

# HAUNTED HISTORY TRAIL *of New York State*

## **ABOUT THE GREATER NIAGARA REGION**

New York State's Greater Niagara Region is located on the westernmost edge of the state. Home to Buffalo, NY, and bordering Canada and two Great Lakes – Erie and Ontario – the region has no shortage of activities or spectacular views. Be sure to check out Niagara Falls State Park while you are in the region – you can stand on the American Side of Niagara Falls or board the Maid of the Mist and sail right into the spray.

### **DAY 1**

Start your haunted excursion at the **Iron Island Museum** for a private investigation of the old funeral home. Many who come for the spirits, end up appreciating the building's amazing history – rooted in the Iron Island neighborhood with ties to the railroad, the military, and much more. One of the better-known spirits was even discovered to be a war veteran named Edgar Zernicke, whose cremated remains were left unclaimed in the basement for years.

Next, head towards Niagara Falls and tour the **Rapids Theatre** – one of Western New York's most haunted locations. Some of the paranormal activity witnessed at the theatre includes strange voices, doors opening and closing, footsteps, a mysterious whistling with keys jingling, and sightings of full blow apparitions. Tours of the theatre will take guests through the front and rear tunnels, onto the main stage, into the green room, and even up to the VIP balcony to explore.

Before making your way to lunch, be sure to wander over to Niagara Falls State Park, located less than a block from the Rapids Theatre. There, guests can visit the American side of Niagara Falls - a sight not to be missed during your visit to New York State.

Continue walking down the road and you will find **The Red Coach Inn** – open in 1923 to welcome guests to what was then known as the “honeymoon capital of the world.” While it was meant for romance, the inn has a haunted history – just ask actor Bernie Kopell (known for playing “Doc” on the show *The Love Boat*). Kopell was accosted by the ghost of a woman at the Red Coach Inn when she walked through a wall towards him while he was doing carpentry work there one time. Hear the whole story when you stop for a rest and for lunch – situated near the center of town, the inn overlooks the Upper Rapids of Niagara Falls and provides a spectacular view for its visitors.

## **NYS HAUNTED HISTORY TRAIL: WESTERN NY/GREATER NIAGARA REGION**

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After lunch, board the bus and make your way up to the **Van Horn Mansion** for a private group tour of the mansion. Look for Malinda Niles Van Horn during your tour – the mansion’s most famous ghost. The 20-year-old beauty and wife of James Van Horn Jr. died unexpectedly after marrying Van Horn in 1836. The cause of her death remains a mystery, but her spirit lives on in the mansion even now. You may also experience doors closing by themselves, unexplained whistling and shadows, and the smell of tobacco in the men’s smoking room when it’s vacant. Video evidence has even captured ghosts peeking out of view in the kitchen.

Just up the road, relax with a glass of wine at the **Winery at Marjim Manor** while succumbing yourself to the ominous stories of the manor’s former residents. If you’re feeling brave, complete your trip in a private ghost hunt around the manor to see for yourself the secrets that lie within the manor.

End your day with dinner at **The Pillars Estate**, an elegant Victorian Mansion that was built in the early 1800s, just after the Civil War. Dine in the style of the century as you are transported back to a time when the spirits of the home were alive in all their glory. While you enjoy your meal, hear stories of the history of the estate and its residents. After dinner, take a guided tour and check out some of the more “active” rooms in the house.

## DAY 2

Day two begins at the **Rolling Hills Asylum** for an eerie private tour of the second most haunted site in the United States. Established in 1827, the Genesee County Poor House (as it was originally known as) became a dumping ground for the outcasts of society. See where widows and orphans mingled with lunatics, and where over 1,700 unclaimed dead were buried on the grounds. Rolling Hills Asylum truly lives up to its reputation – the tour guides are so familiar with hauntings they even know the names and histories of the spirits that still reside in the building. Visitors have reported everything from hearing voices, seeing orbs, to up-close encounters with the spirits themselves!

If you dare to continue, make your way towards Mount Morris, NY for lunch, and take a tour of the **Allegiance B&B** while there. The historic and elegantly restored, circa-1838 mini-White House mansion, is tastefully decorated to reveal the grandeur of the Victorian era. Friendly spirits Karen and Ray reside in the building year round and enjoy interacting with guests in mysterious ways – though Ray is commonly known to be the chattier of the two. Guests who have stayed in the B&B have also reported sightings of a ghost cat that prowls the mansion at night.

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While in Mount Morris, take some time to visit Letchworth State Park - "The Grand Canyon of the East." While not necessarily haunted, the park provides beautiful hiking trails and spectacular views of the gorge. Whether you choose to spend one hour or a few in the park, Letchworth is definitely worth a visit.

Next, stop at **Heaven Sent B&B** and the **Anastassia Event Center** for dinner. Located at the southern end of Letchworth State Park, this 1800s converted church and rectory is now a charming – yet haunted – bed and breakfast catering to guests in the area.

On your way out of New York, be sure to make time for a stop at the **Dunkirk Historical Lighthouse & Veterans Park Museum** in Dunkirk, NY. This historical working lighthouse and adjacent Victorian keeper's house offers evening tours, where guests can hear about the paranormal activity happening on the property or conduct their own investigation.

## **TOUR AT A GLANCE**

**Timeframe:** 2 Day

**Distance Day 1:** Approx. 91 miles round-trip

**Distance Day 2:** Approx. 136 miles round-trip

**Stops:** Iron Island Museum, Rapids Theatre, Red Coach Inn, Van Horn Mansion, Winery at Marjim Manor, The Pillars Estate | Rolling Hills Asylum, Allegiance B&B, Heaven Sent B&B and Annastassia Event Center, Dunkirk Historical Lighthouse & Veterans Park Museum