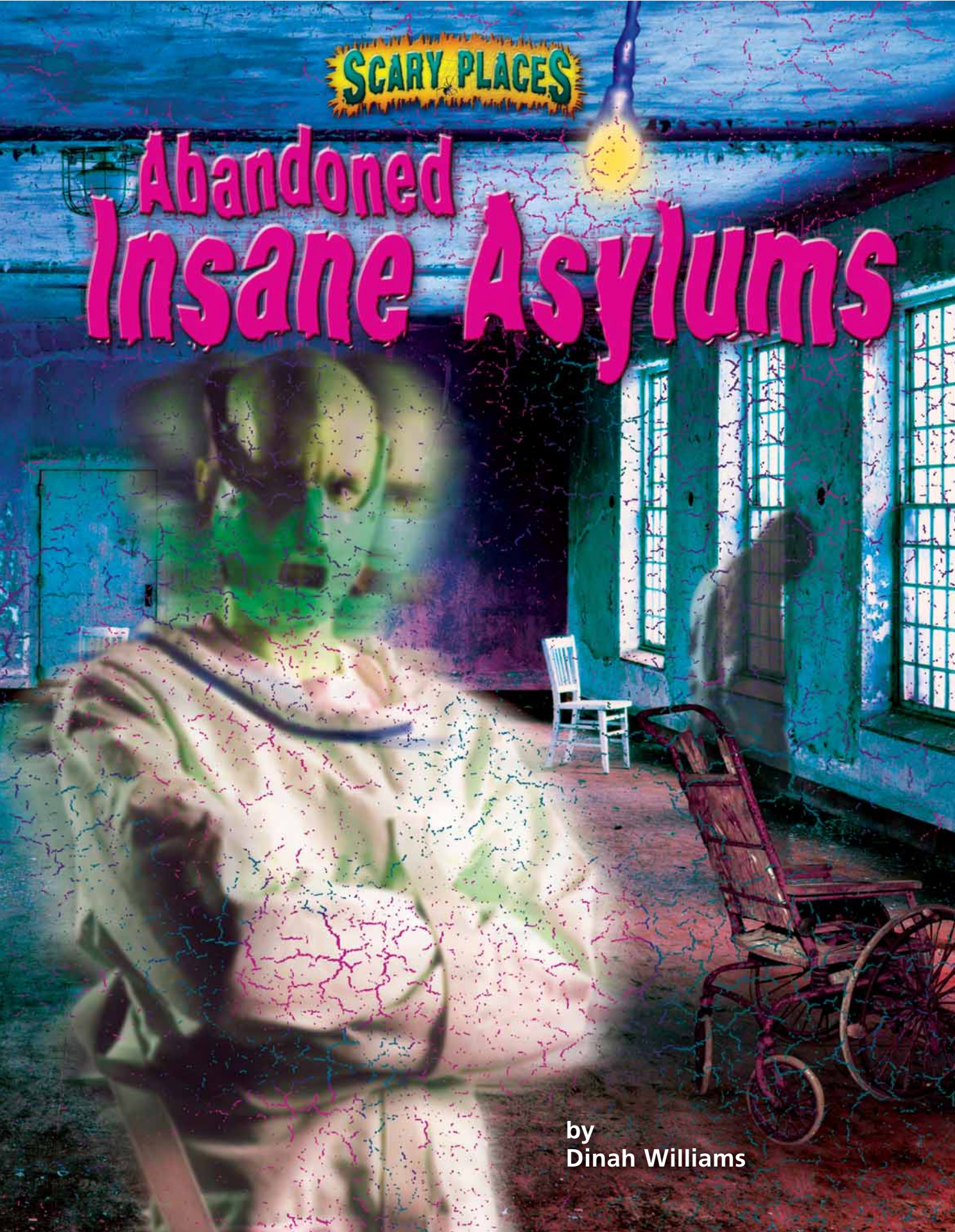


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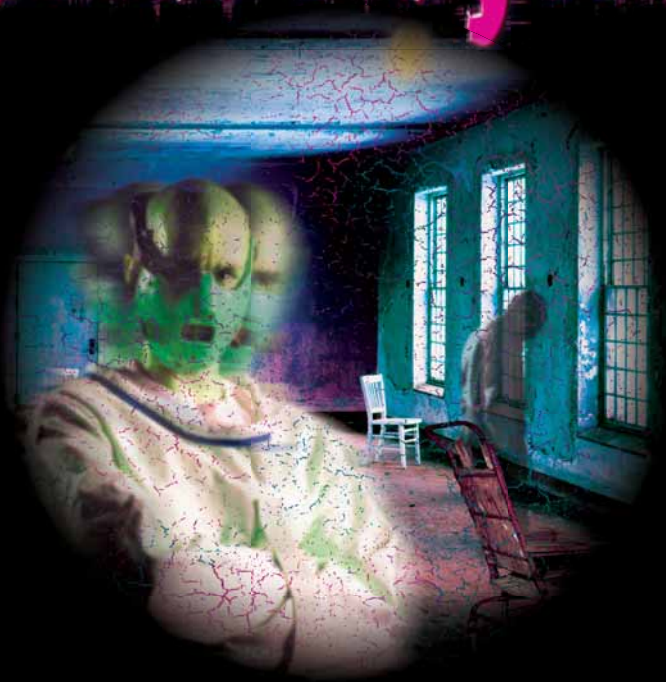
Abandoned Insane Asylums



by
Dinah Williams

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Abandoned
Insane Asylums



by Dinah Williams

Consultant: Troy Taylor
President of the American Ghost Society

BEARPORT
PUBLISHING

New York, New York

Credits

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Publisher: Kenn Goin

Editorial Director: Adam Siegel

Creative Director: Spencer Brinker

Design: Dawn Beard Creative

Photo Researcher: Beaura Kathy Ringrose

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Williams, Dinah.

Abandoned insane asylums : by Dinah Williams.

p. cm. — (Scary places)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-59716-575-4 (library binding)

ISBN-10: 1-59716-575-1 (library binding)

1. Asylums—History—Juvenile literature. 2. Psychiatric hospitals—History—Juvenile literature. 3. Mental health care—History—Juvenile literature. I. Title.

RC439.W537 2008

362.2'1—dc22

2007038531

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For more information, write to Bearport Publishing Company, Inc., 101 Fifth Avenue, Suite 6R, New York, New York, 10003. Printed in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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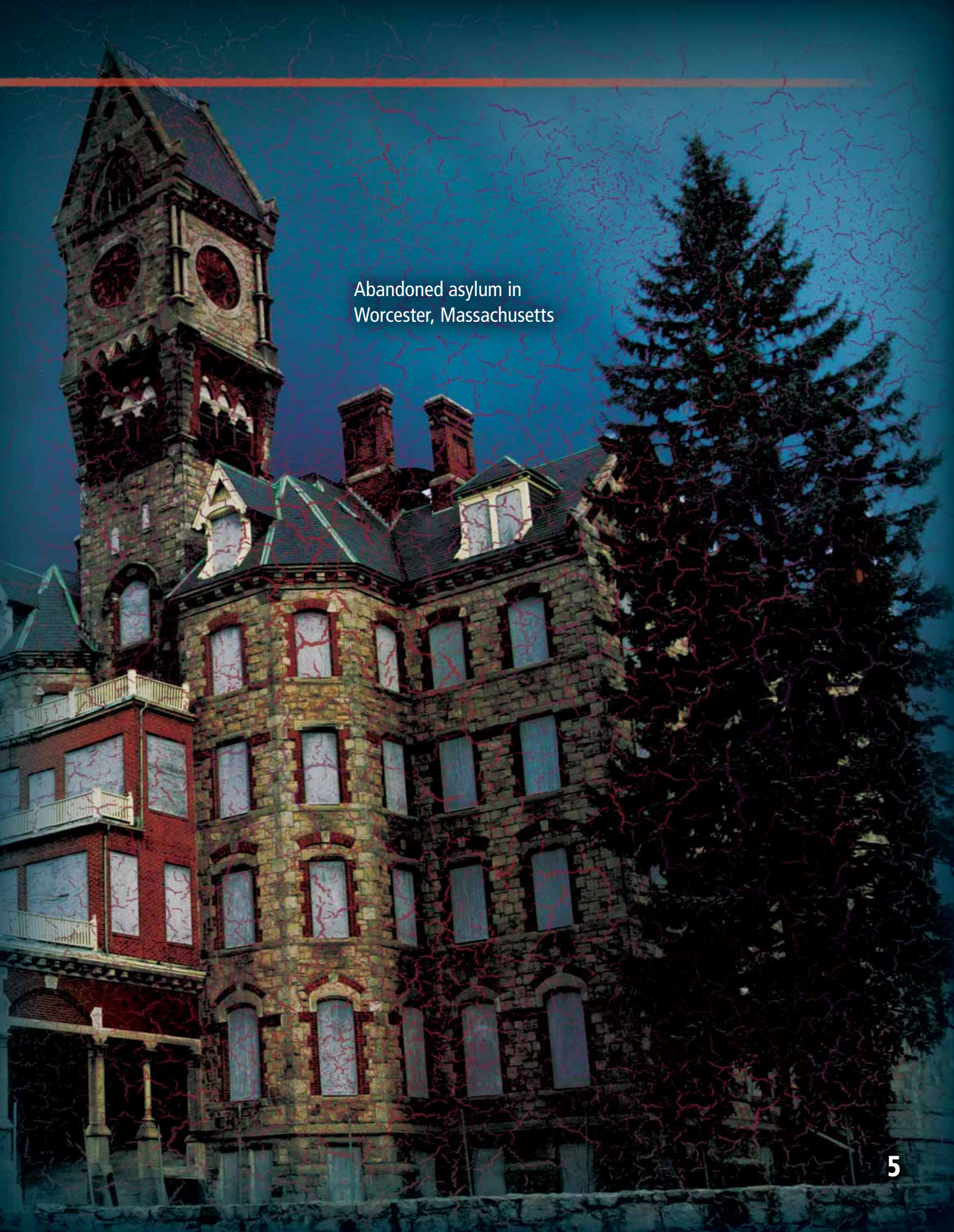
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Abandoned Insane Asylums

Some people have a hard time knowing the difference between what is real and what is imaginary. These **mentally ill** people may hear voices or see things that aren't really there. They may also mistakenly think people are trying to hurt them.

In the past, doctors didn't understand the causes and cures for mental illness. As a result, many of their treatments could be painful. Few were successful. Doctors often placed their patients in **asylums** that were overcrowded and dirty. These places could be more like prisons than hospitals.

Today, the causes of mental illness are better understood. The treatments are better, too. Many of the asylums of the past have been **abandoned**. The memories of the patients' pain, however, still linger within their walls. In the 11 abandoned asylums in this book, you'll discover some of the most terrifying and terrible hospitals for the mentally ill. Luckily, they have all been closed.



Abandoned asylum in
Worcester, Massachusetts

Bedlam at Bethlem

Bethlem Royal Hospital, Moorfields, London, England

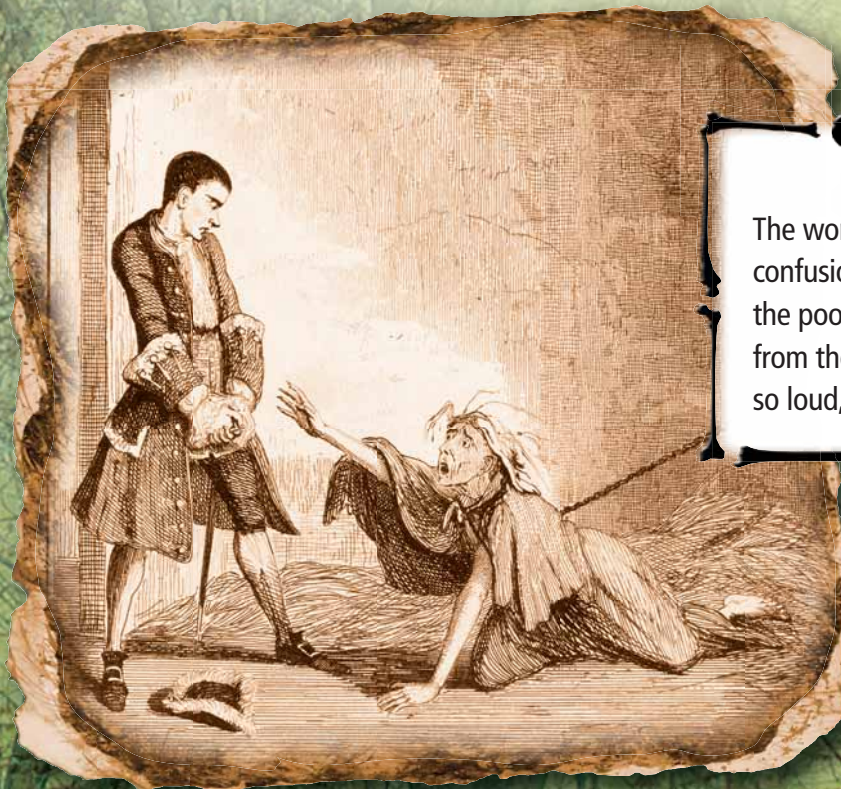
Opened 1676 • Closed 1815

In the 1700s, many people thought that mental illness was caused by evil **spirits**. Some doctors thought it could never be cured. As a result, patients at asylums were often locked away in cages and treated like animals. For a large part of its history, Bethlem Royal Hospital was such a place. Here, the mentally ill were kept—not treated.

Patients and visitors at Bethlem Royal Hospital in the 1700s

The Bethlem Royal Hospital in Bishopsgate, London, began caring for the mentally ill in 1403. The “care” mainly involved chaining patients to the floor or a wall. They were beaten when they couldn’t be controlled. By the middle of the 1600s, the hospital was overcrowded and dirty. So in 1676 the patients were moved to a larger building in a different part of London, called Moorfields.

At Moorfields, the mentally ill became a tourist attraction. People paid a penny to laugh at the “**lunatics.**” Visitors were allowed to bring long sticks to poke **inmates** chained in their cells. In 1814, about 96,000 people visited the asylum. The next year, the building had become so run-down that the patients were moved to a new hospital in St. George’s Fields. While this new asylum looked better, the treatment of the patients was nearly as bad.



The word *bedlam* means a place of wild confusion. The word comes from the name of the poorly run hospital—Bethlem. The noise from the patients at Bethlem was said to be so loud, it could drive a person **insane**.

Patients at Bethlem were often chained to a wall.

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About the Author

Dinah Williams is a nonfiction editor and writer who has produced dozens of books for children. She lives in New Jersey.

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Abandoned Insane Asylums

What secrets lie buried within the crumbling walls of old insane asylums? In the past, doctors didn't understand the causes and cures for mental illness. As a result, many of their treatments could be painful. Few were successful. Doctors often placed their patients in asylums that were overcrowded and dirty. They could be more like prisons than hospitals. In the 11 abandoned asylums in this book, you'll discover some of the most terrifying and terrible hospitals for the mentally ill. Luckily, they have all been closed.

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Haunted Hotels

Creepy Castles

Haunted Houses

Ghost Towns

Spooky Cemeteries

BEARPORT
PUBLISHING

www.bearportpublishing.com

ISBN-10: 1-59716-575-1
ISBN-13: 978-1-59716-575-4

9 781597 165754