

THE GRAVELY ESTATE



The Hauntsville Construction Company crew working under the light of a full moon. Wonder why they guys only work at night?

Every Hauntsville resident knows Old James Gravelly. Several centuries ago his wife was murdered in the Conservatory with an Axe on the Eve of Halloween.



One witness claims he saw the murderer escaping while riding a black horse and using a pumpkin for a head, but that is just so hard to believe. Anyway, the murder has never been solved so Mildred Gravely has never forgiven James for not protecting her from the attack. James Gravely says Mildred has been haunting the old estate ever since. He has therefore hired the Hauntsville Construction Company to tear down the old house and build a new one. As you can see the construction is coming along nicely. The Hauntsville Construction Company has brought in the heavy equipment to do the excavation work but this has gone slowly as the deeper they dig the more graves they uncover and removing the bones has been taking quite some time.



Let's take a look at what has been built so far.

James Gravely wanted something classic to mark the entrance to the estates section of town so he commissioned Vulcan, a local iron worker, to manufacture an archway.



I made this archway using my scrollsaw and a piece of 1/8 inch plywood. It was spray painted black and the lettering painted with gold craft paint. It took me about 2 hours to cut out the archway.



A massive boulder retaining wall has been built to hold back the waters of Spirit Lake. I hand carved and painted these boulders using 17 inch long piece of 2 inch thick foam. First, the Hotwire Etching tool was used to cut the deep cracks between the rocks. Then I used the Hotwire Sculpting tool to roughen the individual stones. I did have to use the etching tool once again as some of my rock sculpting took away the cracks. When I was satisfied with the carving I painted the cracks black using a very fine brush and then the individual stones were painted two different colors of gray craft paint. Part of this stone breakwater can be seen on the left side of the title picture.

Next the black slate roadway was constructed over the foam base.



I started by drawing the outline of the roadway using my ever present Sharpie pen. Then, using the Hotwire Etching tool I cut the lines for the edges of the road and then used the same tool to outline each individual stone. I used gray spray paint to quickly cover the etched cracks so it would look as if each stone was individually set into mortar to hold it in place. When the spray paint dried, I used a small square paintbrush to paint the surface of each stone with a flat black craft

paint. Since the roadway curves I needed to add three extra pavers at the top to meet the staircase that will lead to the actual house. Later I'll add Woodland Scenics fine turf to install the lawn along the sides of the road.

James Gravely's lot is located only a few feet from Joe's Green Water Swamp. During the rainy season this can present a flooding issue. Therefore, James Gravely is having the Hauntsville Construction Company build an elevated foundation for his new home. The heavy equipment brought in stone to build a platform for the house and then the crew had their strong man, some guy named Frank N. Stein, lay the stone work of the wall to create a decorative appearance. I felt sorry for Frank so I gave him a hand. The elevated foundation was made from a 2 inch thick piece of foam. Then, using the Hotwire 6 inch knife tool that has a 1/8 inch thick wire to make its cuts, I cut straight lines into the edges of the foam base using a metal ruler to keep the lines straight.



After etching in each stone brick I sprayed the side of the foam with black paint to fill in the etched cracks (just like how I sprayed the cracks in the road gray) and then painted each brick either gray or black. Using the Hotwire knife I cut a small shelf into the top edge of the brick wall to create a ledge to mount the wrought iron security fence sections. One wrought iron section can be seen above. Next, using the same Hotwire knife I cut six columns each $\frac{3}{4}$ square, to place along the top of the wall to serve as platforms to mount gargoyle statues that will add a spooky and decorative touch.



The photo above shows the staircase cut from a two inch foam block using the Hotwire 6 inch knife and painted gray. The photo also shows a close up of the stones I cut and Frank then set into place. Also visible is the shallow ledge where the wrought iron fence sections will be installed. Visible on the left side is one of the stone columns, carved with the Hotwire knife that will support the gargoyle statues. I see the footings are in place for the great entry gate and arch. According to the shipping orders the arch is still on back order.

Time is getting short before the big night but I can just about see the Gravely Estate coming to life. With the construction materials removed from the property the estate really comes to life. Granted the work crew is loafing around waiting for the building to magically drop into place and Juniper, the witch who handles the landscaping still has to do some wand waving to bring in the trees and bushes, but the estate looks promising. Did you notice there is a caged ghost just waiting to be put back into the house when it is finished. I don't think we should tell James Gravely that his wife is still going to be around to haunt him.



There is still more Hauntsville to come...