

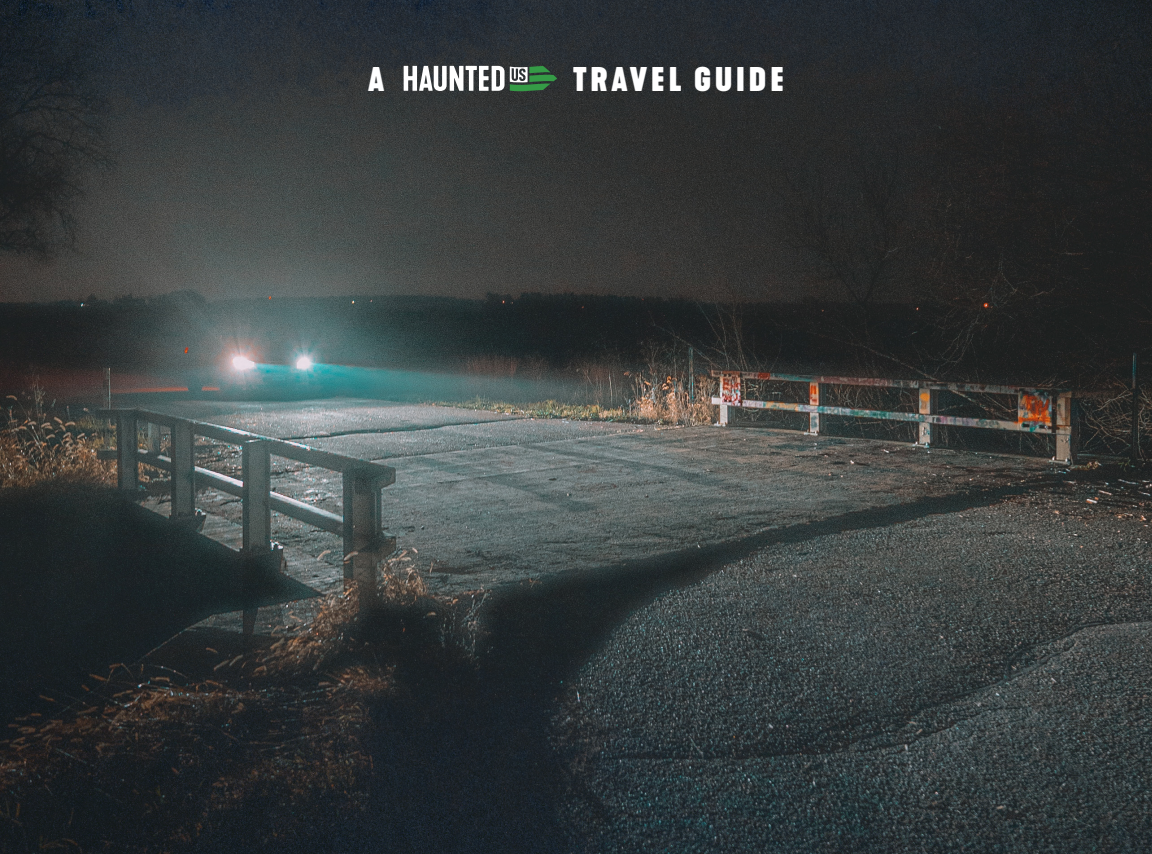


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HAUNTED NIGHTS IN

WISCONSIN

A HAUNTED  TRAVEL GUIDE



MITCH GOTH & BRANDON RUGZIE



Berlin

BERLIN TANNERY

If you're a superfan of Wisconsin's haunted attraction scene, you might already be familiar with the long, red brick building tucked behind a residential neighborhood in Berlin, Wisconsin. But the old tannery at the end of Wisconsin Street might be even more haunted than the props and lighting make it seem. The Berlin Tannery specializes in being a haunted house in more ways than one, with real paranormal encounters reportedly being as common as Halloween-time scares.

In Wisconsin's early years, fur trapping and leather tanning were some of the biggest and most lucrative businesses around. And the small community of Berlin came to be known as the fur and leather capital of it all. Tanneries, industrial operations to convert animal skin to usable material, soon ended up in stiff competition with each other. And, as the Wisconsin fur trade faded out, many old tanneries closed up shop and disappeared forever. But in Berlin, one sign of this formerly thriving industry remains: The Berlin Tannery.

Operational from the mid-1800s through to the 1990s, The Berlin Tannery was one of the town's longest lasting leather facilities. While it started life as a cranberry warehouse, The Berlin Tannery quickly took on a long-term life producing leather. Much of its operation went by uneventfully, though there was one mysterious

day when an anonymous person mailed an in-tact human skin to the facility for tanning (the tannery obviously refused to process this 'hide'). And, in the early 1900s, the building suffered a large fire, but it was able to recover after some time.

After closure, The Berlin Tannery came under private ownership in the early 2000s. The new owner had worked around the tannery during its operation, and already knew stories of unexplained things happening. Tools would often go missing, only to reappear in odd locations. Power to some specific tools would suddenly stop and restart for no known reason. Additionally, there had long been a sense of eeriness about the building. Workers sometimes noted an intense feeling of being watched. It was as if someone, or something, was looming over them. Perhaps a ghost trying to manage the floor from beyond the grave?

Today, The Berlin Tannery has been closed for over two decades. But a good few people would likely tell you: that doesn't mean it's empty. Ghost stories about the tannery have stacked up in recent years, inspiring regional ghost hunters to pay the old structure a visit to explore for things that go bump in the night. And, apparently, many of them have found those bumps in Berlin.

Those intense eerie feelings of being watched are said to remain

in the tannery today, with plenty of modern visitors noting uneasy sensations. But The Berlin Tannery has also become known for its ghostly sounds as well. People hear knocks, taps, and even entire disembodied voices echoing through the corridors on still nights. But perhaps the most interesting thing about these reports is just how frequently these sounds are noted. Some visiting ghost hunting groups claim to capture dozens of EVPs from single investigations. As if the idea of strolling through an old leather tannery in the pitch dark isn't spooky enough, imagine a cacophony of ghostly voices and metallic clangs nipping at your heels as you traverse the shadows.

Some of the Tannery's spooky sounds are said to be similar to those of its operation. You may hear voices calling out orders, heavy machinery running, and even power tools humming around the long-dormant tannery. Leather and fur certainly played a pivotal role in Berlin's history, but could some laborers have cared so much about their work at the tannery that they still clock in to this day? Talk about being worked to death!

Visitors to The Berlin Tannery have also frequently heard phantom footsteps, adding to the building's eerie array of paranormal sounds. Just think, in the mix of all the Tannery's knocks, bangs, and voices,

you might not even notice the sound of the footsteps coming right at you. But, if you're lucky, you'll see the ghost coming.

Apparitions, shadow figures, and other visual anomalies are not quite as common around the tannery as the sounds. But still, many visitors leave having captured what they say are paranormal images. Some lucky ghost seekers at The Berlin Tannery even claim to see full shadow figures with their own eyes. But who exactly are all these entities at The Berlin Tannery who conjure up sounds and make the shadows come alive?

Where the ghosts of The Berlin Tannery come from, and who exactly they are, remain unanswered questions. Some of the ghostly sounds suggest that they are phantoms of former workers. But what about the other strange sounds and experiences? Where would they come from? Visiting mediums and psychics claim to have an answer: portals. Purportedly, sensitives say The Berlin Tannery is home to several spiritual 'portals.' The idea being that spirits use these portals to enter and leave the mortal world. If you subscribe to that belief, then it's no wonder why an old leather facility has become such a paranormal hotbed.

But it's not just the dead bringing life back to The Berlin Tannery. In fact, in recent years, the building has seen plenty of living

visitors. Haunted houses are regularly opened during the Halloween season each year. And while ghost hunters and researchers keep the place busy year-round, the Halloween season remains the biggest draw. If you happen to visit The Berlin Tannery during haunted house season, you may find an extra sensation of chilling excitement from the attraction. Are the strange noises you keep hearing just part of the haunted house, or are they the tannery's real hauntings coming out to make themselves known?