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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Phantom Ship Is Still Sailing

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THE PHANTOM ship still rides the waves, I learned on a recent trip to West Prince. I can't tell you where it's been seen, for it pops up all over the place, apparently.

William Fish lives at Cape Wolfe and he's often seen it. "I have seen it as many as three times in one 24-hour period", he told me recently. Keith Matheson, O'Leary has seen it. And so for that matter has little Judy Carruthers, whom I saw at O'Leary this week, and her sister Rhonda.

Maybe it's part of a vivid child's imagination, but Judy saw men on the decks and in the rigging. Several other young girls who were with her also saw them, she told me. Judy, by the way, is the tiny miss who caught the greased pig at the O'Leary sports rink Tuesday night. She also won her age-class race, I believe.

IN CASE you are still doubtful, four men aboard the fisheries patrol boat "Obelia" saw the ship off North Cape this fall. One of them is Reg Eldershaw, husband of the lady who is our Tignish correspondent. Captain Chester Handrahan, Thane Douglas and Engineer Henry Grant are the others on that boat. It was a ship under full sail with everything apparently ablaze. It remained visible for some 20 minutes, the men report and then disappeared northeast of North Cape.

I understand they tried to get close to the ship with their speedy patrol boat. But nobody has ever gotten close to it apparently. They didn't either.

Perce Morrissey, Sea Cow Pond, has seen it, he told me. So has his niece, Mrs. Francis Fraser, whose father, the late Clarence Morrissey, was a former member of the legislature.

Chains Rattle, Timbers Creak

THERE ARE many stories about the ship. Some people have heard the chains rattling and the timbers creaking like a full rigged ship would under heavy sail. And that was heard even though the ship is always seen ablaze.

Is that imagination? I don't know. I am only telling you what some of these people told me about the experience.

It has been seen off our south shore in the past, and Don MacLeod, whose byline you often see in these papers, tells me that the phantom ship has often been seen off Caribou and Cape John, which are not far from his Pictou County birthplace in Nova Scotia. Dane Crosby says it's been seen at times all along the New Brunswick coast in the past.

I know the phantom ship story is an old one. It was first seen many years ago. But I thought you would be interested in the fact it still rides the waves, for I imagine most of

you thought it had disappeared, as I did myself until I talked with some of these interesting people.

Interesting Items In Old Journal

I FOUND some interesting entries in an old journal or day book kept by a Vernon Bridge merchant in 1869-70. Russell Fraser found it and kindly passed it on to me.

A "milk basin" reflects the farm practice of that far off day. It was a flat basin, and the cream was skimmed off when it rose to the top. The "creamers" came later and they are a tall, narrow tin receptacle with a tap at the bottom, and a glass window so the dairymaid can see the cream as it comes. I recall my mother used one at home and the bit of half-milk and half-cream that was immediately between the skim milk and the cream, was kept for tea milk, as most people called it then

There are still some creamers in use apparently, for I've seen them in some of the stores across the Island.

THERE WERE many sales of "spirits" and one man bought four gallons of rum at five shillings per gallon, and one gallon of gin for nine shillings.

Entries for bundles of white and red "warp" recall the old hand-operated looms, and the weaving of those days when the housewife made just about every bit of clothing worn by the family, from warm underwear to home-spun coats and suits for the men.

Incidentally I'm wondering if anyone knows where there is an old-fashioned loom in this province. I would appreciate hearing from anyone who knows of one. They were common 40 to 50 years ago but most of them have gone, I'm afraid.

Sole leather was a common entry and I find to my surprise that "scented soap" was used in those days, which indicates that the fuss ladies make over their attractiveness is not so modern as some of us may think.

"North Pole" Address Is Baffling

THERE ARE many addresses from the areas close to Vernon and Vernon River but a "North Pole" address baffles me. The man's name was Stephen MacDonald. Perhaps some reader may know of an area that was called by that name.

An entry for bluestone makes me wonder what it was used for. Lorne Callbeck, research officer at the Experimental farm tells me that bluestone was first used for blight in France on grapes in 1881. Later it was used for many years for late blight in potatoes, and I think some people may still use it, though it has been supplanted for the most part by commercial mixtures.

One more item caught my interest. A cake of soap was sold to a woman, whose name for obvious reasons must remain unknown. Above the entry was the firmly written entry "Never pay".

Cattle Grade Story Overstated

A STORY carried in this paper earlier this week was in error when it suggested that more than 50 per cent of cattle sold for beef in this province were in the three top

grades of red, blue and brown brands. There are no figures available for this province but the Maritime Province figures indicate that 26.3 percent of the 33,015 animals shipped through registered packing plants this year were in the top grades.

The figures for P.E.I. would be approximately the same, Vernon Fraser, chief buyer here for Canada Packers told me yesterday.

OF THAT number 416, or approximately 1.3 per cent, were Red brand, 1516, or approximately five per cent, were Blues and 6,693 animals, or roughly 20 per cent, were Brown or standard brand.

The story said that some 58 per cent were in the three top grades but the grades referred to included choice, good and medium. But "medium" is broken down into Brown or Standard, Commercial one, Commercial two and Commercial three. There were (?) Carcasses in Commercial one, 509 in Commercial two and (?) In Commercial three

Good Plowing Seen At Mount Royal

I SAW some good plowing in the provincial championship match at Mount Royal, near O'Leary this week, but I'm wondering why more Prince County people don't attend their plowing matches. The meets are well conducted and I believe 14 or 15 men competed this year in the match for the Prince County title, which is far ahead of the number we get here in Queens, or they get in Dundas where modern plowing competition on the Island was revived a little more than 20 years ago.

They had a beautiful day for the provincial match although the weather, I'm told, was terrible for the Tuesday events, but the crowd was small and I got the impression that perhaps one quarter of them came from Queens and Kings. I thought possibly the small crowd could be caused by the desire of most farmers to work at home on a fine day, but a Prince County man close to the situation, told me they never do get good crowds there.

What Prince County people do is their own business, but I thought it was too bad that more people were not on hand to watch the enthusiastic plowing competitors they have in their area.