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ACROSS THE ISLAND

This Story Of Ghost Involves White Cow

By NEIL A. MATHESON

GHOST STORIES are hard to find now, though I have had many of them in this column over the years. But today I have an interesting one from Morley M. Bell, QC, a Summerside lawyer whose offices are at 300 Water Street.

“The Silent Cow” is the way he heads his story and it goes something like this:

It was about the year 1905-1906 and about a half-dozen of us boys were standing on the South side of the Woolen Mill Bridge at Tryon. The bridge is still there but a new highway by-passes it with the main traffic.

The half-dozen boys included Morley’s brother, since deceased, who was later Dr. E.A. Bell.

It was after dark but the evening was clear, they could see plainly for a distance of 200 feet or more.

“At that time, as most older residents of that area know, there was a semi-circular sweep in the road, and many people who were travelling, during the summer, would drive off the main road immediately to the South of the road and bridge, and pass through the stream and stop to give their horse a drink. The stream then was about 18 feet wide and about up to the hub of the wagon wheels. The distances travelled in all from one approach to the exit on the other would be about 600 feet.”

“Our conversation was halted”, Mr. Bell continues “as we all turned towards Gamble’s Hill and plainly saw a pure white cow turn off the highway, and travel this path, through the stream.

No one spoke during the full trip, but all of us were less than 20 feet from the cow when it passed the bridge, across the water and disappeared on the other side. As anyone knows, a cow passing through a stream of that size would make a continuous splash, but in this case, not any noise or splash whatsoever! We all noticed that and discussed it and were naturally amazed at the time.

Silent Cow Not Explained

“WHEN WE returned home that night both my brother Everett and myself related our experience to our parents. They were both surprised and I noticed both giving each other a knowing glance and they tried to assure us that there was nothing to be alarmed at as it must have been some one’s cow gone astray”, they suggested.

“They did not however attempt to explain how a cow, even a stray one, could go through or across the water without touching or splashing it”, the Summerside lawyer explains.

There’s a natural reluctance on the part of the average person to accept that there’s anything unnatural, much less supernatural, about anything seen, or related by someone in their family.

It’s much easier to “dismiss” it with the thought that it’s imagination, or fancy, or some such more understandable thing.

But as Mr. Bell observes, "I can perhaps understand how one person might be mistaken, but not six grown boys and men who were not given to imagination, and no fear whatsoever."

As Morley says "I have heard of similar things happening, but was inclined to be skeptical, but after experiencing the foregoing, I can now place credence in such other stories."

I have more Morley Bell stories coming, and they are equally interesting.

This Man Had No Head

I'M REMINDED that John MacLeod, Strathcona was one of the many men who talked to me at the Kings County Plowing Match directors' banquet at Montague last week.

Several years ago I called at Mr. MacLeod's to see his mother who was skillful at hooking mats. I remember a lady there telling me of a haunted house in the Eastern Kings area – she did not give me permission to locate it exactly.

The house had been vacant for several years, because of the haunt. The lady's brother had rented the house, so he could have the cellar for storing potatoes. One winter afternoon he was grading the spuds in the basement and heard a rocking chair rocking in the kitchen overhead. He slipped quietly up the cellar steps several times, but was unable to catch the rocker in action while he was looking at it.

Mr. MacLeod told me at Montague, though, that another story told about the house was much more unusual. A little child one day saw a man slip quietly from one room, through a hallway, and into another room before his eyes. The unusual part was that the man had no head. No wonder the child got an awful scare.

Coghlin Story Next Week

THERE HAVE been many enquiries from various sources in the past year or more about the body of Charles Coghlin, a veteran actor who summered at Fortune for a number of years. The story says a fortune teller once told him "You will not die on your beloved Island, but your body will eventually go back home and you will finally be laid there to rest", or words to that effect.

The story was in Ripley's "Believe it or not". I am told it has been published in a number of American magazines; it is a really good story, but it's not true.

Coghlin was not born on the Island, and he did not return after death to be buried here.

I wrote a column on this man about four years ago, and the fictitious story that developed about him. So far as I could find the story first started with the old "Prince Edward Magazine" in Charlottetown, but I have no proof of that.

I'll talk about it next week in this column.