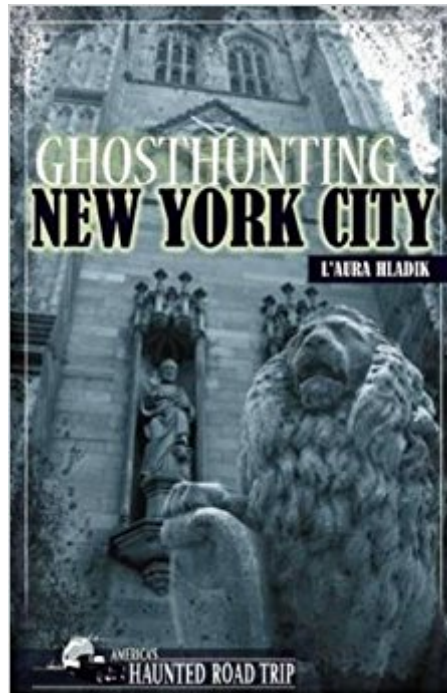




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Ghosthunting New York City (America's Haunted Road Trip)



Synopsis

On this leg of the journey, readers will explore the scariest spots in the Big Apple. Author L'Aura Hladik visits more than 30 legendary haunted places, all of which are open to the public so visitors can test their own ghosthunting skills, if they dare. Join L'Aura as she visits each site, snooping around eerie rooms and dark corners, talking to people who swear to their paranormal experiences, and providing a firsthand account. Readers may enjoy Ghosthunting New York City from the safety of an armchair or by hitting the road and using the maps to find 50 more spooky sites and "ghostly resources." Take the A(HRT) Train to the spookiest subway ride of your life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

EXCERPTS - Ghosthunting New York City, by L'Aura Hladik Chapter 1 Sailors Snug Harbor Walking through the gardens, relaxing in the gazebo or meditating while meandering through the pond area, one would hardly suspect the frightening qualities inherent in this Monet-come-to-life tranquility. According to the website Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden, a distinguished Smithsonian Affiliate, is Staten Island's premier destination for culture and entertainment. Set within a stunning 83-acre park-like setting, Snug Harbor presents a unique blend of gardens, museums, theaters, educational opportunities, and seasonal festivals." In 1801, wealthy Robert Randall, son of a merchant seaman, provided in his will for a safe haven where "aged, decrepit and worn-out" seamen could retire. His 140-acre farm became that haven in 1833 with the

building of a hospital and home on the property for retired seamen of any nation. The rule of occupancy was simply that the retired sailors had to attend prayer services, say grace before every meal, maintain sobriety and be in bed by 9:00 p.m. From 1867 to 1884, Captain Thomas Melville, brother of Moby Dick author Herman Melville, was governor at Sailor's Snug Harbor. By 1900, there were approximately 1,000 retired sailors living there. It was the ideal place for them, as it was self-sufficient with its theater, churches, farmland, and, best of all, its proximity to the water, a comforting sight for the "old salts." As time passed, the population diminished and the remaining 110 sailors were relocated to Sea Level, North Carolina, in 1976, when the City of New York took possession of the property. I visited Snug Harbor in May 2009. It was a clear evening, warm, but not muggy. Brian Backstrom, a security guard who has worked at Snug Harbor for the past eleven years, guided me through the various buildings. This young man not only had his own paranormal experiences while working here but a wealth of historical information as well. We started at the Music Hall. Brian told me that this theater was the second oldest in New York City, "the first being Carnegie Hall." We entered the theater and, per my request, Brian kept the lights off. I used my camcorder in "night shot" mode to record in zero light for any potential paranormal anomalies. Additionally, I used a thermal scanner to check for temperature drops, and I took pictures with my Nikon digital camera. I followed Brian down the main aisle to arrive in front of the stage. Rumor has it that a man committed suicide backstage by climbing the catwalks above the stage and using the rope of the pulleys to hang himself. It was one of those unrequited love tales. Supposedly, a retired sailor fell in love with Mrs. Randall, but realizing he could not have her, ended his life. Brian said he could not confirm this story while researching it in the archives, which he had access to before they were transferred to Sea Level, North Carolina, for storage. The story is perpetuated, however, by various performing artists who claim to have seen a silhouetted shadow of a man dangling on the left stage wall. Brian told me of his experience in the music hall back when he was employed as maintenance staff. "It was around 11:00 p.m. and I was vacuuming this area of the theater when I heard a crash behind me. I turned around and saw the light rigging had been pushed from the balcony it was attached to and slammed right into the floor. It missed hitting me by two rows!" Needless to say, he did not finish vacuuming that night. I wandered backstage to take some recordings and photos. I didn't capture anything paranormally suspicious. From the Music Hall, we went over to Building K, called Matron's House. The story that is attached to this building is disturbing. Brian said that at one time the Head Matron had adopted, or in a sense, enslaved, a local teenage boy who was mildly retarded. She kept him chained in the basement of the Matron's House like an animal. One day, the boy managed to free himself from the chains and made his way

to the main floor of the house. He grabbed a pair of sewing shears and proceeded to the third floor and the Head Matron's bedroom. He stabbed her multiple times and fled towards Forrest Avenue. He was captured and brought back to Snug Harbor and hanged from the "hanging tree" which is in back of Building K. The "hanging tree" is noted not only for its namesake purpose but for its ghastly spikes that grow around its trunk. Brian said that with all the storms they've had over the years, trees on the property have fallen or been struck by lightning. The "hanging tree" remains untouched. While I did not capture any anomalies in pictures or video in the Matron's house, I did have a battery drain on the camcorder in the Head Matron's former bedroom on the third floor. Luckily, I had a fully charged spare to use, once we were outside the building. After taking pictures of the Hanging Tree, we walked over to Building L. Brian told me of his experience in the fall of 2005 at that location. He and another park ranger were standing there, just as he and I were at that moment, engaged in conversation. It was approximately 11:00 p.m. and no one else was there with them. Suddenly, a bizarre creature darted between the two of them, heading toward Building L, and disappeared into the ground. Brian described this animal to be the size of a Labrador dog with the hindquarters of a rabbit and the head of a wild dog or "Hell Hound." He said it made a high-pitched shriek as it vanished into the ground approximately twenty feet from where they stood. Brian and the other park ranger did not discuss what they witnessed with each other. However, they both confided independently to their sergeant about the experience, and their details of the incident and the creature were identical. We continued to the storm door entrance of the basement of Building K. Spiders and cockroaches the size of small puppies added to the subterranean ambiance as we made our way down the stairs and into the basement. Brian showed me the area where the mildly retarded boy was supposedly shackled to the wall. It wasn't clear if the odd-shaped metal loops protruding from the wall were the remnants of shackles. I took several pictures with no apparent paranormal results, save for a dust orb. The temperature remained constant at 58 degrees according to my thermal scanner. Climbing out of the basement, we made our way over to the Governor's House. This is the beautiful, Victorian-styled building one sees upon driving into Snug Harbor. Brian pointed out the window on the second floor that had a vantage point of the harbor when the house was constructed. However, trees on the property now obscure this view. He said many reports over the years by visitors and park rangers have identified a ghostly white figure in this window. Possibly, the classic Lady in White resides eternally in the Governor's House. Her identity is suspected to be that of the former Mrs. Robert Randall, but this identity is doubtful, since the house was built long after the Randalls lived there. Their son, Richard Randall, however, was a bachelor, and may have had a mistress or two in residence at the house. Brian told me about the

ghostly apparition of the woman in white. She has been seen coming out the front door and making her way around the side of the house to the path that leads down the road. It is suspected that she is making her way to the cemetery that is no longer in that location. In recent years, the cemetery has been relocated approximately two blocks away, according to Brian. We made our way into Governor's House via the front door. It appeared that the beautiful structure was now being used as a storage unit. There were various tables, folding chairs, and other equipment strewn about the two front rooms or parlors. I went up to the second floor to record for EVPs and noted the alarm going off in the background. Brian said that it was a motion sensor alarm and that it frequently went off, even when no one is in the house. I went to the window where the Lady in White had been spotted. Thermal scanning remained constant with a temperature of 71.4 degrees Fahrenheit. No EVPs were collected and no anomalies were captured in digital still shots of this house. Snug Harbor is a cultural center offering classes in dance, music and art. A dance class, in the same building as Brian's office, ended as I made my way to my car. I joined the procession of cars to exit the property. Honestly, I was thankful for their company as the landscape had changed dramatically from the inviting, picturesque daylight venue when I arrived to a foreboding, somewhat menacing appearance in the night.

L'Aura Hladik's interest in the paranormal started in childhood with her Dad introducing her to "Twilight Zone" and finishing out 8th grade living in a haunted house. She has appeared on many local US radio and cable TV programs including. She Lives in New Jersey.

Except for spooky stories by S.E. Schlosser, I can think of no better read about ghosts and ghost stories than this book. I give ghost walks as Ghostsofny.com so I have made it my business to read every book about ghosts in New York City. I find it a lively read as one learns about various ghosts as the author shares her search and research about the various ghosts. Most ghost books tend to be pedestrian summaries of what has taken place. Whether or not you believe in ghosts, you will both entertained and informed by the author.

This is a good reference for visiting some historic places in New York City, but I felt like I was reading some little short stories in Junior High School. It had the tone of fiction throughout and I will use it as a reference, that's about it. I found it hard to get through after the first handful of chapters.

I love ghosts and I've also been interested in New York (it's one of the many places I want to visit). I

enjoyed reading about the history of New York and the mysteries and ghosts behind some of the city's famous landmarks, including Ellis Island and Radio City Music Hall.

If there's anything about this book that frightens me, it's the fact that I'm still tempted to read books like these every year, right before Halloween. Each chapter is about some charming NYC landmark, with a lame ghost story tacked on. For each historic house, we get two or three "unseen phenomena" that either move the pictures, pet the cats, or steal pints of beer. Why not just write about the damn houses? The part about McSorley's Ale House, now there's history involved in that one, and I bet the owner and patrons all have stories to tell. The old bars in the Village, they've been around since the 1800's. Why waste such a great opportunity on a boring ghost story? The Merchant's House Museum-who cares about the ghosts, what about the tunnel underneath? Hart Island and the Brother Islands-why not just write about their histories? We know that Hart Island is many things; cemetery for the unclaimed dead, site of an old Nike missile base, resting place for the old Ebbet's Field bleacher seats, to name a few. North Brother Island was an isolation zone for Typhoid Mary, and later an institution for teenage junkies. Do we need the paranormal stuff too? The "true" stories of these islands are far more interesting. Haunted theatres? Big deal. Lots of theatres from here to England are said to be haunted. The author did manage to pull up some interesting (and fun) facts about the theatres that have NOTHING to do with ghosts. For starters, never wear green or yellow on stage, the limelight cancels it out. Never whistle in the theatre, because the stagehands were ex-sailors and they'd signal each other by whistling. Whistle the wrong tune, and the curtain might drop at the wrong time. Oh, and did you know that green and yellow are considered bad luck on stage? They used to be the colors of the devil in old plays. Never let the theatre go pitch black, because the spirits will run amok. Here's the bottom line; the ghosts don't interest me at all, but the historical facts do. This book would've done much better as a series of articles in Time Out NY.

If you want a taste of places in NYC that are haunted without too much detail or any talent in writing, then this is the book for you. I found the lack of writing skills tiresome after a while, like if you were speaking to a twelve year old....so I had to take a few breaks from this book and google the places from time in order to get the real story. The author seems as if she had a list of questions that she answered for each chapter...in the same order, over and over...so it was monotonous...like old book reports. I could almost hear her giggling at her silly jokes. Most of the stories give you a taste without getting to the point, so maybe if you just get a list of contents as shown on then you can do your

own research or just read her references section (she uses the same books over and over) and then just get those books instead of wasting your money on this book. Two stars for the number of places and addresses provided and for "spotlight" sections which were fun to read.

I love the history of NYC especially its haunted, ghost stories. I been to some of the places she mentioned. But I did not see anything about Brooklyn & Queens they do have haunted places and ghost stories as well. Brooklyn & Queens are also part of NYC. The book was well written and informative. If you like the ghost hunting she does give good advice on the subject. I hope in the future she could write a book of ghost stories and haunted places of Brooklyn & Queens.

New York is a great place to visit, and if you're at all interested in a good ghost story or in paranormal investigating, it's even better. L'Aura's book takes you everywhere you could possibly want to go in New York for paranormal experiences or just to get a good ghost story. And L'Aura writes these stories really well. I'm impressed.

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