

RICHARD SOUTHALL

HAUNTED



GHOSTS OF AMERICA'S LEGENDARY HIGHWAY



PACK YOUR BAGS, HOP IN THE CAR, AND HEAD OUT ON A HAUNTED ADVENTURE ACROSS LEGENDARY ROUTE 66

Embrace the spirit of adventure and freedom with an exciting journey of spine-tingling paranormal activity and American history along Route 66. This travel companion transports you from Chicago, Illinois, to Santa Monica, California, exploring over one hundred ghostly hot spots filled with fascinating facts and lingering spirits.

From ghost hunters to avid fans of the Mother Road, everyone can take their own haunted road trip on Route 66 with this essential, easy-to-read guide. Explore the famous highway through historic locations and gripping ghost stories about the St. Valentine's Day massacre in Chicago, the restless spirit of Charlie Chaplin that still haunts the Venice Beach Boardwalk in Los Angeles, and many more. This one-of-a-kind collection, with chapters organized by state, paves the way for your grand tour into the unknown.

Richard Southall has been drawn to the paranormal since he was a teenager. He is the author of *How to Be a Ghost Hunter* and has written several articles for *Fate* magazine. Now living in northern West Virginia, Richard works as a therapist and is actively involved in his community. He is interested in local legends, history, and ghost stories, and also leads ghost hunts when time allows.

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Richard Southall (West Virginia) has been interested in the paranormal since a very young age and was conducting his own paranormal investigations by the time he was a teenager. He is the co-creator of a haunted walking tour of Parkersburg, WV, one of the best-received tours in the United States. Today, Southall conducts private ghost investigations, teaches workshops on ghost hunting, contributes to numerous periodicals, and has been interviewed on regional and national radio about ghosts and hauntings. He is a member of the paranormal group MAJDA.

To Write to the Author

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(image courtesy Library of Congress)

Introduction

The Mother Road. Main Street USA. Although it has been known by many names over the years, Route 66 has allowed us to embrace the spirit of adventure and freedom that is the epitome of our American heritage. Route 66 has been the inspiration behind books, music, television series, and movies for nearly a century. With such a vast history, Route 66 undoubtedly has its fair share of ghost stories. That is the purpose of this book... to chronicle several of these accounts that have been passed down over the years. However, before we can journey down this road together, it is important to get some background of how Route 66 came into being.

History of Route 66

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There are already several books published that can offer a more detailed and concise history of Route 66, so rather than provide yet another exhaustive account of the origins, near demise, and resurrection of Route 66, I will simply review the basics. If you want more in-depth historical information, I personally found that Drew Knowles's *Route 66 Adventure Handbook* was very helpful and could be used in conjunction with this book in order to get a feel for what the Mother Road has to offer.

Route 66 consisted of nearly 2,500 miles of road stretching from Chicago, Illinois, to Santa Monica, California. It goes through eight states: Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. In the early 1920s, cars were being produced en masse and people started to buy them at an astounding rate. To meet the need, the United States government created a federal numbered highway system that linked existing roads together into an interstate route for people to travel. By the way, the official birthdate for Route 66 was November 11, 1926.

Route 66 was not actually one long roadway that started in Chicago and ended in Santa Monica, but rather a series of dozens of different roads that went through a multitude of towns between Illinois and California. These roads had existed long before Route 66 was commissioned. Rather than create a whole new road system, it was decided that the existing roads could be connected to form one continuous roadway from Illinois to California. Route 66 often led people into the downtowns of these communities. This is why Route 66 is often called Main Street USA—sometimes Route 66 actually was Main Street.

Residents of these towns began to notice the increase in traffic and visitors after Route 66 was commissioned. Literally hundreds of new businesses emerged to meet the increased demand of travelers. Restaurants, curio shops, roadside attractions, hotels, and other types of businesses began to sprout almost overnight. No two stops were the same. Many tried to be as unique as possible in order to stand out. It has been

said that a person could travel Route 66 a hundred times and never have the same experience twice.

In its heyday, Route 66 was one of the finest examples of Americana and took on a life of its own in the 1940s and 1950s. People would take weeks to travel the route, always looking for adventure around every turn. The people who lived along and traveled on the 2,448 miles of highway from Chicago to Santa Monica were given an opportunity to express their individuality. New people, new attractions, and new stories were found along every mile of Main Street USA.

In the late 1950s, the federal government commissioned a new series of interstate highways that were designed to considerably cut the drive time for a motorist. The rationale was that with an interstate system, people and cargo could travel cross-country more efficiently. With fewer stops and longer stretches of highway, people could drive farther in a shorter amount of time.

Initially, several business owners in towns along Route 66 thought that the new interstate system would mean even more visitors and more business. In many cases, this new interstate system was constructed parallel to the original roads of Route 66. However, to save money, many of the towns were bypassed. Being cut off from the increasing flow of the interstate traffic, businesses and entire communities suffered. One by one, businesses closed and some of the towns were entirely abandoned, simply fading into history. Eventually, a great piece of Americana was lost. Officially, Route 66 was decommissioned on June 27, 1985. You will not find any official reference to Route 66 on a roadmap printed after 1985. In recent years, several road signs have been erected to commemorate the original route of “Historic Route 66.”

Our Changing Societal Mindset

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The decommissioning of Route 66 was a harbinger of change. A look at the interstate system that replaced the Mother Road is a telltale sign that since the 1980s, we have been in the process of transitioning from a society of quality to a society of quantity. We simply want to get from Point A to Point B in the fastest, most efficient way possible.

What has happened with Route 66 also appears to be happening in other parts of our lives. More and more people would prefer to interact with each other via Facebook than in real life. Some would rather play Farmville than attempt to grow a real garden. We tend to overlook the important things in our lives as we hurry from appointment to appointment. As technology continues to advance, we are slowly losing our connection to others and to our history. There is an uncanny parallel between what the interstate system did to Route 66 and what technology is doing to our society.

If we are not careful, we could lose that spirit of adventure that America was founded upon and exchange it for one of convenience and comfort. This goes against everything that Route 66 stood for. Perhaps it was the great Charlie Chaplin that said it best in the final scene from his controversial film, *The Great Dictator*.

*We have developed speed but we have shut ourselves in:
machinery that gives abundance has left us in want.
Our knowledge has made us cynical,
our cleverness hard and unkind.
We think too much and feel too little:
More than machinery we need humanity;
More than cleverness we need kindness and gentleness.
Without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost.*

Although these words were said over seven decades ago, they still ring as true today as when they were so enthusiastically spoken by Chaplin. Although he was talking about the condition of life during World War II, he just as easily could have been referring to the early twenty-first century and the way that technology has both brought us closer together while it has made us more distant than ever.

Still, there are people who recognize the importance of reconnecting to the spirit of adventure that made the Mother Road so amazing. Although there are several locations throughout the United States where people can get in touch with their past, Route 66 is like no other. It represents a time long before commercialized fast food restaurants, convenience stores, and Wal-Marts; part of the wonder of driving Route 66 is the journey, not necessarily the destination. The Mother Road has become a time capsule that invites us to re-experience a slower, more deliberate time that many of us long for as we race along at a breakneck pace toward an uncertain future.

Why Ghost Stories?

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Why write a book of ghost stories that take place along Route 66? For several reasons. First, ghost stories have a way of uniting us. No matter what our differences are, most people like to hear about others' experiences with things that go bump in the night. Sharing ghost stories with each other helps to preserve our past. Granted, some of the stories in this book are actually urban legends, which can be just as important as true ghostly experiences. At some point in a town's past, a real event occurred (car accident, suicide, murder, etc.) and word got out. Over time, these stories get told and retold to the point that there is little resemblance between the actual event and the story. To make the story more interesting, whispers of paranormal events are often added. And, thus, an urban legend is born.

Second, we want to believe. Whether it's experiencing a ghost recording in an abandoned asylum while on a ghost tour or being reassured by a personal message from a loved one who has recently passed, we want to believe that there is more to our reality than our day-to-day existence of forty-hour workweeks and paying bills.

Third, we like to be scared. This would explain the recent revival in paranormal topics in books (*The Twilight Saga*, *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*), television shows (*Ghost Adventures*, *True Blood*, *Paranormal State*, etc.), video games (*Resident Evil*, *FEAR*, etc.) and movies (*Paranormal Activity*, *The Devil Inside*, etc.). We simply cannot get enough of the paranormal. Although we know the movies and television shows are fiction, we realize that many of the stories we hear from others may have some truth to them. With paranormal groups and ghost tours sprouting up in every state across the nation, it is now cool to belong to a ghost hunting group and go to a place with the intention of being frightened.

I decided to write this book on the paranormal events of Route 66 because with the richness of the Mother Road, there undoubtedly would be several stories that will unite us, cause us to believe in the unseen, and scare us. The legends and stories from the towns along Route 66, and of any community for that matter, often serve as reminders of actual events in the town's past. These stories tell of how local landmarks got their names. They immortalize key people and events that helped to mold a town into what it is today. These stories allow the towns to have a historical significance and individuality that is the epitome of everything that Route 66 stands for. This book is being written partially to make certain that the tradition of storytelling is continued and can be shared for many years to come.

Do people experience the paranormal in their lives? Every day. Over the years, do some of these experiences evolve into the urban legends and folktales that are passed down from generation to generation? Absolutely. It is up to the reader to determine the difference between the two.

Several of the stories in this book go back to a time prior to Route 66's construction. I would like to think that this is more than simply a book of ghost stories. For those who want to travel Main Street USA or live near many of the cities and attractions listed here, I would like to think of this as a guidebook that will whet your appetite to seek to experience the paranormal firsthand.

Although I acknowledge that some of these accounts are stories that have been told and retold to the point that they may have very little resemblance to the actual facts, I also have to acknowledge that some of these stories are in fact real. Average people have had paranormal or supernatural experiences happen to them for hundreds of years. Some people do not share their experiences with others for fear of ridicule. However, others are brave enough to share their experiences with others... their stories should be heard.

Are the ghost stories in this book tales of a real haunting or the product by creative minds? I will leave that question for you to answer on your own. But for now, sit back, relax, and prepare to be entertained by the many ghost stories that have sprung up over the years along Route 66.



ONE

ILLINOIS

301 miles

Some of our country's most significant events have taken place in Illinois. The Great Chicago Fire. Al Capone and the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. John Dillinger being gunned down at the Biograph Theater. The Eastland Ship Disaster that claimed several hundred lives one fateful morning. The list goes on.

With such a wide brushstroke of American culture ranging from mafia kingpins to talk show gurus, Illinois's history is filled with some of the most unique and colorful historical figures of any state. Because of this, it may seem fitting that we begin our journey of Haunted Route 66 in Chicago, Illinois.

Chicago

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The Great Chicago Fire of 1871

Any history of Chicago would not be complete without a discussion of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The



Great Chicago Fire started around 9:00 p.m., Sunday, October 8, 1871, and finally burned itself out two days later on October 10. The official story is that the fire started in a barn owned by Patrick and Catherine O’Leary, who owned a farm at 137 DeKoven Street. It is popularly believed that Mrs. O’Leary’s cow kicked over a lantern, which ignited a pile of hay. However, it was determined that the “Mrs. O’Leary’s Cow” theory was actually fabricated by Michael Ahern, reporter for the *Chicago Republican*, because it was a “more colorful story.” He finally admitted to creating the story of Mrs. O’Leary’s cow in 1893. Although the O’Leary account was determined to be a fabrication, there are at least two lesser-known hypotheses that are just as likely to explain the cause of the fire.

The first hypothesis does in fact involve the O’Leary’s cow. The story goes that Daniel “Pegleg” Sullivan may have accidentally started the Great Chicago Fire when he was trying to steal milk from O’Leary’s cow and placed his lantern too close to a pile of hay. Before he could do anything, a fire started and quickly consumed the barn. Sullivan ran away, fearful that he would get in trouble for trespassing.

A second hypothesis is that the Great Chicago Fire was caused when Biela’s Comet broke up over the Midwest and that the fragments fell to the ground. This theory was first presented by physicist Robert Wood at the 2004 Aerospace Corporation and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Wood attests that there were reports of at least three other devastating fires that took place near Lake Michigan that day. Several eyewitnesses noted that “balls of fire” were seen falling from the sky shortly before the fires were first reported.

One fire completely destroyed Peshtigo, Wisconsin, and surrounding communities. A second fire, known as the Great Michigan Fire, also destroyed most of Manistee, Michigan. The Port Huron Fire, which consumed much of Port Huron, also took place on Sunday, October 8, 1871. Although some of these fires were actually more destructive in terms of

loss of life and burnt acreage, the Great Chicago Fire is likely the most renowned because Chicago had the largest population.

Whatever the cause of the Great Chicago Fire, we know that it was destructive. Over 2,000 acres and nearly 18,000 buildings were destroyed in the fire. About one-third of the city's 300,000 people were left homeless. There were approximately 300 people who died in the fire. Of that number, only 125 bodies were recovered. Needless to say, with numbers like this there are bound to be several ghost stories associated with the Great Chicago Fire ... and ghost stories there are.

Water Tower of Chicago

806 North Michigan Avenue

The Water Tower of Chicago on North Michigan Avenue was one of the few structures that survived the Great Chicago Fire. According to local legend, the Water Tower is haunted by the ghost of a firefighter who gave his life for his city. Apparently, the fireman on duty pumped water as it continued to consume the wooden buildings surrounding the tower. He was so focused on saving the other buildings that he did not notice the fire starting to surround him in the water tower. When he realized that he would not be able to stop the fire and was going to be burned alive, the fireman reportedly hung himself from near the top of the tower. To this day, his ghost has been seen hanging from one of the windows in the upper part of the water tower.

Hull House/Jane Addams Hull House

800 South Halstead Street

The mansion that eventually became known as Hull House was built in 1856 by Charles Hull, a well-known man who had made his fortune in the real estate industry. When it was built by Hull, the area was one of the most upscale and prominent in Chicago. However, when Jane Addams was looking for a location to provide services to immigrants, the area had deteriorated into one of Chicago's poorest neighborhoods. By this time,

Hull was no longer living in the home and gave his niece the property. She was so impressed with Addams's vision that she let her have it with a twenty-five-year lease.

Hull House was founded in 1889 by Ellen Gates Starr and Jane Addams. The primary purpose of Hull House was to help European immigrants make the transition to living in the United States. It provided immigrants and local citizens with a variety of educational programs (literature, theater, history, etc.) and social opportunities that they probably would not receive otherwise. Hull House also provided free lectures and concerts that were open to the public. There were a variety of clubs available for adults and children. In addition, volunteers and staff members became vocal against some of the social wrongs of the day... child labor, homelessness, women's rights, discrimination against immigrants, and the like. Some historians claim that the variety of services that Hull House was one of the first examples of organized social welfare in the United States.

By the time Addams moved into the original mansion, it had already become known as a haunted hotspot. Hull's wife had died after a long illness in 1860, only four years after the mansion had been constructed. People have claimed to see an image of a woman that looked like Mrs. Hull looking out a bedroom window even after Mr. Hull decided to move. Addams has been quoted as saying to friends and volunteers at Hull House that a woman wearing white could sometimes be seen looking out one of the bedrooms on the second floor, which was reportedly the same room where Mrs. Hull had died. Other ghosts were likely to be those of people who had died in the 1870s prior to Addams's moving in and a few people who had died of natural causes while residing at Hull House.

S-M-C Cartage Company

2122 Clark Street

Al “Scarface” Capone (1899–1947) made his fortune bootlegging liquor during Prohibition (1919–1933) and through other illegal activities (gambling, prostitution, bribery of elected officials, etc.) from the early 1920s until his arrest for tax evasion in 1931. Capone had been involved with gang activity since he was a teenager living in Brooklyn, New York. In 1918, Capone moved to Chicago at the request of Johnny Torrio, a fellow gang member who needed some help taking care of some “family business.” Financially, it was a sound decision for Capone, who had a young wife and newborn son to take care of. Although he amassed a great deal of wealth through his illegal endeavors, Capone was also known as a philanthropist. He was hated by authorities and loved by the masses, often being called a modern-day Robin Hood. He was often quoted as saying that he was just a businessman who was providing the people of Chicago what they wanted.

Of particular interest to Capone was the rivalry that had started between his organization, the South Side Italian Outfit, and the North Side Gang. In May 1924, Dean O’Banion of the North Side Gang agreed to sell a brewery to Johnny Torrio, the leader of Capone’s gang. O’Banion knew that there was going to be a raid on the brewery and wanted it out of his hands, so he sold it to Torrio at a low price. During the raid, O’Banion and Torrio were both arrested. In an act of revenge, O’Banion was found murdered on October 10, 1924, at his flower shop on North State Street. In retaliation of O’Banion’s murder, there was a 1925 assassination attempt against Torrio, who was severely injured. Johnny Torrio returned to Italy and put Capone in charge. At the age of twenty-six, Al Capone found himself in the middle of a gang war that spread through the city of Chicago for several years.

After O’Banion’s death, there were several men who attempted to take control of the North Side Gang, but each person was eventually taken down. Finally, George “Bugs” Moran assumed control of the North Side Gang,

which rose in power to rival Capone's gang. The gang war continued for nearly five years, eventually leading to the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre.

On the morning of Thursday, February 14, 1929, four armed men (two dressed as police officers) went to the S-M-C Cartage Company building in search of Bugs Moran. The men were unable to find Moran, but did find five high-ranking members of the North Side Gang, a hired auto mechanic, and a man who had retired from gang life and had simply been visiting his friends. The seven men were lined up against a brick wall inside the company and were summarily executed. The murder weapons were two Thompson submachine guns (tommy guns), followed by two shotgun blasts at close range into the faces of two of the victims. Each of the men had been hit by between twelve and twenty-five bullets. Frank Gusenberg was the only man still living when the police finally arrived, although he had been hit by fourteen bullets. He was taken to a nearby hospital and after he was somewhat stabilized, he was asked who had shot him. His reply? "Nobody shot me."

The garage where the St. Valentine's Day Massacre took place was demolished in 1967 to make way for the parking lot of a nursing home that still stands today. To this day, people claim to hear the sound of machine-gun fire followed by screams. Sometimes the sounds are accompanied by the smell of blood and an overpowering sense of dread.

When the actual wall was dismantled, it went up for auction. Canadian businessman George Patey outbid two or three other men to purchase the bricks. He had numbered each of the 414 bricks and had them shipped back to Canada. Over the years, the bricks were on display in a wax museum, placed in a bar, and nearly one hundred had been individually sold online. When Patey died, he left the remaining bricks to his niece, who ended up selling them to the Las Vegas Mob Museum. According to legend, there is a curse associated with the bricks. Anybody who possesses a brick for any length of time will suffer sickness, financial loss, horrible luck, and a terrible death.

Biograph Theater

2433 North Lincoln Avenue

John Dillinger was a career criminal who made a living from robbing banks. Dillinger and his gang robbed at least two dozen banks, although some experts believe that the number was actually closer to thirty bank robberies. In addition to robbing banks, the gang robbed at least four police stations of uniforms, weapons, and bulletproof vests. Dillinger had become such a “menace to society” that J. Edgar Hoover would use Dillinger’s gang and their criminal activities as catalyst to launch the newly formed Federal Bureau of Investigation.

However, as fascinating as Dillinger’s exploits were, our interest in Dillinger focuses not on his life of crime, but rather his death and subsequent haunting of a historical theater in downtown Chicago. Dillinger had successfully escaped capture for over a year while continuing to rob banks in four states, including Indiana and Ohio.

Finally, federal agents were contacted by Ana Cumpanas (aka Anna Sage) on July 21, 1934. She was a madam at a Gary, Indiana, brothel that Dillinger was known to frequent. She was an illegal immigrant from Romania who had recently been threatened with deportation. Cumpanas agreed to lead authorities to Dillinger in exchange for taking care of her deportation problem. Since there were no other solid leads on Dillinger’s whereabouts, authorities agreed to her terms. Cumpanas said that Dillinger was spending time with a woman named Polly Hamilton, one of her prostitutes that Dillinger had taken a liking to. Cumpanas told authorities that she, Polly Hamilton, and John Dillinger would be going to a movie the next day. To help federal agents identify the trio, Cumpanas agreed to wear a red dress to the movie. Although she was uncertain of the exact time and place, she knew it was going to be either the Biograph Theater on Chicago’s North Side or the Marbo Theater on Chicago’s West Side.

The following day, July 22, 1934, federal agents and police officers from jurisdictions outside of Chicago (there was concern that Dillinger

had informants on the Chicago Police Department) staked out both the Marbo and Biograph Theaters.

Dillinger went to see a performance of the MGM film *Manhattan Melodrama* with Hamilton and Cumpanas. As promised, she wore a red dress, and they were easy to spot in the crowd.

After the show, Dillinger realized that there were federal agents and authorities waiting for him. He attempted to reach his gun as he ran into the alley beside the theater. Three agents were waiting for him and fired five shots. Three of the bullets hit Dillinger from behind. Two of the bullets pierced his chest and the third entered his neck and exited below his right eye. Based on the severity of his wounds, it was apparent that he died quickly. When bystanders realized who had been shot, some approached the body and dipped their handkerchiefs in the expanding pool of blood as a souvenir. Although it was obvious that Dillinger was dead, his body was taken to Alexian Brothers Hospital where he was pronounced dead at 10:28 p.m. Ironically, although Dillinger had robbed banks of over \$300,000 in 1933 and 1934, he only had \$7.81 in his pocket when he was killed.

In the years since Dillinger's death, there have been hundreds of sightings of a man running down the alleyway only to suddenly fall and disappear in the exact spot where Dillinger was ambushed. People have also heard the sounds of a person running followed by five distinct gunshots. Most believe that it is the ghost of Dillinger himself replaying the final moments of his life.

Red Lion Pub

2446 North Lincoln Avenue

Directly across the street from the Biograph Theater is the Red Lion Pub. It was an English pub built in 1882 and was a popular part of the Chicago nightlife for several decades before Dillinger's death at the Biograph Theater. Over the years, the Red Lion Pub developed a reputation for being haunted by the ghosts of past regular patrons and bartenders. On more

than one occasion, patrons have ordered drinks from a bartender, only to find that there was nobody working that fit that description. Most of the paranormal activity at the Red Lion Pub was not visual, but rather auditory. Usually, patrons and staff experienced the sound of voices, running footsteps, the sound of glass breaking, and piano music playing. In addition, doors were seen opening and closing by themselves and bottles of liquor were found to have been rearranged on the shelves of behind the bar. Based on this type of activity, it is likely that one of the ghosts at the Red Lion Pub is that of a bartender or other employee that died long ago. Unfortunately, a few years ago the Red Lion Pub closed its doors after nearly 130 years of operation.

The Eastland Ship Disaster

Chicago River



The Eastland Ship Disaster (image courtesy Library of Congress)

The Eastland Ship Disaster took place on the morning of July 24, 1915. The Eastland had been commissioned by Western Electric for a sight-seeing excursion and picnic on the Chicago River for employees and their families. By 7:00 a.m., there were over 2,700 people crowded onto the Eastland. While the ship was tied to the dock between LaSalle and Clark Streets, too many people went to the port side of the ship to watch other boats along the river before their departure, which made the ship go off balance and capsize. This in turn caused the ship to quickly start sinking with nearly 3,000 people still on board, many of whom were below deck. When the ship sank, a total of 849 people (including four crew members) died in the single worst ship accident in terms of loss of life recorded in Chicago's history. Several bystanders could hear the screams of the men, women, and children trapped below deck grow in volume before fading into an eerie silence as they all drowned within a few minutes, less than twenty feet from shore.

Soon after the ship sank came the grim task of recovering the bodies. Many who died included women and children who were trapped below deck. Mothers had taken their young children to the heated lower deck in order to break the chill of the early morning air. Due to the sheer number of bodies recovered, at least two nearby office buildings were converted into makeshift morgues.

The first building where the bodies of the Eastland victims were taken to was the Second Regimental Armory on North Carpenter Street. It had a refrigerated warehouse on site where hundreds of bodies were placed for easy identification and collection. This was a blessing because the refrigeration helped preserve the bodies so that they could be identified and collected by grieving family members.

Nearly sixty years after the Eastland Ship Disaster, the renovated building became the home office of Harpo Studios, the central hub of the recently canceled *Oprah Winfrey Show* and now the Oprah Winfrey Network.

There have been many reports of paranormal activity in the office building for several years. Dozens of employees and visitors to Harpo Studios have claimed to hear children's laughter, women's sobs and screams, and the sound of broken glass. There have also been several who claim to hear 1920s popular music played throughout different parts of the building.

A second building converted into an impromptu morgue was the Former Historical Society Building, built in 1892 and located at 632 North Dearborn. It is known by locals as the Excalibur Club or simply Excalibur because there is currently a nightclub by that name residing on the site. At least three spirits associated with the Eastland disaster haunt the Excalibur Club. The first ghost is that of a woman in her early forties wearing a red dress. She has been described as an attractive woman, but also appears to be somewhat confused, as if she is lost. Another ghost on the first floor is an older, distinguished bearded man wearing a white suit or tuxedo. Finally, there have been reports of a little girl seen running along the first floor. The little girl is not running in fear; she appears to be playing. She is usually seen on the first floor for only a few seconds before she disappears. All of these ghosts have been reported on the first floor where the bodies were placed for identification by authorities and family members. In addition to the apparitions, employees and people who come to the Excalibur also claim to hear breaking glass in the bar area as well as crying from a downstairs bathroom.

It is interesting to note that both places that were used as morgues report sounds of breaking glass. The sound could either be from the breaking glass of the Eastland as it capsized or from people attempting to break windows in a frantic effort to escape drowning.

If you would happen to walk across or near the Clark Street Bridge, there is a good chance that you could hear the screams of the dying passengers from the Eastland. Ironically, the Clark Street Bridge is on the same street where the St. Valentine's Day Massacre would

take place fourteen years later. It is more common to hear the screams early in the morning, especially near the anniversary of the disaster.

Archer Woods Cemetery

Although this cemetery is not as well-known as the other more haunted graveyards in and around Chicago, Archer Woods Cemetery has had its share of ghosts and spirits. This is a fairly old cemetery that has somewhat fallen into disrepair over the last few decades. One ghost in particular is of a woman who only can be heard as you exit the cemetery. The woman's identity is not known, but the phenomenon has been told since at least the 1960s. People who pay their respects to friends and loved ones can sometimes hear a woman crying as they are about to leave the cemetery gates. There have also been reports of an old-fashioned horse-drawn hearse seen in front of the cemetery. This would make sense, since Archer Woods Cemetery has been in use since the early 1800s. In addition, people have seen floating lights or orbs dancing around late at night in the cemetery.

Bachelor's Grove Cemetery

Bachelor's Grove Cemetery has quite possibly one of the highest concentrations of hauntings of any location in the Chicago area. The cemetery was regularly used for over one hundred years, but after burials started to decrease in the 1960s, it became a regular place for teenagers to party.

In regard to paranormal activity, there appears to be no fewer than fourteen distinct entities at Bachelor's Grove Cemetery, although some estimate the number to be much higher. There are red and orange balls of light that are sometimes seen from within the cemetery that move rapidly from place to place. One possibility is that these are the ghostly impressions of the lanterns carried by the original groundskeepers at the cemetery. Most of the paranormal activity comes in the form of orbs, disembodied voices, or misty forms, but there are at least three specific ghosts that stand out from the rest.

A few years before the cemetery opened in 1844, a farmer owned the land adjacent to the cemetery. One day, he was plowing a garden when something spooked his horse. He lost control of the horse and it ran into a nearby pond. The man tried desperately to free the horse from the heavy plow equipment, but both the farmer and the horse drowned. The farmer and the horse can be seen at the edge of the cemetery.

The second spirit of Bachelor's Grove Cemetery is that of a woman who was buried next to her infant son. On clear moonlit nights, she can be seen walking through the cemetery as if she is looking for a particular gravesite. As she nears her tombstone, her apparition always disappears. Often, sounds of a baby crying and a woman singing softly to comfort the infant can be heard. Because she is always seen wearing a white dress, the ghost has been called the White Lady.

Perhaps the most peculiar apparitions in Bachelor's Grove Cemetery have been sightings of a small group of silent hooded figures. Most people who have seen them always say that there are three or four people dressed in monks' robes walking through the cemetery, apparently oblivious to their surroundings. It is possible that these hooded figures were from the monastery that was once used in the vicinity.

Although not part of Bachelor's Grove Cemetery, there is a nearby turnpike that has been the scene of several deadly car accidents over the years. There have been apparitions of cars accompanied by the sound of brakes screeching, only to disappear. Some of the people who died in these accidents may very well be buried behind the rusty gates of this graveyard.

Loyola University Chicago

1032 W. Sheridan Road

Loyola University was founded in 1870 under the name of St. Ignatius College. It wouldn't be known as Loyola University until thirty-nine years later in 1909. Today, it is largest Jesuit University in the United States. It has a long, proud history of producing successful graduates who have gone on to become great leaders, politicians, and lawyers. It

has also produced its own share of ghost stories, including a pair of ghosts that haunt a building on the main campus.

In the early 1880s, when the college was still known as St. Ignatius College, a nun and Jesuit priest fell in love and had an affair. Shortly after they consummated their love, the nun discovered that she was pregnant and went to tell her lover. She told the priest that she loved him and that she would be willing to give up her position in the church if he would relinquish his title of priest. They could leave the college one night and start a new life in another city with their child. The priest refused her plan, saying that he could not turn his back on God. Grieving and heart-broken, the nun climbed thirteen floors of stairs in what is known today as the Skyscraper building and hung herself. After reconsidering her offer, the priest searched for the nun. Not knowing that she killed herself, the priest was horrified when he found her lifeless corpse swaying from the makeshift noose. When the priest realized what she had done, he was so overcome with grief that he opened a nearby window and jumped thirteen stories to his death. Their bodies were found the next morning.

The highest floors of the Skyscraper are now vacant, but students on campus can see a light flicker from the window to the room where the nun hanged herself. A few have claimed to have seen a form swaying from a noose in a window. Others report of hearing a man's sobbing, and a short scream followed by a sudden silence.

Mount Carmel Cemetery

1400 South Wolf Road

Located in the Chicago suburb of Hillside, Mount Carmel Cemetery is the final resting place of some of Chicago's most notorious gangsters, including Al Capone. The Catholic cemetery was consecrated in 1901 and is Chicago's largest, with more than 200,000 people buried there. Although Al Capone is buried in the cemetery, there have been no known reports of his ghost being seen in the graveyard. However, Mount Carmel Cemetery does have a spirit that has become known as the "Italian Bride."

Julia Buccola Petta was born in 1892 and died twenty-nine years later while giving birth to a child. Distraught, the family decided to erect a life-size statue of Petta wearing a wedding dress at her gravesite. At the base of the monument is a wedding photograph of Petta.

Within a few days of Petta's burial, her mother began to have disturbing dreams in which Julia was still alive. In the 1800s, people who had slipped into a coma were sometimes buried alive. As a precaution, a bell was sometimes placed beside the freshly dug grave with a string attached to inside the casket. If a person regained consciousness, he or she could ring the bell and the groundskeeper could commence to digging the person out of the grave. This is where the term "graveyard shift" originated. Whether Julia Petta had such a device attached to her gravestone is not known.

Julia Petta's mother continued to have these disturbing dreams for about six years. Eventually, Julia's mother was able to get permission to exhume her daughter's remains. To everybody's surprise, Julia's body showed no signs of decay. It was as if she had just been buried the day before. A photograph of the body was taken and placed on the front of the monument, replacing the wedding photo, where it remains to this day.

Not only was her body deemed incorruptible after six years, several stories surrounding Julia Petta and her ghost have emerged over the years. Several people, including many police officers patrolling the cemetery, have reported white mists or orbs near Petta's monument. Other people have claimed to have noticed the strong aroma of fresh-cut roses from near the monument throughout the year. An apparition fitting the description of Julia Petta wearing her bridal dress has also been seen wandering the cemetery close to her monument. Occasionally, the form will kneel in front of the monument as if she is placing flowers before fading away.

Wrigley Field

1060 West Addison Street

Wrigley Field was built in 1914 and has been the home of the Chicago Cubs since 1916. The ballpark was originally named Weeghman Park after Charles Weeghman, owner of the Chicago Whales. In 1915, William Wrigley Jr., of Wrigley's Spearmint Gum fame, obtained controlling interest in the newly formed Chicago Cubs and the park in 1918, and in 1926 renamed the park after himself.

One side-note is that in the 1980 movie *The Blues Brothers*, Dan Ackroyd (Elwood Blues) provides the address 1060 West Addison Street as his home address on his driver's license. Only when police attempt to find Elwood do they realize that he used the address for Wrigley Field. Way to go, Elwood!

Wrigley Field is reportedly one of the most haunted baseball parks in the world. Some believe that several of baseball's greats loved the game and the park so much that they decided to stay there long after they died.

Charlie Grimm was a player and manager of the Chicago Cubs in the 1930s and 1940s. Under his management, the Cubs won National League championships in 1932, 1935, and 1945. Although Grimm worked with other baseball teams over the years (notably the Pittsburgh Pirates, the Dallas Eagles, and the Milwaukee Brewers), his favorite team was the Chicago Cubs. There is no doubt that Charlie Grimm loved baseball. According to legend, Grimm loved Wrigley Field and the Chicago Cubs so much that he had his ashes secretly buried in left field of Wrigley Stadium when he died in 1983.

Since Grimm's death, security guards have heard the bullpen telephone ringing from the dugout in the middle of the night. When the guards go to investigate, the dugout is usually empty, although there have been reports of an apparition that looks remarkably like Charlie Grimm that can be seen walking the dugout and the hallways at night.

Another famous Chicago Cubs personality that haunts Wrigley Stadium is the one and only Harry Caray. Caray had an impressive career as a sportscaster that spanned nearly fifty years. Caray got his start in 1945 with the St. Louis Browns and worked for various baseball teams until he finally decided to be the voice for the Chicago Cubs. He worked for the team for sixteen seasons, and in the process made himself a permanent fixture at Wrigley Field and Chicago. Not long after his death in 1998, Caray's ghost started to be seen sitting in the press box and walking the bleachers of Wrigley Field.

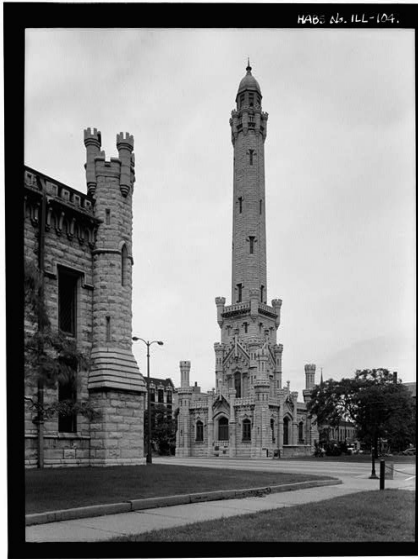
Rosehill Cemetery

5800 North Ravenswood Ave.

The original name of this 450-acre cemetery was to be Roe's Hill, named after a local farmer who had land adjacent to the site. However, a typographical error renamed it Rosehill Cemetery. People liked the new name better and as a result, it has been known as Rosehill Cemetery ever since. The cemetery dates back to 1859 and several notable Chicago figures are buried there, including several former mayors of Chicago and governors of Illinois. Charles Hull, associated with the formation of Hull House mentioned earlier in this chapter, is also buried here.

In May 1864, twenty-year-old Frances Pearce died while giving birth to her daughter. It was likely not the childbirth that was fatal for Frances, but the fact that she may have been weakened by tuberculosis. The infant daughter was named Frances to honor her deceased mother. Unfortunately, the baby died about four months later and was buried beside her mother in Rosehill Cemetery. After they were buried together, there have been several reports of a woman heard either laughing or crying. Sometimes when the monument is photographed, an image of a woman holding an infant can sometimes appear in the picture.

Richard Sears, founder of Sears, Roebuck and Co. died in 1914 and was laid to rest inside a crypt at Rosehill Cemetery. After Sears's death, people began to see him walking near his crypt in the formal attire and top hat



The Chicago Water Tower
(image courtesy Library of Congress)

he was buried in. Another ghost that has been seen inside Rosehill Cemetery is that of the cemetery's original designer, William Boyington. This famous designer was also responsible for the design of the famous Chicago Water Tower, where a fireman's ghost can be seen hanging from a window. Boyington died in 1898, and one of his dying wishes was to be buried in a crypt that reflected the architectural style that was used for Rosehill Cemetery, the Chicago Water Tower, and several other Chicago buildings.

Unfortunately, after the crypt was designed, it was unable to be finished based on Boyington's wishes, and his family had no choice but to design something much more ordinary. It undoubtedly would have upset Boyington had he known that his final wishes could not be fulfilled. This may be the reason why, to this day, people can still hear sounds of construction and a person moaning from within the walls of Boyington's crypt.

Clarendon Hills

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Country House

241 West 55th Street

There are two versions as to what happened that led to the Country House to become haunted. The first version of the story is that in the 1950s, a local resident had an affair with a bartender at the Country House. She had an illegitimate child with the bartender, who refused to claim the infant daughter as his own. One night, the woman and the bartender got

into a heated argument and she left the restaurant with her daughter. In her rage, the mother put her daughter in her vehicle and sped out from the restaurant's parking lot. She lost control of the vehicle and hit a tree about a half mile from the restaurant. The mother died in the accident, but the daughter survived. The bartender felt responsible for the woman's death, took custody of the daughter and raised her as his own.

The second account is very similar, but has a few twists. In this version, a young mother entered the bar with her daughter late one night and asked the bartender to watch her while she ran some errands. In this version, there is no mention of an affair or that the bartender even knew the woman. The bartender refused because he felt that the mother was simply going to abandon the child and never return. The woman got mad and sped away in the car with her daughter. The car hit a tree about a mile from the restaurant, killing both the mother and her daughter. There is speculation that the mother had intentionally crashed her car into the tree, but since she died at the scene, nobody can be for certain.

No matter which version you choose to believe, one thing is certain ... the ghosts of the woman and her daughter have been haunting the Clarendon Hills Country House for nearly fifty years. Although the haunting mostly consists of slamming doors, broken dishes and plates, lights turning on and off by themselves, and shutters opening suddenly, there have been sightings of a misty form of a woman holding her young daughter at both the bar and the entrance to the restaurant. On occasion, there have also been the sounds of a crying baby. If a person stands outside the restaurant and listens, the sounds of screeching brakes followed by a loud crash can sometimes be heard down the road.

Justice

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Resurrection Cemetery

7201 Archer Avenue

According to legend, in 1934 a teenage girl was killed in a car accident on her way home from nearby Willowbrook Ballroom. Although her identity was thought to have been lost over the years, most people who have thoroughly studied the legend of Resurrection Mary believe that the ghost can be identified as a teenager named Mary Bregovy, who died in a horrible automobile accident in 1934.

The most common version of the origin of Resurrection Mary is that Mary and her boyfriend got into a fight on a cold winter's night and she walked home from the Willowbrook, or O'Henry, Ballroom. She was wearing a white, flowing ball gown. The gown blended in with the snow, so it was difficult for passing motorists to see her walking along the side of the road. Mary was hit by a speeding car and the driver left the scene, leaving her to die cold and alone in a roadside ditch. Her body was found the next morning. Mary's parents arranged to have her buried at Resurrection Cemetery, near where the accident occurred. They buried her in the white dress that she died in.

Shortly after her death in 1934, hundreds of drivers have seen Mary Bregovy's ghost walking along Archer Avenue leading to Resurrection Cemetery. Generally, the driver is traveling along Archer Avenue late at night when he or she sees a young woman wearing a white dress hitching a ride. The car pulls over and the girl gets into the front seat. Mary will give directions to where she needs to be dropped off, which is inevitably Resurrection Cemetery. At this point, she will either disappear right before the driver's eyes, or she will walk up to and through the cemetery gate.

Joliet

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Rialto Square Theater

15 East Van Buren

The Rialto Square Theater opened in May 1926 and was originally to be opened as a vaudeville theater. Over the years, the venue not only was a movie theater, but also served as a stage theater and a concert hall. There have been hundreds of world-famous acts that have performed at the Rialto, ranging from the comedy of the Marx Brothers and Ron White to the musical talents of Johnny Cash and Alice Cooper.

The architecture can be described as nothing short of breathtaking, with very ornate Duchess Chandeliers, marble walls in the lobby, and a magnificent domed ceiling. There is no wonder that the Rialto has become known as the “Jewel of Joliet” and is on the American Institute of Architects’s list of the 150 great places in Illinois.

With such a history, it’s understandable that people would want to stay at the Rialto after they have died. Employees, performers, and visitors have had very similar accounts of ghostly activity over the years. In addition to the typical voices, cold spots, and electrical problems that often accompany haunted areas, the Rialto has at least two paranormal acts that have yet to be canceled.

One haunting is of a couple that has been seen and photographed several times in the theater’s balcony. Some people say that not long after the Rialto opened in 1926, a man and woman were in the balcony during a performance. They got too close to the edge and fell off the balcony to their deaths. Although these ghosts are silent, there is often a persistent cold spot in the balcony where they were sitting. There are no documented cases of a couple falling to their deaths in the history of the Rialto, however. It could be just as likely that the ghosts are of two theatergoers who particularly enjoy the view from the balcony.

Another ghost is that of a woman described to be in her mid-twenties that has been seen both backstage and near the theater's giant organ. When she is experienced or photographed, it is described as a misty or vaporous form. The working hypothesis of this ghost's origin is that it is of an actress that performed at the Rialto in the 1920s.

Frank Shaver Allen House

Corner of Morgan and Dewey

Frank Shaver Allen was a prominent architect known throughout Illinois for his work. Two of his structures, Kenosha High School and the English High Gothic Revival-style Christ Episcopal Church in Joliet, have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Although he was a well-known architect, the house that he lived in has become famous for quite another reason.

In 1934, F. S. Allen died at the age of seventy-four of natural causes while living in Pasadena, California. After his death, several private residents have lived in the nondescript, well-built house on the corner of Morgan and Dewey Streets. In the 1970s, the Frank Shaver Allen house became quite the media focal point when the residents invited a local newspaper reporter and some talented psychics into the house to investigate the ghosts that had been haunting it for years. The homeowners' claims to the paranormal activity that had taken place were nothing more than remarkable for the reporter, who started the investigation a skeptic and left a believer.

The psychics claimed to have encountered several ghosts when they investigated the house. One of the ghosts in the house is likely that of Frank Shaver Allen himself, who was often found to be in one of the front rooms of the home. The psychics also were able to communicate with an elderly woman who died in the house after a long illness, a young boy, and a housekeeper or nanny. Skeptical, the reporter researched the house and discovered that people who fit those descriptions had lived there over

the years. According to the psychics, there were other spirits who were unable to be identified.

Visitors and residents of the house have claimed to have seen these spirits since the late 1930s. In addition to the ghosts in the front rooms, there have been sightings of fires burning in different places throughout the house. When a person went to investigate the fires, they would disappear. The smell of burning wood would sometimes be noticed long after the phantom fire had disappeared.

Joliet Arsenal/Joliet Army Ammunition Plant

Joliet Arsenal was constructed in two separate locations (the Kankakee Ordnance Works and the Elwood Ordnance Plant) in 1940. In 1945, the two locations were decommissioned and later combined to form the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant, which was used during World War II to produce TNT and other munitions necessary to help American soldiers win the war. After World War II ended, the production of munitions were halted. The Joliet Army Ammunition Plant resumed production of munitions for the Korean War and the Vietnam War, but it was permanently closed in the 1980s during the Reagan Administration.

On June 5, 1942, a large explosion at the Elwood Ordnance Plant killed forty-eight workers. The explosion was so destructive that it could be felt more than sixty miles away and the damage was so extensive that many of the workers' bodies were never recovered. The only reason that there was not more death and destruction was that the munitions plant was actually at two separate sites. If there had been only one central location, the explosion could have caused a chain reaction that would have been much more costly in terms of loss of life and physical damage.

Today, there is little left to show where the arsenal actually stood. Those who know how to get there often claim to hear noises of machinery running. They have also reported hearing the sound of vehicles speeding off although there are no cars nearby.