

OZAUKEE COUNTY TOURISM

Spooky Oz County spots to visit

For many of us, fall means apple cider, pumpkin pie and foliage. There are a lot of reasons to explore the historic towns that make up Ozaukee County ... and this is a great time of year for the boldest and bravest among us to do a little ghost hunting through some of our historic buildings!

If you're looking for something to get your heart racing this spooky season, pay a visit to some of Ozaukee County's most mysterious paranormal hot spots ... where that rustling sound behind you might not be the leaves ...

Cedarburg

Founded by German and Irish immigrants in the 1840s, Cedarburg's earliest homes and businesses clustered along Cedar Creek, where settlers took advantage of the fast moving creek for fresh water, jobs and power.

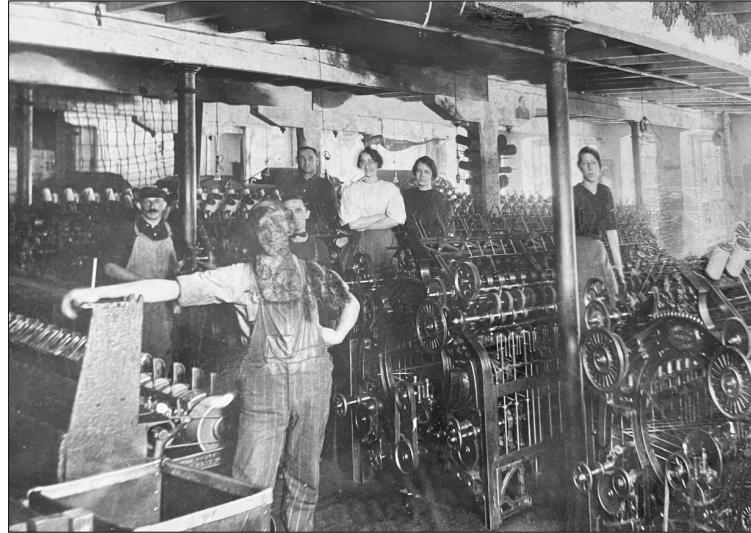
Two of the earliest structures built to harness that water power were the old mills that anchored the town to the north and south, and they still stand today.

The five-story Hilgen & Schroeder Grist Mill was built in 1855 on what is now the corner of Columbia and Portland roads, replacing a wooden structure that was built in 1844.

The mill is said to be haunted by a young jilted lover who hung himself in the loft. Lights frequently appear in the unoccupied fifth floor and it is said his spirit has caused spooked construction workers to walk off jobs.

The ghostly occupant frequently reminds visitors of his presence with cold spots, phantom shoulder taps and an occasional push.

Recently a visitor to Rebellion Brewing struck up a



Submitted photos

Top, in this photo taken in 1905, the worker in the front is seen, even though he died in an elevator accident in the 1860s. **Right**, the same man is believed to haunt the now-closed-off tunnel that runs beneath Bridge Road in Cedarburg.

conversation with one of the bartenders about the rumor of the building being haunted, and as the bartender turned to help another customer, an empty stool at the bar turned and pushed away from the bar by itself.

A few years after the grist mill, the Cedar Creek Settlement was built on the north end of town, on the corner of Washington Avenue and Bridge Road. This woolen mill was busting producer of yarns, blankets, flannels and socks for the Civil War.

The mill grew with demand for wool, and it was only a matter of time before tragedy struck, when a young worker fell to his death in an elevator shaft. The elevator shaft is still

there but closed to the public ... and some believe the worker is still in the building as well. He has appeared in a few photographs over the years, and store employees often report hearing footsteps overhead and in the staircases when they know the mill is empty.

Some people have reported hearing the sound of a woman or child crying, and many shop owners fall victim to harmless pranks like utensils being rearranged, photos being removed from their hooks and set on the floor to lean against the walls, quilts being stacked and folded overnight and rocking chairs moving by themselves.

Several spirits are said to haunt the building that now houses the Cedarburg History Museum and Visitor Center on Columbia Road. The building was at one time a boarding house, and three gentlemen who met their untimely deaths in the building are believed to haunt it, playing pranks and creeping out visitors with the occasional moan, groan or whisper.

Many of the buildings along Cedarburg's main street are on the Historic Registry, and several are believed to have supernatural guests. The Union House Cedarburg is housed in an 1883 building that used to be a hotel and livery. Previous tenants have heard footsteps, voices and doors open-

ing and closing, and some have reported seeing the reflection of a man with a mustache in one of the bathroom mirrors.

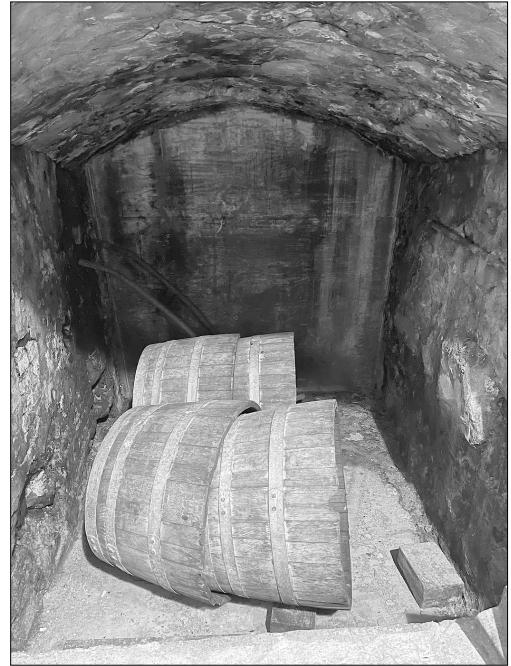
Most recently the spirit has teased its current roomies by turning the water faucets on and off (while someone is watching) and dropping an avocado from a top shelf onto an unsuspecting chef.

The Stagecoach Inn and 520 Social Stop dates back to 1853, a gorgeous stone Greek revival structure that earned its name as a stagecoach stop on the way from Milwaukee to Green Bay. Legend says the stage coach rolled into town at 5:20 p.m., which is how the micro pub on the first floor got its name.

In the late 1800s, a gentleman named George met his death at the hands of his wife's lover. But death didn't change George's kind ways — staff members sometimes report that laundry left unfolded at night is discovered folded in the morning, and guests sometimes report the sounds of chairs moving across the floor in unoccupied upper rooms.

Grafton

In late 1889 Milwaukee architects commissioned and designed a new 30-room business and tourist hotel for Grafton entrepreneur and businessman Edward Mueller. The new Mueller Hotel was completed in the summer of 1892 in the very



center of a vibrant community.

Weekly markets and other social gatherings happened in the shadow of this three-story masonry and timber building. There is a popular story that one guest of the hotel liked it so much that he never left — a ghost named Freddy.

As the story goes, Freddy was waiting for his bride-to-be at the hotel where they were to be married. Unfortunately, she never arrived, and Freddy hanged himself in one of the second-floor rooms.

When the building housed Ferrante's Restaurant, he was seen roaming the halls and employees reported that he even pushed one waitress down some stairs. The current owners haven't had any reports of visits from Freddy, however ... perhaps he moved out when the kitchen closed.

Port Washington

In 1995 when the major remodel of Memories Ballroom began, the north wall in the lounge area was removed to create a new door opening. During the removal, the original 1934 log cabin was found buried in the walls. It is the owner's belief that the builder Leo Weiler's ghost was released with the exposure of the cabin.

Since then strange happenings have occurred at the charmingly rustic ballroom,

such as things disappearing and reappearing days later, lights flashing without explanation and items falling from shelves when no one is near.

Port Washington is famous for its beautiful marina, breakwater and lighthouse. Some people claim to have felt a presence, or heard soft whispery sounds or unexplained metallic clanking, on the pier near the Port Washington breakwater and lighthouse.

In 1854, the ship Toledo sank in the waters off the lighthouse, taking the lives of more than 40 people. Supposedly residents tied themselves to a chain and waded into the water to try to save the passengers, to no avail. It's been suggested that the metallic clanking is the sound of the chain, and the presence and whispers are those of the passengers begging for help.

With Halloween right around the corner, a visit to some of these spots might be right up your alley!

But if ghost-hunting isn't your go-to travel motivator, fear not — these sites and many others throughout Ozaukee County offer enough culture, history and seasonal beauty to keep you firmly planted on this side of the spirit world, and coming back for more.

For information on these places and more, visit ozaukeetourism.com.



Submitted photo

Top, a photo on the wall of a cabin discovered during renovation of the Memories Ballroom in Port Washington reveals the signature of builder Leo Weiler. His ghost is believed to have been released with the exposure of the cabin.