



## touch of the eerie in North Carolina

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Joe Baldwin is looking for his head near Wilmington, a girl who was killed on the way to a party in Charlotte is still trying to get home, and a ghost named Tony has been playing his harp in a house in Southport for over a century.

Chapel Hill will be thoroughly populated with ghouls and spirits Saturday night, but some real North Carolina ghosts will also be stalking nearby, no doubt.

One of North Carolina's most famous ghosts, Conductor Joe Baldwin, was decapitated in a train collision at Maco Station near Wilmington in 1867. As the story goes, Baldwin was frantically swinging his signal lantern, but an oncoming train unfortunately did not heed his warning.

Baldwin's ghost could be seen regularly in the form of a swinging light which wandered up and down the tracks at Maco Station at night, until they took the tracks up recently. Residents say he is still looking for his head.

Harry Warren, a Wilmington historical researcher, said Baldwin hasn't appeared as much since the tracks were torn up.

"Maybe even ghosts lose their direction," Warren said. "But who's to say? I wouldn't say he's not still out there searching for his head." He said he has been out to look for Baldwin's ghost, but has never been fortunate enough to find him.

Warren added that in the 1960s the National Guard was even called out to the site of Baldwin's hauntings. "I don't know what they were supposed to do. Capture him or bottle him up maybe." He said there was so much interest around about the ghost the people's curiosity got the best of them. But Warren said he did not think the National Guard actually found anything.

A girl who left for a party in Charlotte over 50 years ago is still trying to get home. In the 1930s a man reported a strange incident that

happened to him on the highway. A young woman wearing a party dress flagged him down for a ride. She asked him to take her to a certain address in Charlotte, so he opened his back door to let her in and drove to the address. When he opened the door to let her out she had disappeared. He inquired at the house where he had been instructed to go, and the lady inside told him this kind of thing happened all the time. The

girl had been killed on the way to a party and was trying to get home.

In Southport, a musician named Tony played with a group in a hotel over 100 years ago. He went fishing one day with two other musicians and all drowned. But Tony returned to play his harp.

The hotel has since been converted into a house. Residents say Tony slams the door when he comes in and they hear him walking up and down

the stairs. He plays his harp very loudly so that it can be heard all over the large house. Evidently, he is a friendly ghost. He's never been seen, but his music is evidence enough to his existence.

There is another ghost story involving a Chapel Hill student that may make you think twice about eating any apples any time soon. A long time ago (the story does not specify how long) a doctor lived with his young daughter Suzanne and Aunt Mary in rural Mecklenburg County. His family had been prominent in Charlotte since just after the Revolutionary War.

The doctor's wife died when his daughter was in second grade, so he and Aunt Mary raised the girl. The doctor became very protective of his daughter — she was all he lived for and he wanted her near him at all times. He could not bear to let her leave for even short visits to friends' houses. Suzanne loved her father, but as she grew older she longed to get away more often.

When she was 21 she persuaded him to let her go to a weekend house party where she met a student from Chapel Hill named George. George visited Suzanne every weekend after that, which made the doctor very nervous and upset. One weekend George cornered the doctor for an intense conversation about his daughter, after which the doctor stalked out into the night. George planned to return to Chapel Hill to get his diploma and come back for Suzanne, but after he left the house that night he was never seen again and the police never found a trace of him. They assumed he had run off after an unhappy love affair.

Less than a year later the doctor died of a heart attack. One day after he had died Aunt Mary was gathering apples in the orchard from Suzanne's favorite tree when her foot sunk into a soft place which seemed like settling earth. She had to throw out the apples from the tree because they were speckled through with red lines that looked like veins of blood. The

yellow apples from that tree were spotted with red each year thereafter.

Suzanne is dead now too, and the apple tree has been cut down because it obstructed the view of the nearby graveyard where the doctor, his wife and Suzanne are buried. Now the stump looks like a tombstone, fitting in well with the view of the resting place.

In Old Salem (now Winston-Salem), a place full of history, you might expect to find ghostly spirits. And sure enough, the well-known ghost of "Little Red Man" haunted a house there for years. Andreas Kremser was a member of the Moravian Church. Born in Pennsylvania in 1772, he moved to Salem where he lived until his death in 1786. He was a shoemaker and lived in the Brothers House where all the single men of the community were housed. One evening he and some of the other brothers were excavating the basement for an addition to the house when a bank broke and Kremser was covered with earth. He died later that night.

For many years his ghost was sighted in the halls and the basement of the house. He was always wearing the red jacket he had on when he died. People heard sounds at night resembling the tapping of a shoemaker's hammer.

But the "Little Red Man" no longer haunts Salem since a visiting minister put him to rest, pronouncing an invocation of the Trinity and commanding him to rest. Many Salem residents say they miss the ghost.

"We all know about the ghost of Andreas Kremser," a secretary from the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce said. "Some say he was hard of hearing," she added. That would explain why he did not hear the men calling him to move away from the falling earth.

Another spooky story comes from Bath, N.C., where a horse's hoofprints have been imbedded in the earth for nearly 200 years. A prominent man in the town who was into horse racing was preparing for a race one day when

