



Very real chills from the Hill

Chapel Hill may seem to be an idyllic college town, but it has its own supply of skeletons in the closet. In the town's past lurk frightening tales of horror and unexplained death.

The murders of Suellen Evans, Rachel Crook and Lucille Rinaldi are part of this almost forgotten past. Each was committed more than 20 years ago, but all remain unsolved, a mystery to police and community members alike.

In the spirit of the Halloween season it is again the time of year to examine some of these more unsavory memories from the past.

By COURTNEY SANDERS
Staff Writer

Halloween for many of us means dressing up as pregnant nuns, Dick Crum look-alikes or Playboy bunnies and parading up and down Franklin Street.

Or perhaps you are reminded of movies like "Halloween," parts I, II and III, where every closet, bed and kitchen contained a dead person (murdered by some weirdo who always managed to escape death no matter many times he was stabbed or shot).

Chapel Hill has its own murder mysteries.

In some, the killer was never found or the prime suspect was not convicted despite convincing evidence. These chilling cases will keep you watching your step.

Arboretum attacker

Suellen Evans had finished classes and was on her way back to Cobb residence hall. She entered the Coker Arboretum, which runs along Cameron Avenue and Raleigh Street. Within minutes, she was dead.

Thus, the Arboretum is the scene

of one of Chapel Hill's most bizarre murder mysteries. This violent crime was not committed at night when the Arboretum would be dimly lit and spooky. It happened on a hot, cloudless summer day: Tuesday, July 30, 1965.

Traffic was heavy on Raleigh Street, and children were playing only 50 feet away, as Evans, who was planning to go home to Mooresville for the weekend, entered the Arboretum at 12:30 p.m.

A few minutes later, two nuns and two female students heard her screams.

The women rushed into the Arboretum. There they found Evans, who had staggered almost 100 yards back to the street after being attacked. She said, "He tried to rape me. I think I'm going to faint."

Evans fell to the ground dead, her clothes covered with blood. She had been stabbed in the heart.

Her killer had vanished without a trace.

About 250 students gathered to search for clues and the murder weapon, a 5- to 6-inch long switchblade. They got down on their hands and knees to look under every bush and tree, but the weapon was never found.

The police scoured the area as well but found no clues, except for hair samples confirming the killer's race. All the people near the Arboretum that day were questioned. But the police had no suspects and no motive established.

Six days later, a description of a man seen twice near the Arboretum was released: a black male, about 25 years old, about 5-foot-10-inches tall, 160 pounds and with a slender, athletic build.

This description, given by students, matched one given by a janitor in Davie Hall.

Another student said he saw a man wearing a light blue, button-down shirt enter the Arboretum at noon. He saw the same man crossing

Franklin Street near the Alpha Tau Omega house about 1 p.m.

These leads, as well as many others, were followed. Police followed one man to Texas who said he knew who murdered Evans, but it turned out he was just an alcoholic with dreams of grandeur who had heard about the case.

In the end, no arrests were made. To this day, the murder in the Arboretum has never been solved.

Rachel Crook murder

Crook's Corner on West Franklin Street is named after the lady who lived on that property for 20 years, until her murder just outside Chapel Hill on August 29, 1951.

Rachel Crook, a 71-year-old spinster, was found lying in a pool of dried blood on that day on an abandoned dirt road four miles north of Chapel Hill, near New Hope Presbyterian Church.

Crook had been beaten to death with the killer's fists, her face battered beyond recognition. Her legs were drawn up toward her shoulders, and her clothing was pulled up to her waist. One pool of blood was under her head and another under her lower body.

The victim was a lady devoted to her education. At age 50, she had come to Chapel Hill to pursue a doctorate degree in economics.

She lived in a remodeled gas station, where Crook's Corner is now. To help pay for school she operated a laundrette, a fish market and a textile remnant store, all in her home. She also sold boxes of pecans from her plantation in Alabama.

On the day of her mysterious death, 24 deputies and city detectives, along with the State Bureau of Investigation, searched the road and surrounding grounds for clues. A set of tire tracks, indicating that someone had driven onto the road and backed out over the same tracks, were found.

The body was identified after a dressmaker called the police to report Crook missing. Crook had missed a fitting appointment, and the dressmaker had found her home open and the stores untended.

Friends said Crook used to relax on her porch from 7:30 to 8 p.m. She sat in a chair that was always inside the store except for that 30-minute interval. The day of the murder the chair was still on the porch. The police assumed that the killer could have approached Crook at that time; they also surmised that she knew her killer, because she probably wouldn't have been persuaded to get into a car with a stranger.

The other clues that police found were flesh under Crook's fingernails, indicating a struggle, and hair on her clothing that was not hers.

The police thought they had the case solved when they arrested a farmhand seen near Crook's home on Aug. 29. But they released him when evidence led them to a new

suspect.

This second suspect man was covered with scratches and didn't have an alibi. He had also sold his car two days before but had no record of the sale, because it was a cash transaction.

Again police concluded they had the wrong man, because new witnesses said they had heard screams from a green Ford truck passing by on a road near the murder scene. The present suspect hadn't owned a truck.

The police called the Alamance County sheriff to ask for help in locating the green truck. This seemed to be their lucky break, because at the same time an Alamance County woman was complaining that a green truck was blocking her driveway.

The truck was registered to Hobart Lee, who had been convicted of assault on a female in Alamance County but had received a suspended sentence. The police called him into the station. He had fresh scratches on his arms and face, and the tire tracks matched the tires on Lee's truck. The police jailed Lee on Sept. 1.

At the trial, Lee said he was in a house of prostitution on the night in question. The proprietor said she had never seen him before and that the house was locked up that night, because she had been sick. A neighbor corroborated that story.

The Orange County sheriff testified that Lee said he was so drunk that night that he didn't remember what happened. The sheriff said part of their conversation that night went as follows:

"You drove up that road (the one on which the body was found) because you helped build it, didn't you?"

"I guess so."

"While you were there, did you hit her with anything besides your fists?"

"I don't think so."

After an hour of deliberation, the jury rendered a verdict of not guilty.

Christmas Eve murder

Frank and Lucille Rinaldi, hometown sweethearts, were married in July 1963. On December 24, 1964, Mrs. Rinaldi, who was pregnant, was found dead in her home on North Street.

She had been suffocated to death.

Evans fell to the ground dead, her clothes covered with blood. She had been stabbed in the heart. Her killer had vanished without a trace.

and there were signs of a struggle. Some of the doors and windows were not locked.

The police charged her husband with her murder.

Mr. Rinaldi was a UNC-CH graduate student and an instructor in English. He claimed he had been out all day buying Christmas presents for his wife.

Mrs. Rinaldi had worked only one day at Guy B. Phillips school before leaving abruptly and returning to Waterbury. She returned to Chapel Hill on Dec. 20.

Rinaldi's motive seemed to be that his wife had just recently taken out a \$20,000 double-indemnity life insurance policy, bought from their friend John Sipp.

Rinaldi, however, was freed for lack of evidence, but was arrested again eight months later.

At the trial, a local waiter, Alfred Foushee, said Rinaldi had tried to hire him over and over again to kill Mrs. Rinaldi. He also said that on Christmas Eve Mr. Rinaldi said, "It's over. I did it."

He was convicted but won a new trial on errors from the N.C. Supreme Court.

Mr. Rinaldi did not testify at his first trial, but this time he did. At his trial he denied Foushee's story, claiming he had been shopping with Sipp on Christmas Eve.

Sipp said, Rinaldi "did not go even near his wife when he opened the apartment door and saw her lying on the floor." Sipp said he had checked the body instead.

On Oct. 21, 1965, the jury found Rinaldi not guilty.

PYEWACKET

SEAFOOD AND
CONTINENTAL
CUISINE

LIVE MUSIC

929-9297
CHAPEL HILL

RESTAURANT

Dromgoole tale premieres Nov. 1 on public television

"Shadows of Dromgoole," a ghoulish tale of horror and hilarity, will premiere statewide over the stations of the UNC Center for Public Television on Saturday, Nov. 1 at 11 p.m.

Produced here at the University, "Shadows" loosely follows the local legend of Peter Dromgoole, a student killed in a duel fought over the honor of his lover in 1833. The story has been the subject of at least two novels and the theme for one poem.

In the 90-minute show, the fictitious town of Dromgoole-Berry, founded in the late 1700s, sets the scene for murder and dark villainy as well as lighthearted spoofs of vampirism and political hijinks.

The cast features many North Carolina actors. Patricia Barnett, playing the twisted matriarch of the Dromgoole clan, has played in more than 140 productions. She most recently appeared as Madame Elizabeth in "Look Homeward, Angel" for the PlayMakers Repertory Company.

Paul Tourtillote, who appeared in "Look Homeward, Angel" and "Much Ado About Nothing" for PlayMakers, stars as the corrupt senatorial candidate, J.C. Dromgoole.

Walter Spearman, a retired professor from the UNC School of Journalism and author of "The Carolina Playmakers: The First 50 Years," guest stars as Oliver Dromgoole.

James Pritchett, known to millions of television viewers as Dr. Matt Powers on the daytime soap opera "The Doctors" — for which he won an Emmy Award in 1978 — makes a special guest appearance as the Dromgoole-Berry town historian.

"Shadows" is the first production of Maco Light Productions, founded in 1985 by a group of University students. Michael R. Wilson and James A. Briggs, both from Winston-Salem, are the show's creators.

Wilson, who also served as director, said the company's philosophy is to develop the talents and skills of regional artists.

"The idea is to explore the vast heritage of North Carolina," he said. "We're looking to preserve the old, while discovering the new, through the creative perceptions

of its people."
"Shadows" was produced by Maco Light Productions in association with Student Television of the University.

The Legend of Maco Light

On a night in 1867, at the small Brunswick County station of Maco, 15 miles west of Wilmington, a slow freight train was puffing down the track. In the caboose was Joe Baldwin, the flagman. A jerking noise startled him, and he became aware that his caboose was uncoupled from the rest of the train, which went heedlessly on its way.

As the caboose slackened speed, Joe looked up and saw the beaming light of a fast passenger train bearing down on him. Grabbing his lantern, he waved it frantically to warn the oncoming engineer of the imminent danger.

Joe was too late. At a trestle over the swamp, the passenger train plowed into the caboose. Joe was decapitated. His head flew into the swamps on one side of the track, his lantern on the other.

It was days before the destruction caused by the wreck was cleared away. And when Joe's head could not be found, his body was buried without it.

Thereafter on misty nights, Joe's headless ghost appeared at Maco, a lantern in its hand. Anyone standing at the trestle would first see an indistinct flicker moving up and down, back and forth. Then the beam would swiftly move forward, growing brighter and brighter as it neared the trestle. About fifty feet away it would burst into a brilliant, burning radiance. After that, it would dim, back away down the track and disappear.

It was Joe and his lantern, of course. But what was he doing? Was he looking for his head? Or was he trying to signal an approaching train?

In 1889 President Grover Cleveland, on a political campaign, saw the mysterious light, as have hundreds of people throughout the years. But in 1977 when the railroad tracks were removed and the swamp reclaimed his haunting grounds, Joe seemed to have lost interest in Maco. At least, he has not been seen there lately.

PTA Pizza Transit Authority

When it comes to pizza, PTA comes to you.

TARHEEL SPECIAL

After 9:00 pm

Small Pepperoni Pizza

\$5.95

Large Pepperoni Pizza

\$7.95

Good Through 11/16/86 Not Valid With Any Other Coupon
300 W. Rosemary St., Chapel Hill 942-8581

Duke Forest Place, Suite 210A
3326 Chapel Hill Boulevard
Durham, NC 27707
(919) 493-8444

Micro Glyphics inc.

THE TOTAL SOURCE FOR YOUR MICROCOMPUTING NEEDS

INCLUDING:

- hardware and software from the most prominent vendors
- networking
- microcomputer-to-mainframe links
- CADD: computer aided design and drafting
- consulting and programming services
- training
- university volume pricing

湖南 HUNAN 南

CHINESE RESTAURANT

790 Airport Road, Next to A&P

Master Chef C.C. Cheung from Hong Kong would like to invite you try our new lunch or dinner menu.

★ **FREE EGG ROLL AND CHICKEN WINGS** ★

Join us for Lunch on Tuesday or Wednesday, or Thursday and receive a FREE Appetizer with purchase of any Lunch Special. Choose delicious entrees from our 34 item special lunch menu. Lunch Specials include choice of three soups and rice/lo mein for only \$3.57 plus tax. This week's appetizers are:
Tuesday—Egg Roll, Wednesday—Chicken Wings Thursday—Egg Roll LUNCH ONLY

Weekly Dinner Specials

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FOR LUNCH & DINNER

- SPECIAL FAST LUNCH MENU
- FULL TAKE OUT SERVICE
- BANQUET FACILITIES

Mon.-Fri. 11-2:30 Lunch
Sat. & Sun. Noon-2:30 Lunch

Sun.-Thurs. 5-9:30 Dinner
Fri. & Sat. 5-10:30 Dinner

Call 967-6133
FOR RESERVATIONS & TAKEOUTS

*ALL ABC PERMITS *WE CAN MEET YOUR DIETARY NEEDS UPON REQUEST