Downtown Gladstone
Haunted History Walking Tour

Five spooky stops · Local lore · Autumn evenings in Oregon

THE FIVE HAUNTED STOPS

1 Old Gladstone Public Library
135 E. Dartmouth
The Whispering Shelves
Books slide out on their own, and a polite 1890s voice still checks due dates.

2 Gladstone Post Office
605 Portland Avenue
The Unsent Letter
A 1920s letter appears in a PO Box, then vanishes if you try to photograph it.

3 Clackamas Fire District Station
555 Portland Avenue
The Patient Bell
The old station bell rings once a year — always on a rained-out lecture anniversary.

4 Charles Ames Memorial Park
S. end of Portland Ave
The Picnic That Never Ended
Faint lemonade, fried chicken, and a brass band that stays just out of sight.

5 Max Patterson Memorial Park
450 E Exeter Street
The Eternal Game
After dark you hear a bat crack. Leave a baseball — it may return to the mound.

The Stories Behind the Stops

1. The Old Gladstone Public Library

135 E. Dartmouth

The Whispering Shelves

Local lore (lightly embellished) says that when the old library building was cleared, a few stubborn volumes refused to leave. Staff still report books sliding out a few inches on their own, especially anything about Oregon's early fairs or Chautauqua lectures. One night a librarian swore she heard a polite, slightly stuffy voice clear its throat and say, "Excuse me, but that volume is overdue by 127 years." The spirit is widely believed to be a mild-mannered 1890s Chautauqua attendee who simply cannot quit the lifelong learning habit. Bring a book – he might 'recommend' one by gently pushing it towards you!

2. Gladstone Post Office

605 Portland Avenue

The Unsent Letter

For decades, carriers have noticed one PO Box that occasionally holds a letter that was never mailed. The handwriting is old-fashioned and the postmark is always a date from the 1920's. The message is always the same: "Tell them the fair was better when the bees were still in the hive." Historians think it refers to the big wooden "Beehive" auditorium that once stood in the old Chautauqua grounds. The letter vanishes as soon as anyone tries to photograph it. Superstitious locals leave a stamp on the counter as a tip…just in case.

3. The Clackamas Fire District Station

555 Portland Avenue

The Patient Bell

Firefighters joke that the old station bell still rings once a year – always on the anniversary of a particularly soggy 1894 outdoor Chautauqua lecture that got rained out. No one has ever found a mechanical reason. The theory is that an incredibly determined early attendee is still waiting for the "all clear" so the program can resume. If you hear a single soft clang on a rainy October evening, tip your hat toward the river and say, "We're ready when you are."

4. Charles Ames Memorial City Park

Near the South End of Portland Avenue and W. Clackamas Blvd.

The Picnic That Never Ended

This park sits close to where the big summer gatherings once spilled out of the Chautauqua grounds. On quiet evenings people report the faint smell of lemonade and fried chicken, plus the sound of a brass band playing just a little too far away to see. One regular walker swears a white tablecloth appears under a tree, already set with empty plates. The ghostly hosts are apparently still waiting for the last speaker of the day to finish so everyone can eat. Feel free to bring a snack – they never mind sharing the shade!

5. Max Patterson Memorial Park

450 E Exeter Street

The Eternal Game

Long before the spray pad and playground, this area saw baseball games and community picnics tied to the old fairgrounds and Chautauqua era. Kids (and a few adults) still claim that after dark you can sometimes hear the crack of a bat and the cheer of a crowd that is not there. The ball is never found the next morning. Local kids have turned it into a friendly tradition: leave a spare baseball on the park bench overnight and check in the morning. More often than not it has mysteriously returned to the pitcher's mound, perfectly centered, as if someone is still warming up for the next game.