



Ghosts in our Backyard



Some of the scariest ghosts in America are in the Triad

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PERSPECTIVES EDITORS

With Halloween quickly approaching, we thought it would be interesting to share some legends and ghost stories from Winston-Salem and neighboring cities in North Carolina.

The Little Red Man

This tale is perhaps the most famous ghost story in Winston-Salem. It started in 1752. The *Unitas Fratrum* (Unity of Brethren) congregation, more commonly known as the Moravian church, settled in North Carolina. Bishop Spangenberg, who led the group, bought 98,985 acres of Forsyth County and the main Moravian town settled in what soon became known as Salem. In November, 1753, the first colony was established in Salem.

Andreas Kremser was one of the Moravian Brothers. He died in 1786 at the age of 33. Kremser had the unfortunate distinction of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The fatal accident was retold as entry No. 45 in the Church Book of Salem Congregation. According to *Tar Heel Ghosts*, "(Kremser) attended the festal services of the congregation and of his choir, but was uncommonly quiet all day. After the evening service, several of the Brethren decided to work for a while on excavating the cellar for an addition to the Brothers' House.

"They used the method which has been employed successfully in similar cases — that is, they undercut a bank and pulled down the overhang. Several Brethren doubted the advisability of doing that, because of the more sandy substance of the soil, but few agreed with them.

"About half past eleven Brother Kremser was warned by a Brother who found him kneeling at his work, but he could not see the danger. About twelve o'clock, midnight, a Brother who was watching overhead saw that a great bank was breaking,

After his death, the Brothers said, "There's Kremser" anytime a tapping resembling that of a shoemaker's hammer (Kremser's trait) was heard.

and called to the men below to jump back, which they did, and no one was much hurt except our Brother Kremser, who could not get away quickly because he was on his knees.

"He was covered by the falling earth and quite buried in it. He was dug out as quickly as possible, and was then still alive, and spoke, complaining of pain. It was evident that his left leg was broken. The doctor, Brother Lewis, opened a vein in his arm, but little blood flowed, and there were soon signs of his approaching departure, which followed about two o'clock, the blessing of the Church having been given to him among many tears."

Kremser, a small man, was wearing a red jacket when the accident happened.

After his death, the brothers said, "There's Kremser" anytime a tapping resembling that of a shoemaker's hammer (Kremser's trait) was heard. His fleeting footsteps were said to have been heard scurrying through the halls of the house on occasion.

Every now and then, a brother would proclaim that he had seen a little man in red as he hurried past a door in the passages connecting the individual rooms of the brothers.

After a period of years, the Brothers' house dissolved and served different purposes. At one point, it became the widows' house, where old widows were able to live in an inexpensive place with other widows. The widows also talked of a "little red man" but nothing ever came of the stories.

The turning point of the tale came when an upstanding member of the Salem community escorted a visitor through the cellar of the house. He was telling the story of the little red man to his guest as they walked.

No sooner did the words come out of his mouth, then did they see the little red man appearing before them. The two tried to corner and catch him, but Kremser vanished and then looked back at the two, from the doorway, and smiled.

Soon after, a visiting minister exorcised the ghost by giving an invocation to the Trinity, at which time



he commanded: "Little Red Man, go to rest!" After this, the stories stopped and the sightings concluded, but the tale still remains.

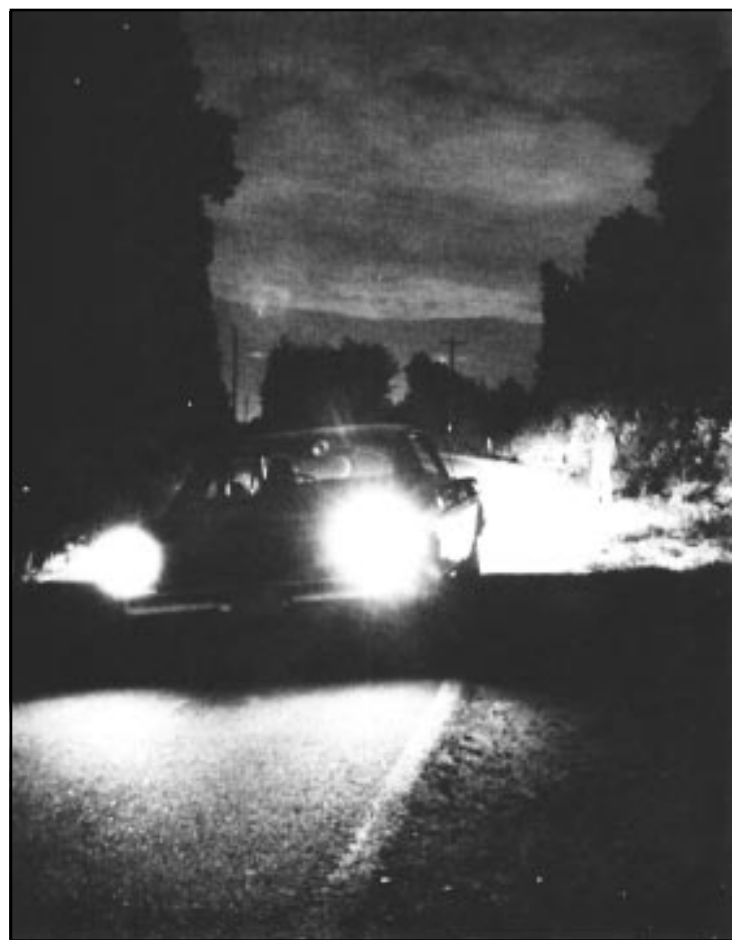
The information for this story was obtained from *Mountain Ghost Stories of Western North Carolina*, by Randy Russell and Janet Barnett.

The Poltergeist by the church

This tale should be of particular interest to those from the university area as it happened on a "Glen something" road somewhere near a church near Highway 150, in Winston-Salem.

Buddy Shelton was walking down the road by the church on a dark, cool night. He was trying to get to Kernersville in the hope of finding a job.

About halfway down the road, Shelton suddenly fell to the ground after receiving what felt like a heavy blow to his back. He jumped and turned, ready for conflict only to find there was no one behind him. Feeling slightly uneasy, he continued down



Courtesy of Triad Hauntings

The hero of "The Poltergeist by the church" was saved from a violent phantom by a kind stranger who gave him a ride.

the road.

Less than a minute later, it happened again.

Shelton turned around, feeling more scared than ever before in his life, to see a vortex of leaves swirling madly around in a site on the ground where there was no wind. He heard a squeal and felt a pinch, then turned around and ran away. He managed to flag down a car and drove to Kernersville, never going back.

This story would perhaps be one that could be attributed to a freak, isolated occurrence if it were not for another story, set at the same place where a man experienced a similar phenomenon.

The information for this story was obtained from *Triad Hauntings*, a novel by Burt Calloway and Jennifer FitzSimmons.

Phantom of Dana Auditorium

Dana Auditorium, at Guilford College was once the site of a war-time hospital. Some suggest that this could be the reason it has been haunted by the ghost known as Lucas for many years.

The ghost (or ghosts) seems to be active in two of the rooms at the auditorium: the choir room and the moon room.

Lucas is often heard performing on one of the pianos in the choir room. Numerous security guards have investigated this phenomenon, but none have ever seen a living person playing.

Other oddities, which are stereotypical of ghosts, have occurred. Lights have been turned on when there is no one visible who can be held accountable. A security guard was once unable to close a door because of what was felt to be a strange force pulling it the other way.

Students have felt the presence of Lucas. One student reported seeing a transparent

figure sitting on a balcony. She said she watched until it faded away to nothing. Another student was once followed by something he could not see, but which left him feeling cold and tingling, with no doubt but that there was a presence behind him.

Perhaps the most notable of the incidents occurred when two security guards were alone in a room with a heavy chandelier. The two guards watched in amazement as the chandelier began to swing in the breezeless room. The momentum grew until the chandelier detached from the ceiling and crashed to the floor. The spectacle was attributed to Lucas.

Terrance Laster, a campus security officer at Guilford College, has had no runs with Lucas himself, but he has heard stories.

Who knows ... maybe Lucas has finally found his way into the afterlife he had avoided, or maybe he's merely taking a break while plotting his next big prank.

The information for this story was obtained from *Triad Hauntings*.

The Haunting of Salem Tavern

Once upon a time when our country was young and taverns were a common and welcome sight to weary travelers, a man came to Salem Tavern looking like death warmed over.

The tavern keeper took one look at him and called for a doctor, but it was too late. The man died several hours later without ever telling anyone his name or where he was from.

The tavern keeper had no real hope of ever finding the man's family, but he kept his belongings hoping that one day someone would claim them.

After that night, things at the previously well-run inn began to fall apart. The servants were edgy and

irritable, and complained of feeling followed at night. They claimed there was something haunting the tavern

The tavern keeper tried to quell the rumors of a haunting but the servants remained on edge.

One night, several weeks later, a female servant came to the tavern keeper nearly hysterical with fear. She claimed she had been up in the attic when she saw an apparition come out of the gloom.

The tavern keeper, who by this time was tired of the annoying business that had kept his servants from their work for so long, went to investigate.

He was about to return to his office after seeing nothing out of the ordinary when suddenly something unusual did happen — mist appeared in the attic and congealed

office and composed a letter to the person at the address the ghost had named.

A few weeks later a young woman arrived to take the stranger's possessions and body back to Charleston.

The tavern was never again bothered by the lost traveler.

The information for this story was obtained from *Triad Hauntings*.

ROBAH'S REVENGE

This story may apply to those less mature than our faithful readers. Then again, it may not.

One night a pack of teenagers was roaming around Salem Cemetery with a bottle of wine. Apparently feeling very bored, they plopped down on top of a grave marked with the name "Robah." They began drinking the wine and talking amongst themselves, occasionally including Robah in the conversation. When standing up to leave, the driver, a girl named Dela, invited Robah to join them. Laughing, they left the cemetery.

When Dela got home she made herself a sandwich and sat down in front of the television. After about 10 minutes it suddenly flicked off. Assuming it was a faulty wire, she turned off the set and went to bed.

She was awakened a little while later by the sound of the television, on full blast. She turned it off, puzzled as to how it could have turned itself on.

The next day Dela was in the den again, eating her dinner in front of the TV. She left the room to answer the phone. While speaking to her boyfriend, she heard her soda fall. She went in to investigate, only to discover that the soda had not merely fallen — it, along with the plate her dinner had been on had been thrown across the room into a wall. Since she was the only one home at the time, Dela ran out of the house in fear.

Oddities like this happened several times over the next few weeks, but only when Dela was in the den. Once she walked into the room to find her picture lying on the carpet, the glass smashed. Another time she was listening to Led Zeppelin when another voice was heard on top of the song on the album.

Dela's parents began to wonder if their child was losing her mind. She was too embarrassed to relate the tale to anyone else, but she finally told her boyfriend. He suggested that Robah must be the culprit, reminding her that she had invited him to come along when they left the graveyard.

They decided to eradicate the ghost. First they walked from the house to the car, calling for Robah to follow them. They then drove to the cemetery. They arrived at Robah's grave and told him to go home.

They then got back in the car and left.

There were no more strange occurrences in Dela's den.

The information for this story was also obtained from *Triad Hauntings*.

Black Crosses on White Linen

In Anson County, there once was a family who seemed to possess a unique method for foretelling disaster which spanned multiple generations. Before any tragic event occurred, a black cross would appear on one of the family linens. After the victim's death, it would

disappear.

The first reported instance happened before the Civil War. An old woman lay dying in her home for many months. One day, just before the woman's death her daughter noticed a black cross in the hem of the pristine white sick-bed pillowcase. Inquiries revealed that no one in the family

had drawn it. After the old woman's death examination of the pillowcase revealed that the cross was gone.

An epidemic of typhoid that was particularly harsh on women and children was the cause of the next outbreak of black crosses. They appeared on baby diapers or other garments of afflicted people, all of whom died soon after the appearance. The crosses would then always disappear.



Courtesy of Triad Hauntings

Robah took the words of some wily teenagers too seriously and haunted a young lady named Dela for a number of days.

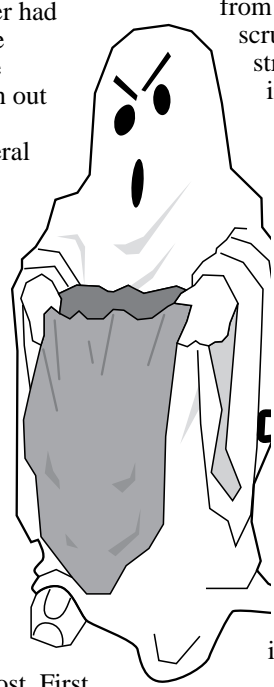
After that instance, there was not a recorded occurrence until 1901. At a family dinner, the mother of the family moved a large vegetable dish and found that a row of three black crosses had appeared on the white linen tablecloth. She hid them from the family and later tried to scrub them out. Neither the strongest soap nor the hottest iron would remove them though.

The next morning the family was awakened by the news that the three small children of a tenant farmer had burned to death during the night. The tablecloth was once again pristine white.

The last recorded instance occurred in 1918. One of the younger son's of the family was fighting in Europe. He wrote to his mother that he was about to go into battle but felt he had to relate the strange occurrence of a black cross that he had in the bookmark in his Bible.

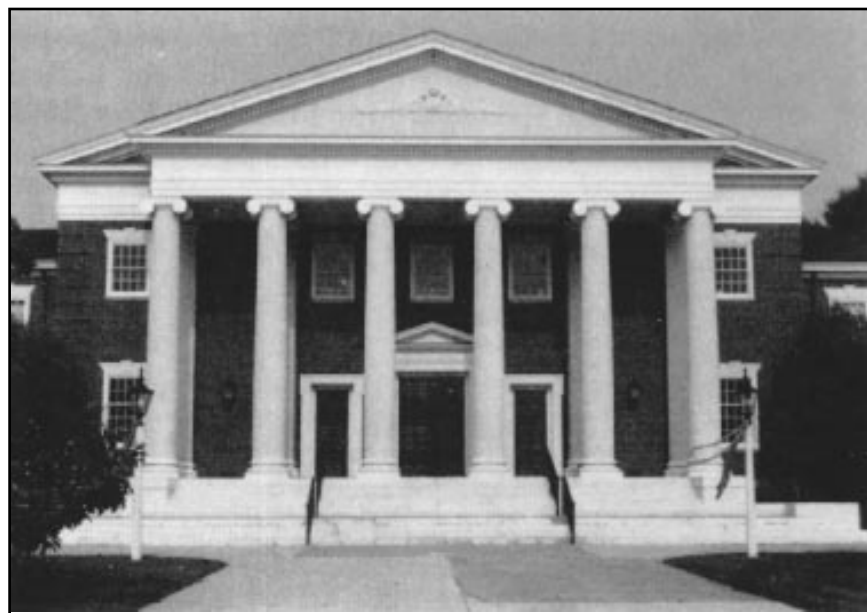
The telegram from the War Department arrived at the already-grieving mother's home three weeks later.

The information for this story was obtained from *Tar Heel Ghosts*, a novel by John Harden.



Those interested in reading more about North Carolina ghost stories and legends may find the following books interesting:

- *Tar Heel Ghosts*, by John Harden
- *Mountain Ghost Stories and Curious Tales of Western North Carolina*, by Randy Russell and Janet Barnett
- *Triad Hauntings*, by Burt Calloway and Jennifer FitzSimmons
- *Legends of Baptist Hollow: tales of Wake Forest College*, by Bill McIlwain
- *North Carolina Legends*, by Richard Walser
- *Supernaturals Among Carolina Folk and Their Neighbors*, by F. Roy Johnson



Courtesy of Triad Hauntings

Lucas, a ghost at Guilford College, has haunted Dana Auditorium for years. Lucas has been silent for the past few years, either gone or resting.

into a human-like, though unrecognizable form.

A ghostly voice filled the room with the words, "You must get word to my fiancée of my death." The voice told the tavern keeper the name and address of his fiancée. It then disappeared.

The innkeeper promptly ran back to his