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## ACROSS THE ISLAND

### Readers Recall Ghosts Of Past

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Provincial - Farm Editor

THERE ARE "true" ghost stories and others that owe something to the imagination of minds that are skillful in weaving weird and sometimes unbelievable yarns. I have some of both today and I'll give you the latter first.

Vancouver's Dan McLean - remember his old fashioned remedies I told you about recently? - sends a really fearsome tale across the continent. Jimmie Dougal Donald Sandy - the name is a play on some of the family names of years ago - was a bonnie story teller. "For true ghost stories he was out of this world ... he could keep our young spines tingling for weeks at a time."

"Ghosts of terror, riding headless horses into a purple dawn, their hooves of fire lit the Island shores in his day", but here's the story as Dan McLean wrote it to me a few days ago.

IT WAS late at night. While passing a graveyard Jimmie Dougal felt something urging him to stop and peer through the iron fence. There before his very eyes a grave opened up, and a coffin appeared beside it. Before his popping eyes the lid opened and out jumped a skeleton, and from each eye flashed a wee flame of fire. There in its own light it danced. Bones rattled as arms and legs swung as if it was preparing for a race."

And then, Mr. McLean recalls, the old story teller would say, "Oh God forgive me for telling you this true story that has haunted me for years and years. I've told you enough. It's too gruesome, to tell you boys that haven't world experience."

But Jimmie Dougal was persuaded to continue and "with a big chew of twist he'd continue freezing our veins of life," Dan recalls.

### Eye-socket Flames Are Terrifying

"OH WHAT A ghost. I can still see it as it rushed the cemetery fence" Jimmie Dougal continued. "Over it came and dropped behind me. I knew no fear, but when that stalk of bones took form before me, with its eye-socket flames increasing in intensity, my legs wanted to take me away from there. Then out of it came those words of terror 'Can you run?'

"In a flash I was off. I called on my wind and legs for speed and more speed. Yet the fire from its eyes was scorching the back of my neck. My wind was failing, so I flopped on a log by the side of the road. I looked, and there on the other end of the log sat the Ghost, who said with words of dread, 'Well, young fellow, that was quite a run we had'.

"YES, IT was, I said, and we are going to have another when I get my wind back.

“On the next hitch I tacked back to the cemetery. My only chance for survival was to get the Ghost back where it belonged. My fear faded as the light from the skull dimmed. At the gate of its resting place, it fell in a heap. I picked it up and laid it in the coffin as close as possible to a human form. Then the grave reached out and took it back to rest”, and Jimmie Dougal’s head nodded in sleep as old lads sometimes do, recalls Mr. McLean who tells me he let his imagination have the bit in the above yarn.

The Vancouver man who was born in St. Margaret’s in this province, had another good yarn in his letter, but that I must leave for another time.

### Screaming Girl And Murderers

SHIFTING TO a man who assures me his ghost story is completely true - and it’s a dandy - I give you Jim Clarkin, formerly of Emyvale but now of Charlottetown.

About 37 years ago Jim was working in the woods at Gray Pond, Maine about 40 miles from Bangor, with his nephew, Billie Cudmore, who now lives in Grandview. They were hiking some 30 miles on their way to Presque Isle where they were going to pick potatoes, and had taken refuge in an old abandoned school house when the worst lightening storm he had ever seen struck up.

SOME TIME after they had laid down to sleep with their knap sacks for pillows, Jim was awakened by big rats running over his face. He tried to get back to sleep and had nearly succeeded when he was startled by the most terrifying screams he had ever heard. They came from a young woman who was being chased by two men. The girl burst into the school house and the two men after her. With that Clarkin and Cudmore ran out and the terrible screams continued from within.

A mile or so down the road they went into a barn and slept in the hay. In the morning the farmer came to feed the stock, and when they had explained their presence, and told what they had seen and heard, the Maine farmer explained that two men had murdered a girl in that old school house some years before, and the ghosts of the trio and the frightening screams were still seen and heard at times. The murderers had never been found.

### Three Coffins Go Through Window

LESTER KEIZER, Charlottetown told me about the dance that was held long ago at Tracadie Cross in a home close to the church. The fiddler used to carry his violin in an old flour sack. Suddenly in the middle of the night, the musician stopped playing, reached for the flour sack, he stuffed his fiddle and bow into it, got his coat and cap and started out the door.

Everyone was startled by the unusual performance, for the man had not spoken a word. The owner of the house ran to the door and asked the reason. The fiddler was reluctant to tell at first, then exclaimed “I just saw three coffins go out through that window” (the window of the room where he was playing) and that caused his sudden departure. I believe Lester told me that the man never played for a dance again.

Sometime afterwards three members of the household sickened and died. The vision the fiddler had seen, had come to pass, for the three coffins were handed out

through the window. Apparently the passageway from the room through the hall and to the door would not permit the passing of the caskets.

### Dead Wife Appears, Gives Message

MRS. PEARL Rice is the smiling lady who greets you at the counter of the Rite-Way cleaners here. She told me a most unusual story. Her grandmother, Mrs. George Lambert died many years ago in Newfoundland while her sailor husband was at sea. The woman died, apparently, with a keen desire to give her husband a message advising what should be done with their two-year old girl, the baby of the family, Roseanna, who was later to become Mrs. Rice's mother.

Shortly afterward, people who lived along the shore - Mrs. Rice thinks the location was Conception Bay - saw a woman who looked like the late Mrs. Lambert climbing each night the stairs of a house that looked out to sea. When Mr. Lambert arrived home shortly afterwards he was told about the occurrence, went to the spot and sure enough, his late wife came down the stairs and out to meet him.

After warning him not to come too close to her, she told her widower where to put their baby girl so she would be brought up, and this advice was followed. The ghostly woman also gave her husband another message. But he would never tell what it was, and the secret died with him when he was lost at sea some time later.

The story has become a part of the traditional family folk lore of the Lambert family and is one of the better ones I have heard in my travels, although there have been many good ones.

### Stories From Stanchel Area

FRED DIXON who farmed in Mermaid for many years and now lives in Charlottetown, was born in Stanchel close to my Rose Valley home. He told me some interesting yarns recently. Here's one of them.

Donald MacIntosh, Springton and John Stewart, Stanchel saw George Dixon of Stanchel on the road one dark night about the time his father, Robert Dixon was buried. George who had been home at the time died nine days later. An eerie light appeared in his bed room and circled the bed once. When the light had completed the circle, George was dead.

THE DIXON family lived at Dixon's Mill. The old home has since burned, and the mill and dam have long since disappeared. It was nestled in a hollow close to a small bridge, and there was an eerie atmosphere there at times by the old dam. So it was natural, perhaps, that a Stanchel farmer whom I shall not name, was startled one night when five small white forms appeared suddenly by his wagon as he passed the spot. After circling the rig they vanished into the darkness. The man, I have been told, was always suspicious of that place because of what he had seen. But the explanation is simple. Fred and his four brothers had been lying quietly in the house, heard the noise and slipped out to the road without a stitch of clothes on them. They were the Ghosts on that occasion.

I have other yarns that were told me by various people but I've just about run out of space, and will have to leave them for a future column.