Examples of campfire stories from the website

http://americanfolklore.net/folklore/scary-stories/

**Birth of the Jersey Devil**

**A New Jersey Legend**

**retold by S.E. Schlosser**

     A storm was raging that night in 1735, when Mother Leeds was brought to bed in childbirth. The room was full of woman folk gathered to help her, more out of curiosity than good will. They had all heard the rumors that Mother Leeds was involved in witchcraft, and had sworn she would give birth to a devil.

Tension mounted when at last the baby arrived.  It was a relief (and to some a disappointment), when the baby was born completely normal.  But a few moments later, before their terrified eyes, the child began to change. The room erupted with screams as the child grew at an enormous rate, becoming taller than a man and changing into a beast which resembled a dragon, with a head like a horse, a snake-like body and bat's wings.

As soon as it was full-grown, the monster began beating all the woman (including his mother) with its thick, forked tail. With a harsh cry, it flew through the chimney and vanished into the storm.

The Monster of Leeds, or the Jersey Devil as he was later called, still haunts the pines of New Jersey, wrecking havoc upon farmer's crops and livestock, poisoning pools and creeks, and appearing on the New Jersey shore just before a ship wreck.

### **The Jersey Devil and the Dog**

**A New Jersey Legend**

**retold by**

**S.E. Schlosser**

It was a week of pandemonium! In January of 1909, the Jersey Devil emerged from the Pine Barrens and began terrorizing the local communities, both in New Jersey and in Pennsylvania. Devil hunts failed to catch the flying creature, which danced on rooftops, stalked small animals, and frightened the good people of the area with its unexpected appearances in their yards and businesses. The newspapers carried the reports along with sketches of the unusual creature.

Mrs. Sorbinski, a resident of South Camden, followed the stories of the Jersey Devil with skepticism tempered with fear. She wasn't sure if a creature that resembled a dragon, with a head like a horse, a snake-like body and bat's wings could possibly exist. It seemed a lot of hokum to her, although several prominent people claimed to have encountered the critter.

Toward the end of the week, Mrs. Sorbinski discovered the truth about the Jersey Devil the hard way. Hearing a commotion in her yard, she hurried outside with a broom in hand. She was concerned for the safety of her dog-and with good reason. The pet, which had been left outside, was in the claws of a beast which resembled a dragon, with a head like a horse, a snake-like body and bat's wings. It was the Jersey Devil. Mrs. Sorbinski valiantly flailed at the Devil with her broom, trying to make the creature let go of her beloved pet. Upset by the stinging blows of the broom, the strange creature released the dog. Then it flew right at her. Mrs. Sorbinski was terrified. The attack had come so unexpectedly that she had no time to move. At the last second, the Jersey Devil veered away and sailed over the fence.

Relief unfroze her muscles. Grabbing up her dog, Mrs. Sorbinski screamed in panic and shock as she carried her pet indoors and phoned for help. Patrolmen Crouch and Cunningham were dispatched to the house. As they strove to calm Mrs. Sorbinski and the gathered neighbors, the officers heard piercing screeches from the standpipe in Kaighn Hill. The officers ran to the location. Silhouetted against the sky was a large creature which resembled a dragon, with a head like a horse, a snake-like body and bat's wings. The Jersey Devil was still in town!

The officers emptied their revolvers in vain at the creature, but their bullets did not faze the creature. It stretched up and up into the darkened sky as if it mocked them, ignoring the clamor of the patrolmen and the crowd. Finally, the creature flapped its large wings and flew lazily away into the night.

For two more days, the Jersey Devil continued to plague the area. Then it disappeared as suddenly as it had come. No one knew why it had emerged from the Pine Barrens, or why it so suddenly stopped its foraging. But everyone, especially Mrs. Sorbinski and her dog, was relieved that the Jersey Devil was gone.

### **Army of the Dead**

A South Carolina Ghost Story

retold by

S. E. Schlosser

A laundress, newly moved to Charleston following the Civil War, found herself awakened at the stroke of twelve each night by the rumble of heavy wheels passing in the street. But she lived on a dead end street, and had no explanation for the noise. Her husband would not allow her to look out the window when she heard the sounds, telling her to leave well enough alone. Finally, she asked the woman who washed at the tub next to hers. The woman said: "What you are hearing is the Army of the Dead. They are Confederate soldiers who died in hospital without knowing that the war was over. Each night, they rise from their graves and go to reinforce Lee in Virginia to strengthen the weakened Southern forces."

The next night, the laundress slipped out of bed to watch the Army of the Dead pass. She stood spell-bound by the window as a gray fog rolled passed. Within the fog, she could see the shapes of horses, and could hear gruff human voices and the rumble of canons being dragged through the street, followed by the sound of marching feet. Foot soldiers, horsemen, ambulances, wagons and canons passed before her eyes, all shrouded in gray. After what seemed like hours, she heard a far off bugle blast, and then silence.

When the laundress came out of her daze, she found one of her arms was paralyzed. She has never done a full days washing since.

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| Characteristics | Criteria |
| Tone | Scary |
| Location | Described in a way to seem scary |
| Story | Takes something normal and twists it to something unbelievable but still interesting |
| Characters | Monster, big, scary |

MY EXAMPLE

There was a thunderstorm outside but that would not stop the birth of Mother Leeds 13th child. All the rumors of the town of if it will be a human or a monster were about to come true. The midwives were begged that if the child was born a boy to kill it…but they believed that each baby was a gift from God. Scream after scream the baby was born as a handsome boy. You could feel the tension relax throughout the Pine Barrens. The storm grew louder as a midwife spread the good news to the other children. Then a shriek was cried out that no human, not even a baby, could make. The baby’s eyes turned red, the face became more angular and long, bones pulling and twisting in ways that no one thought possible. The body had just grown in double the size in a matter of seconds and small arms are now long with deathly claws. One of the older daughters yelled “kill it” as this monster was going towards her. By now, this once handsome little boy is now the size of a grown man with thick, black fur covering its body and tail. The creature grabbed one of its sisters and began eating her!! And wings appeared and opened from its back. Mother Leeds still in a daze just looked around and could only mumble “my little boy…no not my little boy…” The midwives went to make a run for it as one of the younger boys say “don’t abandon us” and with that the midwives got out of the house alive.