

## The Strange Diary of Anna Dupree

By Wayne Peake

Letter From Colonel Fuller to Professor Amsted  
November 17, 1864

Dear Professor Amsted

I hope this letter finds you well, my dear friend. I have recently made the most remarkable discovery. It may shed some light on the mysterious devastation of Essex County in 1789. Perhaps what occurred there was not entirely the result of infectious disease as you have so often maintained. The discovery in question has led me to doubt many of my previous convictions as to the nature of our world; the absoluteness of its physical laws. My once firm resolve that no supernatural or occult forces exist has definitely been undermined, to say the least. Thus have I acquired a new found respect for what I have often characterized as your "impractical scholarly pursuits," please do forgive me.

My discovery came one quiet Sunday afternoon at the old library off Front Street. As I was leisurely searching through its familiar historical section. I made my way to my accustomed roost. I accidentally knocked over a precariously stacked assortment of books and documents; undoubtedly left in the middle of the aisle as a sort of trap for unwary old scholars such as myself (to trip over and break their stiff necks.) I grudgingly began to re-stack the offending books, (grumbling to myself about the ineptitude of public librarians and the inevitable downfall of society as a result,) when I noticed a very old leather bound diary bearing a singularly impressive family crest, what appeared to be a white lizard-like creature on a black shield, the stems of five red roses complete with thorns encircling it. Its' iron lock was detailed with Celtic scrollwork and looked quite formidable. But it had been forced open at some point in the past. The hinges were still stubborn with rust but with some not too gentle persuasion and the point of my penknife it gave way. I opened the book and began to read from it. I was immediately captivated. The morbid narrative contained therein has left me uncharacteristically nervous, and strangely agitated.

I have no doubts as to its' authenticity, for I have verified the names, dates etc. in the Essex County Registry. Besides as a practical matter who would profit from such an outlandish though imaginative forgery? Too what purpose? I still have reservations as to the author's sanity. Though I cannot convince myself that it's simply the ravings of a mad woman. But I am getting ahead of myself. Knowing your interest in this obscure subject and desiring your opinion upon the matter I immediately set about transcribing the relevant passages for you. Those passages I have enclosed herein.

Anna Dupree's Diary  
October 13, 1789

All is lost my father is surely dying. Dr. Albright is giving him morphine for the pain. The look of anguish etched deeply on his dear face tells me it is not enough to relieve his torment, of course he never complains to anyone, least of all me. All these dreadful pallbearers in our home, has made his anguish all the more unbearable for his pride forces him to hide his debilitating pain. There encircling my father was Magistrate Philips, the Vicar Rudolph and all the rest of his fawning attendants, standing about staring like crows on a battlefield. I see them hungrily eyeing him, as if in anticipation of some gruesome feast. It makes me sick.

There is something unseemly in this... what is it they hope to gain from my father's death? For I have no doubt that if not for father's wealth, his prestige and of course a well set table these cringing hierophants would soon be off and about their own petty affairs. As for the servants they

are as silent, distant and unreachable as the stars in a moonlit sky, either unwilling or unable to offer me any solace whatsoever.

Well except for Mrs. Havers who is always trying to ease my burdens and console me whenever possible, she is such a dear. She has been near saintly in her dedication to father waiting on him hand and foot. I don't think she's slept more than a few hours since his mysterious illness began. Without her warm sheepish smile I don't know what I'd do. Even with all the strain upon her she is the only ray of sunlight in this dismal old manor.

Oh, the look upon my father's face as he coughed and spat up his lifeblood staining his bed sheets a sickly shade of crimson. I cannot purge the image from my mind. How it fills me with disgust and then with a burning shame for having such disrespectful feelings. Am I such an awful daughter? It's just that he was always so proud, so aristocratic and stately in his dress uniform. I can see him now standing head and shoulders above the crowd; his head held high, his eyes hard with authority and yet sparkling with a hidden mischief. To see my father, my earthly champion brought to this pitiful state fills me grief and uncertainty. I simply cannot bear to see him this way, wrapped in blankets helpless as an orphaned child in desperate need of a changing.

Anna Dupree's Diary  
October 16, 1789

He is gone... I am alone. His last few hours were more peaceful; at least his face had softened somewhat from the steely mask of the past few days. He seemed to realize his end was near and to except it, finally. He called me to his side and between painful coughing fits whispered his last words in my waiting ear, "My beautiful daughter, my beloved if only your mother were still alive. I have held on as long as I could for your sake, my little one. You must not mourn me Anna, for I shall soon pass beyond the veil. I shall have peace at last, free from pain, free from the sorrows and trials of this coarse world. You must know that I love you beyond the measure of all things and that I am so very proud of the young lady you have become. You will be alright Anna, trust me." His words fell like kisses upon my wet cheek. He had another terrible coughing choking fit, he shuddered and gagged rising up convulsively lifting his arms desperately in the air, his fingers straining toward heaven, then falling back. His eyes stared wildly for an instant then went silent blank. A cold heavy silence filled the room as I bent to close his lightless eyes.

What went through his mind's eye in that last awful moment, what specter was revealed waiting upon the threshold of death or was it only a reaction to that last dreadful moment of pain? Such morbid curiosity is unbecoming I know, but I can't help dwelling upon it. As I lingered inconsolable there holding him and weeping over his lifeless form an eerily inescapable feeling crept over me... a premonition that his life was somehow intimately bound to mine and his end the beginning my own. Perhaps I'm just being foolish, I must try not to be so hopelessly grim.

Rudolf that fat oily Vicar! After strutting about for days enjoying my Father's hospitality (especially the aging port in the wine cellar) nearly forgot the last rights in his drunken stupor. He had to be prodded into it by the skinny rat-like priests that are always scurrying about his enormous swooshing tail. If I were a man! Why would God shorten my noble father's days and give that foppish simpleton a long useless life. I cannot contain myself. My emotions are running wild. I am seething mad one moment and inconsolable the next, I fear the strain is too much for me. At least the Vicar's herd of braying jackasses must soon take their leave, and then perhaps I shall be able to grieve in peace.

Anna Dupree's Diary  
October 20, 1789

It rained incessantly at the funeral, mercifully hiding the tears rolling down my cheeks. It felt as if my poor desperate heart was being strangled. My dear, dear father, you were my life, my life. Now that you are gone, whatever shall I do? Oh father, I wish I could follow you... wherever you

have gone.

I cannot remember the eulogy, nor much of anything else during the funeral. I stood sobbing at the graveside, as the other attendants faded away with their forgotten condolences. Still I remained, frozen, as if carved in marble, another ancient funerary statue in Harper's Cemetery cracking, crumbling and covered in lichen. There I stood until there was only Mrs. Havers and a few of the oldest family servants left. They crouched and jostled in their black funeral garb trying to avoid the downpour and getting caught in the torrent of water, that ran over the sides of their umbrella's, "Come away child, you'll catch your death!" she said. As she slowly warmly moved to put her arm about me, in a sudden fit I pushed her aside and shouted angrily. "I'm not your child! Get away from me." She looked at me stunned, almost spoke then slowly turned and walked away, motioning the others to follow her.

I deeply regret it now. I was so cold, so terribly rude. If only I had left with her then. She didn't deserve my spite, she was only trying to comfort me. It must have broken her tender heart, oh why do I do these things? I know she loves me. I should have realized she was deeply wounded by Father's death and needed comforting too. My only excuse is that I was in such a frightful state, although I know it is a terribly poor one.

My mind was simply numb, as I watched in mute shock as the men dropped shovel after shovel of dirt on my father's slowly disappearing coffin. I lost all sense of time. I stood alone. A sudden gust of wind woke me with its ferocity, whipping my cape about. It had me struggling to maintain my balance at the edge of the black abysmal pit that was Father's grave. The rain had slowed and the moon had arisen lending a strangely jaundiced light to the ancient cemetery. It cast long ominous shadows on the statuary and etched the granite tombs in stark relief. With an act of conscious will, I forcibly pulled myself away from the grave.

In the dim moonlight, I caught sight of the giant willow I knew my carriage to be under. The willow's branches lashed out frantically, desperately like a cornered beast, clawing back and forth as if fending off some unseen Titan. Loud, crackling, lightning sent a brilliant shower of light cascading across Harper's Ancient Cemetery. Illuminating a vision of horror that stung me with electric fright, sharp chills coursed through my spine, every hair jolted upright, tense and almost painfully alert. I suppressed a maddening urge to scream. What I saw there was truly unspeakable; even now it makes me doubt my sanity. Can hallucinations and madness be so real? Do I dare mention it even here in my faithful diary?

Anna Dupree's Diary  
October 21, 1789

I must try to purge myself of these dreadful memories and the only way I can do that, is to unburden myself here within these pages. So come what may, I have determined to leave as full an account as possible, of what transpired. What follows is that awful truth, which I have been till now so reluctant to commit to writing.

As I made my way to the carriage, I saw naked white limbs were flittering in and out along the ancient wrought iron fence, grotesques with the eyes' of rabid dogs shining eerily in the semi-darkness. A lunatics' nightmare could not freeze the blood so surely as these elongated imps in the guise of men. Every movement of those malignant revelers screamed blasphemy to my outraged senses, Oh God what horrors!

Mortal fear suddenly transformed itself into utter soul freezing terror, as a gibbering cacophony rose above storm, filling the night air with a thick sticky horror that clung there like a heavy shroud. It overpowered my senses. My knees buckled. My hands sprang up instinctively to cover my outraged ears, in the vain hope of escaping the terrifying, insane wailing. Their mind shattering screams seemed to burrow deeply into my throbbing skull, echoing there over and over again. I frantically tried to pray, to think clearly. I pleaded to God to let me escape them

unmolested.

The horses whinnied and reared against the reins that held them fast to the hitching post. The cemetery had become a lake of black sludge in the driving rain. I tried desperately to reach the safety of my carriage, the mud sucking and clinging to my boots making every movement a struggle.

With the unholy voices still echoing in my mind. I saw the horses with a last desperate effort snap their tethers and the carriage began to pull away. It was too much for my already panic frayed nerves. I lunged forward barely grabbing hold of one of the stallion's reigns. His eyes rolling in fright his nostrils flaring wildly. I tried to restrain him, but he reared up suddenly and sent me sprawling in the slimy muck. The last thing I remember is struggling back to my feet. Why should that be? Why can't I remember?

I haven't told a living soul about this, for who can I trust? Who would believe me? Now that I am here, safe and warm in my bedchamber I can hardly believe it myself. My reason flees in terror from such realities. I feel tainted by the mere sight of those leprous forms: my mind is stained with evil, the evil that oozed black and ichorous from their foul cries, the memory of which torments me even now. Could a god of mercy create such horrors?

Anna Dupree's Diary  
October 26, 1789

I'm afraid. I haven't slept well in days. Worse yet when I am able to sleep my dreams are plagued by visions, visions of the ghoulish imps stalking the old cemetery. Somehow they torment me still, offering up a banquet of unnatural fleshy delights, tempting me, beckoning me to join them in their feasting and soul blasting debauchery.

My waking hours are a nightmare of a wholly different sort, the virulent disease that killed father is spreading and we've lost another servant to it. Several others have quit either from fear of infection or mumbling something about the manor being haunted or cursed, if they only knew. My nerves are set on a razor's edge. I've been terribly short tempered with the servants; anger boils up and out of me unleashing a fury upon anyone nearby. I cannot help myself, I have never known such anger, and am powerless to hold it in check. God forgive me. I am not nearly as prepared to run the estate as I had thought, especially short handed as we are, there is so much planning, so much paper work, so much arguing. Creditors have been calling at all hours, I do not know how long I will be able to forestall them in my present state. It seems inevitable that the promise I made to father to keep the estate intact, will have to be broken. I can see no other way out then to sell a good portion of the estate.

Mrs. Havers showed me an article from the Essex County Gazette reporting that father's grave had been robbed. She was so angry she swore like a sailor. All the while fuming and puffing, it's the first time I had ever heard her curse. It was so unlike her, so utterly madcap. I had a hard time not laughing aloud.

I should also mention here, a dozen other stories of grave robberies and missing persons within the last several days. The magistrate Philips will undoubtedly be here tomorrow to begin his investigation. How awful, how could someone do something like that? It's well ...monstrous. Perhaps that is what I saw in Harper's Cemetery? Grave robbers. I was terribly distraught over father's death. No, they were no ordinary grave robbers! They were stark naked hobgoblins dancing to the devil's wicked delight! Maybe I should see a Doctor? Perhaps he could give me something to help me sleep? No, no, no I trust my senses, I am not mad, not in the least. Besides they would only have me locked away. I shall do nothing too disgrace the family name or jeopardize our estates.

Anna Dupree's Diary

October 27, 1789

They have found me. I hear the voices.

By Colonel Fuller

Footnote to transcribed texts:

From here Anna's Diary becomes more erratic, the writing is almost a scrawl compared to the elegant handwriting found earlier in the Diary. Also, the pages now become filled with drawings. Some of these have a very intriguing character resembling hieroglyphics, not Egyptian or any cultural type I am familiar with but they appear to be some sort of enigmatic pictograms.

Anna Dupree's Diary

October 28, 1789

I found poor Mrs. Havers this morning sprawled upon the garden steps. Oh, the horror, her body gnawed nearly to the bone, patches of grisly meat clinging to the fresh red skull. I wretched uncontrollably, then began sobbing and choking for air, right there in front of the house staff. I had to be dragged forcibly from the garden in my hysterics, the servants grabbing hold of my arms and rushing me unceremoniously back to my bedchamber. One of them must have rode off immediately for Mayfair, to bring Dr. Albright to me. The gentleman arrived shortly before midnight. He tried to cheer me with his usual charming bedside manner but I could see that he was under quite a strain himself. He looked old, drawn and more exhausted then I've ever seen him, his hair nearly all white now. As if the effects of age had somehow been held at bay, then suddenly unleashed upon him, aging him over night. He has given me some sedatives and ordered me to bed.

So here I remain trying to sleep, but cannot, even with the sedatives for my mind is a racing torrent of terror and doubt. A relentless tidal wave of emotion floods my mind with grief, drowning me in hopelessness. God help us, the only way I could recognize my dear Mrs. Havers was by her shredded garments and the jewel encrusted crucifix she wore. I never realized how much I truly loved my dear matron or how much I depended upon her and now she is gone. I deeply regret all my mean-spirited and senseless teasing of her. I dearly wish I could apologize to her for all the petty spiteful things I'd done, but even more I wish, I could have confessed the love that I had for her, while she yet lived. But now it is too late, too late.

I shall never, ever venture to those accursed bloody stairs again as long as I live! The fear of reliving that hellish vision binds me more surely then chains of adamant. It shall haunt me forever. I will not think of it.

Magistrate Philips has just left. He seemed unsettled, and all too anxious to leave my somber bedchamber. He has made arrangements to see to poor Mrs. Havers funeral and for that I am truly grateful. He was reluctant to talk about the circumstances surrounding the desecration of Father's grave. When I insisted he tell me all he knew, his answer was he suspected some miscreant had dug it up and stolen it. Probably to sell to doctor's for anatomical research or some such thing. But if that's the case why steal one of the gentry's bodies, when so many are dying of this disease? Even more asinine was his suggestion that Mrs. Havers was eaten by wild dogs, wild dogs! Does he think I am a child? He cannot believe such nonsense! If only I dared reveal my secret, but I cannot.

Andre, another of my oldest and dearest servants has left me. As long as I can remember he has been with us. I think he was born here on the estate. I used to sit on his knee and talk with him whenever I snuck away to play in the stables. Andre held his tattered old hat tenderly in his large calloused hands, repeating his apologies over and over for leaving me so soon after Father's death. Making the sign of the cross with each new apology, I could tell he was close to tears. I wished more than anything, this stalwart serf would stay and fight with me! Then his kindly face deeply etched with time and worn by labors became suddenly solemn, staring intently into my eyes, he warned me to flee the old manor. Forgetting for one brief moment that I was his mistress

and he only a serving man, he almost insisted I leave, because, as he put it, "the very devil himself has laid claim to this land." I laughed this off with an act of haughty confidence, I did not truly feel, "It is all right Andre, never fear I am more than a match for any bogeyman, and God help any who tries to drive me from my land's." "The Lord Bless, and keep you mum." Andre said almost cheerily, I think I was able to ease his worries and perhaps some of the guilt he felt for leaving me in my dark hour. Why did I not instead plead with him to stay, why must I be so proud? Perhaps I could leave? If Andre has given up then something is terribly, terribly wrong. But where would I go. I don't believe I could hide from them, even if I could leave. They'd find me again I just know it.

Anna Dupree's Diary  
October 29, 1789

The voices beckoned me over and over again till just before dawn last night. If I had answered the call would it have been my body they found in the garden this morning? All these bloody deaths and the endless grunting squealing chatter will soon drive me insane, if I'm not already. It shall start again soon now. The sun's light fades.

They are here, I can feel their evil currents stirring, oh dear lord. A sulphurous stench always marks their noxious presence. What are they saying? "Come... OUT, out, out." "You called to us." Dear God, I understood that, that echoing growling, grunting pig chatter. Dear God that horrifies me, I'm so nauseas, faint... The evil in those voices was horrifying enough but to understand it! Dear God, what has become of me? What can it mean? What do you want! "Come... out to US, us, us." Why? Why do you torment me? Why? "Come... out to US, us, us." Shut up! Shut up, shut up...

Anna Dupree's Diary  
October 30, 1789

One voice stands out, more powerful than the rest in its unmatched cruelty, its lewd suggestiveness. It's so loud, so insistent! It calls out to me; it wants me to go to them. It's their penetrating into my mind's eye, leering at me, that long repulsive face, mottled mushroom white. It burns. It stretches out for me, overpowering me. "Come... out to US, us, us." "Fulfill... your BARGAIN, bargain, bargain." Sweet Emmanuel what bargain? What bargain devil! What have I done? What have I done? ...There it is again. "Feed on DEATH, death, death ... will not DIE, die, die," can no one hear it! "Come... out to US, us, us." You bloody vultures, Leave me be! "WILL, will, will... bear SEED, seed, seed." I shall kill myself before I let you touch me!

I must calm myself.

I write now while I still may for unless I am completely and utterly mad this may be the last entry in my diary. "WILL, will, will... bear SEED, seed, seed." The relentless voices grow impatient. I cannot withstand them. I must end this torment one-way or the other. If I do not go out to them, they shall soon come for me, I know it. I feel it. I know you devils. I know your secret, oh yes. You spread the disease that killed my beloved father and then fed upon his freshly interred corpse. It was you who gnawed Mrs. Havers face down to the raw red BONE. Come... out to US, us, us." fresh corpse's that's what they want! "Fresh... CORPSES, corpses, corpses YES, yes, yes." You will never ever have me, never, never...

Footnote to the transcribed text  
By Colonel Fuller

It may be of some interest to you Professor that Anna Dupree disappeared on the night of October 30, 1789 the date of the last entry in her diary. She was never seen again although Essex county records show that an extensive search was undertaken over a period of nearly three weeks, (her family was quite wealthy and of the landed gentry) her body was never

recovered.

After Anna's disappearance and presumed death the lands passed to another branch of the Dupree family. As far as I have been able to discover since that time the house has lain vacant except for some brief periods. Although suffering from some neglect it is still a grand and imposing manor by all accounts and maintained by a seasonal staff of groundskeepers and other custodians. The estate has acquired something of an infamous reputation in local folklore. But this latest bit of news I shall save for future correspondence.

P.S. I await with great anticipation your reply, as I have become somewhat engrossed in this little mystery and shall not rest until I hear all you have may have to say upon this subject.

Yours Truly  
Colonel Fuller