



## Feature: Haunted Northern Michigan

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Graphic editor



### Horizon Books

The basement of Horizon Books in Petoskey was not a place some former employees cared to be outside store hours.

Rebeca Otto, a former employee at the bookstore for four years in the late 1990s and early 2000s, said there were two paranormal memories that recurred during her time there.

One was the smell of pipe-like or cigar-like smoke in the downstairs office area when there was no one around but her.

The second was the sound of children playing on the stairs that lead to the lower level.

"It sounded like kids jumping on the bottom of the stairs," she noted.

They would stop if told to, which is part of the reason Otto said she believed the sounds to come from children.

Jessica McGeorge, a former employee in the early 2000s, said she most frequently encountered the spirits when she would open the store.

On one occasion, McGeorge was running late for work. As she got out of her car and approached the back entrance, she looked toward the glass block window of the lower level.

"I saw two kids (one boy, one girl) looking out the window at me as if it was plain glass," she recalled. " ... Because I was kind of running late, I got a sense that they were waiting."

In addition to the stairs, the storage area was a place of activity. McGeorge said she always felt as if something was darting in and out of the room, curious as to what she was doing. And Otto had a closer encounter.

"I saw a full figure with a trench coat and a hat brush past me," she said with a shudder.

It seems that the activity hasn't stopped since McGeorge and Otto stopped working there in the early 2000s. Current employee Elisa Averill noted she's had two experiences about six months apart during her two and a half years at the shop.

She noted that while alone downstairs counting the till, she heard a little girl calling "Mommy" over and over and giggling.

And about six months previous, the lights were off as she was walking to go up the stairs. All of a sudden, she felt a burst of cool air on the back of her head, as if someone had walked up and blown her hair.

"My hair actually went around my face," she noted.

### Julienne Tomatoes

Some employees have refused to go into the basement of Julienne Tomatoes in Petoskey alone -- they say someone's watching them.

Co-owner Tom Sheffler can attest to that. He was in the basement one night working on lights to be hung in the shop, when he felt a presence.

"It definitely felt like someone was looking over my shoulder," he said.

That was enough for him for one night.

The building at 421 Howard St. was built in 1897 and has been home to many businesses in the past.

One of the previous identities of the main floor and basement was the Grain Train, which occupied the space from 1978 to 2002. (As a nod to both the Grain Train and the spirit, Julienne Tomatoes co-owner Julie Adams named one of the sandwiches they serve "Ghost of Grain Train.")

Gary Hammons with Grain Train recalled hearing many stories from when the shop was still on Howard Street.

"A lot of people said they saw the ghost of a female in the corner," he noted. " ... They saw the lady in like an old-time style dress."

Stacey, a former resident on the upper level of the building, said when she lived there several years ago her daughter, then 3, would see a woman in the back part of the apartment.

Stacey said she first noticed something when her daughter wouldn't sleep in her room. She kept coming out of the room, saying she couldn't sleep because the lady kept talking to her.

Walking into the room with her daughter, Stacey asked what lady she was talking about.

"The lady in the ceiling," came the answer.

Both these instances involving the lady in the dress happened in the same area of the building, although separated by floors.



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Former Waugoshance Lighthouse keeper John Herman enjoyed his drink and practical jokes. And, according to some, his interests have extended far beyond his death in 1894.

Waugoshance Lighthouse Preservation Society president Chris West said one night, as a lighthouse assistant keeper went into the tower to trim the wick, Herman snuck behind and locked the assistant in the tower. He'd had a few drinks already, and the assistant saw Herman fall off a platform into the water, never to be seen again.

West said after that time there were little incidences at the lighthouse located off Wilderness State Park in northern Emmet County, but nothing mean or vicious.

One repeating incident was recorded numerous times in logbooks by keepers succeeding Herman.

"Whenever they were falling asleep while the fog bell was being rung, they would always be woken up," West said.

This waking was by way of the chair being kicked out from under them.

More recently, in 2001 West went out to Waugoshance alone to do some work on the property. The midday breeze had shifted without him realizing, and when he noticed he went to check on the boat, which at this point should have been pushed into the rocks.

As he approached the boat, he noticed it wasn't tied where he'd left it. And as he got closer, he saw the boat was tied up with a knot he'd never seen before.

"I untied it and got out as fast as I possibly could," West recalled.

Since that day, West said he leaves a bottle of Jack Daniels at the lighthouse on the last trip out for the season, as a sort of peace offering.

And every year, upon return to lighthouse, the bottle is in the same spot, cap on, but never full.

"It's worked for us so far so we're going to keep going with it," West said.

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