



For more than a year, Dolly McKeehan, curator of the Museum at the Friends Home in Waynesville, has heard a series of mysterious doorbells ring while working in her basement office only to find no one at the door when she arrives. Staff photo by Jan Underwood

## Dinners, walking tours offered for 'most haunted town in Ohio'

This is the fourth year for the Waynesville event, which raises money for the Museum of Friends.

By Lawrence Budd  
Staff Writer

Dolly McKeehan has learned not to answer the third ring of the Museum of the Friends Home's door bell.

"I always chuckle to myself, 'That's enough, Cathy,'" said McKeehan, who is relatively convinced that Cathy Pre-witt, a longtime board member, is just making good on a promise.

"She always told us she would find a way to haunt us," McKeehan said.

Ghosts are said to haunt this old town, where dozens of buildings dating back 200 years still stand.

Four years ago, the Waynesville Area Heritage Cultural Center at The Friends Home began raising funds for the museum, a 1905 Quaker boarding House at Miami and Fourth streets, with dinners and historic tours of buildings in town with ghostly connections.

This year, tours and dinners are running through Halloween night. Last year, the group raised \$8,000.

"We never had any idea it would be so popular," McKeehan said. "It keeps our doors open."

Beavercreek author Chris

### How to go

**What:** Ghost & Goblet Dinners and Haunted Walking Tours

**Dinner and stories:** 7 p.m. Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, through Halloween night

**Tours only:** 7:30 p.m., Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays through October

**Where:** Hammel House Restaurant, 21 S. Main St., (513) 897-3779

**Information:** (513) 897-1607

Woodyard devoted an entire chapter of the second volume of her "Haunted Ohio" series to "The Most Haunted Town in Ohio: The Ghost of Waynesville."

The chapter discusses nine locations with paranormal pasts, including a house on Maple Street an evangelist named Charity Lynch is said to haunt, almost 200 years after she moved to Springboro in 1818.

Lynch is said to be unsettled because she can't locate the grave site of her daughter Mary, who died after being sent to live with relatives in Cincinnati.

McKeehan suspects Mary's ghost is the little girl with blond ringlets and a three-quarter-length creme dress with a satin bow in the back, noticed around the museum porch by about eight people

walking around town.

"They just always say she's playing around the front porch," McKeehan said.

McKeehan also has reason to agree with those convinced the Stetson House, now a shop on Main Street, is haunted.

Once she was browsing the store when her daughter, who had been choosing between two quilts upstairs, demanded they leave after "feeling five cold fingers grab me around the neck."

Research suggests the fingers could belong to Louisa Stetson, sister of the famous hat maker who gave her the case of tuberculosis from which she died in 1879, or schoolteacher Lila Benham, who lived in there in the early 1900s.

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