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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Unusual Tales Told, Dr. Robertson At PWC

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A FEW unusual stories came this week in a letter from James H. MacDonald, Sackville, N.B., who was born in Hopefield, P.E.I.

Mr. MacDonald wrote me regarding the "wooden pumps" of which I wrote recently. Thank you for your suggestion. I shall talk with the man whose name and address you sent to me.

One of Mr. MacDonald's stories goes back many years, and it concerns a chap who lived in the Little Sands area. I don't know what his name was, but let's call him "Bill" to make the story more easily understood.

Well Bill had lost five of his shirts, and neither Bill, nor anyone else in the family had the faintest idea what had become of them.

The strangest part of it was that Bill would wear the shirt to bed, but in the morning it would be gone. Nobody could unravel the mystery until Bill's brother came home on a visit – he was living outside the province – so their mother told him about Bill losing the shirts.

The brother kept a close watch on the door of Bill's bedroom. Sure enough the door opened quietly, and Bill came out. He was walking in his sleep. The brother followed Bill downstairs and out of the house.

BILL'S BROTHER had a long walk ahead of him, for the trail took him down to the road and about a mile from home.

Finally Bill came to a large rock in the centre of the field. He took off his shirt, lifted the rock, put the shirt under it, then replaced the rock and started back home.

The brother followed just to be sure Bill got back home alright. But next day the brother walked to the rock in the daylight.

And sure enough, he found the six shirts that Bill had placed there. Five of them were the ones he had "lost" before the brother came home. The sixth was the one Bill had placed there the night before.

As I've explained, I don't know what the man's name was. I'm using the name "Bill" just to make the story easier to tell. This is particularly for the benefit of anyone who may read this from the Little Sands area, who may know what this man's real name was.

There have been many unusual stories about sleep walkers. Mr. MacDonald tells me "I knew a chap once who used to walk in his sleep. He fell downstairs one night, though, and he never walked in his sleep again."

Lights Forerunners Of Death

JOHN A. MACDONALD, brother of James, “could foretell a death”. Once on the road to the Hopefield post office, he noted something unusual at a house, not far off the road, which was run as a boarding house.

A crew of men were working cutting logs and Belle MacLeod – her father, Norman MacLeod, lived at the time in High Bank – was cooking for the workmen.

When John MacLeod was near the house, he saw a light come from the front door and go down to the County Line Road towards Little Sands.

Mr. MacDonald made enquiries as to whether anyone had gone that way carrying a lantern. There was nobody, he was told, so Mr. MacDonald said “Somebody is going to die in that house.” A short time later, James MacDonald tells me, Belle MacLeod died of pneumonia, a disease that was often fatal in the days that are gone.

The man who lived next door to my father was a carpenter, and he made coffins in the olden days, Mr. MacDonald recalls. He “often heard the sounds of saws and hammers there at night, even when nobody was working in the carpentry shop.”

Once, Mr. Macdonald tells me, “my brother saw a horse and truck wagon, with a long box on the wagon.” There was a man driving the horse, so that part of it looked normal. But the horse, wagon and the box, were visible, though it was “one awfully dark night.”

Wagon Brought Body Home

THE RIG was coming from the home of Mr. Munn. Later Mr. Munn sold the truck wagon and about a year later, the man who had bought it took the same truck wagon to Georgetown to bring the body of a Wood Islands man who had been murdered in Pictou. The man had been placed on the railroad and the railway shunter ran over him. This, apparently, was after the man had been murdered, though I cannot be sure from Mr. MacDonald’s letter. The man whose body was carried on the truck wagon was named Munn, Mr. MacDonald tells me.

Many people do not believe such things actually happen, Mr. MacDonald observes. But he does. Once, he tells me “he was sitting on a big log eating his lunch – he was working in the woods not far from Sackville – when “a thump came on the log “ near to him.

“I wondered what had caused it, but about a month later my nephew, Sam MacDonald, was killed just outside of Amherst, N.S., so that was a warning”, Mr. MacDonald observes. His nephew had been hit by a train.

If any old friends want to write Mr. MacDonald, his address is box 465 at Sackville.

Dr. S.N. Robertson Is Recalled

THIS STORY will appeal particularly, I suggest, to the people who attended Prince of Wales College back in the days that Dr. S.N. Robertson was principal.

It concerns two chaps who attended PWC in my time. Steve Connolly told me the yarn as we were chatting one day in the Post Office where Steve works.

He and George Ayers, Charlottetown, were skipping the second period one morning. It was geometry, as I recall the story, and Steve and George didn’t have their home work done, apparently. The pair decided to head for the furnace room in the basement. They

told the janitor their problem; their main desire was to hide from Dr. Robertson who was often on the hunt for such students.

The janitor was kind and he told them that “the Doctor very seldom comes to the furnace room” to search for students. But this was one of the days he did come.

Hearing the unmistakable sound of the Doctor’s steps coming down the stairs, Steve and George looked quickly for some place to hide. Unable to find a spot, they saw two large barrels and they hopped in and squatted down as low as possible.

When Dr. Robertson arrived he asked the janitor if he had seen any students hiding. The janitor replied in the negative, but Dr. Robertson went on the hunt anyway. When he spotted the barrels, he approached them and calmly invited Mr. Connolly and Mr. Ayers to “come out of there”, and then took them upstairs to administer the traditional Robertson lecture.

A colorful character to look back at, Dr. Robertson could be very formidable on occasion to the students who were under his care.

Stood At Front Door Of PWC

A STICKLER for discipline, he often stood at the front door of the old college with watch in hand. The students who were on time were allowed to enter. But the old head would shake vigorously as soon as the minute hand on his watch reached the fatal position which indicated the hopeful student was late.

He turned me back once – the chap just ahead of me got in – but I knew a back door we used in autumn for football practice, and I went to the back of the building and made the first class as though nothing had happened. The old practice field for football was just behind the college in those days. Generally speaking it was the area that is occupied today by the Vocational Wing and the parking lot behind PWC. It wasn’t regulation width, but some rare old football battles were fought there, and some pretty good players got their initial experience on the PWC field.