

The Historic Holly Hotel has long known to be haunted. In fact, Norman Gauthier, a professor of parapsychology and a world famous “ghost buster,” came to the hotel in 1989 and declared the abode “loaded with spirits”. Since then yearly visits from the GHOST HUNTERS OF SOUTHERN MICHIGAN and many other independent groups have come with cameras and other ghost detecting devices, performing all night “investigations.” Their data and photos are incredible.

The Holly Hotel been referred to as the most haunted historic building in Michigan, and perhaps the most haunted in America. By all accounts, the Holly Hotel does seem to be one of the few active haunted hotels where the occurrences continue over and over. The haunting and strange happenings have been observed by many people, from employees to guests. Very few of these can be easily discounted. The ghostly residents seem to follow certain “habits,” and even if one is ignorant to the fact that the restaurant is haunted, their experience will often fit into a known set of occurrences. For example, many people have smelled cigar smoke, even though they didn’t know that original owner of the Inn smoked cigars. The descriptions of flowery perfume is often strikingly similar as well, and, for some reason, the meat cleaver is the favorite toy for a little girls’ spirit who still plays in the kitchen and on the banquet room steps. Below you can find more information about the supernatural happenings that frequent the Holly Hotel. To the best of this our knowledge, all accounts are true and none of the pictures have been falsified. Have a look, and see if you believe...



The Holly Hotel, consumed by fire, January 19, 1913

The Fires: Two tragic fires consumed the Holly Hotel. The first fire, on January 19, 1913 was followed by the second fire, *exactly sixty-five years apart to the day and to the hour!* We would like to point out, however, that the main significance of the Holly Hotel is it’s incredible historic value. Few buildings can boast having been a elegant turn of century-old hotel, spanning three centuries in the hospitality business. With many of the original architectural elements preserved, the Historic Holly Hotel is the most important structures in downtown Holly and proudly exists on the National Register of Historic Places.

While researching the Holly Hotel's ghosts, we found it impossible not to research the history of the visit by Carry Nation, the fights in Battle Alley during the railroad era, and the delightful and restored buildings from the early 1900's. The quaint Battle Alley shops have materialized following the renovations of the Hotel and are a perfect continuation to your lunch, dinner or Sunday Brunch visit.

. www.hollyhotel.com

When you visit the Holly Hotel, a staff member will be happy to show you around and give an accounting of some of the unexplained events. (Who knows... you may just see a ghost!) It is a sensation shared by many...from those who believe in paranormal events to those who are complete skeptics. Those that believe, feel it is a ghost. Those that do not believe, simply feel they have let their imagination get the best of them and that is all. One or the other has to be right. Or perhaps, in some way, both sides are quite correct. Collected here are the most commonly known “ghosts” that have kept up “residence” within the Holly Hotel.

Mr. Hirst: Before it was the Holly Hotel:” With the early name of the Hirst Hotel, Mr. Hirst was the first formal hotelier. Mr. Hirst passed away in the 1920's, but he :knows” he is still Lord of the house. His ghost is one of the most frequent, although an actual materialization is rare. His spirit seems unable to pass on to the afterlife due to the great fire at the Holly Hotel in 1913 which ended his reign. He does not like noise, nor is he happy with and renovations at the Hotel House being made on his property. If you see a man wearing a frock coat and top hat, you most likely have met Mr. Hirst. *The Cigar Smell* is the most common manifestation of Mr. Hirst. It can be soft and wafting-- barely noticeable--or very strong and overpowering.

Other *Materializations* are most often encountered at the top of the stairs or in the Carry Nation Banquet

Room, although Hirst may be seen anywhere in the house, and has even been noted lurk in the lower level of the Hotel, which once was home to the tonsorial parlor.

Disembodied Voice: Laughter seems to be the most common version of a manifestation of the Hirst voice; a faint, baritone laughter that resounds through the house. He has also been known to speak on occasion, although it isn't often directly to the listeners.

Nora Kane: Described as a petite, beautiful lady, Nora seems to be the hostess of the house. From historical accounts, Ms. Kane had a love of music, and seems to still enjoy to play a good melody now and again. Her spirit is frequently encountered and she has materialized mostly in photographs. (especially at weddings held at the Hotel) Her portrait is displayed in the restaurant's main lobby.

Perfume: Nora's most common haunting is one that appeals to your sense of smell. This may be, in fact, one of the most common haunting in the entire house. Anna's perfume is described as a sweet, flowery scent that can be picked up in any room in the house, although the scent is most common in the turret area in the main bar.

Materializations: Nora's ghost is seen most often in the Bar and back hallway, which once was the main entrance to the Holly Hotel. She is most often described as lithe and graceful, not often complete, but cutting off at about the knees. She always is wearing one of her beautiful dresses.

Music: In life, Mrs. Kane loved music, and she carried that love into the afterlife. She has been heard playing the piano. If you hear music drifting through the house, more than likely it's Nora treating you to a good song.

Disembodied Voice: Speaking of songs, Nora also was a very good singer, and her soft melodies can sometimes be distantly heard throughout the different dining rooms late at night. She has also been known to ask people standing near the piano to play a tune for her. Her voice can also be heard throughout the house.



A photo capturing an "aberration" on the staircase during renovation

The Ghost in the Kitchen: In the restaurant at the end of the main hall, you can find the Hotel's kitchen. Behind the original swinging doors, you will see many of the same utensils, pots, pans, dishes, fine china, table ware and glassware from the turn of the century. It is here that you can find one of the Holly Hotel's most active ghosts. In our research, we found that this spirit may be one of two (or maybe both) girls who died young. Some have speculated that could be the spirit of a little girl who died here after being severely injured in the livery stable which was adjacent to the hotel. (Where the parking lot now exists). Or perhaps it is the ghost of a daughter of Nora Kane (Nora's picture in the foyer has her in a black "mourning dress"). Whoever she is, she seems rather happy and playful, and has been described as being between 9 and 13 years old, with red hair. In our research, we were unable to uncover her name, but her habits are well-known.



A wagon cart leaving the livery stable behind the Hotel, where the "little girl" was injured. Ca 1904

Moving Objects: The playful little ghost seems to enjoy passing her eternity by toying with the many kitchen items placed within the room. In many accounts, the item she

played with most often was the meat cleaver, although the teapots and hanging utensils were also targets. This is also the ghost or ghosts who are frequently heard running up and down the stairways. This young ghost is the only one that appeared during a seance in the early 1990's.

Disembodied Voice: A soft giggling is the most common haunting of this type. This is often accompanied by moving objects (as above),

Other Ghosts: The aforementioned ghosts are generally the most active apparitions in the Holly Hotel, but there are a few others who also seem to reside within it's walls. Here are a few I found in my research.

· *Leona, the Hirsts's dog:* Described as looking similar to a rat terrier, this dog can be heard running down the halls, brushing up against people's legs. Phantom barking is often observed, especially by the early morning chefs.

· *Mysterious Indian:* In February 1996 Mrs. Kutlenios arrived at the Holly Hotel early, getting ready for Thursday afternoon tea. As was her standard, she began to walk the dining rooms for a quick morning inspection. When she rounded the corner into the dining room, she was greeted by the image of a Native American Indian, who looked to be real as anything else in the room except that he had no feet. He hovered in view for a few moments before fading from view. No Indian has been reported before, and none since.

· **Other Haunting:** This is where we present the goings-on and weird happenings that happen frequently at the Holly Hotel. They do not really seem to be tied to any one ghost, but more research into the activities may provide some answers. Every October we present some explanations with special guest speakers, a seance, and ghost stories relating the Historic Holly Hotel. If you are interested in attending this interesting presentation, call for reservations early. We limit the number of guests.



· There is perhaps far more to the Holly Hotel than one might suspect. What makes for these strange things to happen? Over active imaginations? Spirits of the undead? A gimmick, perhaps put on by the folks of the Holly Hotel. Who knows for sure. But one thing is indeed for certain, the Holly Hotel remains an authentic "haunted house," researched and confirmed by "experts"

feel free to visit us on line at www.hollyhotel.com or email us at ghosts@hollyhotel.com