

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Fri., July 3, 1964

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Tales Of 'The Occult' Heard In Cape Bear

By NEIL A. MATHESON  
Provincial - Farm Editor

SOME UNUSUAL events of the past were recalled by Mrs. Dave White at Cape Bear when I called on her a few weeks ago. The former Bella Dutney who was born at Peter's Road, told me her grandfather, John MacDonald, and father, Charles A Dutney, were coming home from Beach Point one night in a horse-drawn cart when they approached a spot close to Murray River where a stream ran across the road.

"Dad said to Grandpa 'Look, what's that?' As both of them saw a woman standing by the side of the road with a baby in her arms. The horse stopped in his tracks as soon as he saw the strange looking pair. My grandfather asked the woman who she was and what she wanted, but she kept her silence.

"Finally a third man in the cart spoke up roughly, 'Speak woman, or get to H... out of here'. With that the woman disappeared and they never saw her again." That would be about 80 years ago, Mrs. White told me, as she was a baby at the time and she is now in her 82<sup>nd</sup> year.

Mrs. White has had interesting experiences herself, I found as our talk continued. "Once when I was 18", she told me, "I was working at Albert Prowse's place in Murray Harbor and started to walk to Murray River well after dark.

"Just as I reached the Wood Islands road a man came out onto the road. He was wearing an old fashioned pea jacket, and I said 'good night', but he didn't answer."

Mrs. White explained that the man walked along with her for more than a mile. "He walked on one wheel track and I walked in the other. He never spoke and as he turned on to another road, he failed to answer my 'good night'. A minute later she looked and the man was not visible.

'Has Never Spoken To Anyone'

WHEN SHE got home, she told her story and Walter Corney, who was at her place, said, "I met that man many times. He has never spoken to anyone yet."

The old story handed down is that the man had come from Cape Breton to teach school at Murray River. He had been found dead on the road in the vicinity, and his ghost was seen many times in the years that followed, I was told.

The talk changed to forerunners, things that were seen that usually presaged a death in the family, or to some close neighbour or friend.

Yes, Mrs. White had one of those experiences. Most unusual, she saw the forerunner along with her husband, though it was his death it was forecasting.

THEY WERE sitting in their living room one night in late autumn and he called suddenly, "come to the window and see this". Looking out she saw a blue light, about the size of a normal candle light, burning perhaps six inches from the ground.

Mrs. White was never nervous, and always investigated any unusual things she saw. So she told her husband she was going out to see what it was. Dave White was a nervous man, and he tried to persuade her not to go. However Mrs. White went out, saw the blue flame and knew it was a forerunner of something that was going to happen. But, of course, she did not know whom it would affect, certainly not her husband she thought at the time.

Knowing that Mr. White was nervous she saw an empty can in the yard close to the house, and she kicked it fairly hard so that the noise could be heard in the house.

#### Coffin Placed At Exact Spot

WHEN SHE entered she succeeded in convincing Dave that "the light" they had seen was nothing more than the light from the window shining on the can.

Mr. White died the following February - it was in 1941 - and, she told me, the house was kept very warm with the fires burning bright, so that it became unusually hot in the room where the remains were laid out in the coffin.

It was decided to carry the coffin outside in the cold weather, to halt any suggested process of decomposition of the body. And the coffin was laid carefully on pieces of lumber in the same place where the late Mr. White and Mrs. White had seen the eerie blue flame burning, though none of the people who placed the casket on the spot had been told anything about the eerie experience.

#### Lime Trees, Wood Carving Seen

I RAN OUT of space last week on the story of Inkerman House. I wanted to tell you about the two rows of Lime trees Col. Gray planted for his residence on North River Road. They are still beautiful and imposing, and it is hoped the city of Charlottetown, which has taken over a portion of the lane, will take appropriate measures to preserve the trees for future generations.

A Lime tree on the Lawson lawn is interesting in itself. The tree forked into two main trunks about four feet from the ground, and the two split apart in a storm many years ago. But Mrs. Lawson's people - they owned the Boyle tannery then - moved an able body of their employees to the spot, straightened up the two trunks, brought them together again, did appropriate repair work on the tree, and tied the two trunks together with a strong chain.

The chain is still there, though the tree itself has grown around it, and the beautiful old Lime adds much to the attractiveness of the Inkerman House lawn.

MR. LAWSON has some unusually interesting pieces of wood sculpture on the lawn and in Inkerman House. I know that "carving" is the term usually applied to wood, but many of Jock's pieces are so finely done they give the impression of sculpture.

Several of the female figures have a delightfully naughty appearance, and the work shows the tremendous patience and attention to detail that marks the really devoted student of the arts and crafts.

Jock has achieved an almost unbelievable reality with many of his pieces. An alligator on the lawn - it's carved from Lime wood - makes the visitor shudder at first glance. It's that realistic.

Mr. Lawson has also achieved some realistic results with driftwood he has gathered in various localities. Some of the pieces are realistic in themselves, but others have been approved by the Lawson eye for detail.

Inkerman House is an interesting historic spot with a great deal of natural beauty. The Lawsons have added considerably to its attractive appeal.

### P.E.I. Folksongs' Books

"LARRY GORMAN, the man who made the Songs" is a title of a book that came to my desk a few days ago, and it carries many of the folk songs written by Larry Gordon who was known, apparently, all over the Maritimes and also in the Maine lumberwoods. It's from the Ryerson Press Toronto and is the work of Edward D. Ives.

The homely songs of Mr. Gorman are known to many Islanders, also some of the many tales told about him. I like one on page 83 of the book. It comes from Maine: -

"They said that Larry Gorman was hurt so bad he couldn't live . . . I don't know whether it was the next winter or two or three years later . . . I went down the street one day and I met Larry Gorman right on the bridge in Ellsworth (That's where he had been said to have been fatally injured) and you don't know what a feeling came over me. I had thought he was dead. If I hadn't been so scared of water I guess I'd have jumped right into the river."

BUT HERE'S a different version of an accident to Gorman on the railroad. Larry was the only man injured in a train wreck, and "he was pulled from the wreck in great distress, for weeks he hobbled about, until a cash settlement was arranged with the railway. After that :Larry Gorman improved with amazing rapidity."

There are many interesting yarns about the man. But even more interesting are some of the folk song reactions to things he had seen and heard in his travels, and some of them are based on P.E.I.

AND SPEAKING of folksongs reminds me that a booklet "Twenty-one Folksongs from Prince Edward Island" comes to my desk via the Northeast Folklore Society and again the editor is Edward D. Ives, who collected the songs during brief visits to the Island in 1957, 1958 and 1962.

The settings are in Western Prince for the most part. Miminegash, Victoria West and Burton are some of the localities mentioned.