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Spooky Get-Aways and Haunted Sites Worth Discovering

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People have been fascinated with the afterlife and what collectively is known as thanatourism (dark tourism) for generations. In the early 1800s, Madame Tussaud's scandalized wax sculptures provided a macabre form of entertainment and by the 1860s, "Ghost Clubs" (which evolved into paranormal investigative teams) were finding their place in history. The 19th-century Spiritualist movement fueled a widespread Victorian fascination with seances. Today, the ever-growing number of television shows, podcasts, books and other mediums have fostered a global paranormal tourism industry valued at \$31.89 billion in 2023 and projected to reach \$40.82 billion by 2034, according to AmericanGhostWalks.com.

In the Petoskey area, there are several noted haunted sites worth exploring—especially around Halloween (although spirits are present year-round). If you've had an  English while in the area, we'd love to hear your stories!

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Outdoor
Exploration in the
Petoskey Area this
November



Historic image of the Perry Hotel. Photo credit to the Greenwood Cemetery photo archives.

Spooky Stays

At the turn of the 20th century, there were 20 luxury hotels in Petoskey to lodge the thousands who traveled by steamer or train to enjoy an “Up North” experience. Only one—[The Perry Hotel](#)—remains. Built by Dr. Norman J. Perry in 1899, the magnificent brick hotel stretches out along Lewis Street between Bay and Rose streets, across from the former Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad station (also built in 1899). Newspaper accounts about the Hotel Perry (as it was originally called) noted it “will be an all-year house and will have accommodations for 250 guests. It is fitted with steam heat, elevator and all modern hotel furnishings.”

According to the [Little Traverse History Museum](#), Perry operated the hotel until 1919 when he sold it to Drs. John and George Reycraft, who had intended to convert it into a hospital. After local business leaders reinforced the need for tourist rooms, the doctors made alternate plans for their hospital and hired their nephew, D. Herbert Reycraft, as hotel manager. During his tenure, a four-story, 46-room wing was added to the building. A series of owners followed, each leaving their indelible mark on the property which is listed on both the state and national register of historic places.

HauntedPlaces.com has several entries related to The Perry, most associated with a woman in a white billowy dress. “We explored the lobby area and were just looking around,” notes Joe Hayes in a post dated May 17, 2014. “I saw a

English

Archives

October 2025

September 2025

August 2025

July 2025

June 2025

May 2025

April 2025

March 2025

February 2025

January 2025

December 2024

November 2024



woman dressed in Victorian style garb walk by me and go down some stairs. She was transparent but very easy to see. I called to my wife and we followed and once she reached the bottom of the stairway and turned, she was gone.” That same summer, Rachel wrote “during my wedding weekend I took an extra flight of steps to my room and ended up in the library. I felt a breeze and saw a white flowy dressed woman in the reflection of the glass door leading out into the hallway.”

It is likely this woman is Doris, a longtime resident spirit who frequents the common areas of the hotel—specifically the library. She has no known last name and little else about her can be found. Did she work there at one point or was she a guest?

There have also been sightings of a man in a blue suit walking around near Dr. Perry’s office on the hotel’s lower level. In recent years, there has also been a young girl with yellow curls seen wandering around the lobby, along with sightings of her in the library and times when people have seen her looking out and waving from upstairs windows. One woman even took a photograph of the hotel’s Christmas tree one year and when she reviewed the picture later at home, the girl was standing next to tree.

Additional stories from The Perry Hotel can be found in the 2012 title *Ghost Hunting Michigan: Your Travel Guide to the State’s Most Haunted Places* by Helen Pattskyn and the 2023 book *Road Less Traveled: Exploring 13 Supernatural Locations of Michigan* by Kyle Winters.

Tucked into the heart of Bay View—the 150-year-old Methodist Chautauqua just north of Petoskey—the **Terrace Inn** has welcomed guests since opening in June 1911. Built by Indiana banker William Joseph DeVol Jr., it replaced the Nash House which had been used as a restaurant for the resort community.

The *Petoskey News* called the newly opened Terrace Inn “a thing of delight, and pleasure.” Advertisements of the era noted “Electric lights and bells. Hot and cold baths on each floor. Hot water heat. Good closets. Rates 2.25 to 3.50 per day.” Within the first decade, the inn was used as a temporary hospital during World War I, although little detail is known about that time. DeVol operated the inn until his death in 1938, after which his widow and son-in-law continued to run it until 1942.

Several owners have maintained this 38-room boutique inn over the years and throughout the past century, dozens of ghost stories have been collected about as many as five individual spirits. Most notably is the “Lady in White” believed to be Elizabeth of Edward Sweet—a spirit referred to as the



"Man in Tweed." Although no date or source is given (and a search of Newspapers.com, Ancestry.com, FindAGrave.com and the local Greenwood Cemetery archives found no information) it is said that Elizabeth was pregnant with twins while staying at the inn when she fell, miscarried and died in room 211. Years later, Edward returned to the inn where he died of a broken heart in room 308. Elizabeth's spirit has been seen wandering the halls of the inn and has been spotted in a handful of guest rooms, while Edward is prone to standing on the balcony.

A third spirit is the "Basement Boy," a young unknown teenager known to mingle with guests. Two workers also reportedly died during the construction of the inn, between the fall of 1910 and late spring of 1911, although no newspaper accounts of this incident could be found. Apparitions have been spotted floating down the staircase and on the landings. There are also countless reports of voices, bumps in the night, creaking doors, footsteps and more, although nothing scary or nefarious.

Over the years, innkeepers have embraced the haunted history of this property and even mention it on the inn's website. They have collected countless stories from staff and guests which are stacked in "ghost folder" available for viewing at the front desk. In the early 2000s, the Terrace Inn played host to an annual "paracon" (a convention of those interested in the paranormal) as well as ghost hunts with various paranormal investigators.



"Frank Fochtman's Saloon, Grill Cafe, and Summer Garden in Petoskey, 1899."

[Little T](#)  [English](#) [ty Collections](#)



Restless Restaurants

City Park Grill is one of Petoskey's oldest buildings, dating back to 1875 when it opened as McCarty Saloon & Billiard Hall. In those early years, men would gather to play billiards, smoke cigars and imbibe on intoxicating beverages. In 1888, the saloon—sitting adjacent to the now-lost Cushman Hotel—was renamed The Annex with a second floor used for religious services, dances and town meetings. The Palm Garden patio was added on the left side of the building and beyond that, the Grill Café opened in July 1910, with a bowling alley in the basement. Underground tunnels eventually connected these buildings providing a secret way to transport liquor during prohibition, under the direction of then-owner Frank Fochtman. The sheriff was onto the illegal activity and between 1918 and 1919, the establishment was repeatedly raided, and Fochtman was fined and sent to jail for violating the liquor laws. Rumors have swirled in recent years around Fochtman's death on March 1, 1932, with many believing he hung himself in the cellar. However, his obituary that appeared in the *Grand Rapids Press* noted that he had been sick for four months and his death certificate issued by the State of Michigan reports a formal cause of death as "septicemia/septic arthritis, coronary thrombosis." Regardless of how Fochtman passed, his spirit seems content within the bar although it has been blamed for broken wine glasses and eerie sensations, especially in the basement. One former staff member noted in an online article "my personal feeling is that he'd be here, just watching over the place."

Playful spirits have been encountered in the **Noggin Room Pub** located in the lower level of The Perry Hotel. This casual bar, a favorite hangout for locals and visitors alike, was established in the 1960s under owner John R. Davis. Reports of glasses breaking on their own and silverware flying through the air have been reported in recent years. Another story shared on various websites is about three staffers who at the end of their shift left beer taps to soak in a plastic pitcher of soda water on the bar. Before leaving for the night, they heard a noise and returned to find that the pitcher was now half empty (or is it half full), with a book shoved down into what was left of the water—yet not a drop had been spilled on the counter. It is the same title, some say, that has mysteriously found its way off the shelves, onto tables and under rugs in the hotel's library (actions often attributed to Doris...see above).

Midway between Petoskey and Mackinaw City (north of Brutus and south of Pellston), sits the **Dam Site Inn**—a casual fine dining restaurant established in 1953 and well-known for its family-style chicken dinners. The property history dates back to the logging era, and at one point, a dining hall for lumberjacks operated nearby. In the 1870s, the land was homesteaded by



Henry Park and his wife, Margaret “Maggie” (Andrews). The couple had one son, Charles T., and three daughters: Nancy and twins, Effie and Elbie. Effie had married Nicholas Sage and their 80-acre property is noted on a 1903 plat map for Maple River Township. In 1912, Effie died following an operation, and soon after, her sisters opened the Maple River Inn restaurant and hotel in their farmhouse across the road from where the Dam Site Inn now stands. At some point, the sisters sold a tract of their land to a Florida investor named Edmund C. Wright, who opened a log cabin dance hall called Wrightington Gardens on July 15, 1926. This gave tourists a full resort experience—sleeping and dining at the Maple River Inn and dancing and drinking (illegally) at the club. By 1930, Wright was out and the Joseph Jay Miller Organization was in, the establishment becoming known as The Battle Creek Club. It’s unknown how long this iteration operated, but the building was apparently vacant between 1947 and 1953 when Ken and Kathy McLaughlin purchased it. The Dam Site Inn opened on August 13, 1953, with a menu similar to what made the old Maple River Inn so popular. In 1977, ownership changed again when Betty and Joe Church took over, who later sold to their daughter, Pamela, and her husband, Ray East, who in turn sold it to their daughter, Olivia, and her husband, Steve Brinks. Now, about those ghost stories...it is commonly believed that one of the Park sisters remains a resident spirit of the inn—although it isn’t clear whether that is Nancy, Effie, or Elbie. Customers have witnessed a woman in a white dress floating around the place. There is also one specific table in the “N” (for new, as in added in 1960) dining room where diners have been touched by something or someone unseen.

Ghostly Beacons

Michigan is home to more lighthouses than any other state (129) and about 50 of those are rumored to be haunted, often by the ghosts of former keepers. Casual spirited accounts have been reported at McGulpin Point Lighthouse in Mackinaw City and at St. Helena Island Lighthouse (located in northern Lake Michigan, west of the Mackinac Bridge). One of the most haunted in the region is Waugoshance Shoal Light, which sits offshore on a crumbling crib near Wilderness State Park in Emmet County. This light, built in the 1850s to replace a light ship, was tended for 13 years by a man named John Herman. He was known as a practical joker (and also enjoyed a nip or more of whiskey on a regular basis).

According to legend, on the night of October 14, 1900, Herman had returned to the light  English g of drinking in downtown Mackinaw City and



thought it would be funny to lock one of his assistant keepers in the tower (either first assistant, Joseph W. Townshend or second assistant, Louis Beloungea). After hours of confinement in the 76-foot tower, the assistant sent a distress call likely to Keeper James Davenport at the nearby McGulpin Point. After being released, the assistant keeper went in search of Herman to likely wring his neck for the prank, but he was nowhere to be found. In fact, he was never seen again. Turns out, that Herman had died at 11:30 that morning on Mackinac Island after having a heart attack a few days earlier. This locking of the assistant in the tower appears to have been the first of many antics attributed to Herman's spirit. Past keepers reported chairs being knocked out from underneath them, cupboard doors and drawers opening mysteriously, locked steel doors swinging open on their own and shovels full of coal being loaded into the furnace, with no one holding onto the implement. Waugoshance was decommissioned in 1912—some say because it was so haunted men refused to be transferred there. The real reason was that the White Shoal Lighthouse (known for its red and white candy cane striping) had been put into service making Waugoshance obsolete.

Waugoshance now sits in ruins and is not accessible to the public – but mariners can still spot it standing haphazardly while traveling along the shoreline on the southern edge of the Straits of Mackinac.

Cemetery Spirits

Cemeteries are rich with history and taphophiles (tombstone tourists) will often admit that sometimes the stories that come from these sites are a bit spooky. RoadsideAmerica.com (among others) have posted about an anomaly in Petoskey's **Greenwood Cemetery** involving the monument for Malinda Mary McManus. Malinda was the wife of William Lorenzo McManus Sr., who served briefly as Petoskey Village President (their son, William Jr., served as mayor years later).

According to Malinda's obituary in the March 21, 1888, issue of *Petoskey News* "It was generally known that Mrs. W.L. McManus has been quite low for a week past, and therefore the intelligence that she passed away from earth at 11 o'clock p. m., on Monday evening, was not unexpected. She was an excellent wife, a devoted mother, and highly respected in a wide circle of friends, whose sympathies go out to the stricken family in their bereavement. The funeral takes place tomorrow morning from St. Francis church."

 English



Malinda was interred in Greenwood Cemetery (section G, block 7) and a large granite gray grave marker standing more than six feet tall, topped with a sphere measuring more than two feet in diameter was erected to honor her. At least twice over the years, that massive ball—which was held in place with a metal pin—has spun on its base, exposing the original pin hole. Given the size and weight of this adornment, there is no possible way any person or persons could have manually turned it. What else would have the strength to spin that granite globe?

For your information: The primary difference between a cemetery and a graveyard has to do with its association, or lack thereof, with a church. Graveyards are traditionally run by a church and located on the churchyard, or on the grounds or campus of a church. Cemeteries are typically run by a council or community.

Themed Events

Join [Harbor Springs Area Historical Society](#) curator Beth Wemigwase for a guided 90-minute walking tour of Lakeview Cemetery in Harbor Springs on Saturday, October 18 or Saturday, October 25. Tours are planned each day for 10 am, Noon, and 2 pm with a cost of \$20 per person (tours are held rain or shine, and tickets are not refundable). In addition to hearing stories about notable individuals like Ephraim Shy and G. C. Ada, who were laid to rest in this historic cemetery, attendees will also learn about the unique symbols that adorn headstones.

The [Little Traverse Civic Theater](#) is once again hosting its popular shadowcast of the 1975 cult classic The Rocky Horror Picture Show over the next three weekends. During a shadowcast performance, actors dress up, lip-sync, and dance as the movie plays on the screen in the background, creating a one-of-a-kind immersive experience. The audience is also invited to dress up and take part with call-and-response lines, props, and other participation activities. Performances will take place on Saturday, October 18 (8 PM) at Odawa Casino in Petoskey (\$20 cash at the door), October 24 (8 PM) at the Petoskey Cinema (\$15 cash/check at the door) and on Halloween, October 31 (9 PM) at the Charlevoix Cinema III (\$15 cash at the door). Prop bags will be sold on site for \$5 each (cash only).

Put your armchair sleuthing to the test during the annual Murder Mystery Dinner  Petoskey on Saturday, November 1. Doors open



at 5:30pm as guests get to know each other prior to an evening of secrets, suspense and scandal. Do you have what it takes to crack the case of this interactive whodunit? Tickets are \$85 per person and include a four-course meal and plenty of crime-solving action. Those wishing to enhance this thrilling experience can add an overnight room package at the historic inn and savor a delicious breakfast for two in the Roselawn Dining Room. Advanced reservations for all activities are required and available by contacting the inn.



Dianna Stampfler has been researching, writing, and presenting about paranormal sites around Michigan (and beyond) for nearly 30 years. She is also the author of *Michigan's Haunted Lighthouses* and *Death & Lighthouses on the Great Lakes*.



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