

## THE LAST WORD

# A Ghostly History Lesson

The imposing granite State House and its grounds offer much of historical interest. For a lively version of events, spend an evening with Jody Donnelly. She meets you outside the State House, beside George Washington's statue, and for 90 minutes brings Columbia's early days to life with stories of battles, heroes, and — her specialty — spirits.

Take the soldiers of South Carolina's Palmetto Regiment who died in the Mexican-American War of 1847. Anyone getting too close to the monument erected in their honor risks their ghostly wrath, Donnelly says. The soldiers are still mad at the scalawag troops who broke palm branches off the memorial as General Sherman's troops marched through Columbia in 1865. Those Union troops also fired rounds at the future Capitol then under construction — six brass stars mark the spots — and broke off Washington's walking cane as they attacked his statue.

The stories go on. There's the worker who leaned out to carve his name on a crossbeam while renovating the State House dome but fell to his death, his name trailing off. His spirit wanders the catwalk at night, as security guards report. — LW

### IF YOU GO

America By Foot's Ghosts and Legends of Columbia tour is offered year-round, 8 p.m.; \$15 adults, \$10 ages 8-14, free under 8. To reserve space: **803-765-1837**, [americabyfoot.com](http://americabyfoot.com)

