

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Thurs. March 3, 1966

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Stories Of Occult Told In Hospital

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THE HOSPITAL is a good place to go for treatment. I've found it's also an excellent place to get interesting column material. I went into the P.E.I. Hospital last Thursday afternoon, had my operation Friday afternoon and came home late Monday afternoon. I came home on the agreement with my doctor that I would be quiet, at least until he has a further opportunity to check up on how things are progressing.

I landed in a ward on the fourth floor with Damon Ross, Flat River – he's spending the winter in the City – Neil MacKinnon from Eldon and Hector MacNeill, a former DeSable man who lives now in Charlottetown. That evening I started to tell some ghost stories as we huddled around one of the beds. Milton Furness, Vernon came in and told a few that were really good. WE shared many a good story later, when I had enough energy to walk a few doors down the corridor, or one of them visited me. I was moved to a semi-private room after the operation.

THOMAS FURNESS, father of Milton, was driving his horse on the ice once when he stopped the animal and kept him standing for several minutes. When a companion asked why he was stopping, Mr. Furness said he was meeting a double funeral.

Of course the companion couldn't see any funeral, but several days later Mr. Furness did meet the funeral procession, and it was a double one – there were two hearse sleighs, as he had seen in the forerunner.

White Animal Had Long Fangs

MILTON HAS also seen forerunners. Back before the turn of the century he opened the porch door one night and saw a snow-white animal with long fangs. Several minutes later he opened the door again. The strange looking animal was still there.

Milton's brother, Douse was well at the time, but he was dead within the week. What Milton had seen was the forerunner of his brother's death.

On another occasion Thomas Furness told his son, Milton, "Don't go far from the house today, there's bad news coming."

Mrs. Thomas Furness was in Montreal where she had undergone an operation. Only the previous day a letter had arrived saying the operation had been successful, and she was doing fine.

But her husband told their son "Your mother was here in the room with me last night," then added the sad warning "There's bad news coming."

That afternoon Milton saw the station agent at Vernon coming across the field with a telegram. "I have bad news for you", he told the young man. "Your mother has died in Montreal."

There are many, I know, who do not believe these stories. Others insist that they may have happened in the long ago but never do now.

Forerunners Are Still Seen

A MAGAZINE I took with me to the hospital reports that Jean Sibelius, Finland's great composer, saw a flock of cranes passing high overhead, then one of them broke formation and dipped close to the Sibelius home, before returning to the flight. The great composer regarded it as an omen of death. Two days later Sibelius died of a cerebral hemorrhage.

That was back in 1957. But here is a forerunner that came to an Island lady only a few weeks ago.

Mrs. Murdock MacLeod – she was Ruth Furness, daughter of Milton – saw last month a vision of a man lying on a bed, with a white sheet covering him to the chin. There were white flowers beside him. Immediately she thought of her father who had been unwell. The presence of the white flowers probably added a more fearsome touch to what she saw.

Mr. Furness entered the hospital for a serious operation – he's only now recovering and was up and around, indeed he was good enough to visit me several times before I got on my feet.

When his daughter, Mrs. MacLeod, came to town to see him, she stopped at a florist shop to order flowers for her Dad. "I was choosing a bunch of red flowers," she told me as we chatted in the hospital just before I left on Monday, "then I changed my mind and ordered white Mims", Ruth added. She has no explanation for changing from the red flowers to the white.

When she reached the hospital shortly afterwards, though, she saw the exact same picture she had seen previously in her vision. There was her father lying on the bed – he had thrown off the top covers – with a white sheet covering him to the chin. And the white flowers were on display close by.

Daughter In Trouble In Calgary

MR. FURNESS had told me that Ruth is "psychic" and she confirmed that opinion. She has seen many things in her lifetime.

Four years ago she suddenly got the feeling there was something wrong with someone close to her. Try as she would, she couldn't shake that impression. She was on her way to Charlottetown at the time, if my memory is correct. She thought of her young daughter, Joan, who was in Calgary, and the impression was so strong that she called long- distance at the first telephone she reached.

The daughter couldn't be reached at first, but repeated efforts finally reached her boarding house some four hours later. When Joan heard her mother's voice she could speak only a few words before she was overcome with emotion. A companion in the house explained that Joan and a girl friend had been driving with a couple of young chaps, and the driver had been hitting between 90 and 100 miles per hour in places.

Joan had pretended she was sick, made the driver stop and let her out of the vehicle. She refused to re-enter it as she made her way home in a manner about which I didn't enquire. Her mother was 3,000 miles or more away from the girl, but her premonition that "something was wrong", had proven to be correct.

DR. R. G. LEA told me a story that is one of the most unusual farm stories I've ever heard. I expect to use it in my column next Tuesday. For those who do not ordinarily read the farm column, may I suggest you do so this time. Damon Ross and Neil MacKinnon are trying to get me the story about a man who lived at Docherty's Corner, in the Belfast area, and one morning missed an unusually good mare he owned. Sometime later he found her in Halifax or Dartmouth, I believe. I'm awaiting the details of this event.

I didn't have the time, or the energy to do much visiting, but here are some of the people I did visit during the few days I was able to move about. Marguerite Godfrey (Mrs. W. R.), Marshfield left the day after I came in. She had been there since the early part of November.

Arthur Inman, Charlottetown – he comes from the Hampton area, I believe – was my roommate for a few days. Cuyler Matheson, Breadalbane came in on Sunday, was operated on Monday and was doing fine when I called that night. Mrs. Hoagy Carmichael, City was in the room with Marguerite Godfrey.

Ivan MacDonald, Nine Mile Creek and Douglas Moore, Parkdale were in the same room as Cuyler. John Craig, Kensington was in the room with Mr. Furness and was just starting to move around after his operation. His operation introduced a plastic ball-and-socket joint to replace the usual hip joint, he told me.

In Hospital Two Months

MRS. JOHN BRUCE, Heatherdale has been in the hospital since early January. I met Mrs. Henry Godfrey, North Wiltshire a few minutes before I left. I chatted with her about her son Alan, who won the national 4-H Club judging contest three years in a row in the Holstein Friesian All-Canadian competition. And another son, Ronnie, was a winner twice.

I called several times at the room of Mrs. Gordon Lord, the former Marion MacKinnon, but she was not available to visitors at the time.

Gordon Senn in charge of quality control at Central Creameries came into the room with me just a few hours before I left.

Every patient to whom I talked had the same story. "Everyone here is so nice – they just can't do enough for you," was the comment and that applied to everyone who looked after them. That's an opinion which has my backing 100 per cent.