



Our Lives
Ghost Stories

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In the olden times, like I told you, when the ship would come in from the sealing voyage there would be a fine lot of work at Bowrings and Jobs. That employed a fine lot of men. My father was one of the men who was in the longshoremen's union.

I never heard tell of him seeing anything on the old Petty Harbour Road. They used to walk home on Saturday nights. The next evening, on Sunday, they would bring a stock of grub back out with them. That was partly the reason why they'd come home every Saturday.

There was this man. I was great friends with him and his son. I used to be in his house quite often. He was one of the men who used to work at the same place where my father worked. Two of them were great friends, so we used to visit one another's houses.

I didn't think that he ever saw anything in the ghost story line, but he told me one time, "Richard, I got a terrible fright one night when I was walking home out over the Petty Harbour Road."

"You did?" I said.

"You can say that I did," he said. "I might as well tell you about it. I always used to walk home with a bunch of men."

For some reason or another they were ready to go home and he wasn't. Job's wharf, or Bowrings, was I suppose about half a mile down. They told him they'd wait for him up by the long bridge, farther in town. When he got up there, they weren't there. They were gone ahead.

He knew then he had to walk home without them, the old way, the old Petty Harbour way. That was only nine miles and Goulds way was twelve.

So he said he started off, and he went in to Kelly's. Kelly's had a public house up in the west end, up by the crossroads on what they called the Waterford Bridge Road.

When he got on the Kilbride Road he took off and went up over Kenna's Hill, until you got up to Long Pond.

So he was coming along, whistling, and didn't have a care in the world until he came around the turn to Long Pond. Around the turn there was a well there.

They called it the Little Well. It was fit to drink out of. So he was going to get a drink out of it, he said, but before he got a chance, here a thing stood right across the road, higher on the legs than any horse he ever saw. And it had this big eye, he said, as big as a saucer, staring right straight at him.

He thought it terrible to turn around and go back. He made a step towards it, and as he did that thing twisted out of his way.



This man had a crippled foot. He used to walk sideways. He forgot he was crippled, he said, and then he started to run. He never stopped running, he said, until he saw the graveyard on the other side of Petty Harbour, up on the hill.

He said he used to trip in stones that were handy as big as footballs. He was so frightened that he couldn't stop running.

When he got over as far as the graveyard, that's where he turned down. He saw the Petty Harbour lights. He was after buying one or two oranges. He took out the oranges and he ate one. That gave him strength to get home to his house. He said he didn't have far to walk to get over because he lived down in the middle of the harbour. When he got in and opened the door he fell in across the floor. His father was alive then and he said, "What's wrong?"

"Father, I saw something that gave me a terrible fright."

The next morning was the last day of work in St. John's. They didn't have to go out anymore. And he never got out of bed for two months. He got better, he said, in time to go fishing.

It looked something like an animal, he said. It resembled a horse. He did get some fright.

Wilson Hayward

A lot of people didn't believe in ghosts, but we did have ghosts here in Bonavista years ago.

They used to see people out around their homes, years ago, after they died. I always had a reason for that. If a man took sick, and he couldn't work, his family would go hungry. So perhaps, if he had three little children, he wouldn't be getting anything from the government. But for the crowd that lived around him, the man's family would fall on hard times.

So, if this man had tuberculosis or something like that, he got worse and worse and worse. Finally he would die.

But that man knew that after he died his children were going to be left alone in the world, with only their mother, with nobody else to provide for them.

I always used to say there was no way in the world that man could go to bed, lie down, and die with a contented mind, with three little small youngsters, knowing that they were going to be hungry.

So that man, when he died, would be buried, but his spirit would always be around his family. So nighttime you could see a ghost out around that person's door. You'd meet a ghost on the street and it seemed they were always looking for something.

Now it's all gone in the past, because if a man got three little youngsters and a wife and if he takes sick his youngsters would be a lot better with him gone. They're looked after more with him gone than what they would if he was home. There would be no reason why he had to worry after his death. He could die peacefully.

But years ago, people couldn't die content.

There's a tree growing up in Camp Seven, what they called Camp Seven, years ago, when they used to have the sidings up there.

When the train was on, they went up to Camp Seven, about seventeen miles from Bonavista. They used to put down a track so that they could push flatcars out there so that the men could load up their wood.

People had their winter camps built up there and moved their families up. There's a tree up there now between Camp Seven and Whisper Siding. Dozens of people went to that and started to chop it. You would be chopping on this side, and there be like an axe chopping on the other side of the tree. They used to have to leave it alone.

I know dozens of people who went and tried the tree and got frightened to death and they had to leave it. The tree is still there, just about chopped off. They was 'lowing that someone must have laid down by the tree and died there. He might have had a family and was worrying about them.

There are stories about ghosts wherever you go. One fella used to get on board his boat and go out into the night. When he got out on the water, there would be another fella, all dressed up for fishing, sitting out on the head of the boat. You wouldn't know but he was going out fishing with him.

I know a young girl one time who came home and looked in her living room. When she went into the room, there was a ghost sitting in the chair.

We got a ghost light out in Bonavista Bay. I've seen him hundreds of times, right out in the centre of Bonavista, halfway up to King's Cove. A girl got killed one time on a ship and they threw her over out in the middle of Bonavista Bay. Before a storm of nord'ard wind, a light appears out there in the bay.

I had a man here who told me about when he was a young man, living in Mockbeggar, here in Bonavista. In Mockbeggar there was nobody but Frenchmen buried up there. There are caskets up there sitting up on top of the ground in lots of places.

He said that he came home this night and when he got inside his gate he heard his house outside door open. And the door closed. He went in the yard. When he opened the outside door, someone opened the second door and closed it. He went in and opened the second door.

Then someone opened the kitchen door and closed it. It went on like that. When he opened the kitchen door, someone opened the hall door and went on. He heard him go up the stairs just the same as if there was a man there.

So he said, "I took off my clothes and I got something to eat. I went up the stairs. I went in my room. I got in the bed. After I got in the bed I heard the ghost go down the stairs again. He opened the hall door and he closed it. He opened the kitchen door and he closed it. He opened the porch door and closed it and he went on out."

This happened several times when he went home and it happened to his father before him



"The next morning," he said, "I got up in under the house with a little rod. I pushed the rod down by every post that was keeping up the house. And here I found that one post was down and resting on top of a casket."

This is where the house had sunk down in the mud and the post settled down on the casket. He went and he got a saw, got up under the house and sawed off that post. He took the stump that

was down in the ground on the casket and took it out. He filled up the hole and he said he was never bothered with a ghost after that.

Art Wicks

A real good friend of mine, Martin Meadus told me this. Not only Martin described this, but his wife, Mary King.

He bought a house in St. John's and swore by his Almighty God that this happened. Everybody was gone to bed. About two o'clock he heard somebody down putting the kettle on the stove. Then someone went and flushed the toilet. By and by the lights all went out.

It wasn't long before it got to him. This night he couldn't put up with it anymore. Someone was rattling the forks.

Mary said one time she was going down over the stairs and she met this old fella coming up. She didn't know who he was. Mary sat in the corner right there when she told me that. It is enough to frighten the lights right out of you.

This is as true as God in Heaven. Martin was sitting down there, sir, when he told me.

This night he got up in the bed and this presence came in the room. He said, "You could hear the drawing of breath."

Martin said, "For the love of God, give me some peace. Take whatever you want."

They never heard of him after.

Mary told me, "Art my dear, the chandeliers were shaking."

Martin and Mary got rid of the house. They are sure that house is haunted.

I said, "Mary, is that true?"

"That's true, Art."

Art Wicks

Years ago it was nothing unusual for someone in the community to be seeing a ghost. It was almost a routine thing to be seeing some kind of a light or some kind of a schooner coming in the harbour with full rigged sails. And boy, it really did happen.

I can recall one night coming home from Shambler's Cove. It was years ago. I was in a rowboat. I would say it happened about one o'clock in the morning when this red light came in from the

eastward. It came in but it didn't make any noise and was just about to hit the boat. It frightened the living daylights right out of me. I didn't know what it was. I thought it was someone in a boat, a speedboat or some damn thing, but it didn't make a noise. It just disappeared. That was off, backward off Burry's Point, this red light.

There was another time in Greenspond Tickle. We call it Greenspond now. We always made fun at people telling us that there was a light. But this night, a big red light, about the size of a puncheon, came on down through the tickle. It frightened the living daylights out of everyone. It just went on down through and disappeared. So I don't know, really, if it was a ghost light or what the devil it was.

I was talking to Captain Sam Blackwood. He always had the schooner called the *Maggie Blackwood*. Sam was courting a girl in Port Nelson, Flossie White.

He told me scores of times about a place called Coaker's Rocks, two big rocks over in Safe Harbour. He said going up, especially in a haze or a dense fog or a little bit of snow, he could see this light coming out from the woods. Before the light got out to where Sam was it always disappeared.