

Gimghoul Castle — the mysterious fortress on the hill

By KATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

On Friday, June 13, 1924, a fairly unremarkable day in the Southern part of heaven, the Chapel Hill Weekly reported that a lodge was to be built "on the edge of Battle's Park at Dromgoole Rock, just west of Piney Prospect." Two years later, Gimghoul Castle was complete, and the secret Order of the Gimghouls moved in to take its place in University lore.

The story connected to Gimghoul Castle concerns Peter Dromgoole, who came from Virginia in 1831 to attend the University. According to William Kemp Battle's "History of the University of North Carolina," Dromgoole was "fond of card playing and of wild company." Dromgoole left the University before he graduated.

According to legend, Dromgoole courted Miss Fanny, a lovely Chapel Hill girl. When Peter's best friend also fell in love with Fanny, Dromgoole became consumed with jealousy and challenged his rival to a duel. The duel was fought out at Piney Prospect. Dromgoole lost and is said to be buried under Dromgoole's Tomb, a large stone beside which the duel had been fought.

After hearing of Dromgoole's death, Fanny pined away of a broken heart and died beside a stream running through Piney Prospect. The stream was christened "Miss Fanny's Stream" in her memory.

In reality, Peter Dromgoole was enrolled at the University, but after he had an argument with a professor, he left his studies in anger and

did not graduate. He was never seen again, however, and his mysterious disappearance has never been explained.

Dromgoole's Tomb can be found on a slope behind Gimghoul Castle, in a heavily wooded area off Country Club road. The castle, built in a medieval Anglo-Saxon style of stone, belongs to the Order of the Gimghouls, a secret society of the University. It was constructed of stones collected by K.P. Battle, who often took long walks near Piney Prospect. Each time he strolled in the woods, he placed a stone in a pile. The huge rock pile that slowly evolved, with help from University students, was used by Waldensian Masons when they built the fortress in 1926.

The Order of the Gimghouls was founded in 1889, mainly through the efforts of Wray Martin. Martin was a dreamy law school student enthralled with medieval tales.

Martin idealized the noble beliefs of knighthood and chivalry — beliefs forming the basis of the Order. On his walks to Piney Prospect, he envisioned 12 imaginary islands below the Point and vividly described each in his journals, which now are the property of the Gimghouls. He imagined "Hippocastles" as a fortress for the island cities. Martin died before the castle was built, but his friends constructed his dream castle.

Though the society is secret, several facts are known about the Order. Hanging in the Great Hall is the Round Table of the Gimghouls. It has the oath of King Arthur inscribed around the edge. There are

suits of armor in the castle, and crossed swords adorn the walls. To gain membership, one must be a male student at the University or a faculty member. Since the fraternity is associated with the campus, new members' names are revealed in each year's Yackety Yack. Distinguished alumni include former Gov. J.C. Ehringhaus, J.L. Morehead, Frank Porter Graham, William Rand Kenan and former UNC-system president William Friday.

Being so secretive, the castle lends itself to tall tales. Over the years, tales of sacrificial rites, weird initiations and white-robed apparitions

have drawn students to the castle like a magnet. The castle is a favorite dare destination. Unfortunately, student jaunts to the castle result in unwanted vandalism. Charles Shaffer, a member of the Order since 1933, doesn't like publicity for the Order. He said publicity only encourages vandals to break the colored glass windows or chip rocks away from the castle walls. Cigarette butts and beer cans often litter the drive.

"It stirs a little curiosity and sometimes the curiosity gets out of hand," Shaffer said.

A popular time to visit Gimghoul

Castle and Dromgoole's Tomb is after dark. Students must approach the fortress on a dirt road that passes through tall trees and dense foliage. Junior John Carelas once visited the castle on Halloween.

"I was a little nervous because I didn't know what to expect," he said. "I've heard the rumors about Gimghoul. I was disappointed because they didn't sacrifice anybody."

STV filmed "The Shadows of Dromgoole" at Gimghoul Castle last year. The film crew was only allowed in the bathroom and kitchen of the castle, according to Tim

McMillan, executive producer of STV and a graduate in anthropology. McMillan said the castle wasn't very intimidating, even though the cast and crew filmed from sundown to sunup.

"It really wasn't very creepy because there were usually 10 to 15 people there," he said.

No one will ever know exactly what goes on in the castle, or whether Peter Dromgoole still haunts the area around his burial place. Until students are invited into the castle to check it out themselves, the rumors will remain a part of the castle.

Halloween may spook small children

By JULIE WOODS
Staff Writer

Halloween is the time when scary ghouls and menacing goblins come out to haunt the night. For small children Halloween can be really frightening, but parents should try to make such fright a positive experience.

"Some children are easily frightened by scary masks and people they don't know," said Frances Campbell, coordinator of psychoeducational services at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center. Parents should be sensitive to the type of child they are dealing with, she said.

"We (teachers) make sure that masks are not part of what is going on," said Miles Reck, a third-grade teacher at Carrboro Elementary

School. "Even though we may be in strange clothes, the teachers don't wear masks so kids can see our faces."

"Any child that can't deal with a scary situation, or doesn't enjoy it, should not be ridiculed or pushed into participating," said Campbell, who has worked at the center for 15 years. Parents shouldn't worry that their kids are scared.

A child can learn to understand that the holiday is fun by dressing up in costumes, putting on make-up and joining in the actual activity of trick or treat, she said. Parents should make it clear that the trick aspect of Halloween is make-believe, she said.

Preschoolers may find scary events such as haunted houses and gory movies too upsetting, she said,

and children older than six should have an adult with them if they attend such activities.

"Kids can enjoy the thrill of being scared as long as they have the sense of security a parent gives," Campbell said. Around age eight or nine, children begin to really enjoy the scarier aspects of Halloween by themselves, she said.

As far costumes go, Campbell said children can be whoever they want to be.

Reck agreed, saying, "There is no specific trend in costumes this year, but hairspray paint is popular with the older kids (third through sixth grade)."

Halloween can also help children acknowledge and overcome any fears that they may have, Campbell said.

"All of us have things that can scare us, and dressing up allows us to deal with a scary situation," she said. "A child can dress up like a witch and say 'okay — I'm a witch like you, and I'm not scared anymore.'"

For children younger than 10, Campbell suggested that parents take them on short trick-or-treat trips in familiar neighborhoods, and walk discreetly behind with a flashlight.

Students should do things in groups, like having Halloween parties or going to Chapel Hill or Carrboro Recreation parties, Reck said. Trick or treaters were told to wear light colored clothing, avoid houses that are not lit up and check all candy after they get home, he said.

CIA

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arrested Wednesday after they refused Dean of Students Frederic Schroeder's request that they leave Hanes Hall. They were charged with disorderly conduct.

Preliminary hearings for the protesters have been set for Nov. 19. If convicted, they could receive a fine and up to six months in jail for the misdemeanor.

Graham Entwistle, one of the activists charged in the incident, said he thought the protest action was successful in making people aware of the CIA's recruiting practices.

"Objectively, I think we were unsuccessful in that our action will not stop the CIA from recruiting on this campus in the future," he said.

The protesters were released on \$250 secured bond, paid by Chapel Hill resident Joe Herzenberg. Herzenberg is a candidate for the Chapel Hill Town Council.

Herzenberg said he put up bond for the students because they were standing up for their principles. "I believe them to be honorable people," Herzenberg said. "I've put up bond for students before and I will continue to do so in the future."

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