

In the spring of 1872 another immigrant family moved here to America to start a new life as well as to seek wealth and fortune.

Old man Bender and his raw bones wife were both around 55 in age there dull witted son was around 26, he was considered dull witted because he laughed all the time they also had a beautiful daughter named Kate who was 22. Their origin was thought to be Germany or somewhere in the surrounding regions because of their accents Ma and Pa Bender did not speak any English and had such thick raw accents that the few words they did know was misunderstood. Their son spoke little English and had had a thick accent that he was also misunderstood most of the time but their daughter Kate spoke perfect English and did not have an accent they settled here in southeast Kansas.

Here they acquired 160 acres of land which they built there 16 by 24 foot cabin, they also grew fruit and vegetables in their gardens and had a large orchard tree. Their cabin was one large living room divided by a white curtain that separated the Benders living quarters from their inn and general store that they owned there was also a cellar below the cabin.

Kate was known throughout the region as a psychics medium, she held public seances and was known to cure any form of illness. She was also very well known with the men many of them would pay a lot of money to stay at the Benders inn just to see Kate and even more for a private seance. The men were usually never seen again.

If a guest (usually a male) was staying at the Benders inn appeared rich he would be seated at the guest of honor chair at dinner with his back to the curtain. Then while Kate distracted him, Pa or his son would come up behind him behind the curtain and hit him on top of the head with a sledgehammer, killing the man instantly, the body was then dragged to the back of the room stripped of all possessions then a trap door leading to the cellar would open for the body to be disposed of later.

In the span of 18 months the Bender family killed 25 known victims.

In the winter of 1872 Phillip and his infant daughter Mary-Ann decided to relocate from Kansas to Iowa, they were never seen or heard from again. A close friend and former neighbor Dr. William York decided to investigate his friend's disappearance. His travels led him to the Bender's inn where he had stayed in the past, he was also very well acquainted with Kate. When he asked the Benders if they had seen his friend they replied they had not, the Benders invited William in for dinner and to spend the night.

When William did not come home as scheduled his brother Colonial York went to the Benders inn as that is where his brother would be staying. When he got to the inn the Benders replied that they had not seen him and that maybe he was just delayed or he was attacked by Indians both of which highly possible. The Benders invited York to dinner and spend the night. That night after dinner when York retreated to his chambers he saw something shiny

underneath the bed when he picked it up he saw that it was a locket attached to a chain when he opened it he was surprised to find the pictures of his brothers wife and daughter. The chain on the locket was always attached to him and he would never just accordantly leave it behind. With this knowledge York decided he needed to go to the sherif immediately. He snuck out of the house undetected, when he reached outside he saw the faint light of a lantern deciding to investigate York crept up slowly what he saw was Pa and his son digging a grave by the orchard at there feet appeared to be a body wrapped in a canvas, York ran to the sherifs office.

In the mourning York, the sherif, his men and a few local boys went to the Benders inn only to discover to there horror that they had gone, fled in the night. The men investigated the inn first, at first there seemed to be nothing suspicious but the they found the trap door leading to the cellar, the cellar floor was covered in blood. Outside they found freshly dug piles of dirt, when they started digging them up they found that they were graves, the first body that they dg up was Colonial York's brother.

Over the next few days they discovered over 2 dozen bodies, which begs the questions: who were the Benders? and how many more victims did they have.



