

Upstate New York is home to dozens of historic hospitals, mansions, private homes, and battlefields, and other sites where the restless dead have appeared to the living. Officially recognized as part of the United States in 1788, New York has a long, rich history full of mystery and tragedy (LINK 1). Residents and visitors to the state have witnessed strange paranormal sights and feelings attributed to the ghosts of the past, from jilted lovers to the tormented mentally ill. Some sites are nationally famous, others the subject of local speculation and legend.

Read on to learn about the chilling history of upstate New York's haunted locations.

## **10 Big Moose Lake**

The famous murder of Grace Brown by Chester Gillette that inspired Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* took place on Big Moose Lake in the Adirondack Mountains. Brown met Gillette at the Gillette Skirt Factory where both worked, and they began an affair that led to Brown becoming pregnant in 1906 (LINK 2). But Gillette had ambitions of social status, including marrying into wealth. After she begged him to keep his promise to marry her, he invited Brown to a hotel near Herkimer, New York. On July 11, the two took a boat out onto the lake, where he attacked with a tennis racket and threw Brown - who was unable to swim - into the water (LINK 3). Gillette was later arrested and convicted of murder, then executed on March 30, 1908 (LINK 4).

Even more than one hundred years after Grace Brown's death, stories of sightings of her ghost continues. Visitors and employees of the Covewood Lodge have seen Brown appear on the lake shore and in the surrounding buildings, haunting the site of her tragic death (LINK 5).

## **9 Utica State Hospital**

The Utica State Hospital, originally named the New York State Lunatic Asylum at Utica and nicknamed "Old Main", opened in 1843 as one of the first institutions for the care of the mentally ill in the United States (LINK 6). The psychiatric asylum is also known for the "Utica Crib" or "Utica Bed", a mattress-sized cage made of wooden bars that restricted a person's movement, where patients were held for hours at a time (LINK 7).

As medical treatments for the mentally ill evolved and became more humane, the overcrowded and underfunded asylum closed in 1978. Its buildings fell into disrepair, and several old wings were demolished (LINK 8). Although the asylum is rarely open for tours and the grounds are closed off, visitors and passersby have seen faces at the windows and reported feeling a presence or a sense of despair, left behind by hundreds of patients subjected to treatments considered advanced at the time but barbaric today: electroshock therapy, lobotomies, isolation, and of course, the Utica Bed. (LINK 9).

## **8 Boldt Castle**

The six story, 120-room mansion was built around 1900 by George C. Boldt on Heart Island in Alexandria Bay, part of New York's 1000 Islands region. Boldt, the wealthy proprietor of New York's renowned Waldorf Astoria Hotel, planned Boldt Castle as a tribute to his love for his wife, Louise. But when she died before construction was completed, Boldt halted all work on the house designed for her and never returned to the island (LINK 10).

The house was left to the elements and vandalism until the island was purchased by the Thousand Islands Bridge Authority in 1977 and gradually restored. A monument to love thwarted by tragedy, Boldt Castle is said to be haunted by the spirits of George and Louise, reunited in death at the home they never had the chance to share. Daily tours allow visitors to explore the house and its grounds, who have reported hearing footsteps and seeing lights at empty windows (LINK 11).

## **7 Fort William Henry**

Dozens of ghost hunters have visited this fort, located in Lake George, in search of paranormal activity from the hundreds of victims of a massacre there on August 10, 1757, when French Indians invaded the British fort and killed wounded soldiers during the Seven Years War (LINK 12, LINK 13).

A variety of spooky happenings have been experienced by visitors to the fort, including hearing the sounds of soldiers patrolling—said to be the spirits of the British and colonial soldiers forced to flee the fort—as well as the screams of the massacred soldiers, and voices who warn guests away from the powder magazine (LINK 14). Two spirits even have names: the Limper, an amputee whose remains were found at the fort in the 1950s, and the Slammer, a mischievous presence who slams doors in visitors' faces (LINK 15). The fort museum holds ghost tours for those interested in finding out more about the fort's haunted history.

## **6 Beardslee Castle**

Another haunted site with war-related history is this massive home located in Little Falls. Beardslee Castle housed munitions and powder during the French and Indian War. According to legend, Indians who snuck inside to where these were stored ignited the powder, blowing them apart (LINK 16).

But other tragic happenings occurred there after the war. Sometime in the mid-1900s, owner Anton "Pop" Christensen hanged himself in a room of the side entrance foyer. Two fires occurred, one in 1919 and another in 1989, although no one was injured; after the second fire, Beardslee Castle was abandoned to ruin (LINK 17).

Eerie stories of ghost sightings abound, including legends of a ghost named Abigail who is said to appear in the house and on the grounds, strange lights that are said to be the cause of several car accidents, and spirits angered by staff members playing with a Ouija board or the desecration of the family mausoleum.

## **5 The Otesaga Resort Hotel**

Located in downtown Cooperstown, the Otesaga Resort Hotel has offered luxury accommodations to travelers since 1909. But it also has a reputation for being one of the state's most haunted hotels (LINK 18).

Paranormal investigators flock to the hotel in search of the sights and sounds of otherworldly presences. While the hotel doesn't have a history of violence deaths or mysterious accidents (and isn't built on a cemetery or Indian burial ground) staff and guests alike have reported strange occurrences within its walls. Guests report hearing furniture being moved in rooms above them—even when they're staying on the top floor!—or children running through the halls when there aren't any young guests staying at the hotel. One guest became concerned about moaning noises coming from a nearby room, but when staff investigated, the noises were traced to an empty linen closet (LINK 19). Mysterious apparitions, eerie sounds, floating orbs and lights—the Otesaga has them all.

## **4 Sleepy Hollow**

Featured in Washington Irving's *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, the small village located in Mount Pleasant, is not just home to fictional, headless spirits. Several locations in Sleepy Hollow have been the site of interactions between the living and the dead. Over 20 different ghosts—from Irving family members to the victims of a mad monk—are said to roam the village and nearby Tarrytown (LINK 20).

The Sleepy Hollow Cemetery is home to the Bronze Lady, a statue of a seated woman whose history is surrounded by superstition. On Halloween 1916, a young girl visiting the cemetery heard a woman crying and discovered, when she turned to find the source of the sound, that the statue's face was wet with tears. Legend has it that sitting in her lap and touching her face could bring you a stroke good fortune...or leave you haunted for life (LINK 21).

Many visitors to the town have claimed to see apparitions of Irving and his nieces at Sunnyside, a home Irving purchased and renovated. And the urban legend inspiration for Irving's Headless Horseman, a Hessian soldier captured and beheaded by the Americans during the Revolutionary War, is said to haunt Patriot's Park and the Old Dutch Church burial grounds (LINK 22).

### **3 Skene Manor**

Built in the 1870s by Judge Joseph H. Potter, Skene Manor has a strange history. Legend says that Colonel Skene was granted the land from the King of England with the condition that he would retain it only while his wife's body remained above ground, as he would have to return to her native Scotland to bury her (LINK 23). Another version of the tale varies, saying that it was continued access to his wealthy wife's dowry at stake. Skene is said to have placed his wife's remains in a lead-lined coffin in the basement or under the grand staircase of the homestead then located there.

Decades after the homestead was torn down to be replaced by Potter's mansion, Skene Manor was converted into a restaurant. The new owner is said to have placed the coffin behind the bar and built it into a stone fountain (LINK 24). Another version of the story says the body and grave have never been found, since the coffin would have later been used for bullets by invading Americans or buried elsewhere on the grounds when Potter built his home (LINK 25).

While the story's details vary wildly and often contradict recorded events, each version identifies a woman in Victorian dress who wanders the halls or watches from the windows as the ghost of Catherine Skene.

### **2 Wells College**

This school, located in Aurora, has a grisly history resulting in many ghostly tales. It appears on many lists of the most haunted college campuses in the country, with over 15 legends even documented on the Wells College website (LINK 26).

"Max", a security guard, is said to haunt the former site of a building that caught fire. When the fire broke out, he was able to save several students but died in the flames; students descending the stairs of the building now on the site have felt pushes from the spirit of Max, still trying to save them. He even returned to walk with a student back to her dorm one night when she called for a security escort.

Another tragedy that occurred at Wells was an influenza epidemic that claimed the lives of a large number of students. In the middle of winter in upstate New York, there was no way to bury the bodies, so they were placed in a room that served as a temporary morgue on the same floor of the campus's Main Building. When the door was repainted after the epidemic, the red color bled through. Today, the building is a dormitory, and students search for the door to the room that held the bodies of the former students (LINK 27).

There are even stories of a former student, brutally stabbed by a professor she accused of stealing a publishing her work, who wanders Zabriskie Hall asking for help with the knife still stuck in her back...who, according to the stories, will try to kill you with it if you remove it (LINK

28).

## 1 Goodleberg Cemetery

Considered one of the most haunted places in western New York, Goodleberg Cemetery is the final resting place of many of the original settlers of the town of Wales. Used for burials from 1811 to 1927, the cemetery is home to many restless spirits and paranormal entities.

The cemetery is haunted by standard ghosts that tend to lurk at burial grounds—grieving widows and crying babies. A doctor who secretly performed abortions, Albert Speaker, lived close to the cemetery and is said to have discarded the bodies of unborn children and unfortunate patients—perhaps those of the ghostly children—within its borders. When the dismembered body of Helen Lindeman, a dentist's wife, was found nearby in 1948, Speaker was suspected, but he committed suicide before he could be officially investigated for the crime (LINK 29).

Visitors have also witnessed hellhounds, black dogs with glowing red or green eyes who let out bloodcurdling howls as they stalk the grounds (LINK 30).

LINK 1: <http://www.iloveny.com/things-to-do/history/timeline/>

LINK 2: <http://www.nycourts.gov/publications/benchmarks/issue4/historiccourthouses.shtml>

LINK 3: <http://law.jrank.org/pages/2741/Chester-Gillette-Trial-1906-Tragedy-at-Big-Moose-Lake.html>

LINK 4: <http://www.craigbrandon.com/Chester%20Gillette%20and%20Grace%20Brown.html>

LINK 5: <http://unsolved.com/archives/ghost-grace-brown>

LINK 6: [http://rootsweb.ancestry.com/~asylums/utica\\_ny/index.html](http://rootsweb.ancestry.com/~asylums/utica_ny/index.html)

LINK 7: <http://inmatesofwillard.com/2012/09/08/1880-the-utica-crib/>

LINK 8: <http://lite987.com/a-tour-inside-uticas-old-main-psychiatric-center-hospital-video-photos/>

LINK 9: <http://theghostdiaries.com/9-haunted-insane-asylums-you-should-never-spend-the-night-in/>

LINK 10: <http://www.boldtcastle.com/visitorinfo/index.php/about/>

LINK 11: <http://www.hauntedplaces.org/item/boldt-castle/>

LINK 12: [http://poststar.com/news/local/ghost-hunters-go-bump-in-the-night/article\\_18f6597e-4a8e-11df-b51e-001cc4c002e0.html](http://poststar.com/news/local/ghost-hunters-go-bump-in-the-night/article_18f6597e-4a8e-11df-b51e-001cc4c002e0.html)

LINK 13: <http://www.fwhmuseum.com/history.html>

LINK 14: <http://liparanormalinvestigators.com/nys.shtml>

LINK 15: <http://perfmarr.com/fort-william-henry-guides-offer-tour-of-haunted-sites/>

LINK 16: <http://beardsleecastle.com/ghostpage.htm>

LINK 17: <http://beardsleecastle.com/historypage.htm>

LINK 18: <http://www.haunted-places-to-go.com/otesaga-hotel.html>  
LINK 19: <http://hauntedhistorytrail.com/places/otesaga-hotel/>  
LINK 20: <http://patch.com/new-york/tarrytown/where-the-ghosts-are>  
LINK 21: <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/29/nyregion/ghost-stories-the-other-legend-of-sleepy-hollow.html>  
LINK 22: <http://www.haunted-places-to-go.com/sleepy-hollow.html>.  
LINK 23: <http://manchesternewspapers.com/2008/10/27/town-watched-by-cathrine-skene/>  
LINK 24: <http://www.dupontcastle.com/castles/skeneman.htm>  
LINK 25: <http://manchesternewspapers.com/2008/10/27/town-watched-by-cathrine-skene/>  
LINK 26: <http://hera.wells.edu/library/find-resources/ghost-stories.aspx>  
LINK 27: <http://www.onlineschoolscenter.com/50-haunted-colleges-campuses/>  
LINK 28: <http://dailycaller.com/2012/10/30/americas-most-haunted-college-campuses-the-definitive-list-slideshow/>  
LINK 29: <http://www.wgrz.com/story/local/2011/10/31/1571768/>  
LINK 30: <http://www.haunted-places-to-go.com/goodleburg-cemetery.html>