

Ghost Tourism in the Ohio River Valley

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Alyssa G. Akin

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By
Alyssa G. Akin

Has been approved by

Dr. Tamara L. Hunt

Committee Chair

Dr. Leigh Anne Howard

Committee Member

Jenn Horn

Committee Member

Dr. Kristalyn M. Shefveland

Director of Graduate Program in Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

Dr. Michael D. Dixon

Director of Graduate Studies

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Abstract

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Committee Chair: Dr. Tamara L. Hunt

Ghost tours are an increasingly popular alternative or addition to traditional tourist activities and are a growing area of heritage tourism and dark tourism. Furthermore, recent literature is showing a growing academic interest in dark tourism, but little research on ghost tourism, a specialized subfield of dark tourism. This study contributes to the understanding of the intersection between historical and paranormal content of ghost tours. It provides an overview of historical and modern ghost tourism to provide context for the ethnographic data collected for this study, which updates and combines earlier and modern contexts of the consumption in ghost tourism. The ghost tour operators and locations researched for this study were: New Harmony Ghost Walks in New Harmony, Indiana; paranormal tours in the Waverly Hills Sanatorium in Louisville, Kentucky; The Willard Library Grey Lady Ghost tour in Evansville, Indiana. Although there were differences in the tours based partly on unique characteristics of each site, all of them combined history with accounts of the paranormal, and in all sites the tour guides established credibility to admitting their own beliefs and openly or inherently relying on authoritative sources. They added to the authenticity of the tourist experience by recounting personal paranormal experiences; in most tours, they also enhanced this through tourist participation in activities. All the sites intentionally linked stories with the specific stops on the tour, further enhancing the tourist experience. These are likely qualities that can be used as a model for other successful ghost tours.

Keywords: Ghost tourism, paranormal tourism, dark tourism, ghost walks

Chapter 1

Introduction

In one of the most famous soliloquies in literature, William Shakespeare's Hamlet contemplates whether to continue with his tragedy-filled life or find potential release in death. Yet he acknowledges that death's true nature is unknown and frightening:

. . . who would fardels [burdens] bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death –
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, – puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?¹

Hamlet addressed a key aspect of the human condition: curiosity about death and its sequel. Although many authors, poets, philosophers, theologians and even biologists and psychologists have addressed this topic, verifiable answers continue to elude us. Perhaps the unknowable and mysterious nature of death is what continues to draw people to explore the morbid or dark aspects of history and humanity through literature, media, and personal experience, including visits to sites connected with death. These sites are essentially historic sites since the death has occurred in the past; this is true even of sites where the death was quite recent since it calls up memories of past events and individuals. The choice to visit these sites may be for entertainment purposes or to satisfy curiosity, but frequently people are drawn to them to learn about the past,

¹ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Scene 3, Act 1.

to experience a personal connection with tragedy and death, or to contemplate what happens once a life has physically ended.

Yet only in the past few decades have scholars begun to explore the historical, sociological, and philosophical implications of tourist visits to sites associated with tragedy and death, which has come to be called “dark tourism.” Such sites include battlefields, Nazi-era concentration camps, sites of disasters such as the World Trade Center in New York, or even museum exhibitions related to disasters such as the sinking of the *Titanic*. The relatively recent emergence of dark tourism research means that there has been an empirical data shortage for such studies.² Ghost tourism, a specific type of dark tourism, has also received increasing attention, but it remains a controversial research area that has only recently been acknowledged as a focus that allows complex social, cultural, political, and moral issues to be addressed.³ Only in recent years have increasing number of scholars begun to investigate the phenomenon of ghost tourism; even with this new interest, there is limited scholarly attention on paranormal tourism and ghost tourism.⁴

This study of ghost tourism in selected locations in the Ohio River valley begins with an overview of earlier and modern contexts of ghost tourism. Starting with a discussion of the literature and terminology used to discuss dark tourism and ghost tourism, the study turns to an historical overview of ghosts as subjects of the spectator’s gaze. It then focuses on the three ghost tour sites that were the subject of this investigation: New Harmony, Indiana, the Willard Library in Evansville, Indiana, and the Waverly Hills Sanatorium in Louisville, Kentucky. It

² Dejan Iliev, “Consumption, Motivation and Experience in Dark Tourism: A Conceptual and Critical Analysis,” *Tourism Geographies* 23, no. 5/6 (2021): 964; Heather Lewis, Thomas Schrier, and Shuangyu Xu, “Dark Tourism: Motivations and Visit Intentions of Tourists,” *International Hospitality Review* 36, no. 1 (2022): 107.

³ Heather Renee Allman, “Motivations and Intentions of Tourists to Visit Dark Tourism locations” (PhD diss., Iowa State University, 2017), 11-12.

⁴ Genoveva Dancausa, Ricardo D. Hernández, and Leonor M. Pérez, “Motivations and Constraints for the Ghost Tourism: A Case Study in Spain,” *Leisure Sciences* 45, no. 2 (2023): 157.

presents data collected from the ghost tours, focusing on the tours' content and the approaches of the tour guides, and analyzes this data relating to ghost tourism using ethnographic approaches within the historical and modern contexts of the consumption of ghost tourism. By implementing this approach, this study contributes to existing scholarship about the content and structure in ghost tourism.

Chapter 2

Ghosts, Audiences, and Ghost Tourism

Terminology

Tourism is a planned journey and with a specific destination that is distinct from a person's normal habitat where they remain for a short time before returning home.⁵ In the late twentieth century, scholars began to study specialized types of tourism, such as ecotourism or adventure tourism.⁶ J. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley introduced the term "dark tourism" in 1996.⁷ Generally, scholars use this phrase to refer to activities that include visiting or reading about sites associated with death, disaster, tragedy, suffering, and/or violence.⁸ More recent

⁵ Michael C. Hall, "Fieldwork in Tourism/Touring Fields: Where Does Tourism End and Fieldwork Begin?" in *Fieldwork in Tourism: Methods, Issues and Reflections*, ed. Michael C. Hall (New York: Routledge, 2010): 9; Titta Niemelä, "Motivation Factors in Dark Tourism. Case: House of Terror" (Bachelor's thesis, Lahti University of Applied Sciences, 2010): 6.

⁶ For early studies of ecotourism and adventure tourism, see David A. Fennell, *Ecotourism: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1999) or Simon Hudson, Bennet P. Lientz, and Kathryn Rea, eds. *Sport and Adventure Tourism* (Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press, 2003), which includes essays on tourism based on winter sports, golf, marine sites, and mountain-based adventure tourism.

⁷ J. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, *Dark Tourism: The Attractions of Death and Disaster* (London: Continuum, 2010). For the scholarly consensus that attributes the phrase to this book, see Philip Stone, "Dark Tourism Scholarship: A Critical Review," *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 7, no. 3 (2013): 148; Katie Heuermann, and Deepak Chhabra. "The Darker Side of Dark Tourism: An Authenticity Perspective," *Tourism analysis* 19, no. 2 (2014), 216; Joan Passey, "Imagined Ghosts on Unfrequented Roads: Gothic Tourism in Nineteenth-Century Cornwall," in *Virtual Dark Tourism*, ed. Kathryn N. McDaniel (Cham, Switzerland: Macmillan, 2018): 45; Jayne Krisjanous and Janet Carruthers, "Walking on the Light Side," *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* 21, no. 2 (2018): 232-233; Lewis, Schrier, and Xu, "Dark Tourism," 108; Maria Cramer, "Beaches? Cruises? 'Dark' Tourists Prefer the Gloomy and Macabre," *New York Times*. Oct. 28, 2022.

⁸ Allman, "Motivations and Intentions of Tourists to Visit Dark Tourism locations," 7; Emily Alvey, "Gone Haunting: Exploring the Use of Mission-based Ghost Tours in Historic House Museums," (Master's thesis, University of Washington, 2017): 18; Cramer, "Beaches? Cruises? 'Dark' Tourists Prefer the Gloomy and Macabre"; Glenn W. Gentry, "Walking with the Dead: The Place of Ghost Walk Tourism in Savannah, Georgia," *Southeastern Geographer* 47, no. 2 (2007): 223; "Impact," Institute for Dark Tourism Research (iDTR), <https://www.uclan.ac.uk/research/activity/dark-tourism/>; Iliev, "Consumption, Motivation and Experience in Dark Tourism," 964; Rachel Ironside, "The Allure of Dark Tourism: Legend Tripping and Ghost Seeking in Dark Places," in *The Supernatural in Society, Culture and History*, ed. D. Waskul and M. Eaton (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2018): 99; Krisjanous and Carruthers, "Walking on the Light Side," 232; Yi-Ju Lee, "Tourist Behavioral Intentions in Ghost Tourism: The Case of Taiwan," *International Journal of Tourism Research* 23 (2021): 959; Lewis, Schier, and Xu, "Dark Tourism," 107; Tiya Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories of Slavery from the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015): 10; Passey, "Imagined Ghosts on Unfrequented Roads," 45; Stone, "Dark Tourism Scholarship," 146, 148.; Michael S. Bowman and Phaedra C. Pezzullo, "What's So 'Dark' About 'Dark Tourism'?: Death, Tours, and Performance,"

research has introduced alternative definitions such as “morbid tourism,” “black spot tourism,” “paranormal tourism,” “tragic tourism,” and “gothic tourism.”⁹ Dark tourism is also sometimes referred to as “thanatourism,” although this term usually refers to those who undertake travel motivated by a specific desire for a real or symbolic encounter with death.¹⁰ According to Allman, “thanatourism is primarily focused on behaviors of the tourists and their motives for visiting the dark tourism location rather than the features of the travel destination.”¹¹ Overall, scholars have identified “thanatourism” as a type of heritage tourism that reflects a fascination with death or travel to locations of death in hopes of having a type of emotional or psychological experience.¹²

While there is still debate about the distinction between “thanatourism” and “dark tourism,” both terms have evolved and broadened over time since the 1990’s. Iliev explains that “some researchers blend both concepts and use the terms dark tourism and thanatourism alternately, while others have suggested redefining the term dark tourism to allow for broader

Tourist Studies 9, no. 3 (2009): 188; Knudsen, “Thanatourism: Witnessing Difficult Pasts,” 56; Niemelä, “Motivation Factors in Dark Tourism,” 11; Dancausa, Hernández, and Pérez, “Motivations and Constraints for the Ghost Tourism,” 158.

⁹ Allman, “Motivations and Intentions of Tourists to Visit Dark Tourism locations,” 7; “Impact,” iDTR; Duncan Light, “Progress in Dark Tourism and Thanatourism Research: An Uneasy Relationship with Heritage Tourism,” *Tourism Management* 61 (2017): 278; Viorel Mionel, “Dark Tourism and Thanatourism: Distinct Tourism Typologies or Simple Analytical Tools?” *Tourism* 67, no. 4 (2019): 425; Stone, “Dark Tourism Scholarship,” 312.

¹⁰ Heuermann and Chhabra, “The Darker Side of Dark Tourism,” 216; A. V. Seaton, “Guided by the Dark: From Thanatopsis to Thanatourism,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2, no. 4 (1996): 234; “Impact,” iDTR; Iliev, “Consumption, Motivation and Experience in Dark Tourism,” 964; Preslava Ivanova and Duncan Light, “‘It’s Not that We Like Death or Anything’: Exploring the Motivations and Experiences of Visitors to a Lighter Dark Tourism Attraction,” *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 13, no. 4 (2018): 356; Lewis, Schier, and Xu, “Dark Tourism,” 107, 108; Seaton, “Guided by the Dark,” 240; Bowman and Pezzullo, “What’s So ‘Dark’ About ‘Dark Tourism’?” 188.

Heuermann and Deepak, “The Darker Side of Dark Tourism,” 216; Knudsen, “Thanatourism: Witnessing Difficult Pasts,” 56-57.

¹¹ Allman, “Motivations and Intentions of Tourists to Visit Dark Tourism Locations,” 7.

¹² Duncan Light, Steven Richards, and Preslava Ivanova, “Exploring Gothic Tourism: A New Form of Urban Tourism?” *International Journal of Tourism Cities* 7, no. 1 (2021): 276-277; Passey, “Imagined Ghosts on Unfrequented Roads,” 45; Seaton, “Guided by the Dark,” 240; Stone, “Dark Tourism Scholarship,” 307; Knudsen, “Thanatourism: Witnessing Difficult Pasts,” 56-57.

interpretations of different phenomena in the field.”¹³ Nevertheless, most academics or scholars continue to use the term dark tourism to discuss tourism research related to sites connected to death.¹⁴ The term dark tourism, however, refers to different types of sites that appeal to different audiences. For example, the grimmest form of dark tourism involves sites connected to substantial atrocities with death and suffering (e.g., concentration camps, Chernobyl) while the lighter side is presented as a variable mix of both the morbid and entertainment (dungeon attractions, dark exhibitions).

In general, ghost tourism is among the more light-hearted forms of dark tourism and is often at the playful end of the dark tourism spectrum.¹⁵ According to Kalaitidis’s research, the term “ghost tourism” is a newer term that was previously regarded as a subset of paranormal tourism; an early use occurred 2003, with a study of the impact ghosts legends have in Scotland’s tourism industry by Inglis and Holmes.¹⁶ As is the case with the definitions of thanatourism and dark tourism, the terms “paranormal tourism” and “ghost tourism” are similar but not identical. Paranormal tourism can refer to a wide range of tourist specific organizations or businesses connected to sites that have a reputation for unusual occurrences, such as extra-terrestrial life forms (e.g., 1947 UFO crash in Roswell, New Mexico), witchcraft (e.g., Salem Witch Trials in Salem, Massachusetts), cryptids (e.g., Bigfoot, North America), and ghosts (e.g.,

¹³ Iliev, “Consumption, Motivation and Experience in Dark Tourism,” 965-966.

¹⁴ Lewis, Schier, and Xu, “Dark Tourism,” 108; Light, “Progress in Dark Tourism,” 276-277; Annaclaudia Martini and Dorina Maria Buda, “Dark Tourism and Affect: Framing Places of Death and Disaster,” *Current Issues in Tourism* 23, no. 6 (2020): 681.

¹⁵ Cramer, “Beaches? Cruises? ‘Dark’ Tourists Prefer the Gloomy and Macabre”; Ivanova and Light, “‘It’s Not that We Like Death or Anything,’” 358; Krisjanous and Carruthers, “Walking on the Light Side,” 232-233; Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 10.

¹⁶ Anna-Maria Kalaitidis, “Affects and Emotions in Ghost Tourism—A Content Analysis on Tourist Experiences at the LaLaurie Mansion” (Master’s thesis, University of Lapland, 2021): 6; David Inglis and Mary Holmes, “Highland and Other Haunts: Ghosts in Scottish Tourism,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 30, no. 1 (2003): 50-63.

Waverly Hills Sanatorium in Louisville, Kentucky).¹⁷ Ghost tourism is roughly any type of travel or vacation that includes visiting sites believed to be haunted as well as learning about ghosts or hauntings, usually within a tourist specific business, and tourists visit historical and haunted attractions or places of supernatural sightings and occurrences in hopes of having a paranormal experience themselves or to gain more understanding on the topic.¹⁸ Essentially, all ghost tourism is paranormal tourism, but not all paranormal tourism includes ghost tourism. Based on the commonality, definitions, and specifics, “ghost tourism” and “dark tourism” will be the terms used throughout this paper.

Early Forms of Dark Tourism & Literature

While the commercialization of death for contemporary tourists is a relatively new trend, observing death and suffering has been a long form of entertainment.¹⁹ Early examples of a dark tourist attractions were the gladiatorial games in the Roman Colosseum, Christian persecutions, medieval executions, British public hangings, and the Salem Witch Trials.²⁰ Onlookers even turned out to watch battles (e.g., the battle of Bunker Hill in 1775, the battle of Waterloo 1815,

¹⁷ Michele Hanks, *Haunted Heritage: The Cultural Politics of Ghost Tourism, Populism, and the Past* (London: Routledge, 2016): 14; Sanja Obradović, Tatjana Pivac, Snežana Besermenji, and Aleksandra Tešin, “Possibilities for Paranormal Tourism Development in Serbia,” *Eastern European Countryside* 27, no. 1 (2021): 205-206.

¹⁸ Alvey, “Gone Haunting,” 19; Hanks, *Haunted Heritage*, 13; Krisjanous and Carruthers, “Walking on the Light Side,” 233-234.; Dancausa, Hernández, and Pérez, “Motivations and Constraints for the Ghost Tourism,” 157; Beatriz Rodriguez Garcia, “Management Issues in Dark Tourism Attractions: The Case of Ghost Tours in Edinburgh and Toledo,” *Journal of Unconventional Parks, Tourism and Recreation Research* 4, no. 1 (2012): 14; Ironside, “The Allure of Dark Tourism,” 103; Lee, “Tourist Behavioral Intentions in Ghost Tourism,” 958-960.

¹⁹ Hanks, *Haunted Heritage*, 13; Ironside, “The Allure of Dark Tourism,” 100.

²⁰ Cramer, “Beaches? Cruises? ‘Dark’ Tourists Prefer the Gloomy and Macabre”; “Impact,” iDTR; Ironside, “The Allure of Dark Tourism,” 100; Lewis, Schrier, and Xu, “Dark Tourism,” 108; Robert Reid, “Is Dark Tourism OK?” *National Geographic*, April 26, 2016; Stone, “Dark Tourism Scholarship,” 147; Lewis, Schrier, and Xu, “Dark Tourism,” 108; Stephanie Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation: The Utilization of Paranormal Tourism in Historic Site Interpretations” (Master’s thesis, Savannah College of Art and Design, 2012), 5; Niemelä, “Motivation Factors in Dark Tourism,” 1, 11.

or the first battle of Bull Run in 1861) from a safe distance.²¹ Murder sites also drew spectators, and according to Seaton, “Murder coverage in the nineteenth century press produced stampedes of visitors to death locations for sightseeing and souvenir hunting.”²² Sometimes the public interest in visiting the site of murder interfered with police investigations. For example, Judith Flanders described the aftermath of the 1811 Marris family murders when Timothy Marris, his wife, their baby, and his teenage apprentice were all bludgeoned to death in the east end of London.²³ Once the crimes were discovered, a crowd of onlookers rushed into the home, disturbing the crime scene. The crowd trailed through the Marris’s house, gawking at the blood spatter and mutilated bodies.²⁴

While the Marris’ neighbors were from the working-class, they were not the only ones who were so captivated by homicide that they visited a murder site. While on a trip in 1828, Sir Walter Scott made a detour to visit the site of a famous recent murder by John Thurtell, a young man from a respectable family. Despite his status, Thurtell was tried and executed for murdering notorious gambler William Weare, while his two accomplices, both disreputable characters with lower-class origins, avoided the death sentence, and one of them, William Probert, turned state’s evidence against Thurtell. The murder took place at Probert’s somewhat isolated home, which is the location Scott visited. Describing it in his diary, Scott noted that the house was in ruins and the garden neglected, and he expressed surprise that the pond where the victim’s body had

²¹ Cramer, “Beaches? Cruises? ‘Dark’ Tourists Prefer the Gloomy and Macabre”; Jennifer Iles, “Recalling the Ghosts of War: Performing Tourism on the Battlefields of the Western Front,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2006): 162.

²² Seaton, “Guided by the Dark,” 242.

²³ Judith Flanders, *The Invention of Murder: How the Victorians Revelled in Death and Detection and Created Modern Crime* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2013): 3.

²⁴ Flanders, *The Invention of Murder*, 3-4.

temporarily been hidden “is now only a green swamp, but so near the house that one cannot conceive how it was ever chosen as a place of temporary concealment for a murdered body.”²⁵

For people who could not visit the actual site of a notorious murder, they had the option to read the detailed descriptions of it in newspapers, buy printed engravings and woodblock prints, or see a theatrical interpretation from plays based on murders. They could even purchase plaques, jugs, mugs, models of murder sites, and porcelain figurines of famous murderers and their victims.²⁶ As this suggests, the public was able to vicariously visit the scenes of murders; since at least the sixteenth century, enterprising publishers made cheap broadsides on noteworthy homicides, usually recounting the events in prose or verse, accompanied by a rough woodcut picture of the murderer, the victim, and less often, the scene of the crime. Broadsides were so popular that they began to be collected and printed in book form, most notably the *Newgate Calendar*, first published in 1773.²⁷ Until 1868, when public hangings were banned in Britain, many of these broadsides were sold to the large crowds who attended executions and most included a narrative of the crime and the criminal’s confession and last words. This last part of the broadside was usually imaginary since it was being sold at the execution itself. These publications tended to be formulaic morality statements intended to alleviate the concerns of elites that this form of literature for the masses portrayed the criminal in a favorable or even heroic light.²⁸ Once public hangings ended, the content of broadsides changed to mirror the highly detailed accounts found in newspapers, complete with quotations from the coroner’s

²⁵ Quoted in Albert Borowitz, *The Thurtell-Hunt Murder Case: Dark Mirror to Regency England* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987): 255.

²⁶ A variety of these objects were listed in *Catalogue of a Collection of Pottery and Porcelain Illustrating Popular British History* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1899) in a subsection for “Crime,” 49-50.

²⁷ Richard D. Altick, *Victorian Studies in Scarlet* (London: J. M. Dent, 1970): 43-44.

²⁸ Ellen L. O’Brien, “‘The Most Beautiful Murder’: The Transgressive Aesthetics of Murder in Victorian Street Ballads,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 28, no. 1 (2000): 16.

inquest on the victim.²⁹ These quite literally sold millions of copies because, as one mid-nineteenth-century observer put it, the public reveled in “a stunning good murder.”³⁰ If someone could not afford to buy a broadside, they could be viewed at taverns or coffee houses. “Other broadsides appeared in shop windows, frequently attracting crowds of bloodthirsty children.”³¹ If this was not enough entertainment, curious people would attend the deceased victim’s funerals.³²

In the nineteenth century, technological improvements allowed for faster and cheaper printing and distribution; coupled with the expansion of education, the working classes became a new target audience for publishers, who responded with low-cost magazines and books, including the “penny dreadfuls.” “Penny dreadfuls,” formerly known as “penny bloods,” were nineteenth century weekly published pamphlets that cost a penny and initially were either reprints or rewrites of late eighteenth century gothic tales and stories of highwaymen and other famous criminals. Later, publishers added overdramatized and sensationalized stories on adventures of detectives, criminals, evil aristocrats, or supernatural entities, aimed primarily at boys, alarming the middle classes with their focus on “anti-social attitudes and criminal behavior.”³³ Yet even as these highly-colored tales were condemned by more respectable audiences, the middle classes themselves were avidly consuming “sensational” fiction that often focused on murders and trials. This type of fiction impressed audiences with its “authenticity” –

²⁹ Philippe Chassaing and W. Heppel, “Popular Representations of Crime: The Crime Broadside – A Subculture of Violence in Victorian Britain?” *Crime, Histoire, & Sociétés/ Crime, History & Societies* 3, no. 2 (1999): 26.

³⁰ Altick, *Victorian Studies in Scarlet*, 47. Altick quotes one of the informants interviewed by Henry Mayhew in his study of the poor and working classes.

³¹ Flanders *The Invention of Murder*, 4; Mystery Tribune. “Penny Dreadfuls: The Ultimate Guide To Their Origins, Decline and Legacy,” accessed March 26, 2023, <https://mysterytribune.com/penny-dreadfuls-the-ultimate-guide-to-their-origins-decline-and-legacy/>.

³² Flanders *The Invention of Murder*, 5.

³³ Patrick A. Dunae, “Penny Dreadfuls: Late Nineteenth-Century Boy’s Literature and Crime,” *Victorian Studies* 22, no. 2 (Winter 1979): 133.

the perception that they were spectators at actual events.³⁴ This blurred the line between reality and fiction while at the same time satisfying the public's interest in the dark side of the human psyche.

It's important to recognize that these people who engaged in real or vicarious dark tourism in the past had varying motives. For instance, O'Brien argues that social class impacted the reception of violent entertainment, with the middle classes emphasizing the morality tale embodied in the execution of a murderer, and the working classes often viewing it as an exposition of the legal, economic, and social reality they faced.³⁵

But murders had not been the only form of "dark" entertainment to draw the attention of the public; by the end of the eighteenth century, the emergence of "gothic" literature fed a popular taste for the supernatural, and from this emerged the earliest forms of modern ghost tourism. Popular interest in ghosts was nothing new, dating back at least as far as Classical Greece and Rome, although it can be hard to trace exactly where ghost tourism specifically began. One example is the early 1660's poltergeist case of Drummer of Tedworth of Wiltshire, England. Joseph Glanvill, a member of the Royal Society, made this case famous in his compilation of accounts of supernatural occurrences, *A Blow at Modern Sadducism*, later called *Saducismus Triumphatus*. John Mompesson, a local landowner and magistrate in Wiltshire had nomadic drummer William Drury arrested in 1661; it was illegal to beat a drum in public without a permit, and it turned out Drury's permit was forged.³⁶ Although Drury was later released, Mompesson transferred the confiscated drum to his home in Tedworth. Immediately afterward,

³⁴ Lynn M. Voskuil, "Feeling Public: Sensation Theater, Commodity Culture, and the Victorian Public Sphere," *Victorian Studies* 44, no. 2 (Winter 2002): 245.

³⁵ O'Brien, "The Most Beautiful Murder," 19-20.

³⁶ Michael Hunter, "New Light on the 'Drummer of Tedworth': Conflicting Narratives of Witchcraft in Restoration England," *Historical Research* 78, no. 201 (August 2005): 312.

his family began to experience poltergeist-like phenomena (e.g., phantom drumming, odd smells, thrown objects, knocking, floating beds) that continued for months. Glanvill himself became a “ghost tourist” when visited the house to view the disturbances, saying that “my curiosity drew me to the House, to be a witness of some of those strange passages [i.e., phenomena].”³⁷ He was only one of several curious visitors who went to Mompesson’s home hoping to witness the strange phenomena.³⁸

As a member of the Royal Society, Glanvill’s visit could be attributed to scientific curiosity, but other “ghost tourists” contemporary with him were attracted by a desire to experience something that was beyond their everyday lives.³⁹ From the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, English tourists visited the remote areas of the Scotland highlands, believed to be a location where uncanny events occurred, in search of unusual experiences which could not be viewed or felt at home in England.⁴⁰ At the same time, English tourists were interested by the perception of historical transformation; when author Samuel Johnson visited the Scotland Highlands and Western Isles in 1775, he was like other English tourists in that he “came to witness what he felt was the passing of an older traditional way of life into the new commercial order prevalent in England, and to witness its last evanescent glimmerings before it disappeared forever.”⁴¹ Though a skeptic of oracles and the supernatural, Johnson was more interested in looking for extraordinary and strange phenomena than Scotland’s actual terrain. Nevertheless,

³⁷ Joseph Glanvill, *A Blow at Modern Sadducism in some Philosophical Considerations about Witchcraft. And the Relation of the Famed Disturbance at the House of M. Mompesson*, 4th ed. (London: James Collins, 1668): 133.

³⁸ Hunter, “New Light on the ‘Drummer of Tedworth,’” 312.

³⁹ Inglis and Holmes, “Highland and Other Haunts,” 51-52; Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 3; Seaton, “Guided by the Dark,” 237.

⁴⁰ Inglis and Holmes, “Highland and Other Haunts,” 52.

⁴¹ Inglis and Holmes, “Highland and Other Haunts,” 53.

Johnson heard an abundant number of credible tales that caused him to believe in the possibility of ghosts.⁴²

History of Romantic and Victorian Dark Literature

Johnson's visit to Scotland coincided with the emergence of early Romanticism; as X. Theodore Barber describes it, this was "a movement that had an element of the bizarre and irrational, and the Gothic novel, with its atmosphere of mystery, madness, and darkness, was having its heyday."⁴³ During the Romantic period (1770-1830), novels, plays, paintings and engravings of wild ruins and castles illustrated accounts of tortures, executions, imprisonments, hauntings, and ghostly appearances.⁴⁴ Representative of this trend is the painting *The Nightmare* (Figure 1), which was painted by Swiss-born and longtime English resident painter Henry Fuseli. Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1782, *The Nightmare* depicts a monster sitting on a sleeping woman while a spectral horse looks on from draperies behind the bed.⁴⁵ Contemporaries were fascinated by the painting and the variations Fuseli produced; engravings and copies made it "immensely popular" and gave it "unusually wide currency in the visual culture of Britain, Europe, and even North America."⁴⁶ As a result, it has often been cited by modern scholars as the epitome of the visual counterpart to the Gothic fiction of the age.⁴⁷

A more interactive uncanny experience at this time was by magic lantern shows that used illusion to depict ghostly images. The magic lantern was projection device that threw luminous

⁴² Inglis and Holmes, "Highland and Other Haunts," 53.

⁴³ X. Theodore Barber, "Phantasmagorical Wonders: The Magic Lantern Ghost Show in Nineteenth Century America," *Film History* 3, no. 2 (1989): 73.

⁴⁴ Seaton, "Guided by the Dark," 238.

⁴⁵ John F. Moffitt, "A Pictorial Counterpart to 'Gothic' Literature: Fuseli's *The Nightmare*," *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 35, no. 1 (March 2002): 173.

⁴⁶ Moffitt, "A Pictorial Counterpart to 'Gothic' Literature, 173; Martin Myrone, "Henry Fuseli and Gothic Spectacle," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (June 2007): 289.

⁴⁷ Moffit, "A Pictorial Counterpart to 'Gothic' Literature," 178-179.

shadows on a screen and was originally invented by Dutch scientist Christiaan Huygens in the mid-seventeenth century.⁴⁸ The public was fascinated with these optical tricks, and increasingly elaborate shows became a popular paid entertainment by the end of the eighteenth century.⁴⁹ Using candlelight and hand painted glass slides to create a projected image of landscapes or classical story characters, these shows often included “Phantasmagorias,” which depicted eerie supernatural beings and spectral effects (e.g., skeletons, ghosts, devils) to tell a story.⁵⁰ Public magic lantern shows became very popular to the extent that traveling showmen would conduct shows in homes, halls, and taverns.⁵¹ While American Phantasmagoria showmen stressed that their show was real and mechanical, by the middle of the century, some practitioners of the new trend called “spiritualism” who claimed to be able to speak to the dead used a magic lantern to summon ghosts, but generally with an intention to deceive.⁵²

Spiritualism

The interest in ghostly Gothic literature and images focused on the supernatural laid the groundwork for spiritualism, which was literally “talking with the dead.”⁵³ Spiritualists believed that that an individual’s unique consciousness and existence left the body at death to travel to the spirit plane and that these beings, or spirits, could communicate with the living from the other side of the grave.⁵⁴ However, the belief that the living could speak to the dead did not originate

⁴⁸ Koen Vermeir, “The Magic of the Magic Lantern (1660-1700): On Analogical Demonstration and the Visualization of the Invisible,” *The British Journal for the History of Science* 38, no. 2 (June 2005): 127-128.

⁴⁹ Barber, “Phantasmagorical Wonders,” 73.

⁵⁰ Barber, “Phantasmagorical Wonders,” 73, 78.

⁵¹ Barber, “Phantasmagorical Wonders,” 73-75.

⁵² Barber, “Phantasmagorical Wonders,” 78.

⁵³ David K. Nartonis, “The Rise of 19th-Century American Spiritualism, 1854-1873,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49, no. 2 (June 2020): 362-363, 361.

⁵⁴ John J. Guthrie, “Seeking the Sweet Spirit of Harmony: Establishing a Spiritualist Community at Cassadaga, Florida, 1893-1933.” *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 77, no. 1 (1998): 2, 21; William D. Moore, “To Hold

with spiritualists. In beginning in the mid-eighteenth-century, Swedish scientist Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688-1771) claimed that he spoke to angels, who were deceased individuals who had reached heaven only after going through a period of instruction; moreover, he believed anyone could contact the dead through entering a trance state.⁵⁵ Two American movements in the early nineteenth century also accepted the idea of communication with the dead. In upstate New York in 1823, Joseph Smith (1805-1844) claimed that the angel Moroni appeared to him with the message that he had been chosen to restore God's church on earth; Smith's followers would later form the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, commonly called the Mormons. This name derived from the belief that Moroni was both an angel and spirit returned from the dead, and that when living, he had been the last great Christian prophet of a group that had come to ancient America after Christ's death. Links with the dead were central to their belief, and after a further revelation to Smith, they began to practice baptism for the dead to help deceased family members reach heaven.⁵⁶ Another group that formed about this same time was the United Society of Believers, commonly called Shakers, who officially organized in 1826. They also believed that they could communicate with the dead, and in 1837, non-Shakers became a type of ghost tourist when they traveled to Shaker meetings during a revival that promised spirit communication.⁵⁷

Communion with Nature and the Spirit World': New England's Spiritualist Camp Meetings, 1865-1910," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 7 (1997): 231; David K. Nartonis, "The Rise of 19th-Century American Spiritualism, 1854-1873," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49, no. 2 (June 2020): 361.

⁵⁵ Erik R. Seeman, *Speaking with the Dead in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019): 161-162.

⁵⁶ Seeman, *Speaking with the Dead in Early America*, 181.

⁵⁷ Seeman, *Speaking with the Dead in Early America*, 170-171.

Spiritualism, the most widespread of the movements that believed the living could communicate with the dead, was triggered by the events in Hydesville, New York in 1848.⁵⁸ Poltergeist-like raps and noises began occurring in the Fox family home; sisters Margaretta (Maggie) and Catherine (Kate) declared the noises came from a spirit and that they could communicate with it through knocking or rapping. They would later claim that a murdered peddler was buried in the basement, and it was his ghost who rapped on the walls and furniture. Within weeks, several hundred people were visiting the house to hear the phenomena.⁵⁹ Interest was so great that the Fox sisters toured the United States to summon ghosts in front of large audiences, and the practice of talking to the spirits of the deceased through seances quickly grew in popularity in America and Europe in the 1850s. Blankshein notes that as spiritualism grew popular, many people tried to capitalize on the fad by claiming to be mediums, which ultimately led to researchers, scientists, and skeptics to question the authenticity of all medium and to try to expose them as frauds. Nevertheless, the Fox sisters, “were able to capture the attention and imagination of the American public and change the way they viewed life and death.”⁶⁰

Victorians found comfort in spiritualism, and it has been estimated that millions of Americans participated in Spiritualist activities during the third quarter of the nineteenth century.⁶¹ Some of this interest arose from the enormous loss of life during the Civil War (1861-1865), which had a profound impact on survivors. Graveyards and monuments served as reminders of those lost, but family and friends looked for assurance of continuity. Many believed that ghostly contact with the living during spiritualist seances confirmed the existence of the

⁵⁸ Blankshein, "Paranormal Preservation," 6; Ironside, "The Allure of Dark Tourism," 103; Moore, "To Hold Communion with Nature and the Spirit World," 231; Diane Goldstein, Sylvia Grider, and Jeannie Banks Thomas, *Haunting Experiences: Ghosts in Contemporary Folklore* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2007): 191.

⁵⁹ Blankshein, "Paranormal Preservation," 6; Ironside, "The Allure of Dark Tourism," 103.

⁶⁰ Blankshein, "Paranormal Preservation," 6.

⁶¹ Nartonis, "The Rise of 19th-Century American Spiritualism, 1854-1873," 361.

afterlife at a time when high levels of urbanization, geographic mobility and changing social norms led to questioning of traditional religious beliefs.⁶² Interest in spirit communication grew, and the spiritualist movement in Britain and America added many new members after the war, most hoping to talk to the dead.⁶³

While most spiritualist seances took place in private homes or lecture halls, the belief offered an opportunity for early “ghost tourism” with the establishment of Spiritualist camps in the late nineteenth century. These arose out of Spiritualist camp meetings, similar to religious revivalist meetings, in the years following the Civil War. In 1866, Spiritualists first met outdoors in Melrose, Massachusetts, and very popular meetings were held in the 1870’s at Lake Pleasant and Onset Bay Grove in Massachusetts. Annual Spiritualist camp meetings took place over the summer months during the 1880’s in New England.⁶⁴ Other Spiritualists gathered informally outdoors in wooded areas with water, hoping to commune with both nature and the spirits. In some cases these meeting places evolved to include permanent structures, such cottages or hotels for lodging or buildings for recreational use. Although the largest number of these camps were in New England, others were founded across the country, and midwestern camps were located in Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin, but camps also were found in Oregon, California, Tennessee and Florida.⁶⁵

An early example was the Onset Bay Grove spiritualist camp in Wareham, Massachusetts, established on a 125-acre lot with parks, buildings, and streets which officially opened on June 14, 1877. To avoid schedule conflicts, the Lake Pleasant camp held its meetings

⁶² Nartonis, “The Rise of 19th-Century American Spiritualism,” 362.

⁶³ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 7; Robert Reid, “Is Dark Tourism OK?”; Barbara Weisberg, *Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism* (New York: HarperOne, 2004): 210-211.

⁶⁴ Moore, “To Hold Communion with Nature and the Spirit World,” 230.

⁶⁵ Moore, “To Hold Communion with Nature and the Spirit World,” 230.

in August, following the Onset Bay Grove camp meetings in July.⁶⁶ Though these gatherings were devoted to spiritualism, they offered a wide range of secular activities such as roller skating, dancing, and boating, which drew people to them. Moreover, they attracted freethinkers and women's suffrage activists, as well as people who were looking for a way to get away from big city life and enjoy nature.⁶⁷ These quickly became tourist destinations, and railroads ran excursion trains that carried thousands of visitors to the sites daily.⁶⁸ By the early twentieth century, virtually every state had a spiritualist camp, with the two largest located at Lily Dale, New York, and Camp Chesterfield, Indiana. Camp Chesterfield was founded in 1890 and is still operated today by the Indiana Association of Spiritualists; it ultimately had a cottages, a grocery store, an ice cream parlor, and a band stand.⁶⁹ According to one early twentieth-century study of spiritualism in Indiana, its "charming location and modern equipment make the Indiana camp an ideal retreat for thousands coming from every state in the union," and the author estimated that 20,000 people came to each session.⁷⁰

By the twentieth century, however, the spiritualist movement was losing adherents. Part of the reason for the decline may have been the broadening public knowledge about special effects and how they could deceive the viewer. As early as the 1850's, popular magazines like *Scientific American* were explaining various ways that the eye could be deceived, either through natural processes or by intentional misdirection.⁷¹ Public scientific demonstrations became a popular entertainment, such as those held at the Royal Polytechnic Institution in London which

⁶⁶ Moore, "To Hold Communion with Nature and the Spirit World," 236.

⁶⁷ Moore, "To Hold Communion with Nature and the Spirit World," 237, 239, 243.

⁶⁸ Moore, "To Hold Communion with Nature and the Spirit World," 238-239.

⁶⁹ Lindsey Beckley, "Mesmerism, Rappings, & Trance Speaking: Spiritualism in Indiana," *Indiana History Blog*, Indiana State Library, November 10, 2016, accessed March 1, 2023, <https://blog.history.in.gov/tag/camp-chesterfield/>.

⁷⁰ Anna Stockinger, "The History of Spiritualism in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History* 20, no. 3 (September 1924): 283.

⁷¹ See, for example, "A New Optical Illusion," *Scientific American* 14, no. 10 (November 13, 1858): 80.

helped raise the general public's contemporary science knowledge.⁷² John Henry Pepper, the Royal Polytechnic Institution director, demonstrated scientific discoveries by entertaining spectators with magical illusions created by special effects. Pepper revealed the deception behind particular types of misleading magic, later known as Pepper's Ghost.⁷³ Magicians (i.e., "conjurers") had incorporated some of these methods into their shows by the second half of the nineteenth century and many of them intentionally staged illusions that were akin to the supernatural phenomena fabricated by mediums to expose and debunk them.⁷⁴ In 1865, magicians Harry Kellar and John Nevil Maskelyne intentionally modeled their shows on two prominent American mediums, the Davenport brothers, who conducted their seances while tied up within a closed "spirit cabinet." The magicians also used a spirit cabinet, but when the doors were opened at the end, the two magicians had been replaced by a lady and an ape.⁷⁵

Additionally, magicians began using moving picture technology to show ghostly images and dancing skeletons by the 1890's.⁷⁶ In fact, one of the earliest creators of cinema ghosts was a French stage performer, George Méliès; in his 1896 film *The Haunted Castle*, special effects make it appear that Mephistopheles is raising ghosts and skeletons from a cauldron.⁷⁷ Thus, those who were interested in ghostly phenomena in the nineteenth century were becoming increasingly savvy consumers. But the appeal of ghostly media in the twentieth century shows that their interest in the supernatural continued.

⁷² Collin Williamson, *Hidden in Plain Sight: An Archaeology of Magic and the Cinema* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015): 31-32.

⁷³ Williamson, *Hidden in Plain Sight*, 31-32.

⁷⁴ Michele Pierson, *Special Effects: Still in Search of Wonder* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002): 13-14.

⁷⁵ Fred Nadis, *Wonder Shows: Performing Science, Magic and Religion in America* (New Brunswick, NH: Rutgers University Press, 2005): 118.

⁷⁶ Jesse Fillerup, "Marimbo Chimes and the Wizard's Monster Band: Music in Theatrical Magic Shows," *Music and Letters* 103, no. 2 (May 2022): 292-293.

⁷⁷ Tom Ruffles, *Ghost Images: Cinema of the Afterlife* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2004): 38.

Spooky Media: Stage shows, movies and television

By the end of the nineteenth century, people could engage in “ghost tourism” simply by making a trip to the local theater or auditorium to see a stage show. In the twentieth century, this included ghosts on film. Special effects made it possible for filmmakers to bring spirits to the screen but after an initial interest in the early years of the twentieth century, it became uncommon for films to focus on the supernatural; in fact, despite – or because of – the massive loss of life in World War I, the number of ghost films (and published ghost stories) declined during the conflict, although interest revived in Europe in the 1920s.⁷⁸

The trend for monster and horror movies increased in the 1930s and continued for most of the twentieth century, but ghosts were the most popular “monster” compared to other horror genres (i.e., vampires, slasher, demons, zombies, aliens, creatures, witches).⁷⁹ The ghost story with the most film and television versions has been Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*; in the silent film era alone, at least a dozen adaptations filmed, the first in 1901.⁸⁰ Perhaps because of spiritualism’s influence or the helpful nature of Dickens’s ghosts, when the horror film became a popular genre in the 1930s, very few of them focused on the spirits of the dead. Most featured monstrous beings such as *Frankenstein* (1931) and *Dracula* (1931) rather than ghosts.⁸¹ Ghosts were still popular, but as Martin Norden points out, films that featured them tended to be comedies, such as *The Ghost Goes West* (1936) and *Topper* (1937) and its sequels, *Topper Takes*

⁷⁸ Ruffles, *Ghost Images*, 47-49.

⁷⁹ Nick Schwartz, “Awesome Infographic Breaks Down the Popularity of Different Horror Movie Types Decade-by-Decade.” *USA Today*, October 31, 2015.

⁸⁰ Florent Christol, “Screening *A Christmas Carol* (Dickens, 1843): Adaption as Completion,” *Cahiers Victoriens et Edouardiens* 82 (2015).

⁸¹ See Kyle Edwards, “‘House of Horrors’: Corporate Strategy at Universal Pictures in the 1930s,” in *Merchants of Menace: The Business of Horror Cinema*, ed. Richard Nowell (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014): 13-30.

a Trip (1939) and *Topper Returns* (1941) in which ghosts comically haunt banker Cosmo Topper.⁸²

Ghost movies continued to be popular in the 1940's, but as Norden points out, in that decade as in the previous one, ghosts were "rarely, if ever, malevolent. Instead, they were usually quite charming, benign, and amusing, and even had human frailties."⁸³ Occasionally there were romantic films about ghosts, such as *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (1947) which features a love story about a living widow and the ghostly sea captain who haunts her cottage. One of the few "traditional" ghost stories on film during this era that featured a menacing spirit was the British film, *The Uninvited* (1944) where a young girl was menaced by a ghost mistakenly thought to be her mother.⁸⁴ In the 1950's, films mirrored the public's growing alarm about the spread of nuclear weapons and the beginning of the space race which was expressed as a fear of the unknown, which in turn inspired growing interest in the paranormal and science fiction.⁸⁵ Many films featured menacing entities such as the merciless *Invaders from Mars* (1951) or giant ants mutated by atomic tests in *Them!* (1954).⁸⁶ But even the ghosts became more menacing. For instance, in *The Screaming Skull* (1958), a husband manufactures ghostly phenomena in order to drive his wealthy second wife insane, but his first wife's real ghost attacks and kills him before he can harm his second wife. The film blurs the line for the audience between the supernatural effects created by the husband and the actions of the real ghost, leaving some question about whether the phenomena was paranormal.

⁸² Martin F. Norden, "America and its Fantasy Films: 1945-1951," *Film & History* 12, no. 1 (1982): 8-9.

⁸³ Goldstein, Grider, and Thomas, *Haunting Experiences*, 215; Norden, "America and Its Fantasy Films," 3-4.

⁸⁴ Paul Meehan, *The Haunted House on Film: An Historical Analysis* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2020): 82.

⁸⁵ Aaron Gulyas, *The Paranormal and the Paranoid: Conspiratorial Science Fiction Television* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015): 25, 32; Norden, "America and Its Fantasy Films," 8-9.

⁸⁶ Norden, "America and Its Fantasy Films," 8-9.

In *The House on Haunted Hill* (1959), a more well-known ghostly horror film of the era, there is a similar blurring of the lines between manufactured phenomena and true paranormal activity. This film focused on a supposedly haunted house and individuals challenged to spend the night there to earn \$10,000 if they survived until morning; while these are not paranormal investigators, their actions as they explore the house and experience seemingly supernatural phenomena are similar to those of later ghost hunters. But paranormal investigation was at the heart of Shirley Jackson's novel *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959), made into a film in 1963. An anthropologist brings two women with "paranormal abilities" to Hill House, long rumored to be haunted by various ghosts; during their investigation, paranormal phenomena occur, ultimately leading to the death of one of the main characters.⁸⁷ Ten years later, a similar paranormal investigative theme was the basis for *The Legend of Hell House* (1973), where a millionaire hires a scientist and several psychics to investigate a haunted house. The plot features poltergeist-like phenomena, a medium who produces ectoplasm during a séance, spirit possession, a machine intended to dispel the ghosts, and several deaths from paranormal causes.⁸⁸

The Exorcist (1973), *Poltergeist* (1982), and *Ghostbusters* (1984) are paranormal films that became highly popular, reflecting a renewed interest in the paranormal in the 1970s and 80s.⁸⁹ *The Exorcist* depicts the demonic possession of a young girl, and the efforts of two Catholic priests to free her; although the exorcism is successful, it costs both priests their lives. Audiences found the movie shocking because of its sometimes profane and violent content, as well as its

⁸⁷ Steven Jay Schneider, "The Haunting, from Novel to Film. . . to Film," *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 30, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 170.

⁸⁸ Meehan, *The Haunted House on Film*, 128.

⁸⁹ American Association for State and Local History [AASLH], "Ghost Tours: Marketing Hype or Spiritual Quest?" April 2017, accessed October 18, 2022, <https://aaslh.org/ghost-tours-marketing-hype-or-spiritual-quest/>.

special effects that included a famous scene where the girl's head appears to turn 360 degrees. The film's release was followed by reports of audience members convulsing and vomiting at screenings and subsequent instances of demonic possession.⁹⁰

Yet the popularity of the *Exorcist* undoubtedly showed producers that there was a market for big-budget films that featured paranormal investigations. Perhaps most notable dramatic film in this genre was Tobe Hooper's *Poltergeist* (1982), in which the Freeling family turns to parapsychologists and a medium to end the haunting of their house and return their daughter from "the other side" where the spirits have taken her. This was followed by sequels in 1986 and 1988. In 1984, *Ghostbusters* took a comedic look at ghost hunting, featuring a team of disgraced academic parapsychologists opening a commercial ghost eradication business. *Beetlejuice* (1988) turned the tables by featuring ghosts hiring another spirit to act as a "bioexorcist" and rid their former home of the offensive family that purchased it.⁹¹ These and other supernatural films such as *Ghost* (1990) and *The Sixth Sense* (1999) helped to create a renewed interest in the paranormal.⁹² They also reflected the increasing interest in ghost investigations.

By the 1960s, people in search of paranormal experiences could find them in their own homes as television served up various helpings of supernatural content. Comedic portrayals of ghosts and the supernatural were central in new half-hour sitcoms that imagined families involved with the supernatural trying to live normal, middle-class American lives. *The Addams Family* (1964-1966) featured a family with macabre interests who occasionally exhibited paranormal abilities; *The Munsters* (1964-1966) was family whose members included the Frankenstein monster, a ghoul, a vampire, and a werewolf; the longer-running series *Bewitched*

⁹⁰ Amy C. Chambers, "'Somewhere Between Science and Superstition': Religious Outrage, Horrific Science, and *The Exorcist* (1973)," *History of the Human Sciences* 34, no. 5 (2021): 35.

⁹¹ Meehan, *The Haunted House on Film*, 56.

⁹² Blankshein, "Paranormal Preservation," 9.

(1964-1972) centered on a witch married to a mortal in contemporary America. In all three cases, the humor derives from these unusual people not only trying to lead a normal suburban life but in the case of *The Addams Family* and *The Munsters*, the families are the only ones who consider themselves “ordinary” Americans. But there were some darker portrayals of the paranormal in the 1960s, including *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1964) and *The Outer Limits* (1963-1965), both of which were anthology series with no recurring characters or plots. While *The Twilight Zone* explored unusual topics (such as time travel) in addition to stories closer to horror and science fiction, *The Outer Limits* was darker and invariably had story lines where the protagonist faced danger from some force or entity, such as supernatural beings or extraterrestrials.

By the 1970’s paranormal television had largely abandoned comedy to become much darker and focused on conspiratorial beliefs, threatening paranormal activity, and the danger posed by extraterrestrials. Some have suggested that this was a reflection of growing concern in the United States over real issues and problems: the war in Vietnam, the energy crisis, and Watergate.⁹³ New shows included Rod Serling’s *Night Gallery* (1969-1973), an anthology series that include both horror and science fiction stories and *Ghost Story* (1972-1973) another anthology series that focused on supernatural creatures including ghosts, witches and vampires. *Kolchak: The Night Stalker* (1974-1975), featured Carl Kolchak, an investigative reporter who each week uncovered supernatural beings ranging from ghosts to zombies to mummies to vampires. Andrew Herrmann and Art Herbig argue that although *Kolchak* only ran for one season, it signaled the “changing narratives in supernatural dramas”; whereas earlier supernatural television, such as *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits* were anthology series set in “otherworldly” places that featured a new, distinct storyline each week, *Kolchak* was based on

⁹³ Gulyas, *The Paranormal and the Paranoid*, 25.

the continuing experiences of a single person and took place within the confines of everyday life. Unlike the 1960s comedies that featured unusual people trying to live an ordinary existence, Kolchak was a reporter trying to earn a living who repeatedly found himself involved with the paranormal. Hermann and Herbig have argued that Kolchak represented “everyman” and as such was “the surrogate for the audience” who might have to deal with unsettling (but not necessarily paranormal) experiences in their lives.⁹⁴

Supernatural dramas proliferated on television in the 1990s and early 2000s, including *The X-Files* (1993-2002), which featured the investigations of FBI agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully. The series portrayed constant tensions within the investigations, as Mulder, the believer, tried to convince scientist Scully that the phenomena they encountered had a paranormal basis. But as Dean Kowalski notes, one of the show’s appeals was the concept that “the truth was out there” and that every week Mulder and Scully attempted to find it.⁹⁵ This desire to find out the “truth” about paranormal phenomena also led to “reality” ghost hunting shows, beginning in Britain with *Most Haunted* (2002-2019), followed by popular American shows such as *Ghost Hunters* (2004-present) and *Ghost Adventures* (2008-present). All of these follow a standard format: a group of investigators go to a supposedly haunted location and use scientific and spiritual methods to try to document the existence of ghosts.⁹⁶ Mikel Koven has argued that to some extent, the popularity of these shows arises from their format; the audience is not simply told about the alleged haunting, they are shown what happens on the investigation, making them feel as if they are part of the action rather than mere spectators; in effect, they are vicariously on

⁹⁴ Andrew F. Herrmann and Art Herbig, “Returning to *Kolchak*: Polymediated Narrative, Discourse, and Supernatural Drama,” *International Journal of Communication* 12 (2018): 227-228.

⁹⁵ Dean A. Kowalski, “Introduction: Mulder, Scully, Plato, Aristotle, and Dawkins,” in *The Philosophy of The X-Files*, ed. Dean A. Kowalski (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2007): 1.

⁹⁶ Fiona Smith and Rachael Ironside, “The Uncanny Place: A Critical Appraisal to Popular Paranormal TV Shows,” *The Journal of Popular Television* 10, no. 1 (March 2022): 96.

a ghost tour. He suggests that this can lead individuals who hear and see these stories to seek out similar activities on their own.⁹⁷ This interest continues even though many have suggested that television ghost hunters sometimes stage or fake ghostly phenomena. Koven points out that the creators/producers of the show *Most Haunted* were pressured to stage some of the paranormal activity or special effects by the broadcasters who were concerned that if nothing supernatural happened in the show, it would lose viewers.⁹⁸

The link between ghost investigations and ghost tourism is suggested by the large number of paranormal television shows that appear on the *Travel Channel*; as of 2019, thirty percent of the channel's programming consisted of paranormal-themed shows.⁹⁹ Other researchers agree that modern media plays a central part in the growth of dark and ghost tourism, influencing many travelers to visit locations that have been promoted on television shows as being "haunted."¹⁰⁰ In fact, a paranormal television show's visit to a location can have a significant impact on the number of visitors to a site; according to Abel, "When the Sci-Fi Channel chooses a location to document paranormal activities for the show *Ghost Hunters*, the venue's attendance usually jumps about 30 percent."¹⁰¹ In Haynes's study, data shows that forty-three percent of ghost tour participants were impacted by popular media.¹⁰² This suggests that paranormal shows are a

⁹⁷ Mikel Koven, "Most Haunted and the Convergence of Traditional Belief and Popular Television," *Folklore* 118, no. 2 (August 2007): 184-185.

⁹⁸ Koven, "Most Haunted," 189.

⁹⁹ R. Thomas Umstead, "Paranormal Programming: It Lives," *Multichannel News* 40, no. 17 (September 9, 2019): 15.

¹⁰⁰ Alvey, "Gone Haunting," 22; Everett Drake Haynes, "Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy" (Master's thesis, Kansas State University, 2016): 4-5, 11, 28, 99; Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 2; Lee, "Tourist Behavioral Intentions in Ghost Tourism," 958; Lewis, Schrier, & Xu, "Dark Tourism," 119; Elizabeth Yuko, "The Terrifying Rise of Haunted Tourism," *Bloomberg*, October 28, 2021.

¹⁰¹ Christina Abel, "St. Augustine Lighthouse Embraces its Haunted Stories. Creepy Events were Featured in a TV Show About Ghosts," *Florida Times Union*, October 21, 2006.

¹⁰² Haynes, "Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy," 45.

resource for planning ghost-themed trips or participation in ghost tours, which will be discussed in the following chapter.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 2.

Chapter 3

Ghost Tourism

When watching or reading about spooky media is no longer enough for those interested in paranormal phenomena, they may seek to experience it themselves personally, often visiting locations they have seen featured on paranormal television shows.¹⁰⁴ Hearing about haunted locations through media or reading about them may inspire individuals to plan a trip to appreciate and make a connection to the location directly. Whatever the impetus that brings people to sites alleged to be haunted, ghost tourism has been shown to be a highly popular form of tourism: data collected from a survey of more than 900 people in October 2022 showed that 82% of the respondents declared that they have visited, ““at least one dark tourism destination in their lifetime.””¹⁰⁵

While early scholarly literature stereotypically reported that morbid fascination with death was the main attraction for those who visited dark tourism locations, recent findings revealed a variety of other motivations.¹⁰⁶ Studies have shown that a specific interest with death is an uncommon primary motivation for dark tourists; they are more likely to visit these sites to learn about them, be entertained, understand past events, seek identity (e.g., personal, national, heritage), satisfy their curiosity, seek thrills, engage with a feeling of community and confirm the supernatural experience.¹⁰⁷ People may also seek to alleviate their fear of death in a safe space or

¹⁰⁴ Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Cramer, “Beaches? Cruises? ‘Dark’ Tourists Prefer the Gloomy and Macabre.”

¹⁰⁶ Jeffrey S. Podoshen, Vivek Venkatesh, Jason Wallin, Susan A. Andrzejewski, and Zheng Jin, “Dystopian Dark Tourism: An Exploratory Examination,” *Tourism Management* 51 (2015): 316–328; Ivanova and Light, ““It’s Not that We Like Death or Anything,”” 356, 358, 363; Lewis, Schrier, and Xu, “Dark Tourism,” 117; Martini and Buda, “Dark Tourism and Affect,” 682.

¹⁰⁷ Iliev, “Consumption, Motivation and Experience in Dark Tourism,” 970- 971; Lewis, Schrier, and Xu, “Dark Tourism,” 109, 117; Podoshen, et. al., “Dystopian Dark Tourism,” 8, 10; American Association for State and Local

to become aware of the inevitability of one's own death. Ghost tourism can also motivate likeminded people to come together in a safe space and lessen the stigma that is often attached to those expressing paranormal beliefs.¹⁰⁸

Tourists from a variety of backgrounds with varying motivations attend ghost tours. The most common and diverse group, which Blankshein dubs the "paranormal enjoyer," is generally interested in and/or open minded about the paranormal but usually attends tours more as entertainment.¹⁰⁹ These people do not specifically travel to or seek out haunted locations and often attend tours because they are convenient, easily accessible, and budget friendly. Typically, these guided tours are less intensive than ghost hunts, are often marketed in major tourist areas, and run several tours a night, especially during peak tourist season.¹¹⁰ Interestingly, Haynes's research showed that the majority of ghost tourists typically spend on average less than \$300 on total travel expenses (e.g., transportation, food, shopping, lodging, admission, service costs), with trips lasting a day or less; this possibly includes locals taking the tours near their homes and or people who include a ghost tour as a side attraction while traveling to a destination.¹¹¹

History, "Ghost Tours: Marketing Hype or Spiritual Quest?" April 2017; Blankshein, "Paranormal Preservation," 15-16; Haynes, "Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy," 15, 53; Krisjanous and Carruthers, "Walking on the Light Side," 232-233 and 243; Ivanova and Light, "'It's Not that We Like Death or Anything,'" 356, 358, 363; Iles, "Recalling the Ghosts of War," 175; Obradović, et. al. "Possibilities for Paranormal Tourism Development in Serbia," 214; Iliev, "Consumption, Motivation and Experience in Dark Tourism," 971; Stone, "Dark Tourism Scholarship," 148; Julie S. Tinson, Michael A. J. Saren, and Bridget E. Roth, "Exploring the Role of Dark Tourism in the Creation of National Identity of Young Americans," *Journal of Marketing Management* 31, no. 7/8 (2015): 856-88; Bowman and Pezzullo, "What's So 'Dark' About 'Dark Tourism'?" 197; Dancausa, Hernández, and Pérez, "Motivations and Constraints for the Ghost Tourism," 159-160; Niemelä, "Motivation Factors in Dark Tourism," 16; Martini and Buda, "Dark Tourism and Affect," 682.

¹⁰⁸ Cramer, "Beaches? Cruises? 'Dark' Tourists Prefer the Gloomy and Macabre"; Iliev, "Consumption, Motivation and Experience in Dark Tourism," 967; Podoshen, et. al., "Dystopian Dark Tourism," 6-7, 10.; Bowman and Pezzullo, "What's So 'Dark' About 'Dark Tourism'?" 189; Dancausa, Hernández, and Pérez, "Motivations and Constraints for the Ghost Tourism," 160; Niemelä, "Motivation Factors in Dark Tourism," 16; Martini and Buda, "Dark tourism and affect," 684-685.

¹⁰⁹ Blankshein, "Paranormal Preservation," 15-16; Haynes, "Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy," 15; Krisjanous and Carruthers, "Walking on the Light Side," 232-233, 243; Lewis, Schrier, and Xu, "Dark Tourism," 110.

¹¹⁰ Blankshein, "Paranormal Preservation," 15-16; Haynes, "Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy," 15.

¹¹¹ Haynes, "Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy," 54, 101-102.

Another type of ghost tourist is one who has a high level of interest in the paranormal and is either a current believer or would like to be.¹¹² Blankshein has dubbed these tourists as “paranormal thrill-seekers” whose main goal is to capture or experience the paranormal, going to some lengths to achieve this goal (e.g., booking tours months in advance, paying higher prices, or traveling specifically to take a tour). This type of ghost tourist loves any type of ghost tour but is more prepared for and excited about serious and intensive ghost tours and/ or hunts.¹¹³

In between these two types of tourists are those who intentionally seek out ghost tours for entertainment or educational purposes; these might be people who want to learn about the paranormal history of a site and are attracted by its reputation or nearby location but may not be as interested in actually having a supernatural experience.

Challenging Stereotyped Characteristics of Ghost Tourists

Those who take the tours may have to deal with negative stereotypes due to broader public attitudes towards the paranormal. During the nineteenth century, many people in the United States and Europe, including social elites, were interested in the paranormal, especially through spiritualism.¹¹⁴ But as magicians and scientists showed the public how easily they could be deceived and because many mediums were exposed as frauds or were unable to produce paranormal phenomena under controlled conditions, many people began doubt these claims and increasingly belittled those who ascribed to paranormal beliefs or claimed to have supernatural experiences, labelling them as different, weird, unconventional, strange, or gullible, a distinct

¹¹² Haynes, “Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy,” 54, 101-102

¹¹³ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 15.

¹¹⁴ American Association for State and Local History, “Ghost Tours: Marketing Hype or Spiritual Quest?”; Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 6; Yuko, “The Terrifying Rise of Haunted Tourism.”

contrast to those who are perceived to be “normal.”¹¹⁵ Thompson mentions that “individuals in Western culture are often ashamed of their paranormal experiences and reluctant to talk about them for fear of being ridiculed.”¹¹⁶ The very label of “dark tourism” is sufficient to provoke a negative reaction, as Bowman and Pezzullo note: “By labeling certain tourists or tourist sites ‘dark,’ an implicit claim is made that there is something disturbing, troubling, suspicious, weird, morbid, or perverse about them, but what exactly that may be remains elusive and ill-defined because no one has assumed the burden of proving it.”¹¹⁷

Though there has been some movement towards greater acceptance, stereotypes continue with cynical and dismissive opinions of paranormal phenomena.¹¹⁸ It is likely that the growing public interest in the paranormal since the 1990s has helped to institute this change, and ghost tours provide a safe site for sharing personal experiences or beliefs.¹¹⁹ For example, ghost tour guides may describe their personal paranormal encounters or other people’s experiences of the paranormal, which encourages the tourists to share their own stories, adding to the guides’ repertoire and providing inspiration for others to abandon their reservations and engage with the

¹¹⁵ Peter Lamont, “The Making of Extraordinary Psychological Phenomena,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 48, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 3; Haynes, “Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy,” 19, 47.

¹¹⁶ Robert C. Thompson, “‘Am I Going to See a Ghost Tonight?’ Gettysburg Ghost Tours and the Performance of Belief,” *The Journal of American Culture* 33, no. 2 (2010): 82.

¹¹⁷ Bowman and Pezzullo, “What’s So ‘Dark’ About ‘Dark Tourism?’” 190.

¹¹⁸ Jan-Willem Prooijen, Talia Cohen Rodrigues, Carlotta Bunzel, Oana Georgescu, Dániel Komáromy and André P. M. Krouwel, “Populist Gullibility: Conspiracy Theories, News Credibility, Bullshit Receptivity, and Paranormal Belief,” *Political Psychology* 43, no. 6 (December 2022): 1061-1079; Ken Drinkwater, Neil Dagnall, and Andrew Parker, “Reality Testing, Conspiracy Theories, and Paranormal Beliefs,” *Journal of Parapsychology* 76, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 57-77; Haynes, “Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy,” 4, 49; Thompson, “‘Am I Going to See a Ghost Tonight?’” 82.

¹¹⁹ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 11.

ghost tour's investigation of belief.¹²⁰ Finding people who have had similar paranormal experiences gives the tourist a sense of comfort that they are not alone.¹²¹

Contemporary Ghost Beliefs

Statistics show that since the 1970s, an increasing number of individuals not only believe that ghosts exist, but many claim to have experienced their presence. Sparks and Miller define belief in the paranormal as “belief in one or more extraordinary phenomena that defy explanation according to current scientific understanding of natural law.”¹²² In one 1978 study, only eleven percent of respondents expressed belief in ghosts. By 1988, that had risen to twenty-seven percent, and to thirty-three percent by 1999. The number of people who claimed to believe ghosts exist reached its peak in 2017 when half of respondents expressed this view, and a further eighteen percent expressed uncertainty about their existence. Although the number of people expressing belief has declined since then, forty-one percent of respondents to a 2021 survey believed in ghosts, thirty-nine percent did not believe, and twenty percent were undecided.¹²³

According to Koven, the evidence suggests that only when a person believes in a concept will they actually experience or encounter it.¹²⁴ This implies that belief in ghosts is linked to

¹²⁰ American Association for State and Local History, “Ghost Tours: Marketing Hype or Spiritual Quest?”; Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 11; Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 10; Thompson, ““Am I Going to See a Ghost Tonight?”” 86-87.

¹²¹ Erik R. Seeman, “Spooky Streets,” *Commonplace* 3, no. 1 (2022); Scheri Smith, “The Living Roam Waverly Hills,” *Louisville Courier-Journal*, September 26, 2005; Dancausa, Hernández, and Pérez, “Motivations and Constraints for the Ghost Tourism,” 160.

¹²² Sparks and Miller, “Investigating the Relationship,” 98.

¹²³ Data from 1978 to 2000 is from Darren Carlson, “One Third of Americans Believe in Ghosts,” Gallup. Last modified October 31, 2000. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/2380/One-Third-Americans-Believe-Ghosts.aspx>. Data from 2017 from YouGov, “To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree that Ghosts Exist?” Survey, October 4-5, 2017, accessed March 1, 2023. https://d3nk13psvxxpe9.cloudfront.net/documents/Conspiracy_Theories_-_YouGov_Results.pdf. Data for 2021 from YouGov, “Daily Survey: Do You Think Ghosts Do or Do Not Exist?” Survey, October 8-12, 2021. Accessed March 1, 2023, https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/3kco0j0bms/tabs_Halloween_2021_20211008.pdf.

¹²⁴ Koven, “*Most Haunted*,” 184.

personal paranormal experiences. In 1990, only nine percent of respondents said that they had seen or felt the presence of a ghost, and only one percent were unsure. By 2022 the percent of respondents who said they had seen a ghost jumped to nineteen percent, with a further twenty-one percent unsure. The numbers for those who said they had felt the presence of a ghost was even higher, with thirty-seven percent saying they had experienced this phenomenon, while a further ten percent said that they were uncertain about having had such an experience.¹²⁵

This data about the rising belief in ghosts and experiences attributed to ghosts seems to be borne out by the number of people contacting paranormal groups asking for investigations. According to Kambhampaty, the number of investigation requests increased for some American paranormal groups during the pandemic. For example, she mentions that Fringe Paranormal, an investigative paranormal group in Toledo, Ohio, went from one or two requests a month pre-pandemic to weekly requests in 2021 for residential paranormal investigations.¹²⁶ This further demonstrates the demand and interest in ghosts, ghost hunting, and ghost tourism.

The Thrill of Recreational Fear

Although increasing numbers of people believe in ghosts, the large percentage of those who do not suggests that it is likely that some people who go on ghost tours do not believe in the paranormal. But many may participate because of the desire to experience horror and fear in a safe environment in a way that is more personally experiential than simply watching television or films based on ghost stories. Originally, ghost stories were a way to keep people safe by leading

¹²⁵ Data from 1990 from: "Many Americans Mix Multiple Faiths," Pew Research Center, December 9, 2009, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2009/12/09/many-americans-mix-multiple-faiths/#ghosts-fortunetellers-and-communicating-with-the-dead>. Data for 2022 from YouGov, "How Many Americans Have Had Paranormal Encounters?" Survey, October 12-16, 2022, accessed March 2, 2023, https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/fk1kwhjb3f/crosstabs_Paranormal%20Encounters.pdf.

¹²⁶ Anna Kambhampaty, "Many Americans Say They Believe in Ghosts. Do You?" *New York Times*, October 28, 2021.

them to avoid certain locations or behaviors; however, some scholars have pointed out that the modern ghost story has the opposite effect, drawing in people who see it as a new type of entertainment.¹²⁷ The growing interest in of dark tourism and ghost tourism could be derived from a natural human attraction to horror, thrills, and mystery. Lee states that ghost tourists can be “fascinated and excited by the supernatural,” which lead them to seek “the thrill of challenging traditional cultural taboos.”¹²⁸ Garcia argues that “ghosts provide a supernatural explanation of real human tragedy and thus turn the experience of visitation of dark tourism sites into a ‘thrilling’ experience.”¹²⁹ Andersen, et. al., explain that recreational fear could potentially be a form of play, giving people a, “low-cost, risk-free experience with fear and related negative emotions.” They further propose that many people enjoy looking for an adrenaline rush through the replication of dangerous situations in certain simulations (e.g., horror films/games, roller coasters, ghost tourism) because it is safe and there is no real threat.¹³⁰ These findings correlate with Obradović, et al., who note that “paranormal experiences can provide excitement for those in search of stimulation and sensation.”¹³¹

The appeal of ghost tourism also could be linked to the way that humans deal with fear, including fear of the unknown and fear of death. Fear in humans is often indicated via unpleasant sensations when in the presence of a threat, often accompanied by physical and behavioral defensive responses.¹³² But ghost tours can allow participants to experience fear in a “risk-free”

¹²⁷ Kalaitisidis, “Affects and Emotions in Ghost Tourism,” 22; Inglis and Holmes. “Highland and Other Haunts,” 56-57.

¹²⁸ Lee, “Tourist Behavioral Intentions in Ghost Tourism,” 958-959.

¹²⁹ Dini Rahmawati, “The Potential Ghost Tour in Bandung,” in *Asia Tourism Forum 2016-the 12th Biennial Conference of Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Asia* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Atlantis Press, 2016): 523-527.

¹³⁰ Marc Malmdorf Andersen, Uffe Schjoedt, Henry Price, Fernando E. Rosas, Coltan Scrivner, and Mathias Clasen, “Playing with Fear: A Field Study in Recreational Horror,” *Psychological Science* 31, no. 12 (2020): 1498.

¹³¹ Obradović, et al., “Possibilities for Paranormal Tourism Development in Serbia,” 206.

¹³² Andersen, et. al., “Playing with Fear: A Field Study in Recreational Horror,” 1497.

environment.¹³³ Lee notes that the most common and most desired emotional response during ghost tours is fear; essentially, ghost tourists may attend ghost tours as a means to terrify themselves for pleasure as a form of entertainment.¹³⁴ Garcia also portrays ghost tourism as a form of entertainment that will connect the tourists' negative emotions (e.g., fear) with an enjoyable experience.¹³⁵ Recreational fear (e.g., horror entertainment such as horror movies, haunted houses, or ghost tours) offers a thrilling experience with fear and associated negative emotions (e.g., anxiety, dread, disgust) in a controlled and safe environment.¹³⁶

Overall, the research demonstrates that recreational fear can help lessen people's anxiety about potential future threats, and mentally and physically prepare them for such threats in a safe environment.¹³⁷ Research by Scrivner, et al. shows, "one recent example of this might be the massive surge in popularity of the film *Contagion* in the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic."¹³⁸ This study sought to discover if people who dedicated more time replicating terrifying encounters before COVID-19 felt a reduced amount of psychological anguish during the pandemic, and it found that people who engaged regularly with frightening fictional experiences displayed stronger mental and emotional resilience during the pandemic.¹³⁹ It may be that horror fiction allows its consumers to practice learning how to navigate dangerous

¹³³ Andersen, et. al., "Playing with Fear: A Field Study in Recreational Horror," 1498; Garcia, "Management Issues in Dark Tourism Attractions," 14; Ivanova and Light, "'It's Not that We Like Death or Anything,'" 361-362; Lee, "Tourist Behavioral Intentions in Ghost Tourism," 959-960; Obradović, et al., "Possibilities for Paranormal Tourism Development in Serbia," 206; Coltan Scrivner, John A. Johnson, Jens Kjeldgaard-Christiansen, and Mathias Clasen, "Pandemic Practice: Horror Fans and Morbidly Curious Individuals are More Psychologically Resilient During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Personality and Individual Differences* 168 (2021): 110397.

¹³⁴ Lee, "Tourist Behavioral Intentions in Ghost Tourism," 959-960.

¹³⁵ Garcia, "Management Issues in Dark Tourism Attractions," 14.

¹³⁶ Andersen, et. al., "Playing with Fear: A Field Study in Recreational Horror," 1498.

¹³⁷ Nicole Johnson. "How Horror Movies Can Help People Overcome Real-World Trauma," *National Geographic Newsletter*, October 30, 2020; Scrivner, et. al., "Pandemic Practice," 5.

¹³⁸ Scrivner, et. al., "Pandemic Practice," 2.

¹³⁹ Johnson, "How Horror Movies Can Help People Overcome Real-World Trauma"; Scrivner, et. al., "Pandemic Practice," 4.

situations by coping with negative emotions in a safe setting.¹⁴⁰ A recent 2020 study by Johnson showed that “parts of the human brain process the horror movie as if the threat were real, which prepares the body to react in the same way it would in a real-life situation” (e.g., pupils dilate, heart rate increases, blood pressure rises).¹⁴¹ After watching the horror film, the body and brain respond by resting and digesting, which causes an increased sense of well-being and strengthens the positive emotions felt later.

Pharino, Pearce, and Pryce in Bali found that paranormal tourists felt both positive and negative emotions, which influences the tourists’ experience.¹⁴² Lee’s study was conducted in Taiwan, confirming, “the mediating effect of memorability on positive emotion and behavioral intention in ghost tourism.” This data demonstrated a significant connection between positive emotion and the senses, where positive emotions impacted memorability more than negative emotions. This may mean that these positive emotions and experiences influence memories and future behavioral intentions, which in turn determine whether a tourist will revisit or recommend a site or tour; this may mean memorability could be a crucial factor for tourists visiting ghost tours.¹⁴³ Overall, both Pharino, Pearce, and Pryce and Lee’s studies demonstrated that positive emotions and experiences is essential for ghost tourism.

Ghost Tour Operators

The first North American ghost tour began in the mid-1970s with Richard T. Crowe’s Chicago Supernatural tour. Subsequently, a number of other ghost tour businesses were

¹⁴⁰ Johnson, “How Horror Movies Can Help People Overcome Real-World Trauma”; Lee, “Tourist Behavioral Intentions in Ghost Tourism,” 960; Chonlada Pharino, Philip Pearce, and Josephine Pryce, “Paranormal Tourism: Assessing Tourists’ Onsite Experiences,” *Tourism Management Perspectives* 28 (2018), 25; Scrivner, et. al., “Pandemic Practice,” 2, 4.

¹⁴¹ Johnson, “How Horror Movies Can Help People Overcome Real-World Trauma.”

¹⁴² Pharino, Pearce, and Pryce, “Paranormal Tourism,” 26.

¹⁴³ Lee, “Tourist Behavioral Intentions in Ghost Tourism,” 966.

established in the 1990's and early 2000's when a strong market for such tours first emerged.¹⁴⁴ In some cases, public interest was inspired by a book or motion picture. Dark tourists were drawn to Savannah, Georgia after the publication of *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (1994), a non-fiction account of a 1981 local murder and subsequent trial that portrayed many aspects of Savannah that were dark and mysterious, including its cemeteries. The book spent nearly four years on the *New York Times* bestseller list and was made into a 1997 film. The book and the movie are credited with helping to create a revival in downtown Savannah, which included the establishment of new businesses, including ghost tours.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park, Colorado, took advantage of its association with Stephen King's novel *The Shining* (1977), which King wrote after a stay at hotel. The story is set in a haunted hotel, and while the 1980 feature film starring Jack Nicholson was filmed elsewhere, the 1997 television miniseries based on the book was filmed at the Stanley.¹⁴⁶ This clearly brought attention to the hotel as a haunted location; in 1999, *The Colorado Springs Gazette* announced a live Halloween radio broadcast on site, calling it "Stephen King's inspiration for *The Shining*," while in 2003, *The Fort Collins Coloradoan* reported that the hotel itself was running ghost tours on Friday and Saturday nights.¹⁴⁷ Many ghost tours were founded when entrepreneurs noticed a growing market for ghost tourism, and in some cases, they identified this interest based on questions about the paranormal that they received during existing historical or heritage tours.¹⁴⁸ It is no

¹⁴⁴ American Association for State and Local History, "Ghost Tours: Marketing Hype or Spiritual Quest?"; Seeman, "Spooky Streets."; Goldstein, Grider, and Thomas, *Haunting Experiences*, 186.

¹⁴⁵ Gentry and Alderman, "A City Built upon its Dead," 51-52.

¹⁴⁶ Terri Peterson Smith, *Off the Beaten Page: The Best Trips for Lit Lovers, Book Clubs, and Girls on Getaways* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2013): 190.

¹⁴⁷ *The Colorado Springs Gazette*, October 28, 1999; *The Fort Collins Coloradoan*, September 27, 2003.

¹⁴⁸ Haynes, "Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy," 60; Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 7; Yuko, "The Terrifying Rise of Haunted Tourism"; American Association for State and Local History, "Ghost Tours: Marketing Hype or Spiritual Quest?"; Alvey, "Gone Haunting," 47; Haynes, "Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy," 10; Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 7.

surprise that the busiest time of year for ghost tourism companies are mostly fall months, September to November; however, some sites operate year round, especially in places that have a milder climate, such as New Orleans.¹⁴⁹

It can be challenging to determine which areas and business will be successful when promoting themselves as a haunted location. A larger-scale ghost tourism business (e.g., Waverly Hills Sanatorium in Louisville, Kentucky) may be more successful where there is an assortment of activities in the area other than ghost tours; however, smaller-scale ghost tourism (e.g., New Harmony Ghost Walks in New Harmony, Indiana) can also be successful with its quiet, small-town feel, positive TripAdvisor ratings, and community support.¹⁵⁰ Other smaller scale ghost tourism includes the Willard Library in Evansville, Indiana. This is a working public library centrally located in a medium-sized city, but it promotes its ghostly reputation through streaming online “Grey Lady Ghost Cams” which likely promotes regional interest in the ghost tours offered by the library each fall.¹⁵¹

The Willard Library ghost cams are a somewhat unusual way of promoting interest in the site’s association with the paranormal, and prior to their fall ghost tour season, they supplement this with other kinds of advertising, including a “Grey Lady Ghost Tour” Facebook site and interviews with local media each year prior to the start of their ghost tour season. As a non-profit that offers free tours, their advertising is somewhat more limited than the advertising and promotion carried on by for-profit ghost tour companies: they place ads in the local paper, distribute pamphlets at tourism centers and hotels, advertise on social media and travel websites

¹⁴⁹ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 15-16; Haynes, “Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy,” 15, 62; Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 5; Haunted History Tours: New Orleans Ghost History Tours, accessed May 5, 2023, <https://hauntedhistorytours.com/>; Ghost City Tours, New Orleans, accessed May 5, 2023, <https://www.neworleans.com/listing/ghost-city-tours/14425/>.

¹⁵⁰ Haynes, “Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy,” 110.

¹⁵¹ “Library Ghost: Tracking the Grey Lady,” The Willard Library, accessed May 5, 2023, <https://www.willardghost.com/#>.

and by word of mouth.¹⁵² Studies show ghost tourism businesses most rely on word of mouth and online recommendations.¹⁵³ However, these formats have both advantages and drawbacks. Travel sites (e.g., Trip Advisor) and social media pages (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) make it possible to receive customer feedback, allowing them to share pictures and recount their ghostly encounters, which promotes the authenticity and trustworthiness of the tour to future tourists.¹⁵⁴ On the other hand, the tours have little control over these sites or personal recommendations, so if a visitor expresses their disappointment with the experience on social media or during conversations, this may discourage others from considering the tour.

Ghost Tour Guides

Ghost tour guides are an essential part of tours because they provide authenticity for the tourist through storytelling and performance.¹⁵⁵ They are one of the reasons tourists return for another tour. Kalaitsidis interviewed research participants who commented that the tour guide was “one of the best aspects of the ghost tour” and that the way the tour guides communicated the stories and performed (e.g., approachable, enthusiastic, knowledgeable) made the biggest impact on the participants.¹⁵⁶ Additionally, participants commented that without the tour guide, the tour would be would have felt something was missing, such as information about the

¹⁵² Haynes, “Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy,” 91; Krisjanous and Carruthers, “Walking on the Light Side,” 245; Rick Paulas, “Inside America’s Ghost Tour Industry,” *The Awl*, May 31, 2013, accessed October 18, 2022. <https://www.theawl.com/2013/05/inside-americas-ghost-tour-industry/>; Obradović, et al., “Possibilities for Paranormal Tourism Development in Serbia,” 205.

¹⁵³ Haynes, “Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy,” 53, 68; Krisjanous and Carruthers, “Walking on the Light Side,” 245; Lewis, Schrier, and Xu, “Dark Tourism,” 119; Paulas, “Inside America’s Ghost Tour Industry”; Obradović, et al., “Possibilities for Paranormal Tourism Development in Serbia,” 205.

¹⁵⁴ Allman, “Motivations and Intentions of Tourists to Visit Dark Tourism locations,” 72; Krisjanous and Carruthers, “Walking on the Light Side,” 247.

¹⁵⁵ Iles, “Recalling the Ghosts of War,” 166; Krisjanous and Carruthers, “Walking on the Light Side,” 244; Seeman, “Spooky Streets.”

¹⁵⁶ Kalaitsidis, “Affects and Emotions in Ghost Tourism,” 44, 48; Dancausa, Hernández, and Pérez, “Motivations and Constraints for the Ghost Tourism,” 161.

location, suggesting that the participants would have had a poor experience if their tour was self-guided.¹⁵⁷ To keep their audiences interested, ghost tour guides must be leaders and entertainers who are enthusiastic, flexible, historically knowledgeable and ready to adapt to a changing environment.¹⁵⁸ Some guides may carry a lantern for effect while others may dress in period clothing related to the site to set the mood and stage the performance.¹⁵⁹ They lead the tourist group to a variety of significant haunted locations, either discussing the stories associated with the location at the site or during the journey between locations.¹⁶⁰ This conveys the impression that the guide is a person who has experience and credibility.¹⁶¹ The stories told on ghost tours depends on the individual guide, although most use multiple sources for the stories they tell, including their own research and experiences.¹⁶²

Guides use a certain number of technical and complex skills to hold the audience's interest. For example, one woman in Annapolis, Maryland uses complex vocal exercises to prepare for her shift as a tour guide, while another Annapolis guide adopts a British accent and colonial-style clothing for his tours, staying in character throughout.¹⁶³ Most guides at Gettysburg dress in mid-nineteenth century clothing and carry lanterns to enhance the "spooky" atmosphere.¹⁶⁴ Tour guides frequently use humor as a part of their performance, joking with

¹⁵⁷ Kalaitisidis, "Affects and Emotions in Ghost Tourism," 44.

¹⁵⁸ Seeman, "Spooky Streets"; Iles, "Recalling the Ghosts of War," 166; Thompson, "'Am I Going to See a Ghost Tonight?'" 86-87.

¹⁵⁹ Krisjanous and Carruthers, "Walking on the Light Side," 241; Thompson, "'Am I Going to See a Ghost Tonight?'" 80, 83; Paulas, "Inside America's Ghost Tour Industry"; Dancausa, Hernández, and Pérez, "Motivations and Constraints for the Ghost Tourism," 161; Goldstein, Grider, and Thomas, *Haunting Experiences*, 188.

¹⁶⁰ Alvey, "Gone Haunting," 21, 57; Blankshein, "Paranormal Preservation," 13-14; Garcia, "Management Issues in Dark Tourism Attractions," 16; Lee, "Tourist Behavioral Intentions in Ghost Tourism," 959; Seeman, "Spooky Streets."

¹⁶¹ Ironside, "The Allure of Dark Tourism," 113; Krisjanous and Carruthers, "Walking on the Light Side," 241; Paulas, "Inside America's Ghost Tour Industry"; Thompson, "'Am I Going to See a Ghost Tonight?'" 84.

¹⁶² Gentry, "Walking with the Dead," 233; Inglis and Holmes, "Highland and Other Haunts," 59; Seeman, "Spooky Streets."

¹⁶³ Selene San Felice, "A Scary Good Job: A Night in the Life of 3 Annapolis Ghost Tour Guides," *The Capital* [Annapolis, MD], October 13, 2019.

¹⁶⁴ Thompson, "'Am I Going to See a Ghost Tonight?'" 83.

participants to get them engaged. Those who lead walking tours often try to be sensitive to the needs of the group, increasing or slowing down the pace as needed, recognizing when to devote more (or less) time to certain locations or to answering participants' questions. In places like Savannah, Georgia, tour guides choose their own route and may limit the geographical distance covered by the tour if conditions require it.¹⁶⁵

Some ghost tour companies provide a script to their employees to make sure the stories they tell are historically correct and consistent, but Harris cautions against dismissing guides as “inauthentic tradition-bearers,” noting that in his study of ghost tours in St. Augustine, Florida, “some guides shared personal material with me that they did not perform during tours.” This suggests a higher degree of personal engagement by the guides that went beyond simply being a paid performer.¹⁶⁶ In other instances, companies allow tour guides to create their own presentations, with guides in various locations reporting that they are deeply involved in researching paranormal stories for their tours, and in some cases, debunking stories that have no historical basis.¹⁶⁷ Such an approach established both the authenticity of the experience and the credibility of the tour guide. It also can prove useful for the guides themselves; at least one guide reported that by adding new content, she makes the tours engaging for herself as well as the tour group: “If I had to tell the same 15 stories nine years in a row, I might stab someone for new material.”¹⁶⁸ In Savannah, Georgia, one tour guide characterized his presentations as an “individual interpretation of [Savannah’s] history, current culture, and aesthetic atmosphere,” which he contrasted with what he calls the “classically antiquarian” tours that rely on facts and

¹⁶⁵ Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 231-233.

¹⁶⁶ Jason Marc Harris, “Shadows of the Past in the Sunshine State,” *Western Folklore* 74, no. 3/4 (2015): 311.

¹⁶⁷ San Felice, “A Scary Good Job.”

¹⁶⁸ San Felice, “A Scary Good Job.”

accepted history.¹⁶⁹ Whichever the approach, guides have stops and narratives they perform regularly.¹⁷⁰ Kalaitidis's research showed that whether the guides focused on history and facts or emphasized entertaining interpretation, "it became clear that the atmosphere and storytelling aspects of the tours were similar in nature, as the study subjects described their experiences being relatively the same no matter what kind of an approach the tour guides took in presenting the site."¹⁷¹

Yet Kalaitidis's research also suggests that when a tour guide debunks a ghost story, this may undermine the site's attraction for the guests who have built a mental image of the site and its story based on fictional tales told about it in the form of urban legends. In her tour of the supposedly haunted LaLaurie mansion in New Orleans, the tour guide recounted the horrific legends about Madam LaLaurie torturing and experimenting on her slaves. But when the guide then discussed research that showed the most gruesome stories had only emerged in the 1940s and were not based on historical fact, Kalaitidis notes that her initial reaction was disappointment. She also wondered if she would have been so enthusiastic about visiting the mansion if she had known the truth, since the macabre tales were the most appealing aspect to visit the location.¹⁷²

This reaction to the true history of a location steeped in legend may not be typical. As Kinsella points out,

¹⁶⁹ Gentry and Alderman, "A City Built upon its Dead," 61.

¹⁷⁰ Krisjanous and Carruthers, "Walking on the Light Side," 243; American Association for State and Local History, "Ghost Tours: Marketing Hype or Spiritual Quest?"; Thompson, "Am I Going to See a Ghost Tonight?" 86. These stops can change, however, in light of new information, such as the case of a location in Savannah, Georgia, which was dropped from ghost tours after an accidental meeting with the homeowner revealed that the home was no longer haunted because of a past exorcism. Gentry, "Walking with the Dead," 233

¹⁷¹ Kalaitidis, "Affects and Emotions in Ghost Tourism," 66.

¹⁷² Kalaitidis, "Affects and Emotions in Ghost Tourism," 48.

I was quite surprised to find out nearly every ghost hunter at Waverly [Hills] was fascinated by the building's history even aside from its supernatural reputation. Only later did I realize that the legends about Waverly and the legend-trips they push ensure that an abundance of regional folk stories endure and that local history will continue to be appreciated.¹⁷³

Folklorists recognize that stories that remain part of the active folklore tradition, especially those transmitted orally, change over time with their retelling.¹⁷⁴ This is evident in the stories told by different tour guides at specific locations. For example, one story told to this researcher by the Waverly Hills tour guides was about three adolescent boys who sneaked into the building one night in the early 2000's. Security was more lax at that time, and those on duty would often look the other way if trespassers wanted to roam the sanatorium. In this instance, a security guard was completing his nightly rounds when he heard banging and screaming from the fourth-floor stairwell metal door. He looked up and saw the boys in front of a window screaming to be let out because they were trapped; supposedly the door refused to open for them, and they claimed they were "surrounded" and that, "they won't let us leave!" The security guard had no difficulty opening the lightweight metal door, and the three boys fell out and scrambled down the stairwell. The guard looked around and saw nothing, except new markings on the metal door. The boys were so terrified of whatever was "surrounding" them that one boy had tried to escape using an axe against the metal door. Guides point out these marks on the metal door to this day (see Figure 7).

¹⁷³ Michael Kinsella, *Legend-Tripping Online: Supernatural Folklore and the Search for Ong's Hat* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2011): 43.

¹⁷⁴ Bruce Jackson, "The Perfect Informant," *The Journal of American Folklore* 103, no. 410 (1990): 401.

This story has apparently been told for more than fifteen years, but the details from the account told to this researcher in 2022 differs somewhat from the account told to Kinsella in 2005. At that time the events described were much more recent, and according to Kinsella,

A group of teenagers who had broken into the sanatorium were exploring the fourth floor when they began to see shadow forms approaching. Panicking, they headed for a large metal door leading to the exit staircase, but the door, which had been rusted open, suddenly swung shut, locking the boys in. One of the teens grabbed a nearby axe and began chopping at the door. The sounds of the boys' screams and the axe strikes against the metal door alerted a night watchman, and when he arrived, he pulled the door open, revealing the boys covered with scratches and in hysterics.¹⁷⁵

The earlier version of the story included more details that were likely to shock the listener: the shadow figures supposedly seen by the boys, the door that had been rusted open suddenly shutting on its own, the boys being covered with scratches.

Ethics

Although most ghost tours tend to take a more lighthearted approach to the paranormal, there are ethical issues that arise about commercial or fundraising use of sites connected with the display of human suffering and death; as Ironside and Reid point out, visiting dark tourist sites can be seen as being insensitive and morally wrong.¹⁷⁶ It is important that tour guides and operators are sensitive when narrating stories around human suffering and tragedy, present it in a non-offensive way, and avoid exploitation of tragedy and the dead through their efforts to build

¹⁷⁵ Kinsella, *Legend-Tripping Online*, 38.

¹⁷⁶ Ironside, "The Allure of Dark Tourism," 101; Reid, "Is Dark Tourism OK?"

and promote their products.¹⁷⁷ Haynes warns that cities should not treat paranormal tourism in a less-than-serious way but should attempt to “retain a sense of dignity and respect, which lends to this type of niche tourism’s credibility.”¹⁷⁸ It may be necessary to allow an adequate amount of time to pass from an terrible event before creating any type of dark tour for a location.¹⁷⁹ As a means of avoiding ethical controversies, a general rule of thumb is to allow at least fifty years to pass after the event and/or wait for the people involved in the original tragedy to be deceased before opening a site to dark ghost tourism; however, waiting for time to pass is not always suitable.¹⁸⁰ For example, Cramer mentions that in 2021, the creator and guides of *Boroughs of the Dead: Macabre New York City Walking Tours* debated whether it was too soon to resume their tours after the COVID-19 pandemic. They ultimately decided to reopen and remarkably tours booked up quickly. Their tourists were interested in learning about Roosevelt Island, which was the location where smallpox patients were treated and quarantined in the nineteenth century.¹⁸¹ This is interesting because the COVID-19 pandemic occurred only a year earlier and was still a potential threat to people.

Some argue that visiting dark tourist sites can be an important corrective to history itself. In her study of ghost tours at southern plantations or other sites that reportedly are haunted by the spirits of enslaved persons, Tiya Miles points out that “Ghosts are the things that we try to bury, but that refuse to stay buried.”¹⁸² While the past itself cannot be accessed, ghost stories make for a special mode of connection to the past, reminding us of our troubled history and promoting the creation of an even greater level of appreciation for the past rather than a sanitized educational

¹⁷⁷ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 28-29; Krisjanous and Carruthers, “Walking on the Light Side,” 248; Lewis, Schrier, and Xu, “Dark Tourism,” 119.

¹⁷⁸ Haynes, “Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy,” 103.

¹⁷⁹ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 32-33; Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 11.

¹⁸⁰ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 33.

¹⁸¹ Cramer, “Beaches? Cruises? ‘Dark’ Tourists Prefer the Gloomy and Macabre.”

¹⁸² Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 16.

history.¹⁸³ When Kalaitisidis essentially asked her participants if dark tour sites/structures associated with things like human atrocities should be deserted and/or defaced to keep tours at bay, the participants generally agreed that the site should remain as it was, reasoning that ignoring or destroying it does not change the past nor does it keep curiosity seekers away from the location.¹⁸⁴

By examining the harsh realities of the past, ghost tourism can provide historically accurate material related to the site and the people who lived (and died) there, replacing rumor and urban legends.¹⁸⁵ Ghost stories provide entertainment and may spark the curiosity of those with little previous interest in or knowledge of history, thus educating upcoming generations. Sadly, there are many “bottom-liners” in the ghost tourism industry who will withhold accurate information or otherwise tamper with the history to gain better ratings and increased public interest. There are ghost tour businesses and museums that are more interested in giving correct information and less about high profit, but even they could struggle to present an accurate interpretation of the past.¹⁸⁶

While dark and ghost tourism can be controversial, both help preserve history. They assist in the preservation of the past, not only through the stories that they tell but also by promoting public interest in the physical preservation of historic buildings and structures. Historic homes and other institutions that offer ghost tours can use them to produce needed revenue. Alvey notes that museums in historic homes are under economic pressure due to decreased attendance; since most rely on contributions and admission proceeds, these locations

¹⁸³ Alvey, “Gone Haunting,” 60; Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 34, 40; Cramer, “‘Dark’ Tourists Prefer the Gloomy and Macabre”; Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 223; Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 16; Seeman, “Spooky Streets.”

¹⁸⁴ Kalaitisidis, “Affects and Emotions in Ghost Tourism,” 48.

¹⁸⁵ Yuko, “The Terrifying Rise of Haunted Tourism.”

¹⁸⁶ Paulas, “Inside America’s Ghost Tour Industry.”

must find ways of enticing more tourists while preserving the purpose of the site and communicating its history.¹⁸⁷ According to Alvey, “ghost tours can be financially lucrative for historic house museums,” and with the high public demand for such tours, many museums have begun to offer them. An additional benefit is that ghost tours broaden their audience and attract visitors to return.¹⁸⁸ Such museums try to relate the tours to history in some way, so that way the visitors leave learning something they did not know before.

Many places have used a blend of history and hauntings to help fund preservation efforts and support local businesses.¹⁸⁹ Funds from ticket sales to ghost tours or ghost hunts and investigations are used to restore and maintain structures.¹⁹⁰ But an appeal of ghost tours at sites associated with human distress is the fact that they offer tourists the opportunity to explore the tragedy but with less emphasis on “serious” history than a tour based on heritage alone. Ghost tours do discuss significant historical issues, but they do so in a context that adds a dimension that provides additional space for the participant to engage with the events and the site. Thompson comments that, “the ghost tour juxtaposes the serious with the ‘not serious’ in ways that history tours do not.”¹⁹¹

Structure of Ghost Tours

Ghost tourists yearn for entertainment, information, and depth of coverage in their ghost tours. While there are several types of ghost tours (e.g., ghost hunting tours, guided ghost tours, self-guided supernatural tours), this research focuses on guided tours, specifically on guided

¹⁸⁷ Alvey, “Gone Haunting,” 18.

¹⁸⁸ Alvey, “Gone Haunting,” 58-59, 49.

¹⁸⁹ Yuko, “The Terrifying Rise of Haunted Tourism.”

¹⁹⁰ Yuko, “The Terrifying Rise of Haunted Tourism.”

¹⁹¹ Thompson, ““Am I Going to See a Ghost Tonight?”” 80-81.

walking tours of supposedly haunted locations. Many places offer motorized tours where the group is shuttled about by bus, trolley, boat or, in Savannah, Georgia, by hearse.¹⁹² These offer different types of experiences than walking tours, although most ghost tours are similarly structured.

Guided Motorized Ghost Tours

Both Blankshein and Gentry agree that motorized ghost tours have an advantage by covering a larger area or greater variety of sites than walking tours in a shorter length of time, allowing for tourists to see more of the landscape.¹⁹³ Motorized ghost tours are typically in bigger cities and use trolley or bus as a mode of transportation; however, hearses, segways, and boats can also be used for motorized ghost tours, though it is less common.¹⁹⁴ While a motorized tour might easily transport groups to locations, most of them include stops that may be challenging for people with mobility issues, and many plainly state that they are not wheelchair accessible. An example of a motorized bus ghost tour is the “New Orleans Ghost Adventures Tour,” which offers private access into a cemetery at night and live commentary on board. However, this tour is not wheelchair accessible.¹⁹⁵ Historic Tours of America offers several trolley “Ghosts & Gravestones” tours in eastern America (e.g., Key West, Florida; St. Augustine, Florida; Savannah, Georgia; Boston, Massachusetts). Their Key West, Florida ghost trolley tour passes by several of Key West’s most tragic and sacred sites (e.g., Grotto of our Lady of

¹⁹² Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 14; Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 231-233; Haynes, “Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy,” 5; Ironside, “The Allure of Dark Tourism,” 104; Goldstein, Grider, and Thomas, *Haunting Experiences*, 186.

¹⁹³ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 14; Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 231.

¹⁹⁴ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 14; Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 233; Haynes, “Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy,” 5; Ironside, “The Allure of Dark Tourism,” 104.

¹⁹⁵ “New Orleans Ghost Adventures Tours,” TripAdvisor, accessed March 3, 2023, https://www.tripadvisor.com/AttractionProductReview-g60864-d13357914-New_Orleans_Cemetery_Bus_Tour_After_Dark-New_Orleans_Louisiana.html.

Lourdes, Captain Tony’s Saloon, St. Paul’s Church), and it stops at the Key West Shipwreck Treasure Museum for a quick museum tour. This tour then loans a “ghost meter” to participants to search for ghosts in the museum area for the remainder of the tour. As with the “New Orleans Ghost Adventure Tour,” this one is not wheelchair accessible. While “Ghosts & Gravestones” can make some accommodations within reason and given enough notice, they state that, “significant portion of our tour takes place in historic sites that do not have any accommodations for people with disabilities (as historic sites, they are exempt from such requirements)” using rough terrain (e.g., stairs, cobblestones) as an example.¹⁹⁶

An example of a motorized boat ghost tour is the “Haunted Bayou Cruise” by the Mystic Ghost Rides company in Saint Louis, Mississippi, which offers spooky local legends and tales (e.g., History of Bayou Caddy, curse of The Old Oak Tree, Reptilians in The Devils Swamp, the Creeper) to tourists riding in a pontoon boat; they are guided by a storyteller while sailing through the back bayous of the Mississippi while spooky theme music plays in the background.¹⁹⁷ For an example of a motorized segway ghost tour, there is a “Haunted Segway Tour” in Charlotte, North Carolina that visits Charlotte’s famous locations (e.g., Historic 4th Ward, Settlers Cemetery), while guides tell ghost stories and provide details about the city’s history.¹⁹⁸ Because of the unique requirements of a tour conducted on segways, tourists must weigh at least 100 pounds and be physically capable of riding and controlling the machine.

And finally, an example of a motorized hearse ghost tour is a company that was first established in 2002 in Savannah, Georgia called the “Hearse Ghost Tours.” This company has

¹⁹⁶ “Ghosts and Gravestones Tour,” Historic Tours of America, accessed March 3, 2023, <https://www.ghostsandgravestones.com/key-west#about>.

¹⁹⁷ “Haunted Bayou Cruise,” The Mystic Ghost Ride Company, accessed March 3, 2023, <https://mysticghostrides.com/ghost-boat-tours/haunted-bayou-cruise/>.

¹⁹⁸ “Haunted Segway Tour,” Charlotte NC Tours, accessed March 3, 2023, <https://www.charlottenctours.com/segway-tours/haunted/>.

several hearses that have been renovated into convertibles that can hold eight people. If there is a group of over eight people, the group will be split into two different hearses; however, because Savannah’s local ordinances bar hearses from following each other, the groups will get two entirely separate routes. Additionally, the tourists remain in the hearse for the entire tour since the sites they visit are privately owned.¹⁹⁹

As this brief overview indicates, motorized ghost tourism can present some challenges. Some are not wheelchair accessible, either because the mode of transportation is not equipped with the proper accommodations for wheelchair access, or the sites visited have steps, uneven ground, or other barriers to accessibility. The mode of transportation itself – such as small boats or segways – also may limit accessibility.²⁰⁰ Another disadvantage of motorized ghost tourism is the limited view from the vehicle; windows, window frames, the roof, or even other group members can limit the passenger’s gaze, restricting their engagement with the site.²⁰¹ Finally, although motorized ghost tours cover more territory within the cityscape, they usually have a faster pace than walking ghost tours. Traffic conditions may not allow a motorized tour to linger at a site, limiting the amount of information the tour guide can impart before the tour approaches the next location, and the pace may also restrict the participants’ ability to ask questions.²⁰² All of these may lower the level of engagement that the tourist feels with the sites visited.

Guided Walking Ghost Tours

Walking tour guides are able to spend more time discussing details about a site, thus covering more information in detail. In a sense, walking ghost tours may provide more quality of

¹⁹⁹ “Public Hearse Tour,” Hearse Ghost Tours, accessed March 3, 2023, <https://www.hearseghosttours.com/>.

²⁰⁰ “New Orleans Ghost Adventures Tours,” TripAdvisor, accessed March 3, 2023.

²⁰¹ Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 231.

²⁰² Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 13-14 and 21-22; Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 231-232.

information and greater engagement for the tourists, while the motorized ghost tours may be more about quantity of sites visited.

Ghost walking tours allow variation that is generally not possible in motorized tours. Researchers generally report that a walking ghost tour can last from one to three hours.²⁰³ As was the case with motorized ghost tours, there are advantages and disadvantages to guided walking ghost tours. One advantage is that walking tours engage more of the senses to promote greater interaction with a site, allowing the tourists a possible experience with ghosts in the physical environment.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, ghost walking tours lead to a “greater sense of place,” and allow for a more intimate, and possibly more authentic experience by allowing the tourists to hear the ghost story while standing in or next to the location where the paranormal events allegedly took place.²⁰⁵ For example, according to Gentry’s study, over 40% of participants he surveyed declared that walking gives them greater control over their experiences.²⁰⁶ Another advantage to a guided walking tour over a guided motorized tour is that tourists may have a better chance to take photographs and explore the locations for themselves.²⁰⁷

However, there are some disadvantages to walking tours of haunted locations. Both Blankshein and Hanks agree that walking ghost tours are the most common, publicly noticeable, most universal, and oldest form of ghost type tourism.²⁰⁸ But these tours often bring people into

²⁰³ Garcia, “Management Issues in Dark Tourism Attractions,” 16; Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 231, 233; Hanks, *Haunted Heritage*, 14; Inglis and Holmes, “Highland and Other Haunts,” 59; Krisjanous and Carruthers, “Walking on the Light Side,” 243; Seeman, “Spooky Streets”; Dancausa, Hernández, and Pérez, “Motivations and Constraints for the Ghost Tourism,” 161; Goldstein, Grider, and Thomas, *Haunting Experiences*, 187.

²⁰⁴ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 13-14; Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 231-232; Ironside, “The Allure of Dark Tourism,” 112-113.

²⁰⁵ Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 225, 227, 236; Inglis and Holmes, “Highland and Other Haunts,” 60; Miles, *Tales from the Haunted South*, 10-12.

²⁰⁶ Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 234.

²⁰⁷ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 14; Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 231; Lee, “Tourist Behavioral Intention in Ghost Tourism,” 959.

²⁰⁸ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 13- 14; Hanks, *Haunted Heritage*, 13-14.

residential areas of cities, which has occasionally brought about resistance to them. In 2003, a member of Savannah, Georgia's Tourism Advisory Committee unsuccessfully tried to pass regulations restricting where and when such tours could take place by arguing that they created unsafe conditions because of "tourists wandering into the streets" late at night. However, because he lived in an area frequented by ghost tours, other members of the Committee downplayed his complaints.²⁰⁹ Nevertheless, safety concerns have led cities to adopt ordinances that place limits on the size of the tour. As Krisjanous and Carruthers point out, "as almost all walks start in fading light and then carry on in darkness, walking can become dangerous, particularly as some sites are reached through narrow passageways, gates and rough terrain or busy locations."²¹⁰ Haynes mentions that there are restrictions on the number of people in tour groups in New Orleans, where they are not permitted to exceed twenty-eight visitors per tour.²¹¹

While there are diverse ways to organize a walking ghost tour, the majority follow a specific structure, generally consisting of taking tourists to a variety of reportedly haunted or ghostly locations. Once tickets are purchased, tourists will gather at a designated location (e.g., haunted building, landmark). Usually, the group is taken on a specific route with the tour guide recounting ghost stories at landmarks and sites.²¹² The preferable size of a tour is twenty to thirty individuals; a larger number would negatively impact the performance, environment, and quality of the tour. However, fewer than ten tourists might make it more difficult to create an eerie atmosphere since the tour would become more personal.²¹³ Most ghost walking tours are

²⁰⁹ Quoted in Gentry and Alderman, "A City Built upon its Dead," 58.

²¹⁰ Krisjanous and Carruthers, "Walking on the Light Side," 241.

²¹¹ Haynes, "Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy," 62.

²¹² Alvey, "Gone Haunting," 47; Blankshein, "Paranormal Preservation," 13-14; Garcia, "Management Issues in Dark Tourism Attractions," 14-16; Haynes, "Paranormal Tourism Study of Economics and Public Policy," 62; Ironside, "The Allure of Dark Tourism," 104; Lee, "Tourist Behavioral Intention in Ghost Tourism," 959; Paulas, "Inside America's Ghost Tour Industry"; Goldstein, Grider, and Thomas, *Haunting Experiences*, 187.

²¹³ Garcia, "Management Issues in Dark Tourism Attractions," 15.

conducted in the evening, although some may be offered during the daytime.²¹⁴ This is because its environment, vibe, and atmosphere are spookier when it is darker and gets tourists in the mood for being frightened. Finally, most ghost walking tours take place outside although some may enter buildings or locations open to the public.²¹⁵

In most cases, tourists receive guidelines on behavior, (e.g., respecting private property, no voyeurism in people's windows, etc.), and in some cases, safety issues are discussed, such as appropriate footwear or traffic safety.²¹⁶ During the tour, the guide will generally embed the ghost stories within a broader context of the local history, which often includes some sort of tragedy or catastrophe, and many include accounts of tour guides' firsthand experiences with ghostly phenomena or accounts of previous ghost tourists' encounters.²¹⁷ Sometimes the original location is not available for tours, as in cases where the building has been torn down, so the tourists may be directed to a symbol or landmark that would approximate the location in the original narrative, although in some cases, guides scrap the story entirely once the original site is gone.²¹⁸

Since ghost walking tours involve a leisurely stroll through a city center or neighborhood, the distance covered is generally short, roughly a mile and a half of flat terrain.²¹⁹ The terrain is an important consideration for tours; as Paulas notes, not many tourists want to take an arduous climb through the streets of San Francisco to see Victorian structures.²²⁰ Most guides stop at set

²¹⁴ Seeman, "Spooky Streets"; Dancausa, Hernández, and Pérez, "Motivations and Constraints for the Ghost Tourism," 161.

²¹⁵ Alvey, "Gone Haunting," 21.

²¹⁶ Gentry, "Walking with the Dead," 231; Krisjanous and Carruthers, "Walking on the Light Side," 240, 242.

²¹⁷ Blankshein, "Paranormal Preservation," 14; Thompson, "'Am I Going to See a Ghost Tonight?'" 85-86.

²¹⁸ Garcia, "Management Issues in Dark Tourism Attractions," 16; Gentry, "Walking with the Dead," 231; Paulas, "Inside America's Ghost Tour Industry."

²¹⁹ Blankshein, "Paranormal Preservation," 14; Gentry, "Walking with the Dead," 231; Seeman, "Spooky Streets"; Paulas, "Inside America's Ghost Tour Industry."; Goldstein, Grider, and Thomas, *Haunting Experiences*, 187.

²²⁰ Paulas, "Inside America's Ghost Tour Industry."

locations and have narratives they perform regularly at them; however, in some cases, the routes might remain flexible and change nightly or according to the preference of the tour guide.²²¹

Finally, since the tour takes place on foot, it visits fewer sites than motorized tours because of the slower method of travel.²²² Since some tours may include climbing stairs or walking over uneven ground, they could pose a problem and exclude those with mobility issues. A walking tour at a specific location (e.g., building, house) is limited in scope, usually only involving the structure and surrounding area; however, in many cases the tourists also get a broader history of the location, especially since many tours generally require their guides to have a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the local or site history.²²³

Walking tours offer a different kind of experience than motorized tours, but both kinds of tours generally are led by guides who are knowledgeable about the history of the sites they visit. To provide the tourist with a more authentic experience, guides often recount their own personal experiences with the haunting or those of others, especially people who have been on previous tours. This helps to establish credibility and add an experiential component for the tourists, who usually do not directly encounter the paranormal on the tour but can do so “second hand” through hearing about the personal experiences of others.

²²¹ American Association for State and Local History, “Ghost Tours: Marketing Hype or Spiritual Quest?”; Thompson, ““Am I Going to See a Ghost Tonight?”” 86; Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 233.

²²² Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 14; Gentry, “Walking with the Dead,” 231.

²²³ Blankshein, “Paranormal Preservation,” 14; Seeman, “Spooky Streets,” Thompson, ““Am I Going to See a Ghost Tonight?”” 85-86.

Chapter 4

Methods

All procedures were reviewed and approved by the University of Southern Indiana Institutional Review Board (IRB). Fieldwork was roughly 20 hours (48 if driving time included). Data was obtained during September, October, and December of 2022 using participant-observation as the primary method. The first ghost tour the researcher attended was on September 30, 2022, and the final one was on December 30, 2022. The locations for the research were based on the physical location near the University of Southern Indiana. The study sample consisted of three ghost tour operators and/or organizations, with the researcher taking each tour four times:

1. The New Harmony Ghost Walk tours in New Harmony, Indiana.
2. Willard Library's Grey Lady Ghost Tour in Evansville, Indiana
3. The Waverly Hills Sanatorium 2-hour Paranormal tour in Louisville, Kentucky

The methodological approach for this topic is qualitative research, specifically ethnographic research.²²⁴ By taking the ghost tours, the researcher acted as a participant-observer, allowing her to perceive the activity and the relationship between the tour guide operators and tourists in the field.²²⁵ According to Hall, tourism research is often conducted in the field where empirical material or data is collected by a researcher in the natural environment via investigation, interaction, participating and observing those participating in the tourist activity.²²⁶ The present research consisted of a mixture of overt (e.g., subjects know they are being observed) and covert (e.g., subjects are unaware they are being observed) observation as a

²²⁴ University of Virginia. "Ethnographic Research." University of Virginia. Accessed March 31, 2023.

<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1071andcontext=tqr>.

²²⁵ Nisaratana Sangasubana, "How to Conduct Ethnographic Research," *Qualitative Report* 16, no. 2 (2011), 568.

²²⁶ Hall, "Fieldwork in Tourism/Touring Fields," 11.

participant-as-observer approach to collect the data in an uncontrolled environment.²²⁷

Furthermore, this type of research is the most appropriate because this is the most direct way to generate data about firsthand experiences of paranormal content of ghost tours since it can be conducted by one person.²²⁸ Ethnographic research was also chosen because many previous ghost and dark tourism researchers collected their data by participant observation, open-ended interviews, and/or surveys. Since audio and video recordings were prohibited during all the tours, the researcher took notes during the tour when possible, or writing them immediately post-ghost tour, as soon as possible to reduce recollection issues.²²⁹

Although the researcher was integrated into the setting, her purpose in taking the tours was not revealed to the members of the public on the tour, which allowed the researcher to remain an observer rather than become a focus of interest to the members of the group.²³⁰ This was important because knowledge that they were being observed by a scholarly researcher may have influenced the behavior of the tour group members, which might undermine the goal of observing how people behave naturally in the given environment. If the participants were aware of the research, there was the possibility that they would try to meet what they believed were the goals of the researcher in what they did or said.²³¹ As a result, the researcher focused on the ghost tour guides and their audience by observing their interactions, looking for patterns, and participating in their activities. Additionally, the researcher did not ask the tourist guides questions that did not seem natural in a ghost tour setting; the only interaction between researcher, ghost tour guides and ghost tourist would be defined as just a casual conversation.

²²⁷ Janice Jones and Joanna Smith, "Ethnography: Challenges and Opportunities," *Evidence-Based Nursing* 20, no. 4 (2017): 97.

²²⁸ Sangasubana, "How to Conduct Ethnographic Research," 568.

²²⁹ Sangasubana, "How to Conduct Ethnographic Research," 569.

²³⁰ David M. Fetterman, *Ethnography: Step-by-step*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications, 2019): 137.

²³¹ Fetterman, *Ethnography*, 144; Sangasubana, "How to Conduct Ethnographic Research," 567-568, 571.

This research did not record data that would have identifiable information regarding a person's identity; while the names of the ghost tour guides were collected during this research, their names were changed to maintain their privacy. Nevertheless, because the researcher attended multiple tours, sometimes conducted by the same guide, it became necessary to briefly explain their objectives and ask if they would be comfortable if the researcher took notes by hand. Most guides were delighted that a researcher was investigating their line of work and allowed the researcher to take notes as long as it was not during the times when it needed to be completely dark during the tour.

New Harmony: A Brief history

New Harmony, Indiana is a historic 20,000-acre town of less than a thousand residents in southwestern Indiana, nestled on the Wabash River in Posey County just across the river from Illinois. In the early nineteenth century, New Harmony was the location for two attempts to establish American utopian communities, one millennial and one socialist.²³² The first group to arrive in either 1814 or 1815 were German religious Lutheran Separatists, also known as the "Harmonists." They had been led to America by Johann George Rapp, first settling in Pennsylvania. They subsequently moved to the wilderness of New Harmony because they were convinced that Christ's second coming was imminent, and that they had to separate from secular society to lead lives of Christian perfection to prepare for it.²³³ They ultimately built one hundred and eighty structures and were largely self-sufficient.²³⁴ But not everything was harmonious

²³² Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, "The Innovative Approach Behind the Utopian Communities," <https://www.indianamuseum.org/historic-sites/new-harmony/>; New Harmony Town Government.

²³³ Donald E. Pitzer, *New Harmony Then and Now* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011): 16; Lucy Jayne Kamau, "Out of Harmony – Indiana Histories," *History Today* 47, no. 8 (August 1997): 46.

²³⁴ Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, "The Innovative Approach Behind the Utopian Communities"; New Harmony Town Government.

between the community and the other settlers living nearby. It has been suggested that conflicts between the two groups may be due to the Harmonists' economic dominance of the area which was resented by their neighbors, but others point to the Harmonist suspicion of the secular world and failure to exercise mutual neighborly assistance to one another; in any case, things grew so heated that the locals who had to pay the high prices charged at the Harmonist mill rioted over two days in January 1820.²³⁵ Such conflicts, along with internal dissatisfaction among the Harmonists, may have led to the decision to sell the town and its surrounding land in 1824. In 1825, the wealthy Welsh-born Scottish industrialist, manufacturer, social reformer, philosopher, and philanthropist Robert Owen and his Scottish geologist and philanthropist business partner William Maclure bought the property to establish a secular communal society after the Harmonists returned to their Pennsylvania community.²³⁶ Robert Owen envisioned a utopian society where everyone would be social equals who shared wealth and work based on their capabilities. He even persuaded many important scholars, artists, scientists, naturalists, geologists, educators and early feminists to join the Owenites; however, this experiment in utopia did not last long. Conflicts and disputes began to divide the community once Owen left for Britain immediately after purchasing the property, leaving his son William Owen in charge of the community. Robert Owen did not return to New Harmony until 1826, but even then left the area for various periods of time. Ultimately, he officially left New Harmony to return to Britain and the community was dissolved in 1827.²³⁷ But five of Owen's children, along with many others, remained in Indiana after he left, and the site of the experiment left a lasting impact that

²³⁵ Pitzer, *New Harmony Then and Now*, 32; Kamau, "Out of Harmony," 46.

²³⁶ Pitzer, *New Harmony Then and Now*, 35; Kamau, "Out of Harmony," 46; Indiana Archives and Records Administration, "New Harmony Indiana," accessed April 11, 2023, <https://www.in.gov/iara/divisions/state-archives/collections/posey-county-circuit-court-historical-records/introduction-to-posey-county/new-harmony-indiana>; Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, "The Innovative Approach Behind the Utopian Communities"; New Harmony Town Government..

²³⁷ Kamau, "Out of Harmony," 46.

went beyond this corner of the state; it offered the first kindergarten and infant school in America, was the site of the original headquarters of the United States Geological Survey, was the location of the nation's first women's club, and is the site the oldest and only remaining Working Men's Institute in Indiana (today a library and museum).²³⁸ Although there has been considerable change over time, twelve early nineteenth century structures and twenty mid-nineteenth century structures still stand.²³⁹

It is common for stories of hauntings to be connected to buildings this old, and reports of items moving on their own, sounds of footsteps, and ghostly conversations come from the Chadwick-Fretageot House, Community House #2, Thrall's Opera House, the Fauntleroy House, the Workingmen's Institute, and the Murphy Auditorium. In the case of Community House #2, the building allegedly is haunted by a young man who committed suicide in the nineteenth century.²⁴⁰ In most locations, however, the phenomena are not connected to tragedy but have been attributed to former owners who apparently did not want to leave their homes, even after death. This is the case for the Fauntleroy House, which was built by the Harmonists in 1820, but became more famous as the place where Constance Owen Fauntleroy organized the Minerva Society in 1859, making it the nation's first women's club.²⁴¹ A descendant of one of the early owners of the Fauntleroy House, Mary Emily Fauntleroy, purchased the home in 1911, remodeled it, and turned it into a museum. In the 1920s, the home was purchased by the Indiana Federation of Women's Clubs, which agreed to allow Mary Emily to continue living there for the rest of her life as the museum's curator. During the Depression, the home/museum was taken over by the State of Indiana, but during World War II, the museum was shut down, and Mary

²³⁸ Indiana Archives and Records Administration, "New Harmony Indiana."

²³⁹ New Harmony Town Government; Indiana Archives and Records Administration, "New Harmony, Indiana."

²⁴⁰ Joni Mayhan, *Haunted New Harmony* (n.p., 2017): 40-41.

²⁴¹ Nora C. Fretageot, *Historic New Harmony: A Guide*, 3rd ed. (n.p., 1934): 51.

Emily was forced to move next door to her brother Homer Fauntleroy's house, despite the earlier promise that she would be able to live there for the rest of her life. She died in 1954 and never again lived in her beloved Fauntleroy House. Although reports of unusual activity in the house sporadically occurred over the years, it was after extensive renovations of the house began in 2007 that there was a reported uptick in unexplained phenomena (footsteps, sounds of conversations, music, knocking, and alarm system malfunctions). Not only was the building literally stripped to the studs, but some of the antiques Mary Emily had collected were discarded because their provenance was unclear, making them unsuitable for a state museum. When the renovation was finished, appropriate artifacts were placed only in one room while the rest of the house remained empty. Since the renovations undid many of the changes Mary Emily made to the house and sent her collections into storage, the increase in phenomena is assumed to be Mary Emily expressing her displeasure with the changes.²⁴²

The New Harmony Ghost Walk Tours

The *Haunted New Harmony* organization conducted all New Harmony ghost tours for this research, and this was the only location where the tour took place completely outdoors. There are two versions of the tour, "Original" and "Dark Side," and each had tourists sign a liability waiver upon arrival at the starting location. While this was a measure of legal protection for the tour operators, every tour guide also added some humor by stating that signing the waiver was an acknowledgement that the tour company could not be held liable if the tourists were followed home by a ghost. All stops on the tour and stories told about the locations were consistent across the tours, even with different tour guides. Guides did not wear Victorian

²⁴²Mayhan, *Haunted New Harmony*, 76-77.

clothing, but generally jeans and zip-up jackets with their company logo on them; however, according to their social media page, they dress up in costumes during the tours given during the week of Halloween. The names of the tour guides have been changed to Jade, Ryan, Josh, Debbie, and Tina. All guides discussed past paranormal experiences they have had when ghost hunting and what others (e.g., tourists, guides) have experienced. There were a few times the tours were in the way of traffic and vehicles parking. The researcher was unable to determine if the tour guides were paid employees or volunteers and how they became ghost tour guides. The guides all appeared passionate about their line of work and often conducted ghost hunts in the New Harmony structures and/or have had previous experience with ghost hunting. One guide, Tina, did mention that all tips went towards renting different New Harmony structures to conduct ghost hunting research.

The Original Ghost Walk Tour

During the fieldwork research in Fall 2022, the Original Ghost Walk tour was in its fifth year of operation and focus primarily on the Harmonist and Owenite structures; each original tour had fourteen stops. As the *Haunted New Harmony* website describes it, this tour “covers the history and hauntings ... of the two Utopian societies.”²⁴³ Tickets were purchased online in September 2022, with prices being \$15 in September and \$20 in October. After the ticket purchase was made, confirmation email was received, including information about where the tour would start (i.e., Thrall’s Opera House), parking, arrival time and check in, and a reminder that the tour would begin on time. The email further added that the tour generally lasted for approximately 90 minutes, recommended wearing comfortable shoes, and advised that

²⁴³ Haunted New Harmony Events,” Haunted New Harmony, accessed April 11, 2023. <https://jonimayhan.com/>.

participants might wish to bring flashlights. While the streetlights generally made flashlights unnecessary, this was not the case with the visit to the Harmonists Cemetery which has no streetlight nearby and in consequence is very dark. Finally, the confirmation email stated the tour operator would contact the tourists via email if a reschedule was needed in the event of bad weather and that tourists should consider tipping the guides.

The researcher took two “Original” tours and two “Dark Side” tours. The first original tour was on Friday, September 23, 2022, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. There were five members of the tour, including the researcher. There were two guides, Jade and Ryan. Jade was the leader of the group, while Ryan brought up the rear. Jade encouraged the tourists to take photos, suggesting that they might capture a ghost. Jade also later mentioned that each Haunted New Harmony tour guide put a different spin on the tales told.

The second original tour was on Friday, October 7, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This tour had four tourists, including the researcher, which created a more personal experience. Ryan from the previous first tour was the only guide for this tour. Ryan was both the leader and caboose (the guide who followed the group). Another guide was scheduled to join the tour group but did not attend and no explanation was given. It was on this tour that Ryan claimed that the tour guides check/confirmed history with historians. Additionally, this tour was the only New Harmony ghost tour that showed tourists’ photos of “captured ghosts.” Later, tour guide Ryan admitted that he was a skeptic.

The Dark Side Ghost Walk Tour

At the time of this field research in fall 2022, *Haunted New Harmony* was offering its Dark Side Ghost Walk tour for the first time with a focus on New Harmony’s more modern

structures that are reported to be haunted. The ghost tour operator's website, *Haunted New Harmony*, states that the difference between the original and dark side ghost walk tour was that the stops are in a different part of the town, where there is less light and, "the stories get even more intriguing."²⁴⁴ Tickets were purchased online in September 2022, with prices being \$20 for both dark side tours. A confirmation email was received that was very similar to that sent confirming the original ghost walk tour, with the only difference being the starting point at the corner of Church and Main Street at a curved concrete bench, a few blocks from Thrall's Opera House.

The first dark side tour was on Saturday, October 1, 2022, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. There were twenty-three tourists in the group including the researcher. There were two guides for this tour, Debbie and Josh. Debbie was the leader, while Josh brought up the rear. According to tour guide Debbie, this group was the biggest group she has ever had. This tour was "dark" in more than one sense: it was led through an area of town where there is significantly less light from streetlights. While the ghost tour guides did have lanterns, they were dim and electronic, making it difficult to see any upcoming obstacles in the way. One example was when the tour was taken up the stairs to go into the Roofless church and a couple of tourists tripped going up the stairs. Another tripping hazard example is when the tour was led down a loose gravel alleyway and had to cross over large, tall tree roots to get to the Harmonists Cemetery. While the tour was notified of this before reaching the tree roots and the leader of the groups went in front of the group to place the lantern and stand by the roots, so people knew where they were, it was still difficult to make out what was a shadow and what was the roots past the light, causing a trip hazard for the tourists.

²⁴⁴ "Haunted New Harmony Events," Haunted New Harmony, accessed April 11, 2023. <https://jonimayhan.com/>.

Once the tour reached the Harmonist Cemetery, the guides acknowledged that no one knows precisely where the bodies are buried at the cemetery; there are no headstones or any other indications of where the graves might be, though the Native American burial mounds were more obvious. The fact that the group members might be standing on unmarked graves caused some uneasiness; one tourist commented that she wished she knew in advance that there was the possibility that she would be stepping on graves, since her spiritual practices and beliefs taught that it was disrespectful to walk or stand on burials. Another tourist agreed.

Towards the end of the dark tour, the group stopped at what was called “Church Park,” an outdoor garden located in the center of the town where the Harmonist’s church originally stood. As everyone gathered around and sat at the fountain designed by sculptor Don Gummer, Debbie brought out two L-shaped metal dowsing rods from her bag and held one in each hand.²⁴⁵ She discussed how the dowsing rods were used as a means to communicate with ghosts, with the rods crossing or spreading apart to answer “yes” or “no.” Debbie received a “no” response when she asked if a man was present, but the rods moved to “yes” for questions about the presence of a woman and a child. Debbie then asked the tourists if anyone would like to try to communicate with the ghosts. When two volunteers raised their hands, they were shown how to use them by the guides and keep the rods straight. The volunteers or members of the audience would ask the ghosts questions, such as “Is Mary Emily Fauntleroy here?” and “Do you like it here?”

The final stop was at the Rapp-Maclure-Owen mansion. Since the mansion is privately owned, Debbie was not able to share any experiences of her own, but she did recount stories told

²⁴⁵ Dowsing is a centuries-old practice used to find water or minerals; in earlier eras a forked stick was used, which dipped towards the ground to indicate the presence of the desired material. In one famous French case from 1692, a dowsing stick was used to hunt down a murderer, who later confessed. See Michael R. Lynn, “Divining the Enlightenment: Public Opinion and Popular Science in Old Regime France,” *Isis* 92, no. 1 (March 2001): 34-35.

by maintenance workers and housekeepers about their paranormal experiences, such as hammers going missing when performing maintenance.

The second dark tour attended was on Friday, October 14, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This tour group had twenty individuals, including the researcher. There were two guides, Tina and the same tour guide as the first original tour, Jade. Tina was the primary leader, while Jade was at the rear, although they would occasionally swap roles during the tour. The tour was consistent with the first dark side tour. It was on this tour that the guides explained that most of the tips they earned were used by them to rent New Harmony's haunted structures to conduct their own paranormal investigations.

A difference between this group and the first dark side tour group was the interaction between the guides and tourist volunteers when demonstrating the dowsing rods. The guides on the second tour did not take the time to fully demonstrate how to properly use the dowsing rods (e.g., hold them straight, "show me my yes/no") and did not assist volunteers with the rods. As a result, the tourists had difficulty holding the rods properly. This may have been because the time for the tour to end was near and this interaction had to be rushed; in any case, the experience was less than ideal.

The Willard Library: A Brief History

Evansville, Indiana had other libraries before the Willard Library opened in 1885, but this was the first purpose-built library in the city; previously, Evansville had been served by a small collection housed in a converted church, and initially people had to pay an annual subscription to

use it.²⁴⁶ Located just off the central business district in Evansville, the Willard Library is the oldest continuously operating public library building in the state of Indiana and was the dream of local philanthropist Willard Carpenter, who made his fortune out of railway and land speculation. In 1876, he and his wife Lucina deeded various properties valued at between \$200,000 and \$400,000 to begin construction of the Victorian Gothic building. Although he was keenly interested in the ongoing construction, he died in 1883 before the project was completed. Newspapers across the country reported his death and most mentioned the gift that established the library.²⁴⁷

At the same time, Willard Carpenter was a controversial figure; even the highly laudatory account of his life in *Evansville and Its Men of Mark*, published in 1873, referred to the public criticism he had suffered for years, which the author attributed to “misrepresentation and slander.”²⁴⁸ But the evidence suggests that his business dealings were often questionable, and there was considerable controversy over his role in the collapse of plans for Straight Line Railroad between Evansville and Indianapolis in the late 1850s, which Carpenter had heavily promoted. In 1865, when a railroad between Evansville and Crawfordsville was proposed, even though Carpenter had nothing to do with it, one of his promoters claimed that an opponent of the project was using “the prejudice which he knew existed in this community against Mr. Carpenter on account of his connection with the straight line [sic] road” and he went on to assert that “Willard Carpenter has no connection whatever with this new Company; and I say further, that

²⁴⁶ Donald E. Baker, “Two Publics: The Willard Library and the Evansville-Vanderburgh County Library,” *Indiana Libraries* 6, no. 2 (1986): 13; Herbert Goldhor, *The First Fifty Years: The Evansville Public Library and the Vanderburgh County Public Library* (Evansville, IN, 1962): 1.

²⁴⁷ See, for instance, the notices in the *Springfield Reporter* [Springfield, VT], November 16, 1883; *The Western Recorder* [Lawrence, KS], November 20, 1883; the *Delaware Gazette and State Journal* [Wilmington, DE], November 15, 1883; or the *Summet County Beacon* [Akron, OH], 14 November 1883.

²⁴⁸ Edward White, *Evansville and Its Men of Mark* (Evansville, IN: Historical Publishing Company, 1873): 346.

he never shall have with my consent.”²⁴⁹ Three years later, during a mayoral campaign, one candidate alleged that Carpenter was supporting his opponent, the incumbent, as part of a secret deal to protect Carpenter from his creditors.²⁵⁰ Given this history, it’s not surprising that every librarian who led ghost tours of the library referred to Willard Carpenter was a “sketchy guy,” often involved in shady dealings.

Willard Carpenter’s character has been tied to the building’s alleged haunting by a ghost called the “Grey Lady.” Some have alleged that the ghost is his daughter Louise, angry that her inheritance had been spent on the library. While it is true that she received no inheritance from her father, this was because he died without leaving a will. Indiana law directed that his estate should have been divided between his widow and his children, it may be that he had little property to leave. Four years prior to his death, he had testified in a court case that he was essentially penniless.²⁵¹ However, his widow, Lucina, was not penniless, and when she died in 1884, she left inheritances to her two children, Louise and her brother Albert. Louise received roughly \$10,000, which consisted of forgiveness of a loan of \$6000 and \$4000 in cash, and Louise’s two daughters received real estate from their grandmother.²⁵²

A month after her father died, Louise filed for divorce, so it could be that she began to experience financial difficulties. In any case, in 1896 she brought suit against the trustees of the Willard Library, alleging that she was entitled to one-third of the money given to the library as her lawful inheritance. She alleged that her father had been of unsound mind at the time he made that gift, and that the trustees had unduly influenced him into funding the library.²⁵³ The circuit

²⁴⁹ James G. Jones, “John Ingle, Jr. and the Crawfordsville Railroad,” *Evansville Daily Journal*, 25 September 1865.

²⁵⁰ *Evansville Daily Journal*, 2 April 1868, 4.

²⁵¹ A lengthy account of Carpenter’s testimony appears in *The Evansville Journal*, January 16, 1879.

²⁵² Will of Lucina Carpenter, Probate date: 3 July 1884. Greene County Indiana Circuit Court, Will Records, vol. 5, 1919-1929.

²⁵³ *Evansville Journal*, August 23, 1896.

court found against Louise and an appeal to the state Supreme Court also failed.²⁵⁴ She received nothing and was reported to be bitter about the court's decision until the day she died in March 1908. Many believe that she was so bitter that she became the Grey Lady ghost. However, since the first report of the ghost dates to the 1930s, long after Louise's death, and the ghost's reported actions are benign, many believe that the Grey Lady may be a former librarian or library patron.

Willard Library Ghost Tours

Tickets for the Grey Lady Ghost Tour are free but in limited quantities; they were available to the researcher through the Willard Library's web page and on their social media sites. The tours are only given in the Halloween season and tickets were not available until early September 2022. A confirmation email was received showing proof of ticket purchase, along with the date and time of the tour. Tour group members entered the main doors, passing a security guard, before gathering at the main floor Adult Services checkout counter to confirm their arrival for the ghost tour. One of the librarians or librarian assistants would check in the tourists and ask them to stay on the main floor until the tour began. Most tourists sat down at desks and chairs or wandered about, looking at the books on the main floor. All the tour guides were Willard Library librarians and library assistants who volunteered to guide or assist the ghost tours, and they all use the same script on the tour which most of them have memorized. However, according to one tour guide, they often "put their own spin on it." Additionally, once the researcher mentioned her reason for being there, one tour guide said the researcher may hear many different stories since different people will guide the tour. Only one Willard Library tour guide read from a script during the tour. At no point were the Willard Library ghost tour guides

²⁵⁴ "High Court Decisions," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 9, 1901.

dressed up in costume or in Victorian style clothing. They were a mix of business casual to casual wear. The names of the tour guides have been changed to Jill, Amanda, and Leah.

The Willard Library ghost tours began with the guide introducing herself as the tour began; although most ghost tours have two guides per group, all three Grey Lady tours of the evening (starting at 7:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m., and 9:00 p.m.) were conducted by the same individual. Two librarians or library assistants were present at the library but were engaged in other duties. While the tour is scheduled for an hour, those taken by the researcher lasted between 42 and 54 minutes. This is likely because the guide must return from the lower level, where the tour ends, to the main floor to start the next tour. A tip cup to donate funds was present at the end of the tours.

There are three levels in Willard library: the Main floor, the top floor, and the lower-level basement. There were eleven stops on the ghost tour: Main floor/Adult Services department (meet-up spot), halfway up the stairs to the second floor for bookcase, on top of the second-floor stairs platform, second floor/special collections and genealogy department, the Bayard Room/Boardroom, the bottom of the stairs in the lower level, the children's room, the children's checkout counter, the lower-level hallway, and the Browning Room lobby area. At the end of the tour, tourists would leave the building via a lower-level door.

The first Grey Lady Ghost Tour taken for this research was on Thursday, October 13, 2022, scheduled from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., but it ended after only 42 minutes. There were nineteen tour group members, including the researcher. Jill, the tour guide who is a librarian who has worked for Willard Library for more than 20 years, told the group that the Grey Lady ghost tours have been going on for 20 to 25 years. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of tours in 2020 and 2021; as a result, this research was conducted during the first tours offered

since 2019. She mentioned that on the website, www.willardghost.com, six cameras offer a live stream from the children's room, stairway, basement hall, children's story room, research room, and the first floor Adult Services. According to the tour guide, when ghost cams first went live on the internet over twenty years ago, public interest led their website to crash.

The second Grey Lady Ghost Tour was on Thursday, October 20, 2022, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This tour group had twenty-five members, including the researcher. The tour guide was a library assistant named Amanda who had been with Willard Library for several years and the tour lasted for 50 minutes. Amanda was the only tour guide who had a microphone and who offered pictures of ghosts to the tourists. She said that though many other librarians believe that the children's room in the basement is the most active for ghostly phenomena to occur, she disagreed and felt that the second floor was more active. She and the other librarians agree that there have been no reported ghost experiences on the first floor. Amanda pointed out that 90% of the décor and architecture in the Willard Library are original, such as the creaky wooden staircase, while the second-floor boardroom continues to be painted green, just as had been when the building first opened. (See Figure 4).

All tour guides noted that the first appearance of the Grey Lady was said to be in the lower level of the library during the winter of 1937 and was reported by a maintenance man who came to stoke the furnace fire one early morning at 3:00 a.m. During that time, the lower level was unfinished with a dirt floor. According to this account, he was using his flashlight to navigate the dark hall and dropped it at one point; when he picked it back up, he saw a figure wearing a long dress, shawl, updo hairstyle, and a veil over her head, and he was able to make out that the figure had no face. This latter detail was only mentioned in the second tour by

Amanda and no other tour guides: allegedly, this maintenance worker has been the only Willard library employee to quit because of the ghost.

The third Grey Lady Ghost Tour was on Saturday, October 22, 2022, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and was the only tour taken on a Saturday. This group had twenty-three members, including the researcher. The tour guide Leah was a children's librarian who had been with Willard Library nearly ten years and was the only one of the library's tour guides who read directly from the script, explaining that she had not done a ghost tour in over three years. She omitted some of the locations the other tour guides included in their presentations. For instance, on the second level, while Leah told the stories about the check-out desk on that level, none were told in the Bayard Room/Boardroom. After this, the tourists were allowed to explore the second floor on their own instead of moving to the next location on the lower level. Similarly, in the lower level, Leah told all the stories at the children's checkout desk, unlike the other tour guides who recounted stories in the children's room, the hallway, and Browning Gallery room. It may be that Leah was conscious of the fact that she was running out of time; her tour was the longest one this researcher took, lasting 54 minutes.

The children's room in the lower level of the Willard Library is a children's story pit that was built in the 1980's. It is a room with tiered riser carpeted seats that are surrounded by children's books. Jill and Leah asserted that this is the most haunted location in the library and commented that "electronic equipment goes crazy in there" because a "vortex" supposedly exists in this space. On one tour, the guide noted that Lorraine Warren, a well-known psychic medium and her husband Ed visited the Willard Library in the 1980's after attending a psychic fair at University of Southern Indiana. Warren did not feel anything during most of her time at Willard Library, but once she went into the "children's room," she became unresponsive and went into a

psychic trance. She later claimed that she saw a woman in a long dress with an old hair style wearing older shoes with hooks. Warren said the woman was looking into water, and she felt that the ghost was connected to the land and not the building.

A slight issue occurred during both Amanda's and Leah's tour. The tour group stopped awkwardly halfway up the stairs when going to the second level of the library. With the design of the staircase and so many people congested in one area, many tourists could not see or hear what the tour guide was doing or saying because of the blocked view. The first tour guide, Jill, took the tour group to the top of the stairs' landing on the second floor, which made it easier to hear and see her. Furthermore, because many tourists were out of the line of sight, some tourists appeared uninterested and even talked during the tour guide's presentation, making it more difficult to understand what was being said.

The fourth Grey Lady Ghost Tour was on Thursday, October 27, 2022, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; it lasted 47 minutes and was the final Grey Lady Ghost tour of the year. Jill, who led the first tour taken by this researcher, led this group of twenty members. Her performance was virtually the same as on the first tour: she told the same stories and jokes on both tours, and her two tours were the shortest of all four tours taken.

According to the various accounts of the ghostly figure of the Grey Lady, she is said to have a lilac or "old lady" perfume scent, likes to pull pranks and hair, brush against dangly earrings, move chairs, or drop the temperature when she is near. Paranormal research groups have conducted investigations in the Willard library, and most of them agree that the library is haunted by several entities but are unsure of the number. People reportedly have seen specters of children and older men in the library, and a transparent man seen in the basement has been named "Frank." Several tour guides mentioned that the team from the television show *Ghost*

Hunters visited Willard Library in 2006 to investigate; the only phenomena they reported were orbs of light in the upstairs boardroom and a mist going up a wall, but that was seen only after they had packed their equipment to leave. The *Ghost Hunters* team reported that their evidence was inconclusive as to the haunting at the Willard Library. Whoever the ghosts are, people generally believe they are non-threatening.

Waverly Hills Sanatorium: A Brief History

Waverly Hills Sanatorium is a stone and brick Tudor Gothic restoration style building on the southwestern end of Jefferson County in Louisville, Kentucky.²⁵⁵ According to the Waverly Hills tour guides, construction broke ground in 1924 and the sanatorium opened in 1926. During that time, the Waverly Hills Property was six miles outside the Louisville city limits.²⁵⁶ It was built to quarantine tuberculosis patients from the outside world, could house 400 patients, and was a completely self-sustainable community (e.g., milk cows, garden, orchard, radio station, laundry facilities, maintenance garage, butchery, dentist, salon).²⁵⁷

Tuberculosis (TB), also known as consumption and “the white plague,” killed one in seven people in America in the late nineteenth century; in 1891, the Michigan State Board of Health declared that it killed more people in the state than any other disease.²⁵⁸ Worldwide, it was estimated to cause one death in eight, but for most of the nineteenth century, scientists were hindered in their search for a treatment because they thought it was a hereditary illness, not a

²⁵⁵ Lynn Pohl, “Documenting a Deadly Disease: Tuberculosis and Waverly Hills Sanatorium in the Filson’s Collections.” *Ohio Valley History* 21, no. 1 (2021), 72.

²⁵⁶ Pohl, “Documenting a Deadly Disease,” 82.

²⁵⁷ Pohl, “Documenting a Deadly Disease,” 72, 82.

²⁵⁸ Pohl, “Documenting a Deadly Disease,” 73; Michigan State Board of Health, *Restriction and Prevention of Consumption*, leaflet no. 175 (September 1891): 1.

communicable disease.²⁵⁹ In 1865, Jean Antoine Villemin was the first to present research that showed that the disease was caused by an infectious agent, and in the early 1880s, Robert Koch isolated the bacillus that caused tuberculosis.²⁶⁰ By the 1890s, the idea that tuberculosis was a communicable disease had been accepted by the medical community, which warned that it could be carried from an infected person to the lungs of a healthy person through coughing that expelled sputum.²⁶¹ To stop the spread of TB, in the 1890s the Board of Health of New York City made it a crime to spit on the floor of public buildings, railroad cars, and ferries, and many other states and municipalities, including the state of Indiana, enacted similar rules.²⁶² At the same time, the impetus grew for creating tuberculosis sanatoria for isolation of the infected and to provide them with specialized treatment, which usually focused on fresh air, a healthy diet, and moderate physical exercise. In the early twentieth century, many of these institutions added surgery in their treatment regimes, with varying success. By 1904, there were 115 sanatoria nationwide, and this number grew to 656 by 1923.²⁶³

Some tour guides addressed the ineffectiveness of some early treatments. For instance, heliotherapy, using natural sunlight, or sunbathing, was used to help cure TB patients by placing their beds on the porch facing towards the sun. Interestingly, electrical outlets were pointed out by the tour guides during all the tours, stating that Waverly Hills was the first to use electrically heated blankets to keep the patients warm when sunbathing on the porch during cold weather.

²⁵⁹ American physician William H. Burt, who provided the figures for world-wide deaths, also argued that tuberculosis was hereditary in his book *Therapeutics of Tuberculosis: : or Pulmonary Consumption* (New York and Philadelphia: Boericke & Tafel, 1876): 7, 15.

²⁶⁰ Albert Calmette, *Tubercle Bacillus Infection and Tuberculosis in Man and Animals*, trans. Willard B. Soper and George H. Smith (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins Co., 1923): 5-6.

²⁶¹ Michigan State Board of Health, *Restriction and Prevention of Consumption*, 1.

²⁶² Charles V. Chapin, *State Control of Tuberculosis* (Providence, RI: Snow & Farnham, 1900): 26-27.

²⁶³ John F. Murray, Dean E. Schraufnagel, and Philip C. Hopewell, "Treatment of Tuberculosis: A Historical Perspective," *Annals ATS* 12, no. 12 (December 2015): 1751

If fresh air, good diet, rest, natural remedies, or sunbathing did not cure a TB patient, then surgery may have been performed. One surgery, according to tour guide Cara, was artificial pneumothorax, which was collapsing the diseased lung for a few days to help heal the lung that TB had infected. This was based on the idea that TB thrives in a moist, blood-rich environment, which collapsing the lung would cut off. After several days, the lung was reinflated. If artificial pneumothorax did not help, then the next surgical step was thoracoplasty, where the surgeon would cut open the chest or back of a TB patient to remove 7-8 ribs. While the Waverly Hills tour guide declared that only five percent of patients survived after thoracoplasty, a study of patients who had the surgery between 1935 and 1946 shows that approximately 2.7 percent of patients died within four months of the surgery, and a further 9.4 percent of patients died later in ways associated with the surgery. Those patients who had the surgery included some with minimal signs of disease in an effort to slow its progress, but many were “patients for whom nothing else can be done and in whom operation is almost a measure of despair.”²⁶⁴ For those who survived, the outcome could be positive, and Cara mentioned that a former patient who had this procedure visited Waverly Hills and told the staff that the thoracoplasty saved his life, and he went on to have children and grandchildren.

Waverly Hills Sanatorium was part of tuberculosis sanatorium movement that began in 1884 in with the creation of Adirondack Cottage Sanatorium at Saranac Lake in New York’s Adirondack Mountains.²⁶⁵ But the current five-story Waverly Hills Sanatorium, built in 1926 was not the first hospital on Waverly Hill. It replaced a two-story Tudor-style, wood framed building that opened in 1910 and had twenty beds on each side of the pavilion. An additional

²⁶⁴ T. Holmes Sellors, “The Results of Thoracoplasty in Pulmonary Tuberculosis,” *Thorax* 2, no. 4 (December 1947): 220, 216.

²⁶⁵ Pohl, “Documenting a Deadly Disease,” 76.

hospital for advanced cases had 50 beds, and a training school for nurses opened in 1912. By 1915, the hospital had the capacity for 170 patients of all ages in any stage of the disease; it also took in people of color as well as White people.²⁶⁶ With the rapid increase of TB patients seeking admission, it was soon at capacity, even after additional buildings were constructed. A new larger sanatorium was planned, with a chapel, library, and large recreation room. However, the new building was for White TB patients only; Black patients would be housed in the original 1912 hospital.²⁶⁷ According to the Waverly Hills tour guides, the new sanatorium was created to capture fresh air and sunlight to help heal TB patients. Today, the large, square, and glassless window-like openings all over the building once had copper screens.

By the 1940s, new types of chemotherapy treatments were being developed, and by the 1950s, these were so effective that it led to a decline in the sanatorium movement.²⁶⁸ In 1961, Waverly Hills Sanatorium closed its doors. However, according to the tour guides, the building quickly was reopened as a geriatric facility and nursing home called Woodhaven Medical Services in 1962. Issues arose at Woodhaven because it was constantly understaffed and overcrowded. Severe patient neglect and abuse was reported, which led to what the Louisville *Courier-Journal* called “the most intense state investigation into possible neglect of patients ever undertaken in Kentucky.” The investigation found puddles of urine in hallways, patients locked in their rooms, neglect that led to dehydrated and underweight patients, and in one case, roaches were found in the feces of one patient.²⁶⁹ This led to Woodhaven’s closure in 1981, and although proposals to remodel the building into a prison were developed, people in the surrounding

²⁶⁶ Pohl, “Documenting a Deadly Disease,” 82.

²⁶⁷ Pohl, “Documenting a Deadly Disease,” 83.

²⁶⁸ Murray, Schraufnagel, and Hopewell, “Treatment of Tuberculosis: A Historical Perspective,” 1751.

²⁶⁹ Robert L. Peirce, “Home’s plan to close ends state’s most intense probe,” *The Courier Journal* [Louisville, KY], December 15, 1980.

community objected, and the idea was scrapped. As the tour guides point out, the wall material in the rooms at Waverly would have made it easy for convicts to escape, and they referred to the movie *Shawshank Redemption* which featured similar conditions.

In 1996, Waverly Hills was purchased by Robert Alberhasky, who planned to build the world's largest Jesus statue on the site. The tour guides compared it to the famous 155 foot-tall Christ the Redeemer statue that looms over Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from atop Mount Corcovado; the Louisville statue was planned to be some 35 feet taller than the one in Rio, and some predicted it would draw a million visitors a year to the city.²⁷⁰ Alberhasky's plan was to dismantle the sanatorium and use whatever materials were left to make the statue and associated structures, including a four-story worship center, theater, and gift shop. However, a lack of funding led to the project being abandoned in late 1997.²⁷¹ Waverly Hills tour guides asserted that because Alberhasky was bitter that he could not do what he wanted with his own property, he did not stop trespassers from wreaking havoc on the inside of the building. The walls were defaced with graffiti, and trash inside the sanatorium was knee high. But that trash ended up as a positive; it turned out that when Charlie and Tina Mattingly purchased Waverly in 2001 they discovered it had preserved the original chapel's flooring.

Since the purchase, the Mattinglys have undertaken dedicated preservation efforts to restore the former tuberculosis hospital. To help raise funds to undertake the extensive renovations at the sanatorium, the Waverly Hills Historical Society was formed in 2003 and is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.²⁷² The board members of the Historical Society consist of local

²⁷⁰ Leslie Scanlon, "The Visitation: a statue of Christ to draw the world to Louisville," *The Courier-Journal* [Louisville, KY], November 10, 1996.

²⁷¹ Bill Pike, "Funding for huge Jesus statue falls short," *The Courier-Journal* [Louisville, KY], December 12, 1997.

²⁷² Waverly Hills Historical Society. "About the Waverly Hills Historical Society," accessed April 11, 2023. <https://waverlyhillshistoricalsociety.org/about-us/>.

community volunteers with expertise and knowledge in business, event planning, hospitality, customer service, accounting, and the paranormal industry.²⁷³ The building itself is on the National Register of Historic Places, and the goal is for the old building to be a staple of the local community as well as to contribute to the local community through economic, historical, and educational means.²⁷⁴ According to the Historical Society’s website, it exists for “the purpose of preserving and restoring Waverly Hills Sanatorium, a former tuberculosis hospital in Louisville, Ky, memorializing the staff, patients, and those touched by the sanatorium as well as educating the public about the history of tuberculosis, its effects and impact on the local community.”²⁷⁵ Funds are raised by historical and paranormal tours, donations, an annual Haunted House in October, and other fundraising activities held throughout the year. Tour guide Cara commented on both her tours the researcher attended, “every time you take a tour, we put in a window.”

Waverly Hills Sanatorium Ghost Tours

During the fieldwork research in December 2022 for Waverly Hills Sanatorium, the researcher purchased tickets online in September and October 2022 through on the ghost tour operator’s website, with prices being \$30 for the “2-hour paranormal tour,” but \$32.40 total if the service fee is included. The confirmation email stated basic information and ground rules: non-alcoholic beverages were permitted if they had a screw cap, no audio or video recording was permitted, tour group members were to arrive thirty minutes prior to the scheduled start of the tour, and participants should dress appropriately for the weather since it is partially open to the elements. It also gave details about the location of the access point entrance.

²⁷³ Waverly Hills Historical Society, FAQs, <https://waverlyhillshistoricalsociety.org/f-a-q-s/>

²⁷⁴ Waverly Hills Historical Society. “About the Waverly Hills Historical Society.”

²⁷⁵ Waverly Hills Historical Society. “About the Waverly Hills Historical Society.”

When tour guides were asked when Waverly Hills first began giving tours, they said that it was likely between 2002-2004, but most likely 2003. Waverly Hills is a gated site, and visitors are not permitted to enter until thirty minutes prior to the start of the tour. Staff are on the grounds to help direct traffic, assist with parking, and lead tourists to the waiting area. Waverly Hills was built to capture the wind for fresh air, so given the outside temperature in December, the tourists met inside the building in an enclosed, temperature-controlled room that was once the cafeteria which still retains chairs and tables. Once all registered attendees were present, the tour guides reviewed the rules and regulations before dividing the large group of up to fifty tourists into two groups. Group A and Group B went on different routes through the building, stopping at all the same places regardless of the route. The guides used walkie talkies to stay informed about the location of the other guide and stay informed about later tours that would follow this one. Additionally, the guides did not dress in any kind of special or period clothing; most wore either jeans or leggings and hoodies. The staff at Waverly Hills are either volunteers or full-time employees. The names of the tour guides have been changed to Cara, Sharon, Emma, Ruby, and Jenny.

The first Waverly Hills Ghost tour was on Friday, December 2, 2022, from 8:00 p.m. to 10 p.m. There were fifty people, including the researcher, on hand to take the tour that night. After the groups were divided, there were twenty-two tourists in Group A, the researchers' group, which was led by Cara, a full time Waverly Hills employee, and Sharon, a retired Waverly Hills employee who was visiting. The researcher also attended another tour at a different time with Cara as her tour guide and each time, Cara was the leader of the tour guide, while the other guide Sharon, brought up the rear of the tour and did little talking, mostly making sure all tourists were accounted for. Although audio and video recording were banned, some tour

guides allowed visitors to take pictures; Cara suggested that they not use flash photography, telling them to take photos in the dark and “play with the contrast,” to look for evidence. Cara did take the time to respond to all questions.

The second Waverly Hills Ghost Tour was on Friday, December 9, 2022, from 8:00 p.m. to 10 p.m. This group had forty-eight individuals, including the researcher. Of all the tours taken in this research, this was the only one whose start was delayed; while no reason for the seven-minute wait was given, it is likely that some tourists were still arriving. The researcher went with Group A again since it was the same route and the same tour guide, Cara, as the first tour. This allows for a direct comparison of the two tours to identify any differences between them. The other tour guide, Ruby, brought up the rear of the group. Cara told the same history and stories at the same stops with one omission on the second tour. On the first tour, Cara mentioned that on the second, third and fourth floors TB patients shared a room with a bed was placed on either side against the walls, but that there also were smaller, single rooms across the hall from these rooms that were reserved for those who were dying, the idea being that they could be separated from everyone else so that they could pass away with dignity (See Figure 6). Cara omitted this story as we passed the single rooms on the second tour.

The third Waverly Hills Ghost Tour was on Saturday, December 17, 2022, from 8:00 p.m. to 10 p.m. The number of visitors was smaller: only thirty-nine people took the tour, including the researcher. While all the other Waverly tours the researcher attended only required light dressing for cooler weather (e.g., pants, jacket), this tour required thick, heavy clothing (e.g., coat, gloves, hat). The low temperatures might explain why there were considerably fewer visitors on this tour than on any other Waverly ghost tours.

For this tour, the researcher went with Group B, which had eighteen members. This tour had two guides; Hope was the leader, while Emma was in the rear. As mentioned above, both Group A and B go to the same stops taking different routes. There are roughly thirteen stops on Waverly's paranormal tour. Group A's route starts in the second-floor cafeteria (meet up room), then goes to the chapel, porch area/double occupant rooms, hallway/ mini kitchenette area, and sunbathing room which are all on the second floor. The tour then goes upstairs to the third floor to the hallway but pauses only for a short time before going up to the fifth floor. After a stop in front of room 502, the tourists are allowed to roam the fifth floor and take flash photography. The next stop is the fourth floor, where the group conducts paranormal experiments before being taken into the operating room. The group descends to the ground floor, to visit the morgue, electroshock therapy room/ hallway, the body chute hallway, and the body chute itself. This is one of the most popular sites – if not the main attraction – of the tours. The steep chute, which is more than 500 feet long and starts in one zip code and ends in another, is a long ramp with steps along the side and was originally used to bring in materials when building the sanatorium but was later used as a discreet way to transport corpses of deceased patients from the building so the living patients would not see them and become despondent about their own health. The tour ends by delivering the visitors to the gift shop. Group B starts by descending to the ground floor to go directly to the body chute stops. The group then returns to the second floor and takes the same route that Group A took, but the last stop of the tour is the morgue and then the gift shop. Both tours include substantial stair climbing, with Group B having more climbing than Group A, so these tours are not suitable for those who are physically challenged.

The fourth Waverly Hills Ghost Tour was on Friday, December 30, 2022, from 8:00 p.m. to 10 p.m. This group was larger than the third tour, with forty-eight visitors including the

researcher. Twenty-three tourists were in Group A, the researcher's group. Emma was the leader for this group, while other guide at the rear was Jenny. The only difference in the fourth tour was that the exterior doors on the fifth floor were opened so tourists could go outside on the balcony when there was free time to look around the fifth floor; during the other tours, the doors remained closed and sealed up with black plastic, apparently to keep out the wind.

While the tours at New Harmony, the Willard Library, and Waverly Hills differed in many respects due to the history and purpose of each site, there were similarities about the ways that the tour guides presented the material and established a sense of authenticity for their visitors. The means of creating authenticity is the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Analysis

Although ghost tourism is on the lighthearted end of dark tourism, tourists also may treat ghost tours with some degree of seriousness. Unlike most heritage tours, which focus almost exclusively on education, ghost tours also include an experiential component that is central to meeting the expectations of the tourists. People who take ghost tours may accept the idea that ghosts exist and are seeking validation through personal experience. Ghost tours also can be a safe place to share ideas about the paranormal that they might be reluctant to admit elsewhere. Skeptics may take ghost tours to look for evidence to prove or disprove the existence of spirits, while those who take the tour out of curiosity or for fun may expect to experience something out of the ordinary. Consequently, tour guides must establish the authenticity of the experience to meet the needs of the guests. Because paranormal phenomena rarely perform on cue, tour guides can take different approaches to establishing authenticity. However, the characteristics of the site may influence the way that this is established.

Paranormal experiences, whether first-hand or recounted as the experiences of others, are a vital component of the ghost tour experience, a key element which distinguishes the ghost tour from a historical or heritage tour. Most of the tour guides in this study validated tourists' belief in ghosts by stating their own paranormal beliefs. A second way to establish authenticity is for tour guides to base their narratives on reliable sources and inform the tourists about those sources. Tour guides also established the authenticity of the experience was by describing their personal experiences or those of others. And finally, all the tour sites included activities which involved the tourists in the experience.

Sharing Personal Beliefs

To some extent, the status of the tour guides within the organization may be related to the level of ghost belief expressed by them during the tours. The New Harmony tours charged a fee, and some of the tour guides may have been paid employees. However, even for those who were not, tourists could tip the guides at the end of the tour, and Tina mentioned that they used the tips to rent different New Harmony structures to conduct further paranormal research. This suggests that the New Harmony guides were actively involved in ghost investigations, even if at least one of them was not yet convinced that supernatural entities existed. Ryan claimed that he is a skeptic, but open to the possible existence of the paranormal. On the other end of the spectrum, Jade not only believes in ghosts, she claimed to be a clairaudient, a person also who can hear spirits. Tina stated that she believes in ghosts but reported no psychic abilities.

The Willard Library ghost tours were free (although preregistration was required), and all of the tour guides are employed by the library as librarians or library assistants. Although there was a tip jar available at the end of the tour, these funds apparently went to the tour guides for their own personal use. Unlike the tour guides at New Harmony, none of those at the library mentioned that they engaged in paranormal research, although Amanda asserted that she believes in the paranormal. She declared that all of the Willard library ghosts are friendly poltergeists, and whether or not the other tour guides expressed belief in the supernatural, all of them appeared to accept the possibility of the existence of a haunting in the library, since they all agreed that any ghosts that inhabit the library are friendly.

The Waverly Hills tour guides were all part-time or full-time employees of the site and given that paranormal investigation is the primary attraction for Waverly Hills, an interest in the supernatural likely attracted these employees. The guides quite openly expressed their belief in

the paranormal and noted that in the course of their jobs they frequently encountered unusual or ghostly phenomena.

Credibility of Sources

Another way for tour guides to establish the authenticity of the experience was to make it clear to the tour group that they relied on credible sources of information or use accounts verified by experts. For example, at New Harmony, Ryan, who had only one unusual experience himself and expressed his skepticism about the paranormal, told his group on the Original Tour that the historical information the guides provided came from local historians and museums. When tour guide Jade came to the Fauntleroy House, rumored to be the most haunted house in New Harmony, she told the group that the first documented ghost in the house was seen in the mid-nineteenth century as was reported in the book *The Old Fauntleroy Home*. This account quoted the granddaughter of the woman who first experienced the ghost, saying that her grandmother had told her of the ghost passing her on the stairs one evening.²⁷⁶

The New Harmony guides also included stories about paranormal investigations using scientific equipment that seemed to indicate the presence of ghosts. Tina mentioned how on one tour, the tour guides used a Structured Light Sensor Camera System (SLS Camera) which emits an invisible infrared laser grid that maps objects within its field, including those that are not visible to the human eye. Paranormal investigators believe that the software interprets ghosts as stick figures, and on this particular tour near the Green Gothic house, the camera revealed a short

²⁷⁶ Author Ross F. Lockridge reported this story in *The Old Fauntleroy Home* as told by Caroline Dale Snedeker, whose mother, Nina Owen, was born in the Fauntleroy house in 1849. According to Snedeker, her grandmother Caroline Neef Owen told her that shortly before Nina's birth, she was going up the staircase in the early evening when "the ghost of the house (a little old woman) passed her coming down." *The Old Fauntleroy Home* (New Harmony: n.p., 1939): 107.

stick figure reaching out to touch a roughly five-foot tall female tourist; this figure was not visible to the tourists. The smaller stature of the stick figure suggested that this was a ghostly little girl that followed the tours. When the female tourist reached out her hand, the stick figure jumped up and away from the female tourist. Jade also revealed that they had captured the little girl on an audio recorder.

Tina also described her participation in an investigation of the haunting associated with the Murphy Auditorium which is used for musical and theatrical performances and is one of the stops on the Dark Tour. The group used a variety of different devices, such as a Spirit Box, a REM pod, and dowsing rods in an effort gather evidence about the haunting.²⁷⁷ The group had the most success using the dowsing rods which appeared to move in answer to questions; they suggested that there were several different spirits present, including Gus, a former maintenance man who was said to have died in an accident on site. Tina said that in response to specific questions, Gus indicated that he had fun scaring people, enjoyed watching women change in the dressing room, and liked to watch the plays. She reported that as the investigation progressed, a tourist claimed to have been touched by unseen hands, and Tina said that she told the ghost not to touch the tourists. Despite Tina's request, a different tourist was touched and when that person used the dowsing rods, they found out that it was Gus who touched their shoulders and he did so to get their attention. When asked "are you still standing by me right now?" Gus gave an affirmative response through the rods and indicated that he was happy to be next to that tourist. Tina also reported that during that investigation, the group heard footsteps and knocks on the dressing room wall, and they saw shadows moving on the wall.

²⁷⁷ A spirit box is a device that rapidly scans AM or FM radio frequencies; paranormal investigators believe that spirits will cause the scanning to stop on specific words to convey a message. A REM pod is a proximity sensor that is a small device with a short antenna; if any object comes within the range of the antenna, the device lights up and a tone sounds.

While Willard Library tour guides did not specifically identify their sources of information, the fact that they all work in the library itself, coupled with the Willard Library's extensive archives on local history and the building of the library and its subsequent history, indicates their credibility. When it came to reported ghostly activity, the tour guides enhanced the credibility of the claims by referring to investigations of the building undertaken by individuals or groups in the paranormal community. While all the tour guides mentioned the visit by a psychic medium in the 1980's, only one guide mentioned that this was the well-known demonologists Lorraine and Ed Warren, whose work was the basis for *The Conjuring* movie series. Beginning in the 1990's, the library each year allowed one group of legitimate paranormal researchers to conduct an overnight investigation free of charge in October; according to Arrika Taylor, adult services librarian, there was a ten-year waiting list.²⁷⁸ All the librarians also discussed the investigation conducted by the popular paranormal organization TAPS (The Atlantic Paranormal Society) for the television show *Ghost Hunters* in 2006. Even though their findings were meager, the fact that this well-known group investigated the library added credibility to the reports of a haunting.

Providing a natural explanation for "ghostly" phenomena can be a way of establishing credibility by showing that the evidence is being evaluated for alternative, non-supernatural explanations. At the Willard Library, Amanda did this when discussing the sound of footsteps on the stairway. She claimed to have personally experienced this, saying it sounded like someone was following her up the stairs. While not entirely dismissing the phantom footsteps, she pointed out that the library is an old building with wooden floors, and the sound of footsteps might not

²⁷⁸ Personal email correspondence with Arrika Taylor, Adult Services Librarian, August 4, 2023. The investigations were suspended during the pandemic, and it is uncertain as of this writing whether they will be revived.

have a paranormal explanation: it could be creaking wood caused by her own weight on the stairs.

The Waverly Hills tour guides all noted that their information for the tours was gathered and fact-checked by local historians and the Waverly Hills Historical Society, and they all also debunked a story told about a specific haunting. According to legend, a nurse supposedly died on the fifth floor of Waverly Hills, and the four tours taken by this researcher all recounted different “facts” about the death. One guide stated that a nurse was found by a maintenance man hanging from a light fixture or pipe in front of room 502. According to this version, the nurse had an affair with one of the doctors and became pregnant. The doctor attempted an abortion, but complications arose, and the nurse died; to save himself, the doctor made it look like the nurse completed suicide by hanging herself. In another version, the tour guides said the nurse hung herself when she found out she was pregnant from her affair with one of the doctors. In a third version, the nurse was not found hanging but fell to her death from the fifth-floor balcony after she was pushed, lost her balance, or willingly jumped. On each tour, however, after recounting a version of the tale, each guide stated that the death of the nurse is a myth. When members of the Waverly Hills Historical Society investigated this tale, there was no evidence of a nurse dying during this time or in these ways at Waverly. They further discovered that the maintenance man who reportedly discovered the nurse and cut her down would have been roughly nine years old at the time the events were said to occur.

Accounts of Personal Experiences

Because paranormal phenomena do not appear on command, the closest many visitors on a ghost tour will come to a supernatural experience is to hear about firsthand experiences in the

location where they occurred. All of the tour guides at each location either recounted their own paranormal experiences at the site or described the personal ghostly experiences of others.

The New Harmony tour guides gave first-hand accounts of their own experiences and recounted other accounts told to them by their colleagues. Ryan, who was unsure whether ghosts existed or not, noted that he had one experience that was unusual, although not necessarily proof of ghosts. He said he was in one of the downtown shops when a heavy picture frame that was securely attached to the wall dropped onto his hand; the unusual feature of this experience is that it happened when the conversation turned to ghosts. Believers Tina and Jade described their more extensive paranormal experiences on the New Harmony Dark Tour. This included stories about Gus in the Murphy Auditorium, and while Tina shared her experiences in the auditorium during a paranormal investigation, all the tour guides recounted stories of various people experiencing cold spots, seeing an apparition that appears in the control booth, hearing footsteps, and nearly bumping into Gus's spirit in the lady's dressing room.

Jade provided accounts of the personal experiences other tour guides had in the Fauntleroy home, which included phenomena ranging from doors slamming in the tour guides' faces to the feeling of someone rushing past them. Some reported being pushed or shoved while sitting or standing on the stairs and the feeling of being watched. Furthermore, tour guides have also heard someone playing the harp (Mary Emily, the last Fauntleroy to own the home, played the harp; see Figure 2). Jade reported that the employee charged with caring for the Fauntleroy home told her that on one occasion, the employee drove past the house and noticed that the front door was open. When she went to investigate, she could hear people having a conversation upstairs, even though no tours are allowed on the second level, and no one was supposed to be in the house. When she went upstairs, there was no one there or anywhere else in the house. She

added that the next-door neighbor claimed that he could hear piano music playing coming from the house, even though the piano had not been tuned in several decades; he also said he heard gospel music coming from the house in the middle of the night.

Jade also reported on her personal experiences during a paranormal investigation of the Fauntleroy House. She and the other members of the team experienced a phantom odor which smelled like baking bread, and they heard footsteps and voices on the second floor. The building's alarm unexpectedly went off during paranormal investigations but was not tripped at other times when people were in the building. Her team also used a spirit box in an effort to communicate with Mary Emily Fauntleroy, whose spirit is thought to haunt the location. Since some believe extensive renovations angered Mary Emily's spirit, investigators asked Mary Emily if she was happy with the changes. Jade told the tour group that the responses on the spirit box indicated that Mary Emily hated the renovations, but Jade also noted that Mary Emily said that she liked her. Jade believed this is because the New Harmony ghost tours always make a point to stop outside the Fauntleroy home and tell Mary Emily's story. However, Jade added that some tour guides would not tell Jade about their own paranormal incidents that they found frightening, worried that whatever they experienced would return.

On the Willard Library tours, all the tour guides except Jill supported the authenticity of the alleged haunting by recounting their personal experiences with ghostly phenomena (Jill claimed that she had no such experiences). Nevertheless, all also described the phenomena their colleagues and library patrons have experienced. According to Amanda, she and others have felt the touch of an unseen force, witnessed chairs moving on their own, found the elevator call button constantly being pushed on unoccupied floors, heard human whistling in the elevator, seen books flying off shelves or across rooms, heard or seen constant automatic toilet flushing,

even after the sensor had been changed in an effort to correct the problem, and smelled phantom odors. Other reported phenomena include cold spots, the scent of “old lady” perfume, hair touching, a woman heard sobbing, unseen hands playing with dangling earrings, books falling on their own, phantom footsteps, batteries in electronics suddenly dying despite having been fully charged, a feeling of heaviness in the air, and the sounds of a manual type writer on the second floor even though no such machine was in the building at the time. Some report the feeling of being pressed – not pushed – by something unseen on the stairs. A projector that is operated by electronic switches to drop down from the ceiling continues to do this on its own, even when it is unplugged.

Amanda told her own personal account of a ghostly encounter during her first year as a Willard library employee. She was standing on a stool pulling books from the top shelves, when she suddenly noticed the strong scent of what she called “old lady” perfume that filled the spot she was in. Only one male patron was in her vicinity, and Amanda recounted how she proceeded to do a “drive by sniff test” on the male patron to see if the aroma came from him. She could smell his aftershave or deodorant, but it was nothing like the perfume she had smelled earlier. After the male patron left, Amanda went around to smell the area and had noticed that the perfume scent now appeared in different spots. It was no longer by the bookshelves but had moved near the large decorative columns in the room. Amanda said her experience was confirmed when her superior also smelled the perfume, which made its way over to the mystery section and then was no longer there after a couple of minutes. Despite the unusual behavior of this phantom smell, Amanda pointed out that she could not prove that this was not the result of the aroma flowing through the air vents and playing tricks on her.

Jill, a no-nonsense librarian that has been with Willard library for over twenty years, claims to have had no first-hand experiences. Nevertheless, she mentioned a story that was not told by Amanda or Leah about batteries in equipment draining and recordings not working when in the children's room. Jill recounted an instance in which a former director of the Willard Library was giving an interview to a local reporter that was interrupted by a shriek from the children's room. He immediately investigated and found that every fourth book or so was pulled out at an angle; the library assistant who discovered it had screamed and had a look of horror on her face when the director arrived. She had seen books shelved normally minutes earlier, and no one else had entered the room between that time and the moment she found them pulled out. After this incident, the interview with the director continued in the children's room, but later that night, the reporter called the library with the news that all of the footage shot in the children's room – that is, after the books were pulled out – was gone. It either had been erased or had never been recorded in the first place, even though the equipment had worked normally in the other room.

At Waverly Hills, all the tour guides recounted personal experiences as well as those told to them by others. Of all the tour guides at the site, Cara told the most detailed stories of seemingly paranormal incidents that she and others had experienced. She said that there is a saying in Waverly Hills: "If you mess with the spirits, they will mess back. Be respectful and the spirits will be respectful back to you." One story she shared was of a tourist who had been mocking the ghosts and tour guide all night, claiming that everything had been faked. When the tour reached the operating room, a heavy door slammed shut near this tourist, who promptly turned white as a sheet and left.

Cara also said that she and other people have seen unexplained shadow figures and the creature known as “the creeper.” Shadow people are intensely black figures similar to a shadow, but with no physical person or object present that could be casting it. Cara reported that the creeper is said to be a specific shadow person that some claim is a demonic force from a different realm; its name comes from the fact that it creeps on the floor on all fours, its arms and legs appearing to be excessively long and crudely twisted. When it is nearby, people are said to have an overwhelming feeling of doom. Cara said it has been reported to charge at people, hopping up on the ceiling or walls just before it reaches the person. Sometimes it has been seen creeping along the ceiling, though this is rarely witnessed by ghost hunters and tourists. Cara suggested that it was feeding off the energy and trauma of the remaining souls in the sanatorium.

Cara also provided an account of interactions with the spirits of sisters Audrey and Louise. Audrey had gotten tuberculosis twice and stayed at Waverly Hills both times before being released. However, her sister Louise died at Waverly Hills. Paranormal investigators have reportedly captured the sound of someone saying “Audrey?” Cara described how one of these investigations took place a little after the lockdown in 2020; in this case, the researchers captured a response. After an unseen person said “Audrey?” the group captured another voice saying, “Yes Louise?” Cara believes that this indicates the possibility that Audrey was finally reunited with her sister.

The researcher witnessed an instance of a Waverly Hills tour guide having a new experience and then adding it to a subsequent tour. At the point that the researcher’s tour group was in the body chute, some members of the group ventured down the chute while others stayed at the top of the stairs with the rear ghost tour guide, Emma. Those at the top of the stairs heard a sound similar to a doorknob being jiggled, as if someone trying to open the exterior door in a

nearby hallway. Emma went to investigate, found nothing and returned to the group moments later. Although there are possible explanations for this sound, such as staff or trespassers trying to enter the building, Emma saw no one when she investigated the sound, and she added this personal experience to a tour she led the following week which this researcher attended.

Making Tours Experiential

Involving tourists in activities during the ghost tour was a feature of some, but not all, of the tours studied, but the type of visitor participation varied by location. At New Harmony, these activities enhanced the experience for visitors in both the original and the dark side tours. For example, all the New Harmony tours turned their flashlights off in the Harmonist cemetery to show how dark it was at night in that location, and possibly to heighten the feeling of the uncanny. However, the original tours did not include any visitor participation or experiments that tried to contact spirits; possibly this was to offer a less frightening experience for visitors who want to learn about ghosts but not participate in efforts to contact them. It was only on the dark side tour that the guide turned off the flashlights in the Roofless Church and drew the tourists' attention to a piece of artwork that was illuminated by a small light; with the flashlights off, a demonic face/bull shape silhouette could be discerned in the shadows (see figure 8). The dark side tours also included efforts by both the tour guides and tourists to contact spirits by using dowsing rods. Whether the tourists or the guides were using the rods, the group was focused on what the rods were doing, or were thinking of questions to ask, such as "are there children here," "are you a woman," "are you [insert New Harmony historical name]," "do you like it here?" For each dark side tour, the visitors were fully involved in this paranormal investigation, which made this a much more experiential excursion than the original tour.

The Willard Library set an appropriate mood with Halloween decorations and a display of supernatural and horror books available for check out. During the tours, two of the guides showed photos that reportedly captured ghosts in the library, but the guides performed no kind of paranormal experiments, and most tours had no guest participation. However, on one tour, the guide did involve a member of the group in a demonstration. Every guide told the story of a maintenance worker who noticed that the light bulbs were not lit on the chandelier hanging over the second-floor stairway (see figure 9). Fetching a ladder, he investigated and discovered that all the lightbulbs had been unscrewed just enough for them to be turned off. On three tours, the guides simply pointed out that the chandelier was hung so high that it could only be reached by a ladder, but on one tour, the guide asked a taller person in the group to try to touch the chandelier. The person who volunteered was over six feet tall, and he could barely reach the bottom of the lightbulb itself. This served to emphasize how difficult it would be for anyone to surreptitiously unscrew the lightbulbs and suggested that the mischievous Grey Lady spirit must have been the culprit.

Waverly Hills ghost tours were the most experiential with each tour including time for guests to explore on their own. Most notably, each tour stopped on the fifth floor to give tourists five minutes to walk around by themselves, and they were encouraged to take flash photos to see if they could capture visual anomalies or other evidence of paranormal activity. Immediately after this activity, the tourists went to the fourth floor, reportedly the most haunted location on the property. Here, flashlights, cellphones, smart/digital watches or any other light source is prohibited; tour guides state that this is to allow everyone's eyes to adjust to the darkness and allow tourists to see the area better. At the same time, it is a way of subtly heightening expectations for the experiment to follow. After a quick story about what supposedly lurked in

the darkness and what past visitors or employees had witnessed on the fourth floor, the tourists were divided into two groups: one headed to the left wing with one of the guides and the remaining group accompanied the other guide to the right wing. In each group, the guide asked for someone to participate in an experiment, and after choosing one person from the various volunteers, the guide asked them if they “are okay with being touched?” On each tour, the volunteer said “yes.” Then, that volunteer was told to walk forty to fifty feet down the dark hallway, stop, turn to look at the tour group and stay still. During this experiment, the visitors were encouraged to state aloud what they saw; on some tours, they were asked to flutter their eyes to help them see something. At this point, the tour guide, or less often one of the tourists, would ask the group if the volunteer – who remained motionless – appeared to be getting bigger or taller. The power of suggestion may have been at work here because other members of the group agreed that the volunteer appeared to grow larger; others said that they thought it looked like the person was walking towards the group. The volunteer was also asked to describe their experiences, and for most tours, they reported something unusual, such as seeing something moving at the edge of their vision, sensing something in the room next to them, describing a feeling as if someone was holding their hand, or experiencing the feeling that someone was behind them.²⁷⁹ While this experiment may demonstrate the power of suggestion, utilize an illusion created by shadows and light, or be evidence of actual paranormal experiences, there is no doubt that, other than their visit to the infamous body chute, this experience was the one that tourists most eagerly anticipated.

²⁷⁹ During Kinsella’s time with paranormal researchers at Waverly Hills, a similar experiment was conducted: another team member felt chills and reportedly sensed a threatening presence behind them. A few minutes later, several members of the group claimed they witnessed a towering, shadowy figure trailing the team member who noted the threatening presence. One of the ghost hunters asked that member to walk down the hallway and then come back to the group. As the member was coming back to the group, both the ghost hunter’s and Kinsella claimed to witness, “a large, black mass looming behind him that seemed to be well over seven feet tall.” Kinsella, *Legend-Tripping Online*, 39.

Summary

All three sites enhanced the experiential aspect of the tours by various methods designed to support the authenticity of the experience. Most of the tour guides shared their paranormal beliefs with the visitors, providing them with a safe space for them to explore their own beliefs. Guides at New Harmony and Waverly Hills plainly stated their sources of information, showing that these sources were credible; at the Willard Library, the credibility of the sources was inherent, since the tours were led by professional librarians and library assistants. All of the tour guides shared personal paranormal experiences, either their own or those told to them by others. Finally, most of the tours had some form of tourist participation in activities or experiments.

There were some clear differences between the tours given at the different sites. Unlike Waverly Hills, the Willard Library and New Harmony did not have tragedy as a central feature in their histories, and their tour guides took a somewhat different approach. While guides at all three locations were upbeat in their tours and added humor here and there, the tours at the Willard Library and New Harmony more heavily emphasized the history of the locations than the tours than Waverley Hills, giving heritage equal or greater weight than the paranormal. The Waverley Hills tours included history as well, but they emphasized the paranormal aspect much more than the tours at the Willard Library and New Harmony.

There was a slight but noticeable difference between volunteer tour guides and paid employees when it came to the way they told their stories and what they included in them. The free ghost tours guided by volunteers at the Willard Library were less than an hour and took place entirely within the building. To some extent they seemed more rushed, possibly a consequence of having multiple tours scheduled in an evening that required the earlier tours to

end by a specific time. The tours were historically educational, but the volunteers had a script that most of them memorized, although they did put their own spin on the tales. While not all tour guides made the same stops within the building, the stories they told at the locations were very similar.

The New Harmony and Waverly Hills tours differed from the Willard Library because they charged a fee for the tours, and they required extensive movement exposed to the outside elements. Most of the tour guides at these locations were paid employees who regularly gave tours, unlike the Willard Library volunteer tour guides who work as librarians. None of the librarians expressed an interest in paranormal investigating, but New Harmony and Waverly Hills guides made it clear they participated in such investigations. These factors likely contributed to the impression that they appeared more interested and invested in both the paranormal and historical tales they told than the guides at the Willard Library. While the guides at New Harmony and Waverly Hills clearly had shared knowledge about the sites, at neither location did they appear to follow a written script. However, the tours followed regular patterns as they made their way through the sites, and most of the guides made the same stops at New Harmony and Waverly Hills and provided similar information at each stop. But because many of the tour guides at these locations had participated in paranormal investigations at the site, they had personal experiences to share with the tours during their presentations, something that was largely absent from the tours at the Willard Library.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

For at least the last two hundred years, human interest in ghosts has suggested that people not only want to understand paranormal phenomena, they want to experience it as well – although in most cases, from a safe distance, such as through participating in seances, attending magic lantern or phantasmagorical shows, seeing ghosts in the movies, or visiting places alleged to be haunted, either vicariously through paranormal investigation television shows or by visiting the sites themselves. Thus, ghost tours are the modern incarnation of the human pursuit of engagement with ghosts.

Accounts of hauntings derive from the history and character of their location, and in the case of New Harmony, the Willard Library, and Waverly Hills Sanatorium, the tours at each of them reflect the character of those sites. New Harmony is one of the oldest towns in the region, and the guides recognize that heritage tourism is a major revenue source for the community. Tour guide Jade noted that New Harmony relies heavily on tourism and special events to bring in funds for the town. Although the historic buildings and sites have been jointly managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the University of Southern Indiana, the rest of the town benefits from the revenue generated by tourism.

The original ghost tours at New Harmony appear to have been crafted to appeal to heritage tourists who are also interested in the paranormal; there are daytime tours available for those who are interested only in the history of New Harmony and not its hauntings. While ghost tour guides include a substantial amount of information about the history of each site, they also incorporate elements of the paranormal. The history, which clearly is based on credible sources, provides authenticity for the tourists, while the tour guide's expressed beliefs and personal

accounts of paranormal experiences help the tourists get closer to the paranormal in a safe environment. While New Harmony may have had episodes of violence in its past, none of the hauntings described in either the original or the dark side tour appear vengeful or violent. While “Gus,” the spirit said to haunt the Murphy auditorium, allegedly died through an accident on the site, the activity ascribed to his ghost is mostly playful and typical of paranormal phenomena: footsteps, a feeling of being watched, occasionally being touched, and a few brief sightings. Similarly, the story Mary Emily Fauntleroy, who was ousted from her home in life and is said to be unhappy with renovations made to the house since her death, emphasizes her connection to the town’s history and her love for the location.

It seems that the original tour is intended to introduce visitors to the ghostly heritage of New Harmony in a genuine, yet non-frightening way. None of the original tours included any paranormal experiments, which to some people may be more unsettling than simply hearing ghostly tales. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the original tours are more family-friendly since they do not include paranormal experiments which younger children might find more frightening.²⁸⁰ However, there were few children on the New Harmony original tour and none on the dark side tour.

At least in part, the New Harmony dark side tours appear to be responding to the public interest in paranormal investigation, since they include using dowsing rods in an attempt to contact spirits. The tourists not only ask questions while the tour guides use the rods, but they are also allowed to use the rods themselves. It is likely that many tourists have never participated in a paranormal investigation, and this is a simple introduction to it which may be less alarming

²⁸⁰ Dr. Tamara Hunt, professor of history at the University of Southern Indiana, reports that she has been contacted by families who ask if the dark side tours would be too frightening for children under the age of 13. Personal communication, 9/24/2022.

than using other paranormal investigation devices. Spirit boxes may produce frightening voices or words, or an SLS camera may indicate the physical presence of invisible beings, but the dowsing rods simply move back and forth (if they move at all). Skeptics in the group may believe that the person holding the rods is intentionally or unintentionally moving them rather than a paranormal entity; even believers may accept this explanation as a way of dealing safely with evidence of the paranormal that they might otherwise find too terrifying. Yet even while the dark side tours include greater experiential activities, they also include substantial historical material, a clear acknowledgement of the most basic attraction of the site: its unusual history. New Harmony is a tourist location because of its unusual heritage as the site of two communal societies, and because of the large number of surviving early nineteenth-century buildings, which means that historical authenticity is important in the ghost tours. This is especially true since tourists may plan the ghost tour as the last activity for a day spent enjoying the other historical sites and amenities of the town.

The Willard Library also emphasizes history in its tours, but the guides meld that with the paranormal claims about the building. The fact that the guides are working librarians and library assistants employed by the library adds authenticity to their narratives about its history. While not all the guides claim to have had paranormal experiences themselves, they enhance the credibility to claims of a haunting when they recounted the experiences of others, described a professional paranormal investigation that took place there, and showed images from the “ghost cams” that operate continuously on the site.

While the Willard Library ghost tours used strategies similar to those used in New Harmony and Waverly Hills to assert authority and credibility to enhance the experience of their visitors, it differed in important ways from the other two locations. It was the only tour that took

place indoors protected from the environment, and it was the only one of the three sites that did not charge a fee for the tour. It was the only tour that was led entirely by volunteers who were also employed by the site in another capacity that was completely separated from the paranormal. Unlike New Harmony and Waverly Hills, which rely heavily on tourism, the Willard Library has a separate and distinct purpose that has nothing to do with leisure travel: it is a public library that serves the local community. Nevertheless, the Willard Library is best known outside the community as a haunted location, a reputation which has been enhanced by the TAPS investigation in 2006 and the installation of the “ghost cams” which provide continuous real-time images available through the internet.

The tourists who take the Willard Library ghost tours are likely to be seeking a mild paranormal experience as part of an evening’s entertainment. The Grey Lady and the phenomena associated with her (perfume, cold spots, books and chairs moving on their own, electrical anomalies) are not violent or threatening. Furthermore, while the tours take place in a building nearly 150 years old, the interior is brightly lighted; this is a distinct contrast to the Waverly Hills and New Harmony tours which are led by guides with flashlights. Because of these reasons, but also possibly because this was the only one of the tours that was free to the public, the visitors on the Willard Library tours included more young people and even children.

Unlike the other two sites, the Willard Library does not offer its ghost tours as a profit-making venture, although ghost tourists are encouraged to leave a tip for the tour guide. This is not to say that the library does not benefit from the stories about the Grey Lady: one popular item among the merchandise sold by the library is a Grey Lady t-shirt. However, the most important benefit from the Grey Lady is the fact that the interest in the haunting draws people to the library who might not otherwise have visited it. The building’s primary purpose is as a working library

which is well-known for its genealogical and heritage records; it is ranked third in the state of Indiana for this type of resource. Many people visit the library solely to use these collections, and during the ghost tours, the guides impart this information to the tourists, possibly stirring their interest in returning for a visit to research their ancestry.

The tour guides stress that spirits in the building are friendly, although this seems somewhat at odds with the legend that the Grey Lady is the vengeful ghost of Willard Carpenter's daughter Louise, who is angry about her father giving the bulk of his fortune to the library rather than to his children. However, the librarians who led the ghost tours uniformly reject this identification. Even though the idea of a vengeful ghost who is haunting the site that robbed her of her inheritance may appeal to some people, this might not suit the library's situation. If people believed that the ghost was malevolent or violent, it might discourage them from using the library. On the other hand, the image of a quaint and harmless specter in the library helps to raise public awareness of the institution and may encourage people to visit. Further, it attracts ghost tourists who might not otherwise have come to the building, and the fact that the tours are led by librarians and library assistants gives the Willard Library a chance to showcase its history, its holdings, and its services to people who might otherwise be unaware of them.

Although the tour guides often used a lighthearted tone and injected humor, the fact that the library is a place with a serious mission for the community is undoubtedly a factor that plays a role in the way the institution treats the alleged haunting. It clearly takes advantage of it to heighten public awareness of the library and attract potential patrons, particularly through the ghost tours and ghost cams, but attracting ghost tourists is not a primary intent of the organization. While it uses many similar strategies as New Harmony and Waverly Hills to

convey authenticity and credibility about the alleged haunting, the paranormal is only a minor part of the library's many and varied programs and activities.

Of the three sites in this study, Waverly Hills is most closely associated with the paranormal, and most of its tours focus on that aspect. Nevertheless, these tours, like those of New Harmony and the Willard Library, emphasized authenticity and credibility, with Waverly Hills guides noting that the history included in their presentations was confirmed by research. This was enhanced when they offered corrections to popular but erroneous stories about the hauntings, such as the nurse thought to have killed herself, was murdered or was accidentally killed. In addition, the guides themselves had participated in paranormal investigations and incorporated accounts of new phenomena as they occurred, such as the incident of the sound of a doorknob rattling experienced by this researcher in the body chute which was incorporated by the guide into a subsequent tour. Waverly Hills also offered the highest level of tourist participation; guests were given time to walk around the fifth floor and were encouraged to take flash photographs for the purpose of capturing paranormal phenomena. All the tours also included the experiment on the fourth floor where one tourist was sent down a hall to stand, and the others in the group were encouraged to look for visual changes in the person's appearance.

Each of these sites used similar strategies on their tours to establish authenticity and credibility and provide an experiential activity, but they employed different types of content to meet the expectations of the tourists. But the tourists themselves were likely different, selecting the tour that best met their needs and inclinations. Those who are interested in the paranormal but do not want a supernatural encounter may take ghost tours in New Harmony or at the Willard Library, and they likely fall into Blankshein's category of "paranormal enjoyer," those who have a mild interest in the supernatural and take ghost tours largely for entertainment. A different kind

of tourist is likely attracted to Waverly Hills, which is most famous as an actively haunted site – far more than either New Harmony or the Willard Library. Guests likely have higher expectations about seeing or experiencing paranormal phenomena and would be characterized by Blankshein as “paranormal thrill-seekers” who are seeking an actual experience with the supernatural. Waverly Hills was the only tour which specifically excluded children. All tourists had to be at least ten years old, and if they were under eighteen, they had to be accompanied by an adult. It seems likely that tourists anticipate and likely expect a paranormal experience.

The types of tourists at each site likely varied because of the nature of the site, and to a certain extent, the perceived nature of the paranormal activity. New Harmony and the Willard Library are historic sites first, and haunted locations second, and their visitors likely anticipate a mixture of the two themes on the tours. Visitors who take the New Harmony ghost tours may pair it with other activities in the town, including dining, shopping for antiques, or enjoying nature walks. Ghost tourists at the Willard Library likely make it the primary activity of the evening, but because these are only an hour in length, they may pair it with other activities, such as dining, to make a night out. Waverly Hills, however, distinctly appeals to the tourist intentionally seeking a paranormal experience; given its relatively secluded location and the length of the tour, participants likely make the ghost tour the focus of their travel.

Although the ghost tourists likely had different expectations of the tours, it appears from their reactions during the tours that these expectations were met. In all twelve tours attended by this researcher, the tourists were almost uniformly quiet and attentive during the presentations, as well as when they asked questions. For the original New Harmony tours, this may also have been due to the small size of the group. With only four or five tourists, the interactions with the tour guide were more personal and relaxed, and this may have encouraged the tourists to ask more

questions. They were clearly involved and engaged in the experience. While the dark side New Harmony tours had much larger groups of about twenty, the tourists were still quiet, respectful, and attentive; only a few of them asked questions which tended to come from the same people throughout the tour. However, during the dowsing rod experiments, the entire tour became fully engaged as they watched the rods move in answer to questions posed by members of the group.

New Harmony is a small town with no through highway; after dark, there is very little foot or automobile traffic. Despite the streetlights, the area is quite dark, and this increases the focus on the tour guide and decreases the possibility of distractions. The situation is quite different at the Willard Library, whose tours take place in a brightly lit building in the midst of a wide range of possible distractions. Each tour had about twenty participants, and while they were generally attentive to the guides, there is no question that some were occasionally distracted by the books, artwork and furnishings – possibly not an unwelcome diversion, if part of the purpose of the tours is to attract people to use the library. But the creaking floors and stairways sometimes made it difficult to hear the guide, and children on the tour often caused distractions as well. Like the Waverly Hills tour, the Willard Library ghost tour entails a significant amount of stair-climbing, and with the limited space on the staircases and within the library, the tours must often pause to allow all the group members to arrive at the next location. The fact that tours must finish in less than an hour means that the presentation sometimes seems rushed. However, tourists seemed satisfied with the experience, which after all, was at no cost to them.

The Waverly Hills tours also seemed to meet the expectations of the tourists. Even though each group usually had about twenty-five participants, the tourists remained quiet and attentive while the guide was talking or doing the experiment on the fourth floor. A small number of people asked questions, but there appeared to be proportionally fewer questions on

these tours than at New Harmony or the Willard Library, possibly because participants wanted to make sure they had time to see as much as possible in this enormous building and were reluctant to delay the tour. It is also possible that because these tourists may have been more intent on having a paranormal experience than those at the other two locations, their interest was focused on connecting the guide's narration with activity in the surrounding area.

The tour groups were especially attentive during the experiment on the fourth floor, where a member of the group went down a long hall to stand while others in the group focused intently on that person for signs of paranormal activity. Since no one was permitted to have any light source during the experiment, the darkness meant that they had few, if any, distractions. The guides, or occasionally members of the group, heightened the focus by asking others if they saw any unexplained changes or shadows in the area where the group member stood in the distance. Since it was somewhat difficult to see the person in the darkness, such experiences may be due more to the power of suggestion than to the paranormal.

All the tour guides made effective use of the environment to keep the tourists' attention. In each location, the tour guide took the group to a specific site then told a story or described a paranormal encounter connected with it. This enhanced the experience for the tourists, since they were able to see the location that was the focus of the story. The experience of hearing the story of "Gus" while being in the Murphy Auditorium in New Harmony adds a layer of authenticity to the account that is impossible to achieve at another place. Similarly, describing the sightings of the Grey Lady at the Willard Library in the exact locations where they occurred, or giving accounts of paranormal activities that took in Waverly Hills' body chute while standing in the chute allow the visitor to experience the stories in a unique way that combines the physical location with the story being told. Tour guides often made the most of this connection, telling

stories in a way that involved the specific history of the site, incorporating local lore that was attention-grabbing. To some extent in New Harmony, and to a much greater extent in Waverly Hills, the guides often incorporated accounts of tragedies to heighten the emotional appeal of their stories.

The ethnographic fieldwork used in this research updates and combines earlier and modern contexts of the consumption in ghost tourism. Beginning with a discussion of the literature and terminology used to discuss dark tourism and ghost tourism, this study turned to an historical overview of ghosts as subjects of the spectator's gaze. It then discussed the phenomenon of ghost tourism before focusing on the three ghost tour sites that were the subject of this investigation: New Harmony, Indiana, the Willard Library in Evansville, Indiana, and the Waverly Hills Sanatorium in Louisville, Kentucky. The study collected and analyzed data relating to ghost tourism gathered by attending the ghost tours and taking detailed notes on the tours' content. The observations were focused on the tour guides because of their influence on the ghost tourist's experience.

Although these sites were very different locations – a small town, a public library, and an abandoned medical facility – the tours used similar strategies to meet the expectations of the tourists. Tour guides established their credibility by stating their own beliefs about the paranormal and citing explicitly or inherently credible sources for their information. All of them included personal accounts of paranormal experiences associated with the site to build authenticity, and some of the tours used various kinds of group participation to engage the tourists more thoroughly in the activity.

At the same time, each location appeared to utilize its unique characteristics in the ghost tours. Both New Harmony and the Willard Library included historical information as a major

part of their tours. This is not surprising, given the fact that both locations were built in the nineteenth century and have well-established stories about their heritage that many tourists may want to hear, especially if these can provide an explanation for alleged hauntings. Waverly Hills's claim to fame stems not so much from its age but from its purpose. Although built as a place to care for desperate people, the numerous deaths that resulted there became the most prominent aspect of the site's history. As a result, ghost tourists to Waverly Hills want to hear about its history, but largely because of the basis it provides for the alleged hauntings.

As this study has shown, the public interest in ghosts and the interest in experiencing the paranormal from a safe space has existed for at least two hundred years, and it continues to grow in the twenty-first century. As sites attempt to meet the demand for new ghost tours and ghostly experiences, they would be well advised to follow some of the models provided by this investigation. First, identify the kind of audience likely to be interested in ghost tour; if they were people who would visit the site for heritage or other purpose, it is important to build upon that to create interest in a paranormal tour and provide authenticity for the stories that are told. For this reason, tour companies need to consider the overall purpose of their location and the way that the paranormal tour fits into it. Heritage sites, museums, libraries, universities and similar sites should consider whether too great an emphasis on the paranormal element might overshadow the other attractions or purposes of the site.

In the tours themselves, the tour guides need to establish their credibility by basing their narrative on reliable research and being open about their own paranormal beliefs. This can help to create a safe space for the tourists who might otherwise be reluctant to admit their own beliefs and reassure them about the authenticity of the experience. Describing personal experiences that took place in the locations the tour visits is a way of further adding authenticity to the

experience, while including activities that involve group members engages them more fully in the tour and meets the needs of those tourists who are seeking experiences as well as information. If the site is such that tourists who visit it are pleasurably anticipating interaction with the paranormal, then tours should consider making paranormal experiments part of the experience.

Whether or not ghost tourism continues to expand is yet to be seen. But for the present, a variety of types of tours and venues exist to meet the needs of the tourist regardless of their degree of interest in the paranormal.

Figures



Figure 1. *The Nightmare* by Henry Fuseli, 1781. Image accessed from <https://www-jstor-org.univsouthin.idm.oclc.org/stable/community.14492923>



Figure 2: Mary Emily Fauntleroy playing her harp in the Minerva Parlor of the Fauntleroy Home.
<https://www.facebook.com/newharmonyshs/photos/miss-mary-emily-fauntleroy-daughter-to-one-of-the-founding-members-of-the-minerv/840257763021275/>



Figure 3. *Willard Library Side View*. Picture by Alyssa Akin.



Figure 4. *The Bayard Room/Boardroom*. Picture by Alyssa Akin.



Figure 5. *Waverly Hill Sanatorium at Night*. Picture by Alyssa Akin.



Figure 6. *Waverly Hill Sanatorium Second Floor Double Occupant rooms*. Picture by Alyssa Akin.



Figure 7. Waverly Hill Sanatorium door with marks made by an axe. Arrow Pointing Towards Axe Scars. Picture by Alyssa Akin.



Figure 8. New Harmony's Roofless church art statue. Picture by Alyssa Akin.



Figure 9. Chandelier on the second landing of the Willard Library.
Picture by Alyssa Akin.

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