

NC Legends & Ghost Stories

Presented By:

Occoneetchee Lodge 104

North Carolina is divided into 2 Order of the Arrow Sections; SR-7B extends from Central North Carolina east to the coast and SR-5 extends from Central North Carolina west to the mountains. The NC Legends and Ghost Stories of the SR-7B area is presented by Occoneetchee Lodge 104. Lodges of this area are Tsoiotsi Tsogalii 70, Occoneetchee 104, Croatan 117, Wahissa 118, Nayawin Rar 296, and Klahican 331. We sincerely hope you enjoy the patch series and reading about a few of the hauntings of our State!

SR-7B Area

Lydia's Bridge (Lodge 70's [Tsoiotsi Tsogalii] area): On certain rainy nights, where US 70-A twists around a sweeping curve that passes by an old, overgrown underpass, drivers will see a young woman in a white evening dress standing by the side of the road, desperately trying to flag down a passing car. If anyone pulls over to help the young lady, she climbs meekly into the back seat of the car and explains that her name is Lydia, and that she's just been to a dance and now she's trying to get home. She gives the driver an address not too far away, and he kindly agrees to take her there. The driver may try to engage Lydia in conversation, but she seems distracted and in a world of her own, so he just leaves her in a respectful silence and concentrates on the road ahead.

When the car pulls in to the address that the young woman gave, the chivalrous driver invariably hops out to open the door for her – only to discover that she has vanished.

Perplexed, the man goes to the door, where an old woman answers. The man explains that he's picked up a young lady named Lydia by the overpass who asked to be brought to this address, but she's no longer in the car. He wonders if she may have run out before he could open the door, and he just wants to know if she's safe and if everything is as it should be.

A faint, pained smile of recognition passes over the old woman's face, as she reaches for a picture in a silver frame sitting on a table by the door. It's a photograph of the young woman the man drove to the house. "Lydia was my daughter," the old woman says, "She died in a car wreck by that overpass in 1923. You're not the first one, and I suppose you won't be the last. Every so often, her spirit flags down a passing driver. I suppose she still doesn't understand what happened to her. I suppose she's still trying to get home. "That's why the overgrown underpass near Jamestown is called Lydia's Bridge. Drive past it on a rainy night and you may see Lydia, too.

The Devil's Tramping Ground (Lodge 104's [Occoneetchee] area): In the low, rolling hills of southern Chatham County, south of Siler City in the woods near Harper's Crossroads, lies one of the most famous places in North Carolina and perhaps one of the most haunted places in the world.

The Devil's Tramping Ground is a mysterious, perfectly round and absolutely barren circle about forty feet in diameter in the pinewoods of Chatham County. Not a tree, not flower, no lowly weed or even a single blade of grass will grow in the limits of the circle. Seed sowed there refuse to sprout. Any

vegetation transplanted there will wither and die. What's even more strange, any object left in the circle at dusk will have been violently moved outside its bounds by dawn.

Dogs tuck their tails between their legs and whimper when brought near and will dig their heels into the sand, refusing to be brought into the circle.

Men have tried to spend the night in the circle, but not one has succeeded and remained sane. Something they see on their vigils drives them out of their wits, never to recover. For the Devil's Tramping Ground has earned its name. It's said that here that the Devil himself walks at night.

In his Tramping Ground, the Devil spends his nights pacing around and around in a circle and turning his bitter mind towards ways to bring human souls to damnation. The scorching heat of his cloven hoof prints is what kills the vegetation and has rendered the soil barren. He angrily brushes aside anything left in his path, his great strength easily able to toss aside the heaviest objects. And, because when he walks in his private spot on earth, the devil drops the illusions with which he disguises himself when he appears to men, and in his natural state the face of this fallen angel is so horrible that no man can see it and remain sane.

The mystery of the Devil's Tramping Ground has been known since Chatham County was founded shortly before the War for Independence. From generation to generation, the story has been passed down, and despite efforts by scientists to explain this barren patch of land; no satisfying explanation has ever been given.

Hoof Prints at Bath (Lodge 117's [Croatan] area): Bath is a town on the Pamlico River on the coast of North Carolina. Famous for the legendary pirate Blackbeard, it is also famous for the legendary footprints of this story.

A man named Jesse Elliot was a resident of Bath and the proud owner of a powerful racing stallion. Elliot would race any comes, and he and his stallion would always win.

One day, a tall man appeared in the town and approached Elliot, saying he'd heard of his racing fame and had a horse he'd like to try against his stallion. Elliot quickly agreed, and the two men arranged to meet the next day.

When Elliot arrived at the course, he saw the stranger already waiting for him on a midnight black stallion; larger and fierier than any Elliot had ever seen. And atop that angry horse was the stranger, also dressed all in black, with an evil fire in his eyes that burned into Elliot's soul.

Frightened, Elliot paused for a moment, but his greed for racing consumed him and he urged his stallion on, shouting "Take me a winner or take me to hell!" Elliot's horse charged ahead, but the stranger's stallion soon drew aside. And as soon as it did, Elliot's own horse dug its feet into the grown, throwing his rider into a tree and killing him instantly.

As for the stranger, it's said that he just laughed, and rode back to his home in hell with Jesse Elliot's soul astride his black stallion. And the footprint's where Jesse Elliot's horse dug its feet into the sand can still be seen to this day.

Man In The Red Hat (Lodge 118's [Wahissa] area): The Single Brother's House, or just Brother's House, is located in the historic Old Salem Village in Winston-Salem. This reconstructed old Moravian village was once home to one of North Carolina's most beloved ghosts.

The building was originally used as a communal home for unmarried men in the Moravian settlement. Moravians have a strong tradition of keeping excellent records, so we have an unusually detailed account of how this ghost came in to being.

On March 25, 1786 a shoemaker named Andreas Kresmer was killed while excavating a new foundation for an addition to The Brother's House. Working late, around midnight Brother Kresmer was caught

beneath a falling bank of earth and passed away a few hours later. This kind man and was much mourned by his fellow Brethren.

For years afterwards, strange sounds that resembled the tap of a shoemakers hammer were heard throughout the house. A small man wearing a red cap like the one Brother Kresmer had been wearing when he died was also seen scurrying through the halls.

One of the most famous encounters with the Little Red Man is the story of Little Betsy — The granddaughter of a resident of the house who lived there after it had been converted into a home for Moravian widows; Little Betsy had been left deaf from an early childhood illness, but could still speak. She knew nothing of the ghost or the accident, but one day while visiting her grandmother rushed excitedly in from the garden and told of a small man wearing a red cap who had beckoned her to come and play.

According to legend, the Little Red Man's appearances were brought to rest when he made an ill-advised appearance before an important member of the community showing an important visitor around the cellar. It's never good to show up the boss, and a minister was called in to lay the ghost to rest, which apparently worked. The Little Red Man has not been seen since.

Jackson's Cemetery (Lodge 296's [Nayawin Rar] area): Legend has it that if you go to the Jackson plot just off highway 13 in Goodwin, there is a coffin in a tree. If you try to get it out of the tree, it will get dark and if you turn your head and look back, the coffin will be gone. Some say that hurricane Fran pulled the coffin from the ground, others say someone pulled it out.

The Maco Light (Lodge 331's [Klahican] area): The Maco Light is one of North Carolina's great ghost stories. For over a century, mysterious lights were observed and even photographed bobbing up and down along the railroad tracks near Maco Station, a few miles west of Wilmington. When anyone approached the lights, they would disappear. It's even said that Grover Cleveland saw the lights while on whistle stop tour in 1889.

The legend of the Maco Light dates back to a tragic night in 1867. A train was rolling along the tracks and the signalman, Joe Baldwin, was sleeping in the caboose. Joe was shocked awake by a violent jerk, and he immediately knew that the caboose had become detached from the rest of the train. Joe also knew that his wasn't the only train scheduled for those tracks that night.

Grabbing his lantern, Joe Baldwin stood on the back of the caboose as the sound of an oncoming passenger train rumbled closer. Joe frantically waved his warning light, but it was too late. The engineer of the oncoming train had too little time to stop the tons of speeding steel. The locomotive slammed into Joe's caboose, and brave Joe Baldwin was decapitated in the crash.

Joe's head was thrown by the force of the accident into the murky swamps that surrounded the tracks. It was never found. His headless body was buried a week later.

Ever since that night, lights have been seen moving up and down the track around Maco. Sometimes it's only one light, sometimes it's two. People say that it's the ghost of Joe Baldwin, still searching for his missing head.

Regrettably, the tracks along the route were pulled up in 1977. The light has not been seen since.