GHOST HUNTING
101

The Basics

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What is a ghost?

No one is 100% sure what a ghost really is, or if they even really exist. That is the main mission of ghost hunters – to find proof that they are out there.

Most people believe that a ghost is the spiritual remains of a person who refuses to cross over after death. The person’s energy is left behind, and that is what causes us to see, hear, and smell strange things in haunted areas.

There are a few different types of ghosts:

- **Residual Hauntings**: With a residual haunting, the same event is played out over and over throughout the years. There is no interaction between live people and the ghost – the ghost is stuck at that moment in time and is not aware of anything going on around it. This type of haunting is common at places where there was strong emotion felt by the ghost during his life.
- **Traditional Hauntings**: Traditional hauntings are the most common type of ghosts. These ghosts interact with the living – sometimes they move objects, other times they just try to communicate by making sounds. It is commonly believed that traditional hauntings are spirits who died and are confused about their death. Sometimes this is because they died due to unnatural reasons and feel they have unfinished business to take care of before crossing over.
- **Anniversary Hauntings**: Like the name implies, these ghosts haunt a specific area only on the anniversary of their death. Usually this is due to a tragic/violent death.
- **Poltergeist**: Very uncommon, these ghosts are extremely active...and sometimes even violent. They are constantly moving objects around and making lots of noise.

However, many ghost hunters never see a real apparition. Some more commonly found signs of ghostly activity are:

- Unexplainable cold spots
- Unexplainable drafty/windy areas
- Unexplainable smells (such as perfume, smoke, food, etc)
- Unexplainable sounds (voices, footsteps, moaning, crying, etc)
- A strange "being watched" feeling
Where can I find ghosts?

Any location could possibly be haunted! Some common places people find them are:

- Cemeteries
- Historical parks or museums
- Houses
- Churches
- Hospitals

However, please make sure you have permission to visit places located on private property, and also obey any posted hours at public places. Not only is it disrespectful to not follow rules or get permission, but it’s considered trespassing if you don’t...you could face fines or even jail time! There are plenty of haunted places you can visit legally, and you’re just as likely to find ghosts during the day as you are at night. **Trespassing DEFINITELY isn’t worth the consequences!**

![Baker Mausoleum at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Newark, Ohio](image)

Some local haunted legends around Licking County are:

- Cedar Hill Cemetery - Newark
- Licking County Players Theater - Newark
- The Buxton Inn - Granville
- Denison University - Granville
- Union Lake - Johnstown, Ohio
- Alexandria Cemetery - Alexandria
How can I prove ghosts exist?

The Buxton Inn in Granville, Ohio

Here are a few basic ghost hunting tips:

- **NEVER** go alone! A lot of common haunted places include cemeteries and old buildings that are well off the beaten path. You need at least one other person with you so you do not get lost, and also so you have someone there to help in case you get injured. It is also a good idea to carry a first aid kit.
- Never go into an abandoned building without permission from the building’s owner. If you enter an abandoned building without permission, it is considered trespassing and you could go to jail or face large fines!
- Use a 35mm camera with 400-speed film and/or a digital camera to take photos of ghosts (and other interesting things you might find).
- Use a cassette recorder, a microcassette recorder, or a digital recorder to record ghostly sounds.
- Don’t litter or take anything from the place you are exploring.
- Be a little skeptical – try to rule out any logical explanations for strange phenomena before declaring a ghost caused it.
- **Most important tip:** HAVE AN OPEN MIND AND HAVE FUN!
How can I photograph ghosts?

You can use any type of camera for ghost hunting – digital, 35mm, or disposable.

Here are a few tips for capturing ghosts on film:

- Don’t take photos during rain or snow storms - raindrops or snowflakes may get on the camera lens and look like orbs. Orbs often show up in photos taken at haunted places. They look like round circles of bright light in photos.
- Make sure your camera lens is clean - fingerprints or dust may also look like orbs.
- If the same ghostly image shows up in the same spot on all of your photos, chances are it is dust on the lens rather than a ghost.
- Keep your fingers away from the camera lens when taking photos; a finger in the corner of a photo often looks like a ghost.
- Tie back hair - a loose hair in front of the lens is often mistaken for a ghost too.
- No one should smoke on investigations. Smoke may also show up in the photos, and it will discredit any ghostly images. Also, smoking can be a fire hazard in cemeteries or old buildings.
- Avoid photographing glass or mirrors - they cause too much reflection, especially when the camera’s flash is used.
- Avoid taking photos of direct sunlight - this causes lens flare.
- Take photos in areas where you get a strange feeling or experience any ghostly activity (when you feel cold spots or smell any strange smells, etc).
- Use your flash at night. If your camera has a night vision option use that instead.
- Take multiple photos of the same area - the more photos you take, the more likely it is that you will capture a ghost on film.
- Ask the ghosts’ permission before taking their picture - many people believe this is the key to successful ghost photos!
- When sorting through your photos after an investigation, ask for others’ opinions. Another set of eyes is always beneficial for finding or explaining strange objects in photos.
How do I record ghostly sounds?

You can use any cassette recorder, microcassette recorder, or digital recorder to record ghostly sounds. The correct term for recording ghostly sounds is “Electronic Voice Phenomena” – usually referred to as EVP. Sometimes the sounds come across very loud, and other times the sounds are very faint and you have to listen very closely to hear them. Sometimes the ghosts don’t speak, they just moan or make other noises. Sometimes the ghosts even speak in foreign languages.

To capture EVP on tape, ask the ghost(s) questions. You probably won’t hear the answer to your question until you play the tape back, so pause before asking the next question.

Here are a few more tips:

- Use the highest possible recording level to get the best results.
- Some people recommend using an external microphone. This helps reduce sound caused by the tape when using either a cassette or microcassette recorder.
- At the beginning of the recording, state the date, time, and location you are at. This is very important if you have multiple tapes of recordings, it will keep you from getting the tapes confused.
- Ask the ghost simple questions.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Don’t talk or whisper when you are trying to record an answer - your voice may cover up the EVP!
- Use headphones when listening to the recording. Some EVPs are very faint, and wearing headphones will enable you hear the faint sounds better.
Are there any books about ghost hunting?

There are many great ghost hunting books available. Below is a list of my favorite books:

- *Ghosthunting Ohio* – John B. Kachuba
- *Haunted Ohio* series – Chris Woodyard
- *Ghost Hunter’s Guide to Haunted Ohio* – Chris Woodyard
- *Ghost Stories of Ohio* – Edrick Thay
- *Ghosts* – Randy McNutt
- *Columbus Ghosts* – Robin Smith
- *Columbus Ghosts II* – Robin Smith
- *The Ghost Hunter’s Guidebook* – Troy Taylor
- *Ghosts Among Us* – Leslie Rule
- *Ghosts and Haunts of the Civil War* – Christopher K. Coleman
- *Devils, Ghosts, and Witches* – George Swetnam
- *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Ghosts and Hauntings* – Tom Ogden
- *Ghosts of the Great Lakes* – Megan Long