

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Sept. 27, 1971

ACROSS THE ISLAND

29 Pt. Cribbage Hand – Tales Of The Occult

By NEIL A. MATHESON

SID STEWART, High Bank was one of the many people I met at the Dundas Plowing Match early this month and he had a story for me about a “perfect Cribbage hand”.

It was in a game in which he had participated, which made it all the more interesting to me, for Sid was one of the friends I met in Ottawa that has always remained that – a friend.

I do not play cribbage so I know nothing about it. But through the help of a number of people – Pius Callaghan, Managing Editor of these papers is one – I gather a perfect hand is a one-in-a-million thing, perhaps even more rare.

Strangely enough Pius had a perfect hand once; but he agrees they are rare. Indeed he says the odds may be even greater than “one in a million”.

By DONALD WHITCOMB

GETTING BACK to Sid Stewart, he was a partner of Donald Whitcomb, Somerville, Massachusetts the night of July 6, 1971 when he got the miracle hand.

Whitcomb got the five of hearts, the five of spades, the five of clubs and the Jack of diamonds in the deal. He cut for the next card and up turned the five of diamonds or his perfect hand which is worth 29 points.

As Milton Reynolds, Brookline, Mass. puts it on paper, Whitcomb held “the most prized and elusive cribbage hand, totaling 29 points – hold the Jack of diamonds, the five of clubs, spades and hearts and having the five of diamonds turned up.”

Reynolds adds “As a result of this unusual count he (Whitcomb) and his partner, Sidney Stewart of High Bank were enabled to eke out a very close victory over Sally Harris, Guernsey Cove and Milton Reynolds, Brookline, Mass. on this one in a million shot and the resulting thrill of a once in a lifetime.”

Invisible Messenger Story

GHOST STORIES are hard to get now so it is with unusual appreciation to Morley M. Bell, QC Summerside that I pass along this one which he has kindly sent to me.

Early in April about the year 1907 or 1908, five or six of us were sitting on the bank under a small grove of trees opposite to the Tryon Consolidated School. This was on a Sunday night after most of us had attended one of the Church Services and it was a dark, calm night.

“WE WERE halted in our conversations by a noise approaching from the direction of the old Woolen Mills travelling at great speed and following the contour of the road which we estimated about 10 feet above the highway. It passed us and continued south towards the Aboiteau Bridge still following the contour of the road till it passed out of hearing.

It was clearly audible for about one-third of a mile – there was no sound of wings and in any case there were no birds at that time of the year and no bird could travel at such a high speed.

### “Unseen, Unknown Force”

“IT APPEARED to all of us as if some object was being propelled through the air by some unseen and unknown force and that force was not any physical or human force.

“I have often wondered since what it was, and the only conclusion I could come to was that it was an invisible messenger going on its intended ways, but the question still is unanswered. “Was it a messenger of life or death or if not, what? This is not an imaginary event and I verify it as true.”

### Barbara MacDonald Story Retold

I WROTE the story of the wreck of the Barbara MacDonald several years ago, based on a page-long clipping from the Patriot of many years ago.

This week a part of that clipping brought back memories of an unusual twist to that old story of ship wreck, peril and finally miraculous rescue.

Senator John A. MacDonald was mostly known as “Cardigan Jack” to his friends and he’s the man who named several ships after his daughters.

This one, the Barbara MacDonald, was making her maiden voyage if I remember correctly, and the owner Cardigan Jack was aboard. A terrible storm developed and the MacDonald family was deep in fear that their husband and father was lost, along with his crew.

The storm wrecked the Barbara MacDonald, but it cast the wreckage upon the rocks of Cape Pine on the storm tossed coast of Newfoundland. The only way to shore, apparently, was to scale the face of a steep cliff, and this, the storm tossed victims of the wreck were able to do. But they did it only after a fearful struggle.

The old story says that the MacDonalds went to bed that night in Cardigan after offering prayers for the husband and father, though they had many reasons to fear that he was lost.

### Mama, Mama, Daddy Is Saved

SENATOR MACDONALD’S youngest daughter, Gertrude joined in the prayers though at her age one wondered if she understood completely the import of the tragedy that was feared which the mother and others had feared had already befallen.

But the climax of this part of the story comes when it is told that the little girl awakened about four o’clock, ran into her mother’s bedroom saying “Mama, Mama, Daddy is saved”.

At first the thought was that the child had been dreaming and little stock was taken of her “Daddy is saved” statement.

But later when it was found that Senator MacDonald and his crew had scaled the cliff on their road to safety, that he had reached the top at the time his little daughter back in Cardigan had explained joyfully “Daddy is safe”.

There was great rejoicing both in the MacDonald home and the homes of the crewman who were saved from death.

As an old Patriot story put it, the homecoming of the crew was eagerly awaited and what had once threatened to be a sad Christmas was turned into the happiest ever.

One story is unusual. That story goes like this:

When the ship's owner arrived home there was great rejoicing in the MacDonald home.

### Jack, You Have Turned Gray

AFTER THE first exchange of happy greetings were concluded he was greatly surprised to hear his wife exclaim "Why Jack, you've turned gray".

A glance in a nearby mirror confirmed that this was indeed true and the startling fact that this Cardigan man who had sailed away from Cardigan only a few weeks previously with jet black hair was now almost white.

That as the toll which the harrowing experience with the elements had taken but, fortunately, there were no serious physical effects remaining, apart from a pair of decidedly sore shin bones.

The Patriot said many years ago of the experience:

"And so the chapter of the maiden voyage of the Barbara MacDonald was finished. Only by a miracle were the men saved from the same fate as that met their gallant ship.

"To this day vivid memories of suffering during the storm and subsequent shipwreck are still fresh in the mind of Senator MacDonald, who even after all those years, awakes at night from the terrible dream of climbing that cliff in Newfoundland."

I talked years afterward to one of the crew of the Barbara MacDonald and he told me, among other things, that they thought they never would have climbed that cliff, had they really been able to see it by broad day light, and realize how terribly steep and rough it really was.

Senator MacDonald has long since died, but he was still alive when the Patriot told the story long ago of his nightmares of recalling that terrible night climbing Cape Pine.

### Sister Ship Lost

A SISTER ship, Anna MacDonald, was wrecked off Prospect, N.S., enroute from New York to Halifax with a load of hard coal. It foundered during a bad sou'easter when it struck a ledge of rock.

Captain Will Miller and his crew of six men went to the bottom with the boat. Captain Miller – three brothers were sea captains – was a Stanley Bridge man. A son, Jim Miller lives in Economy, Nova Scotia.

Another brother, Dan Miller, lived in Alberton and he too was lost at sea. He had told his wife that this was to be his last voyage. It was his last because he never returned, a very different thing from the happy retirement from the sea which he and Mrs. Miller had envisioned.

Mrs. Blanche England, Alberton is a daughter. A third brother, Captain Albert Miller, was also a sea captain when last heard of by relatives here. Captain Albert was Master

of a luxury cruise ship in the waters off Malaya, or Japan. It was before the Second World War in which Japan was so powerful an aggressor.

Final word was never received here, though it is presumed that Captain Albert Miller is no longer alive.

Mrs. John Court, Charlottetown, the former Christine Miller, is a niece of the three sea captains.