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16 Real-Life Haunted Places in Rhode Island

From star-crossed lovers to lonely orphans to mysterious figures, meet the things that go bump in the night in the Ocean State.

4 hours ago

by [Kaitlyn Murray](https://www.rimonthly.com/bios/kaitlyn-murray/)



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A haunting at General Nathanael Greene's Homestead in Coventry, portrayed by Kinsley Coelho and Josh Wojnar. Photography by Wolf Matthewson.

Everyone remembers their first ghost.

I can still picture mine right down to the eerily blank expression beneath the brim of his black porkpie hat and the way he evaporated into the sunlight the second he passed through our slider door. But is the memory a result of my mother's unparalleled penchant for storytelling, her re-capping of the incident so vivid my mind can to this day conjure up the image with ease? Or did we truly come home from the grocery store one day to a phantom in the kitchen?

More than twenty years later, the jury's still out. Our little raised ranch in Narragansett was built in the mid-eighties and, as far as we knew, the worst it had endured was a raucous URI party or two. The scariest thing about it was its atrocious green rug. Surely it wouldn't have any reason to host the spirit of Oppenheimer's doppelganger.

Or maybe it was the grounds on which the house stood. Rhode Island is rife with history, and it's no stranger to tragedy. Local haunts are believed to have all sorts of spirits, so I dug deep into some of the more credible spooky stories. Whether the following hauntings are "real," however, is as debatable as my own experience. It's up to you to determine for yourself.

THE JUDGY TEETOTALER, THE SOLEMN SISTERS AND THE ECHOES AT THE GENERAL NATHANAEL GREENE HOMESTEAD

The History: Established in 1770 by a forge master named Nathanael Greene on the same

grounds as his family's foundry, the General Nathanael Greene Homestead in Coventry was originally called Spell Hall.

"Everyone thinks the name is supernatural-related," says Nathanael Greene Homestead Association president David Procaccini. "There were 100 families that lived in Anthony Village and [Greene] had the area's first school room in his house — we think that's where the kids went to learn how to spell."

Greene was a descendant of the first settlers in Providence. He helped found the Kentish Guards state militia group before joining the Continental Army in response to the Revolutionary War. He rose through the ranks to Quartermaster General and his tactical retreat approach as the Commander of the Southern campaign essentially lured the exhausted British army to their surrender at Yorktown. Yet, despite his part, Greene has long been nicknamed the "Forgotten General of the American Revolution."

He eventually moved his family to Georgia to run a plantation called Mulberry Grove.

As for Spell Hall, Greene's brother took it over following his departure from Rhode Island. The general's grandniece, Elizabeth Margaret Greene Warner, was the last family member to live in the house — she remained there until her death in 1899 and her remains are buried in the family cemetery out back. The Nathanael Greene Homestead Association bought the property in 1919 and has been tending to it ever since.

The Haunts: "I spend so much time in the house and I've seen so many things happen, I can't deny that there's something," says Association trustee and property caretaker, Josh Wojnar.

Nathanael Greene spent his final year in the South, so it's open to debate if he is behind the haunts at Spell Hall. But phantom wafts of baking bread, brief sightings of an older woman in one of the bedroom mirrors and a judgy energy have given visitors reason to believe another Greene is.



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General Nathanael Greene Homestead (Kinsley Coelho and Josh Wojnar-Board Member)

"Elizabeth was heavily involved with the Temperance movement," says Procaccini. "There have been instances where people have brought alcohol into the homestead, and you would hear

somebody stomping up the stairs and all the door latches would rattle through the whole house.”

One night he was in the bathroom when somebody tried to get in. The latch opened and he held out his hand out to stop the door from opening all the way. When he got out, he discovered the only other people in the house were up in the attic.

Other possible perpetrators? It could be two little girls said to have died on the property. The Association doesn't have many details, but believe they were between seven and ten years old and could have been children of one of the families that worked in the area.

“We think many were buried in the unmarked cemetery next to the Greene family cemetery,” Procaccini says.

There's also a corner of the yard where people hear children crying, he says. “We had a guy who would bring his horse and it refused to go near it. You could fire cannons around that horse and he was fine, but if you brought him over there, he would rear and try to get away.”

Once, they even got proof on film. Wojnar had been giving a private tour to a ghost investigation group when they heard a loud, unexplained thump in another room. The team had been recording with a thermal imaging camera at the time and decided to play it back.

“Sure enough, you can hear the noise, but when the guy paused the video to show someone else, I looked at the screen and said, ‘Wait a minute, what the hell is that?’” Wojnar recalls. “They had caught a full-on apparition. As the camera guy turns towards the noise, a figure comes out, looks at us and turns like it's going out the back door. If I saw it on TV, I would have laughed and been like nope, completely fake. But I was there. They tried all sorts of things to debunk it, like maybe it's a shadow, or a reflection, but there was no other explanation.”

Here and Now: The homestead regularly hosts events and is open to the public for tours Fridays through Mondays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., April through October. Admission is \$8 for adults and \$4 for children. *50 Taft St., Coventry, 821-8630, [nathanaelgreenehomestead.org](http://nathanael-greenehomestead.org) (<http://nathanael-greenehomestead.org>)*



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Hellen the ghost doll at the General Nathanael Greene Homestead.

THE STAR-CROSSED LOVERS ON THE EAST SIDE OF PROVIDENCE

The History: It all started on a humid night in 1845, when famed writer Edgar Allan Poe first saw Sarah Helen Whitman tending to her rose garden at 88 Benefit St.

An established poet, activist and intellectual force in her own right, Whitman was dressed in white under the moonlight, and Poe was immediately smitten — so much so that he wrote a

poem about the one-sided encounter. They went on to dedicate poems and valentines to one another before finally meeting in person in September of 1848. Their short courtship included many conversations between the stacks at the Providence Athenaeum and afternoons whiled away in Swan Point Cemetery, where Poe eventually proposed. Despite her loved ones' objections, Whitman agreed to marry him if he stopped drinking. They were set to wed on Christmas Day, but alas, two days prior, Whitman received an anonymous note at the Athenaeum claiming her betrothed had been seen drinking. She promptly called off the engagement.

Poe died just ten months later (under mysterious circumstances) in Baltimore. Whitman, meanwhile, remained in Providence as a fierce defender of his reputation until her death in 1878.

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Poe's penciled signature next to his anonymous poem "Ulalume." Photo courtesy of the Providence Athenaeum.

The Haunts: Most of Poe and Whitman's main haunts have been said to retain their spirits. The circa-1838 Providence Athenaeum is a prime example.

"[Poe] was in Providence for a short time, but it's incredible the mark he made on our institution and the important things that happened to him in the building," says Robin Wetherill, the Athenaeum's director of membership and external relations.



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They say it was Edgar Allan Poe and Sarah Helen Whitman's tumultuous whirlwind romance that condemned their souls to Providence. Here Kelly McCabe of Providence Ghost Tours and Levi L. Leland of edgarallanpoeri.com (<http://edgarallanpoeri.com>) stand in as the ghosts of Whitman and Poe outside the Providence Athenaeum. Photography by Wolf Matthewson.

“They were here at the library when Whitman pulled a bound book of magazines off a shelf and said, ‘Oh I loved this recent anonymous poem called ‘Ulalume’ — have you read it?’ And Poe said, ‘Yeah, I wrote it.’”

He signed his name in pencil at the bottom of the page and they returned the book to its proper place. The Athenaeum still has it in their special collections, along with a memoir that Poe once borrowed called *Stanley Volume I*.

“We have in our records that Whitman checked out the same volume some years later,” says Wetherill. “It’s easy to speculate that she wanted to feel closer to Poe.”

But are these remnants from their relationship enough to keep them from moving on after all these years? Levi L. Leland, founder of the Edgar Allan Poe: Rhode Island guided walking tours, has heard many firsthand tales from those who have reported they’ve seen ghostly figures in period clothing at the Athenaeum, or have felt taps on their shoulder while studying alone on the steps.

But it seems as though the spirits have a broader range. Leland says there are multiple accounts of a man in a period-esque black coat visiting Swan Point Cemetery and aimlessly strolling Benefit Street at dusk.

“Poe was only really known to wear a black suit because that’s all he had, so the connection makes sense,” Leland says. “He had unfinished business here as far as Whitman goes. And with Whitman hosting seances in, I think, some attempt to get closure after his death, maybe that has something to do with it — maybe he’s stuck.”

Whitman promised that she, too, would return to the mortal world post death.

“They say if the moon is full and it’s midnight, sometimes you can see a white glowing figure outside her old home on Benefit,” Leland says. “They think that it’s Whitman’s spirit still tending her roses almost 150 years after her death.”

Here and Now: You can catch a group walking tour of Poe and Whitman’s Providence with Leland select weekends September through November or you can book a private tour through his website, edgarallanpoeri.com. The Providence Athenaeum is open to the public; see website for hours. 251 Benefit St., Providence, 421-6970, providenceathenaeum.org (<http://providenceathenaeum.org>)

THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE AT THE ARTILLERY COMPANY OF NEWPORT

The History: The Artillery Company of Newport was originally formed as a militia in 1741 to protect the City by the Sea from outside invaders. Since its inception, the company has had a presence in every war the U.S. has been involved in.

It was first stationed in the Colony House but moved to the Clarke Street armory building in 1836. In addition to hosting meetings for the company, the building is a museum of military and war artifacts, including uniforms, medals, crests, weapons (see: cannons cast by Paul Revere himself) and more.

Much of the inventory was donated by past and current members. Notable items, such as Prince Philip’s British Navy uniform, were requested and granted by various organizations and estates. The museum also houses former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat’s uniform; two weeks after receiving it in the mail, Sadat was assassinated by extremists.

“We have 283 years of history here, so you can definitely take a look around at everything and

see why this place might be haunted,” says the Artillery’s Commanding Colonel William Farrell.

The Haunts: Rumor has it, if you stand outside of the Artillery Company and take a photo of the building, you just might capture a figure lurking in the second window from the left on the top floor. The window in question is attached to Farrell’s own office.

Could the spirit be the artillery’s longest-serving member, whose tenure spanned the Civil War in 1860 to his death after World War I in 1923? Perhaps it’s Marion Richardson, a World War II nurse who survived service in Europe only to be murdered in her own Newport home at eighty-three years old.

Farrell wonders if the museum’s weapons — and the lives they may have taken — are behind the supposed haunting.

“I’m here all the time and I haven’t seen anything,” Farrell says. “I don’t necessarily believe, but I don’t disbelieve.”

Here and Now: The museum is open to the public Memorial Day through Columbus Day on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Entry is free, though donations are welcome. 23 Clarke St., Newport, 846-8488, newportartillery.org (<http://newportartillery.org>)

THE CURSED OBJECTS AND THE FORMIDABLE WOMEN AT BELCOURT OF NEWPORT

The History: American socialite and coachman, Oliver Hazard Perry Belmont, commissioned architect Richard Morris Hunt to design Belcourt mansion on Newport’s Bellevue Avenue in 1891. In 1896, Belmont bestowed the mansion to his second bride, Alva Belmont. A former Vanderbilt, the new Mrs. Belmont already had a reputation as a prominent figure in the women’s suffrage movement and as the creative genius behind the neighboring Marble House. Under her influence, Belcourt became a hot spot for lavish social gatherings for Newport’s elite — as well as the occasional seance.

“She was infatuated with Victorian era spiritualism,” says Belcourt’s house manager and tour guide, David Bettencourt. “She hosted a night with an occultist while they owned the house between 1896 and 1908.”

After Oliver Belmont’s death, the mansion was left to his brother, Perry, and sold off in 1940. Harold and Ruth Tinney purchased it in 1956, christening it Belcourt Castle and filling its sixty rooms with exotic antiques and reproductions. The home gained even more notoriety when their son’s wife, Harle Tinney, published her memoir, *The Ghosts of Belcourt Castle* in 2010, which chronicles her supposed fifty-plus years of living with the supernatural.

Belcourt is currently owned by local jewelry designer and philanthropist Carolyn Rafaelian.

“When [Rafaelian] moved in, she brought in a number of people to help cleanse the house both physically and spiritually. And we haven’t really had any issues since,” says Bettencourt.

The Haunts: The mansion had unnerving connections from its very beginning. The terrazzo floor in the first-level reception hall is made with individually chipped pieces of Italian marble, which took three years to install.

“During that time, an Italian artist was killed in an accident with concrete,” Bettencourt explains. “The Tinneys claimed you could hear deep sighs from him not being able to finish the job.”

In her book, Tinney claims ghosts came from items brought into the house like a haunted chair. She describes instances of witnessing a visitor experience a flash of light and the smell of burning rubber when they touched the aforementioned chair and finding that the suits of armor had moved by themselves.

Bettencourt, who leads the mansion’s Walk With Ghosts tour in addition to regular tours, says the haunted tour is a great way for guests to experience the property at night.

“I’m a little skeptical, but there are some things that I can’t explain,” he says. “We have this huge chandelier from the Tinney family on our first floor. It has 13,000 crystals, and every once

in a while, I'll come in and just one random crystal will be spinning real slow and subtle. It makes no sense because there's no air vents above it or anything like that."

Here and Now: The mansion is open for historical tours Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets may be purchased in advance online or at the door. Walk With Ghosts tours are offered seasonally. *657 Bellevue Ave., Newport, belcourt.com (<http://belcourt.com>)*

THE PERMANENT GUESTS OF THE GENERAL STANTON INN

The History: The General Stanton Inn's long legacy begins in 1650, when the Niantics (a Narragansett Nation tribe) gifted English settler Thomas Stanton with a four-by-two-mile piece of land in Charlestown for facilitating the safe return of their beloved princess following her abduction by another tribe. In 1740, Thomas' grandson, Joseph Stanton II, added an inn and converted the existing dwelling into what is believed to be the first Native American school in Colonial America. Then, at the start of the American Revolution, Joseph Stanton III, a member of the Sons of Liberty, used the property's tavern as a covert meeting spot for General George Washington's spies. The tavern was later used in a similar vein by his nephew, General Joseph Stanton IV, to strategize against the British during his time as the leader of Rhode Island's first militia.

The next century would prove just as pivotal for the inn: It served not only as a welcoming stagecoach stop and boarding house, but also as a stop on the Underground Railroad. The property's docket isn't free of scandal, however. The inn also gained notoriety as an illicit gambling house (attracting the likes of Al Capone and John D. Rockefeller) and a convenient hideout for Block Island rum runners and wanted gangsters alike during Prohibition. The twenty-first century has proved much quieter for the property, with the latest developments involving renovations by current owners David and Jackie Moore, but its colorful past still makes itself known in various ways.



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With roots dating back to the seventeenth century, The General Stanton Inn in Charlestown is allegedly still visited by its namesake, portrayed here by lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Gilbert of the Adjutant-Pawtucket Rangers. Photography by Wolf Matthewson.

The Haunts: It seems some may have never checked out of the General Stanton Inn. Upstairs, room nine (the general's former quarters) and the Colonial Suite (where the ceiling once held a hidden roulette table) are said to experience paranormal activity. Guests staying in room fourteen have also heard conversations in the inaccessible attic space above. Between rooms six and seven, inn employee Amber Richardson recalls feeling an overwhelming sense of unwelcomeness.

The eeriness trickles down to the lower levels, as well.

"Another time, I heard a man sigh behind me. I was the only person on property that day," Richardson says. "It was so loud I turned around; no one was there. Afterward, I was walking

past a door that leads into the Narragansett Room and I heard somebody walking ... again, no one.”

She is hardly the only employee to experience the unexplained. David Moore has glimpsed passing shadows in empty rooms, felt random cold pockets on a ninety-degree day, and witnessed an electric compressor start up on its own.

“It was unplugged, too,” he adds.

Bartender Marianne Papi-Roque recalls doorknobs spinning in her hand, phantom tugs of her hair, doors slamming and objects ending up in different areas of the bar seemingly by their own accord.

“One that really sticks out is when I got a phone call at six o’clock in the morning from my manager at the time. She said, ‘What did you do after you closed last night? Did you have a party there?’”

Guests had complained of people running up and down the stairs and playing loud music all night long. Confused, Papi-Roque said to check the cameras — the recordings didn’t show a soul.

“She was ready to fire me!” she laughs. “But no, they don’t scare me. Now I just tell them to knock it off when they act up.”

But who exactly is the “them” behind all the strange happenings? It could be General Stanton IV, who purportedly died of old age in the building and was buried in the family cemetery on the property. There’s also a rumor about a fleeting feline.

“We have quite a few patrons that had been here twenty or thirty years ago and they’ll ask about the ghost cat,” Moore says. They say it’s friendly — you can hear it meow and feel it brush up against your legs.”

Here and Now: You can book a stay or dinner reservation at the General Stanton Inn via its website. The restaurant is open Monday through Friday from 4 to 11 p.m., Saturdays from noon to 11 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. *4115 Old Post Rd., Charlestown, 364-8888, thegeneralstantoninn.com (<http://thegeneralstantoninn.com>)*

THE FORLORN ARTIST AT THE FLEUR DE LYS

The History: The Fleur De Lys holds a sad story behind its intricate yellow facade. Inspired by European architecture, artist Sydney Burleigh (with the help of architect Edmund Wilson) designed the Arts and Crafts-style building in 1885. It was built a few doors down from the Providence Art Club, where Burleigh was a prominent member.

He claimed the ground floor studio but allowed fellow artists to access the space for their own pursuits. One such example was his student at the Rhode Island School of Design named Angela O’Leary. Their relationship seemed to go beyond your typical mentor-mentee connection; her studio on the second floor featured small windows overlooking his, as well as a door that connected the two.

“The story that people always tell is that she was his lover, and she wanted him to leave his wife, but he said no,” says the Providence Art Club’s Gallery Manager Michael Rose. “But I’ve never actually seen any evidence that that was the case. They did go to Europe together, but his wife went as well. So, if she was his mistress, it was sort of flagrant.”

If anything, the scorned woman narrative diminishes her legacy.

“She was an accomplished artist in her own right. She worked with watercolor, and her paintings are comparable to many artists who worked in that period. She even hosted her own one-woman show at the art club,” Rose says. “But she also very obviously had depression.”

With the Providence Art Club being the first historic art club to ensure equal membership for women at its establishment in 1880, O’Leary, like her mentor, was a well-established constituent. She was the only woman welcome to attend the “boys-only” meetings (read: Friday nights dedicated to drinking and discussing art). When O’Leary didn’t show up one night in

1921, the group grew concerned. They told one of the member's preteen sons to run next door to the Fleur De Lys and check on her.

Angela had killed herself using the gas from her studio's lighting fixtures.

The Haunts: O'Leary's art endured, with many of her paintings still on display at the Providence Art Club. The club also has a large portrait of her hanging in one of its galleries.

"Her eyes follow you everywhere you stand," says Sadie Swap, the art club's marketing and media coordinator.

As for the Fleur De Lys, the Burleighs left it to the art club with the stipulation that it forever remain what it was intended to be: an artists' studio.

"In 140 years, the space has only had around six or seven artists because when someone gets it, they keep it," Rose says.

According to Rory Raven's *Haunted Providence*, past resident artists have claimed O'Leary's ghost occasionally roams the halls. Anthony Tomaselli, the fine art painter who currently rents the space, says he has yet to encounter her, but he does feel "a bit jittery here after dark."

The ghostly phenomena aren't limited to the studio. Rose has had his fair share of spooky happenings at the Dodge House Gallery, another Providence Art Club-owned building just two doors down. Do the historic properties have another lost being in their midst? Or is it O'Leary attempting to reunite with her one true love — her work — at the art club? Like art, it's all up to interpretation.

Here and Now: The Fleur De Lys is privately rented, but resident artist Anthony Tomaselli is generally welcoming of visitors. The Providence Art Club art galleries are free and open to the public. 11 Thomas St., Providence, 331-1114, providenceartclub.org (<http://providenceartclub.org>)

RHODY REMNANTS

From the uncanny to the downright sinister, here's a look at what else goes bump in the night in Rhode Island.



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The grave of Mercy Brown with simulated ghost orb at Chestnut Hill Cemetery. Photography by Wolf Matthewson.

The Grave of Mercy Brown

When nineteen-year-old Mercy Brown died in 1892 from tuberculosis, it seemed like another

rung in a stream of awful luck for the Brown family, who had already lost their mother and eldest child. But when her younger brother, Edwin, seemed destined for the same fate, their father allowed a local doctor to exhume the bodies in search of a cure. The others were found in normal states of decomposition while Mercy, whose body had originally been stored in an above-ground vault because the ground was too frozen for burial, seemed almost alive with blood still red in her heart and liver. Surely, they thought, supernatural powers were to blame: Mercy was a vampire, and she was the one behind her brother's poor health. The natural solution was to cut out her heart, burn it, and feed its ashes to Edwin. Despite the precautions, the youngest Brown succumbed to the disease two months later. For a chance encounter with Mercy's sad soul, which some say manifests in the form of a glowing blue orb, you can still visit the cemetery where her body was stored, buried, disturbed and re-laid to rest. ***Chestnut Hill Cemetery, 10 Rod Rd. (Route 2), Exeter.***



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The crypt where Mercy Brown was initially laid to rest at Chestnut Hill Cemetery. Photography by Wolf Matthewson.

The Carriage Inn

Though parts of the property were renovated after Roy Ring took ownership in 2017, the all-stone Whiskey Room at the Carriage Inn in North Kingstown still holds vestiges of its former life as an eighteenth-century inn and tavern stop: a hidden door that used to be the main entrance and stones charred black from a catastrophic fire in 1957. Try as he might, Ring has not been able to rid the blocks of the stain. "If you look it up, there's a story about hearing a boy crying because his dad was killed in a fire here," Ring says. Ring and others have seen shadows pass over walls, drawers refuse to open, and basement locks swing like pendulums. Female bartenders have felt pushes or tugs of their hair ("Because back in the day, men didn't want women behind the bar," Ring guesses). Psychics have heard female voices shushing each other upstairs, perhaps alluding to the fact the inn once served as a brothel. "You'll hear one story then another, and then you'll see different things for yourself," says Ring. ***1065 Tower Hill Rd., North Kingstown, 294-0466, carriageinndining.com (<http://carriageinndining.com>)***

The Old Arnold Estate, aka the Conjuring House

Get acquainted with Rhode Island's most famous real-life horror by watching "The Conjuring." It's the 1970s, when a normal family moves into an unassuming home in the boonies of Harrisville, only to learn it once belonged to a satanist named Bathsheba who sacrificed her own daughter to appease the devil. While Hollywood certainly may have taken a few liberties, the full story of what happened — and still happens — in that house is equally as hair-raising. If that's

not enough to keep you from sleeping with the light on, the brave-hearted are welcome to tour — and even camp out at — the property to see what all the fright is about. **1677 Round Top Rd., Burrillville, theconjuringhouse.com (<http://theconjuringhouse.com>)**

Seaview Terrace

Built in 1907 by whiskey millionaire Edson Bradley, Seaview Terrace (aka Burnham-by-the-Sea, aka Carey Mansion, aka the creepy manor facade seen in ABC's "Dark Shadows") is the largest privately owned Gilded Age estate in Newport. Local legend has it that Bradley's wife, Julia Williams Bradley, was quite fond of the residence and following her funeral at the grounds' chapel in 1929, she couldn't resist making it her afterlife address, as well. In October 2020, "Ghost Nation" visited the French-Gothic mansion for a paranormal investigation and stars of the show claimed to hear pacing, whispers and knocking.

Providence City Hall

Providence City Hall is said to be visited by the ghost of a former mayor. No, not Prince of Providence Buddy Cianci, but rather Thomas Doyle (term: 1864 to 1869), whose body lay in state at the building following his untimely death. Staff have reported seeing moving chairs, hearing whispers and footsteps in empty rooms and smelling lingering odors of cigar smoke. It also was the subject of a "Ghost Hunters" season eight episode cheekily titled "City Hell" back in 2012. **25 Dorrance St., Providence, 680-5000, providenceri.gov (<http://providenceri.gov>)**

Cumberland Monastery / Cumberland Public Library

Though no one perished in the monastery's devastating 1950 fire and the Trappist monks have moved out — and the Cumberland Public Library has since moved in — there are whispers that a lone phantom monk roams the halls and frequently tidies up unattended books. But that's not the only otherworldly connection this spot has to offer: A monument on the grounds named "Nine Men's Misery" marks the spot where nine Colonists were captured, tortured and beheaded by Native American warriors during King Philip's War in 1676. As such, many locals have sworn the nearby trails are plagued by bloodcurdling cries of the slain men. **1464 Diamond Hill Rd., Cumberland, 333-2552, cumberlandlibrary.org (<http://cumberlandlibrary.org>)**

The Ladd School

Founded in 1908 by a eugenics doctor, the Rhode Island School for the Feeble-Minded was created in an erroneous attempt to cleanse society of its "undesirable" inhabitants, which throughout its years of operation (and a few name changes) included everyone from criminals to those with intellectual and developmental disabilities to the "sexually immoral." Like many other institutions of similar nature at the time, its halls were full of human rights violations and cruelties such as forced sterilizations and medical procedures devoid of anesthetics. The murder of a nine-year-old boy in 1955 at the hands of another inmate forced Dr. Ladd to resign the next year, but the school continued, albeit with more regulations and updates to the campus. The school converted into a "center" in 1978 with the intention of holding itself to a higher standard before closing for good in 1994. The last of the campus' ruins were demolished in 2014, but plenty of ghost stories still surround the sorry site once shrouded in scandal. **Exeter, [the-laddschool.com](http://theladdschool.com) (<http://theladdschool.com>)**

Purgatory Chasm

With a name like Purgatory Chasm, you know there's a story behind it. In fact, the 160-foot cliffs overlooking Second Beach in Middletown have a few, and they're all just as morose as the name suggests. One states a man lost his life in the 1800s after his paramour, a young Newport heiress, dared him to jump the divide (earning the area its Lover's Leap nickname). Another goes further back and claims a Native American man fell to his death while chasing the object of his affections — the woman in question, meanwhile, made it across the chasm safely — and his

ghost is now trapped in the depths, forever searching for his lost love. **Tuckerman Avenue, Middletown**

Crescent Park

While the historic Crescent Park in East Providence is often the site of pleasant family memories for most Rhode Islanders, thanks in large part to the whimsical Looff Carousel, there are some who remember it in connection with a brutal murder in the mid-nineties. After it was discovered by a family in search of seashells in the area, authorities dug up the body of a thirty-year-old woman. Deep lacerations to the face and torso found during the autopsy confirmed that she was indeed a victim of homicide. Not long after the news went public, the victim's former lover confessed to the crime and was sentenced to life in prison. Some visitors have since shared feeling sudden bouts of anger and jealousy while paying the park a visit, while others say they've seen the woman strolling along the beach. But the good news is she may not be doomed to wander the afterlife alone: There have also been accounts over the years of a ghostly woman in nineteenth-century garb staring wistfully out over the water, and some even attest that the carousel itself is beholden to the amusement of passed patrons. **Crescent Park Looff Carousel, 700 Bullocks Point Ave., Riverside, 435-7518, crescentparkcarousel.org**

Ramtail Factory

This one is so unexplained, even the 1885 census of Rhode Island officially listed the Ramtail Factory as "haunted." Founded by William Potter in 1799, the industrial mill relied on a giant water wheel in the Ponagansett River to power machines that cleaned and turned wool to cloth, and it quickly became a major source of employment for the surrounding families in the village of Foster. One such worker was Potter's (alleged) son-in-law, Peleg Walker, whose ornery disposition made him best suited for a solitary role as night watchman. It was no secret that Walker and his boss did not get along with Walker once even telling Peleg, "One day you will have to take the key to this mill from a dead man's pocket." A few weeks later, factory workers found Walker barricaded inside the building, hanging from the bell rope. He was buried nearby, but soon after, legend says the village was awakened one night by the sound of the bell ringing ceased as they approached and it is said that when they stood inside the building, it was empty. When it happened again, they took down the rope. The time after that, they took down the bell altogether. But then they reported other odd things: The water wheel began turning backward, machinery started up by itself and a lone lantern made the rounds at night despite the mill having never hired a replacement. Not wanting to work in a haunted factory, many of the workers left, eventually forcing Potter to shut down operations in 1850. It later burned in 1873 and its scarce ruins can be seen scattered in the woods on the Foster road. All rights reserved.

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A simulated ghost of Peleg Walker at the site of the former Ramtail Trail Factory. Photography by Wolf Matthewson.

