Waterford Ghost’s Revenge
By Carroll B. Colby

It’s not often that a ghost has a chance to get back at people still alive, but near Waterford, New York, there was supposed to have been one which did just that. The ghost’s revenge took place about 1900.

At that time, near the end of a barge canal, there lived a carpenter. He was poor and sick with tuberculosis, but he still worked hard to support his wife and two children with earnings from odd jobs about the village. Unfortunately, his own parents were particularly selfish, cruel and mercenary and demanded that he will them his house and property, which in case of his death would have gone to his wife. This, of course, the carpenter refused to do. Shortly before he did die, he warned his parents that if they did anything to harm his family after he was gone, he would come back and haunt them as long as they themselves lived. He would see to it, he said, that they would never make any profit from his house even if they did get it away from his wife.

As soon as their son had passed away, the parents undertook legal proceedings and did obtain possession of the property, evicting the impoverished wife and youngsters. The house was run down, but usable, and they hoped to rent it rather quickly. So they closed the blinds and waited for a tenant. But no tenant ever rented it, for presently discouraging things began to happen. Some of the neighbors, passing the empty house late at night, soon noticed lights shining between the shuttered windows and from between loose boards along the sides. At first they thought that perhaps the wife had come back and was secretly living there. They had liked the wife, and so did not investigate too carefully.

However, the lights continued to wave about and flicker from within, far too mysteriously for their comfort, and they began to cross the road when they passed that way after dark. Rumor spread that the son had indeed come back to make good his promise to keep the parents from making any money from the cottage. As no one wanted to rent the place it fell more and more into ruin. Even in its last years, when it was completely untenantable, the mysterious lights could be seen still.
The greedy parents nevertheless kept trying to rent or sell the place. No one would listen to them. The lights continued showing right up until the day when, with a muffled crash and a cloud of dry dust, the sagging roof finally fell in and the tottering walls collapsed into the cellar hole. Only then did the lights vanish, never to return.

No one could explain the mysterious lights, but many neighbors felt sure that the Waterford ghost had had its revenge. . . .