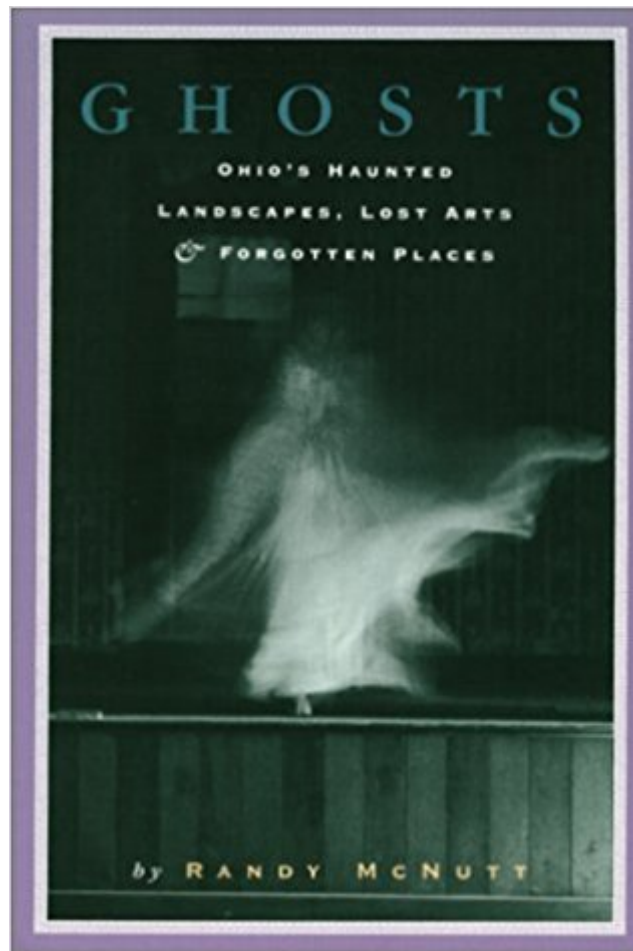




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Ghosts: Ohio's Haunted Landscapes, Lost Arts & Forgotten Places



Synopsis

Towns come and towns go. Travelers sometimes have to move in the fourth dimension. Randy McNutt takes us on an eccentric travel trip to dozens of Ohio ghost towns, uncovering tattooed chickens, legendary daredevils, swamp ghosts, milkmen who delivered milk and whiskey, and a fella who bit off his mother-in-law's ear. Handsome illustrations. 80 pages.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is obviously well-researched, though I think that more information on other parts of Ohio could have been included as well. It's obvious that the author concentrated on his area of Ohio. I would love to see a few sequels to this book; I'd buy them! However, my biggest complaint is the title--it is **very** misleading. I expected stories of **haunted** places in Ohio--and only a couple of ghosts are alluded to. Actually calling it Ghost Towns: Ohio's Lost Landscapes and Forgotten Places or something like that would have been better, I think.

This book had an interesting premise, but it was a lot of rambling, very little information on the ghost towns, and a bit of a disappointment. I didn't finish it, donated it to the Kidney Foundation after a few chapters.

I really loved Ghosts because it takes me to a lot of places I have visited and grown up around, from ghost towns to old canals to old battlegrounds. It is one of my favorite travelogues, and I

recommend it highly.

I have mixed feeling about this book. For all Randy McNutt's assuring us in his introduction of his numerous wanderings around the state of Ohio searching out lost towns, the book has the feel of bookish research about it. For one, and this seems unforgivable, there is not a single photograph, not one. Granted, some of the towns he discusses are nothing more than plowed fields today, but many others, by his own accounts, contain remnants of human habitation still evident. We read about the severe flooding that just about wiped Chilo off the map, for example, but it's still there and occupied; a photo of it would have been nice. Also, as an addenda, McNutt lists three dozen or so ghost towns from around the state, chosen, it seems, for no other reason than they had unusual names (Fly, Climax, Jaybird, Roundhead, etc.); for each of these he supplies a short description most likely taken from county histories published in the 1880s. Anyone can go to Google maps, find weird-sounding towns and placenames, and then check out what old histories had to say about them in a decent library and not hit the road once. I'm not saying that's what McNutt did, but the book gives the impression he could have. The towns dealt with in the main body of the book receive pretty full accounts of their history. Almost all the towns mentioned in the book are still in DeLorme's Ohio Atlas and on Google; some towns that aren't are tough to find for lack of directions or confusing information (i.e. it seems impossible to me that Surprise could be "in Washington Township, three miles west of what is now Route 61 in Morrow County" because that would place it either out of Washington Township or not on the RR as McNutt claims it was). The book contains interesting information about the towns covered, and McNutt is a decent enough writer. But the sense of place, which to me is the most intriguing thing about investigating lost towns in the first place, seems lacking. It's one thing to learn about a town's historical past, but I am just as wild to know why that place was chosen for a town, where it was exactly, and what it looks like now. Some photos just might have done the trick.

I love this book. While I never visited towns like Rialto, when they were more than a wide place in the road, I feel like I have a pretty good idea what they were like after reading "Ghosts." A nifty canal went through Rialto in it's boomtown days, and you can still see the remnants one of the locks there today, although the weeds and undergrowth try to hide it. The town is long-gone, but with Mr. McNutts writing, one can step back in time. And, the last chapter, on Hamilton, is priceless. I didn't want the book to end. Highly recommended.

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