

A rich mystery



**Meredith
Jacobs**

The death of an heiress just weeks after her wedding sounds like the plot of an Agatha Christie novel, except this mystery is true.

Steve Bouser tells the story in "Death of a Pinehurst Princess: The 1935 Elva Statler Davidson Mystery." A book-release party will be held Thursday in Southern Pines. (Details are in the Book Events listing on this page).

Elva's late father was Ellsworth M. Statler, who transformed the hotel industry, and was the first to add private bathrooms to hotel

rooms. He died in 1928, although his company continued building hotels until the 1950s.

Bouser is the editor of *The Pilot* in Southern Pines and writes that he became interested in Elva's death through Diane McLellan. She came across an old photograph of Elva and decided to solve the mystery. A 1935 coroner's inquest into Elva's death had not determined the cause.

If you like reading about mystery and scandals, consider adding Bouser's book to your Christmas wish list.

Rite of passage

Clarence V. Matthews' coming-of-age novel, "Jacob's Rite of Passage," is set in Fayetteville during the Great Depression.

Main character Jacob

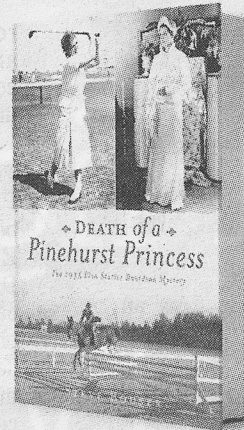
Pete Manor is the youngest child in a family of sharecroppers and has higher aspirations for his life during a time of social and educational segregation.

Matthews describes his book as being about "pertinent life truths that involve mother-son overbonding, betrayal, abandonment, sexual explorations and misconceptions about 'manhood.'"

Matthews lives in New Jersey and has more than 30 years of experience as a real estate agent.

Sequels are planned for his book, which is \$8.95 and can be ordered from online booksellers or at his website, jacobsriteofpassage.com.

Meredith Jacobs can be reached at jacobsm@fayobserver.com or 486-3542.



'DEATH OF A PINEHURST PRINCESS: THE 1935 ELVA STATLER DAVIDSON MYSTERY'

Steve Bouser

Nonfiction

208 Pages. \$19.99

BOOK EVENTS

■ **Thursday:** A book launch party will be held at 7 p.m. at The Country Bookshop in Southern Pines for Steve Bouser, author of "Death of a Pinehurst Princess: The 1935 Elva Statler Davidson Mystery." A book signing and wine reception will follow. Reservations are required. Call The Country Bookshop at (910) 692-3211.

■ **Jan. 11:** Sharyn McCrumb will speak about her latest novel, "Devil Amongst the Lawyers," at 7 p.m. at the Headquarters Library.

■ **Jan. 15:** Retired Col. William Richardson and co-author Kevin Maurer will sign copies of "Valleys of Death: A Memoir of the Korean War" at Barnes & Noble Booksellers at 2 p.m.

■ **Jan. 18:** Dr. Michael Cummings will speak at 7 p.m. in the Mary Livermore Library at UNC-Pembroke. The event is sponsored by The Friends of the Library.

BOOK CLUBS

All-club meeting: Area book clubs are invited to meet together to discuss "The Help," by Kathryn Stockett. For information, contact Angela Vann at 483-0977 evenings or by e-mail at thefayettevilleoprahbookclub@yahoo.com



Find more book events at events.fayobserver.com.