning Your Visit

For current information about visiting Priest Field, including retreat opportunities, trail access, and special events, visitors should contact Priest Field directly through their website or phone.

The site is most meaningful when approached with some historical knowledge. Reading this guidebook before your visit will help you appreciate the significance of the land and understand what occurred here more than two centuries ago.

Consider walking the trails slowly, pausing to imagine what happened on this ground: a desperate farmer seeking relief from supernatural torment, two brave priests facing demonic forces, a family transformed by conversion, and a Voice promising that this land would become a place of prayer.

That promise has been kept. You are standing in its fulfillment.

Understanding the Events: Historical and Theological Perspectives

Historical Credibility

The Wizard Clip haunting is unusually well-documented for a paranormal event. Unlike many ghost stories that rely on folklore or single-source accounts, the Wizard Clip events have:

Multiple Credible Witnesses: Dozens of people witnessed the supernatural manifestations, including respected community members, multiple Protestant ministers, and Catholic clergy.

Contemporary Documentation: Letters between Fr. Cahill and Bishop Carroll, written at the time of the events, survive in Church archives. These provide firsthand accounts from the primary actors.

Physical Evidence: The clipped linens existed as physical artifacts. Multiple people examined them, and samples were taken to Baltimore and Conewago for inspection.

Newspaper Accounts: The Potowmack Guardian published articles about the events in 1798, providing contemporary journalistic record.

Multiple Written Histories: Fr. Gallitzin wrote accounts years after the events. In 1870, Fr. Finotti compiled a comprehensive monograph. In 1990, Raphael Brown and Rev. Msgr. John L. O'Reilly published a detailed history. Multiple historians have examined the events over two centuries.

Lack of Financial Motive: Unlike some paranormal claims that enriched the claimants, the Wizard Clip events brought Adam Livingston no financial benefit. If anything, they harmed his reputation and business. There was no motive for fraud.

Ecclesiastical Approval: The Catholic Church, which is generally cautious about claims of supernatural phenomena, authorized an official exorcism. This required the bishop to be convinced that the events were genuinely supernatural and not explicable by natural causes or psychological factors.

Skeptical Perspectives

Despite the documentation, skeptics have questioned various aspects of the Wizard Clip story:

Psychological Explanations: Some have suggested that the events were manifestations of psychological distress, particularly given Mary Ann's nervous breakdown. However, this fails to explain the multiple independent witnesses or the physical evidence of the clipped linens.

Mass Hysteria: The theory of mass hysteria might explain some witness accounts but struggles to account for the physical artifacts and the fact that multiple Protestant ministers witnessed events independently before fleeing.

Fraud: Some skeptics have suggested deliberate fraud by the Livingston family or Catholic conspirators seeking converts. However, the lack of financial motive, the multiple independent witnesses, and the fact that Protestant ministers witnessed events without Catholic clergy present make this explanation implausible.

Natural Phenomena Misinterpreted: Perhaps the most sophisticated skeptical approach suggests that unusual but natural phenomena (possibly including early psychological dysfunction, property disputes, and religious tensions) were interpreted through a supernatural lens by people predisposed to such interpretations. This acknowledges the sincerity of the witnesses while questioning their interpretations.

Theological Interpretation

From a Catholic theological perspective, the Wizard Clip events illustrate several important principles:

The Reality of Evil: Catholic theology teaches that Satan and demons are real spiritual beings with intellect and will, though they are created beings (fallen angels) and not equal to God. The Wizard Clip events demonstrate this reality dramatically.

Spiritual Authority: The Church claims spiritual authority over evil spirits, exercised through the sacraments (especially the Eucharist) and through the formal rite of exorcism. The Wizard Clip exorcism demonstrates this authority in action.

Sacramentals: Holy water, blessed salt, and other sacramentals have genuine spiritual power when used with faith. Fr. Cahill's initial blessing with these sacramentals provided temporary relief even before the formal exorcism.

The Importance of Obedience: Fr. Cahill's recognition that he needed the bishop's permission to perform an exorcism illustrates the Catholic understanding of Church authority and the importance of priestly obedience to one's bishop.

Conversion of Heart: Adam Livingston's transformation was not just an intellectual acceptance of Catholic doctrine but a genuine conversion of heart—a complete reorientation of his life toward God.

The Communion of Saints: The Voice that instructed the family after the exorcism suggests the ongoing connection between the earthly Church and the Church in heaven, with the blessed dead continuing to care for and assist the living.

Providence: The entire sequence of events—from the Stranger's arrival to Adam's prophetic dreams to Fr. Cahill's appearance—suggests divine providence working through human free will and even through demonic opposition to bring about good.

Protestant Perspectives

Protestant Christians would interpret these events differently than Catholics in certain respects:

Spiritual Warfare: Most Protestants would agree that the events demonstrate genuine spiritual warfare between God's kingdom and Satan's forces.

Biblical Precedent: The events parallel biblical accounts of demonic possession and deliverance, particularly in the Gospels.

Authority Through Christ: Many Protestants would emphasize that spiritual authority comes through faith in Christ rather than through sacramental rituals or Church hierarchy. They might interpret the successful exorcism as a result of genuine Christian faith rather than specifically Catholic authority.

The Role of Conversion: Protestants would emphasize Adam's personal faith and conversion to Christianity (understood broadly) rather than specifically his conversion to Catholicism.

Questions About Post-Death Communication: Many Protestants would be skeptical of the Voice being a deceased person returning to instruct the living, preferring to see such phenomena as either divine angelic messengers or potentially continued demonic deception.

Academic Historical Perspective

Professional historians approach the Wizard Clip events as cultural and religious history rather than attempting to verify or debunk the supernatural claims:

Regional Religious Context: The events occurred during a crucial period of American Catholic development and Protestant-Catholic tension. They illustrate how religious communities established authority and identity in frontier regions.

Folk Religion and Popular Belief: The Wizard Clip story reflects the complex interaction between official Church teaching and popular religious belief in early America.

Oral History and Memory: The divergent accounts compiled by Fr. Finotti demonstrate how oral history functions and how collective memory shapes and reshapes narrative.

Gender and Power: The different responses of Adam and Mary Ann Livingston reflect gender dynamics and women's agency in early American religious life.

Material Culture: The clipped linens represent an unusual instance of material evidence for claimed supernatural events, making the Wizard Clip case particularly interesting for historians.

Questions and Reflection

As you conclude this guidebook and perhaps prepare to visit Priest Field, consider these questions:

For All Visitors:

- What draws you to this story and this place?
- How do you respond to claims of supernatural events? What convinces you or makes you skeptical?
- What does the transformation of cursed ground into a place of prayer suggest about redemption and hope?
- How do you understand the relationship between the physical world and spiritual realities?

For Christian Visitors:

- What does this story teach about the nature of evil and God's power to overcome it?
- How does Adam Livingston's conversion speak to your own spiritual journey?

- What role does community play in spiritual warfare and deliverance?
- How do you understand the Voice that instructed the Livingston family? Was it genuinely a deceased person, an angel, or something else?

For Catholic Visitors:

- What does this story teach about the Church's spiritual authority?
- How do the sacraments and sacramentals function as spiritual weapons?
- What does Fr. Cahill's obedience to the bishop reveal about Church structure and authority?
- How does this story illuminate the Catholic understanding of purgatory, the communion of saints, and prayer for the dead?

For Historical and Paranormal Enthusiasts:

- What makes the Wizard Clip case more or less credible than other claimed paranormal events?
- How do we evaluate historical evidence for supernatural claims?
- What can we learn from the divergent witness accounts?
- How has this story shaped regional identity and memory?

A Final Word

The Wizard Clip Haunting is, above all, a story of transformation. Cursed ground became holy ground. A terrified family found peace. A skeptical farmer became a devoted Catholic. Evil was confronted and defeated. And land once marked by murder and supernatural terror became a place of prayer, fasting, and praise—exactly as prophesied.

Whether you approach this story as history, as faith, as folklore, or as paranormal investigation, it invites wonder and reflection. Something extraordinary happened on this land more than two hundred years ago. The evidence is substantial, the witnesses credible, the transformation undeniable.

Today, Priest Field continues the mission Adam Livingston began when he donated this land to the Church. It serves as a place where people encounter God, find peace, and experience spiritual renewal. The Voice's prophecy continues to be fulfilled with each retreat, each prayer, each quiet walk along the Opequon Creek.

As you visit Priest Field or reflect on the Wizard Clip story, may you encounter whatever truth you need most. May you find peace in this place that overcame terror. And may you carry with you the central message of the Wizard Clip Haunting: no darkness is so deep that light cannot overcome it, no curse so strong that blessing cannot break it, and no soul so lost that grace cannot find it.

The Wizard Clip Haunting reminds us that we live in a world charged with mystery, where the boundaries between seen and unseen are thinner than we might imagine, where evil is real but God's power is greater, and where ground cursed by murder can become a sanctuary of prayer.

Welcome to Priest Field. Welcome to the land where the Wizard Clip haunting occurred and where prophecy continues to be fulfilled. May your visit bring you closer to whatever truth you seek.

Additional Resources

For More Information About Priest Field:

- Website: [Contact Priest Field directly for current website]
- Phone: [Contact for current number]
- Address: Priest Field, Middleway, WV

Historical Sources:

- Gallitzin's Letters, Angelmodde Press, Loretto, PA, 1940
- "The Mystery of the Wizard Clip," Rev. Joseph M. Finotti, S.J., 1870
- "The Mystery of the Wizard Clip: Supernatural Visitations in Old Virginia and their Remarkable Legacy," Raphael Brown and Rev. Msgr. John L. O'Reilly, 1990

Related Sites:

- St. Agnes Church, Shepherdstown, WV
 - Basilica of St. Michael the Archangel, Loretto, PA (Fr. Gallitzin's church and grave site)
 - Baltimore Diocese Associated Archives, St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore, MD
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This guidebook was compiled from historical sources including the writings of Fr. Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin, Fr. Joseph M. Finotti's 1870 monograph, Baltimore Diocese archives, and contemporary historical research. While we have endeavored to present the most accurate historical information available, some details remain uncertain or disputed. We encourage visitors to approach this remarkable story with both open minds and appropriate critical thinking.

Priest Field is private property operated as a retreat center. Please respect the property, follow posted guidelines, and contact the center in advance if you wish to visit.

May your journey to this historic and holy ground bring you peace, insight, and renewal.