

The Mothman Chronicles

The Legend Hiding In The Woods



Photo by Josh Davis
The Mothman statue stands tall in Point Pleasant, W.Va.

By Laura Flood
The Mothman Chronicles

It is an eerie quiet that fills Main Street. Walking “down town” Point Pleasant W.Va, it feels as if one has just journeyed into a David Lynch film. Signs for the local antique and coffee shops that say “we’re open” fill the empty side walk.

Jerry Kolsterman of Beaver Creeks, Ohio has come to Point Pleasant to find just one thing. It something that he can’t find in any of the antique shops, no, what he is looking for is answers; answers about the mothman.

“I am here looking for the mothman. I mean you have to believe that something is out there, why would there be so many stories if it wasn’t real,” said Kolsterman.

Point Pleasant is home to the mothman folk legend. According to local lore the mothman acts as an omen.

The creature made

its first appearance in 1966 when a local couple went to the old abandoned World War II TNT bunkers hidden in the woods. The couple reported seeing a creature with red eyes and large wings. News of the mothman was short-lived, but in 1967 the mothman would become infamous.

In 1967, Point Pleasant had one of the nation’s biggest tragedies of the time. The Silver Bridge, that connected West Virginia to Ohio collapsed, killing over 40 people. It was said that the mothman was spotted before the fall.

The creature sparked a national fascination. Newspapers from all over flocked towards the small West Virginia town. In the early 2000s, the mothman would make news again, this time as a feature film starring Richard Gere. Once again the town was swarmed

with questions about the existence of the mothman.

Instead of pushing their bizarre history to the side, many locals embraced the legend. The main advocates of the “I believe club” are the storeowners that occupy Main Street.

“Yeah something is there,” said Bob Landrum, a local shop owner. “But 1966 is incorrect for the first sighting. I did research on the topic, and you can do it, too, it was actually in the early 1700s before Ohio was settled.”

For anyone like Kolsterman who is looking for answers about the mysterious creature Landrum is the person to talk to. With his shop in the heart of town, Landrum has become one the main stops for mothman hunters. Landrum’s passion for the legend is made obvious by the paintings on his walls.

He can tell you all the history on the topic as well as accounts of the mothman.

“Yeah I have seen it, that’s how I know something is up there. You see seven different Indian tribes used roam that land, and the bunkers were placed on top of an Indian burial ground, said Landrum. Point Pleasant has a deep history in Indian culture. The Shawnee tribe used the land to harvest corn.

With the old World War II TNT bunkers being part of the military some believe that the military is behind the mothman, and that the government is well aware of what is happening up in the bunkers.

“You see the bunkers were closed to the public, now why would the government do that? They recently opened three, but you better believe they are still up there,” said Landrum. “I

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Tragedy on the Silver Bridge

By Isaiah Rosier
The Mothman Chronicles

“Those who lost their lives are remembered.”

These words, which commemorate the Silver Bridge collapse, are inscribed in Point Pleasant, W.Va., along with the names of those killed in the disaster.

On December 15, 1967, at about 5 p.m., the town of about 6,000

suffered a tragedy. During rush-hour traffic, the bridge suddenly buckled and collapsed, the result of an eye-bar fracture caused by stress and corrosion.

Thirty-one vehicles fell into the icy waters of the Ohio River. Forty-six people were killed, 19 of whom were from West Virginia, and nine were injured.

“The Silver Bridge collapse was one of the worst in history,” said Allison Rollins, a 21-year-old native of Point Pleasant. “When they talked about the bridge failure in Min-

nesota on the news, they brought up Point Pleasant.”

The catastrophe took an unnatural twist when residents began to claim that they had spotted the mothman, a great, winged creature, on the top of the bridge just before its collapse.

The mothman had been seen by hundreds of Point Pleasant natives and visitors in the 13 months leading up to the bridge collapse. Some say that the mysterious creature came as a messenger, trying to warn residents of the town of the impending disaster. Others blame the beast for the accident. Others still deny the being’s existence.

Jeremy Pitchford, an Ohio native who works at the Mothman Museum in Point Pleasant, said that the Silver bridge collapse prompted the bridge

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8 Witnesses Now Testifying To Seeing Flying Creature

Photo by Josh Dais
This headline was found on a copy of the Point Pleasant Register in the Mothman Museum.

Mothman Fast “Facts”

- First seen near Point Pleasant on November 15, 1966, by two couples, Steve and Mary Mallette and Roger and Linda Scarberry.
- Seen as a messenger, warning people of impending tragedies.
- Supposedly seen before the collapse of the Silver Bridge on December 15, 1967.
- Also reportedly seen before the earthquake in San Francisco, the bridge collapse in Minneapolis, the twin towers bombing in New York, and the nuclear explosion in Chernobyl.
- Its most notable feature is its glowing, red eyes, a common depiction in many reported sightings.
- Made famous by the 2002 film, *The “Mothman Prophecies,”* starring Richard Gere and Laura Linney. The Mothman is also featured in two documentaries: *“Eyes of the Mothman”* (2011) and *“Mothman Country”* (2011).
- Has boosted Point Pleasant’s economy through tourism and the annual

Mothman Festival held each fall. The festival usually brings in about 4,000 or 5,000 people for a weekend. The Mothman Museum in Point Pleasant usually sees about 40 or 50 visitors each day.

- Origin theories:
 - Some think that the mothman can be attributed to the “Curse of Cornstalk.” The Shawnee chief Cornstalk fought in the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774 and was murdered at Fort Randolph, where the town Point Pleasant was later built.
 - Some believe that the mothman is a Thunderbird, a mythical creature from Native American legends. The Thunderbird is capable of summoning storm clouds and controlling lightning.
 - Others believe the mothman was actually a Sandhill Crane, a large North American bird with red plumage around its eyes.
 - A few even believe that the mothman is some sort of alien entity.