

# The haunting of North Morton

By Kelli Meskin  
The Lumberjack

An early 1950s suicide has taken a life of its own. A nineteen year old girl named Kathy hung herself in a second floor room of North Morton.

Mary Nunez and Mrs. Ortiz, both custodians in the early 1950s, found Kathy hung from a bar in her closet when they entered the room to clean the hall.

"We put our stuff in the room and she was there," Nunez said.

Mrs. Ortiz has passed away since and Mary Nunez is presently a custodian in Taylor hall and has been interviewed by news channels on the case of the North Morton suicide.

Nunez says the original story of why Kathy killed herself was because her fiancé "jilted" her.

It was right before Christmas break during the early 1950s when Kathy's boyfriend broke things off. She was distraught and under emotional stress.

Many of the stories are similar, but vary. Some people say she also slit her wrists, and every now and then the walls bleed

red or they turn pink.

Supposedly, pink was Kathy's favorite color and her walls in her room were painted pink.

One year the RAs painted the closet doors pink and everyone in the hall was frightened thinking the paint had bled through.

Other stories say she killed herself because her parents went bankrupt and she couldn't go home for Christmas.

Another story said her boyfriend was killed in a conflict in Korea, or in "the" war.

"When someone comes up with a good twist it gets associated with the ghost story, and later it may die out," said Dr. Kieth Cunningham, English professor teaching a folklore class.

The story of the North Morton suicide has many versions which come and go. The popular ones last the longest.

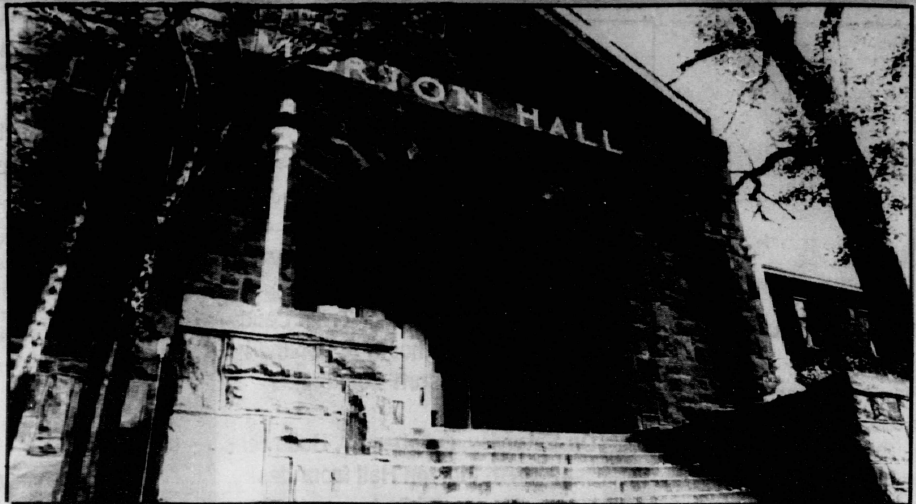
Some say the ivy outside the window of the "ghost room" is the first to die in the winter and the first to grow back in the spring.

When the Cardinals football team stays at North Morton in the summer, they place bets with each other to see who can stay in the "ghost room" for the whole night. I'm not sure if anyone of them has won the bet.

Custodians say they've seen their buckets of water move from one spot to another while they were mopping. And security has also said they've seen the "Blue Lady" late at night.

They called her the "Blue Lady", because she had a blue nightgown and she was seen in the hallways, after her death, wearing it.

The women also said they hear sounds



Chris Moody/The Lumberjack

The front steps of North Morton hall. A suicide was rumored to have taken place in the early 1950s and the story continues today. Kathy, a past resident of the hall, was rumored to have hung herself from a closet bar in her room. The story has been told and retold throughout the years and is an excellent NAU ghost story.

like a breeze of wind go by.

Tammy Daughtery, senior physical education major, lived in North Morton 13 years ago and is presently living there while she attends graduate school.

While she was an undergraduate student she went up to the top floor of the dorm to use the phone. While on the phone she heard doors slam and footsteps walking down the hall. A cool breeze went by as it happened.

She saw no one.

Another time she used the phone on the same floor and the same thing happened. Those were the only two times she has ever been on that floor.

"I have not been on that floor since," Daughtery said. "I don't know if it's me, but I was not going to invite a second opportunity."

Other occurrences have happened. In a 1987 story of *The Lumberjack* a reporter said the showers went on at one in the morning throughout the hall. It even happened in the RHDs room.

The room Kathy killed herself in, is now being occupied after a number of years of being used as a storage room then a fire escape.

Dani, a junior English major, has moved into the

room.

This past summer North Morton went through renovations. Many things were changed. The fire escape was turned back into a dorm room after some controversy by members of North Morton hall council.

The bars were taken off a room people called the dungeon, down in the basement. Originally it was a freezer, the bars were there so people would not break in. Other stories say insane patients were kept in the room when and if North Morton was an insane asylum.

The "ghost room" was turned into a storage room after residents in the room would go insane and run and scream out of the room.

Years later, a wall was set up in the middle of the room, making it too small for anyone to live in or use.

It was used as a fire escape and the girls would go through the room and slide down a pole outside the window.

Dani has lived in North Morton for the past 5 semesters and knew she would be moving into the "ghost room" after renovations were done over the summer.

"I didn't think it would be as big a deal as some people make it out to be," Dani said.

People visit while she is studying and want to ask questions about Kathy. "It's kind of fun to talk about but it can get annoying at times," Dani said.

Dani says she hasn't seen or felt anything strange happen, except her posters won't stay on the walls and the door never really stays shut.

Some of her friends have felt more paranormal activity than she has. One of her best friends lives in the same building

and won't come over after dark.

Another friend of hers came over and her friend's dog ran, across the floor, into the room. The owner of the dog screamed and left.

"When you listen to a story you imagine things," Nunez said.

The original girls that lived in North Morton around the time of Kathy's suicide claimed they heard and saw strange misty images in the hallways.

A few people have tried to investigate into the story of Kathy's suicide and found nothing.

Nunez said the RAs back in the 50s probably didn't want to publish the incident and give their hall or the institution a bad name.

The RAs then were older ladies, not like we have today, and they liked to keep bad things hush-hush.

It was ideal to have a perfect hall where nothing went wrong. A hall where boys never got through the electrical fences or where the girls never succeeded in sneaking out the windows at night.

Nothing has really happened to Dani but she said sometimes "it's deathly quiet up here on this side of campus."

It's possible the story of Kathy's suicide is not true. Only a few years ago has the name Kathy been associated with the North Morton suicide.

Students who have researched the story have come up with no actual proof of any suicide on campus.

The mortuary at that time is now gone. It was located near the Monte Vista hotel.

But the story has been around for about 20 to 25 years and whether it's true or not the story is a "classic ghost story" Cunningham said.

Kathy's soul still lives in the minds of those who believe in and see or feel her.



Chris Moody/The Lumberjack

The ghost of North Morton is a fictitious story told by NAU students and the community. Ghosts are rumored to haunt the hall and strange occurrences have been reported by residents past and present.