

top of sleeping bags still burn vividly in his mind.

Officer Charles Haller, first on the harrowing scene Dec. 7, 1971, said Thursday he can rest more easily now that the accused murderer, John List, is in custody.

"I'm glad he's caught now. We'll be able to find out what he did and why he did it," said Haller.

"That night when I got home, I said to my wife, 'How can you kill somebody and leave and have it all planned out?' It bothers you. You wonder why he did it," said Haller, who was 26-years-old and on the force six years when the incident occurred.

When asked to recount the events the night he went to the Lists' Hillside Avenue home, Haller easily recalled the details, right down to the witch's hat, the glass and the soda can on top of the mantel in the ballroom. The items were left there from a party the 16-year-old daughter, Patricia, held days before her death.

He remembers parking his patrol car in front of the house because the long driveway to the List home was muddy and rocky from an earlier rainfall. He and his partner, Officer George Zhelesnik, now retired, had a long walk to the house.

There was no answer at the front door, so the officers crawled



CHARLES HALLER

Found bodies

a piece of wood — it was hard and stiff. They were obviously dead."

They searched the rest of the house and found his 85-year-old mother, Alma, in a closet of her small apartment upstairs. Zhelesnik opened the closet door. The woman's head, covered with clothes in an apparent attempt to hide her, was facing the door and her feet were toward the inside of the rather large closet, Haller said.

"Her hair was sticking up. I wonder if he shot her while she was standing near the closet," said Haller, shuddering as he tried to picture the scene.

There wasn't a bloody mess because the killer apparently mopped up after himself. The officers found several bags of bloody paper towels and rags in the kitchen and a smaller room with a sink. The sink had a slight