

Ghost tour in York

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Oct 13, 2006 — Tonight (Friday the 13th), Scott Butcher, director of business development for the Nutec Group and chair of Downtown Inc.'s Promotions and Marketing Committee, will lead a candlelight ghost tour of York.

The tour is an updated version of the popular Ghost Tours led by Georg Sheets a few years ago. Tickets are available at the Downtown Inc. offices at \$7 for adults and \$5 for children.

From the gathering spot at 14 W. Market St. (Downtown Inc. offices), the first stop will be the old York County Court House on East Market Street. At one time, jail cells were in the basement of the building. It's also the location of York County's famous "Hex" trial for a murder that took place in Rehmeyer's Hollow. There are those who believe two ghosts hang out in the building: A former judge who skitters between courtrooms one and two, and a jailed man who took his own life before he went to trial.

Across the street, some folks at The Lafayette Club have reported hearing the footsteps of a dedicated deceased employee who apparently sticks around to make sure things are running smoothly.

On East Philadelphia Street is the Goodridge House, believed to have been a stop on the Underground Railroad as escaped slaves from the South made their way to freedom in the North. Some people say "you can hear haunting moans coming from the basement," Butcher said. Others say they've heard the "rattling of chains" and ghostly footsteps.

At one time, people said they could smell cigar smoke in the projection booth of Capitol Theatre - that came from a long-ago stagehand known to keep a stogie clamped between his teeth. Others have said they've heard the voice of a woman in the empty auditorium.

At the now-closed Fisher's Restaurant, the owners said they had ghostly encounters while they were renovating the place. Staffers reported hearing disembodied voices calling their names in the former Ramona Restaurant portion of the building. You'll also hear about the sing-along humming that was not coming from an old record player.

Outside the York County Judicial Center - on the site of the former

Penn Hotel, which was built on the site of the former Pennsylvania House hotel - there will be the story of the dwarf cannibal from Fiji who died while touring with a B.T. Barnum show when it stopped in York.

Butcher said there will be many more stories on the walking tour.