

The Haunted Hollows of History



Does Mary Surratt's Ghost Haunt the Senate Chamber Seeking Justice?



There is no grievance that is a fit object for redress by mob law.”
Abraham
Lincoln

Along with fellow conspirators Lewis Powell, David Herold and George Atzerodt, Mary Elizabeth Surratt was sentenced on June 30, 1865 to be “hanged by the neck ‘til she be dead.” Mary Elizabeth Surratt was the first woman to be executed by the United States Government. The Civil War produced great national distress, conflicting loyalties, and changing values in America. The fact that a military tribunal had tried and convicted Mary Surratt and she was hanged over protests against executing a woman makes her execution still controversial a century and a half later in a time of modern wars and military tribunals.

Mary Surratt’s Ghost is Said to Haunt the Senate Chamber, Seeking Justice

Outside of Shakespeare’s ghosts that both Edwin and John Wilkes both portrayed, the ghost of Mary Surratt is probably one of history’s most restless spirits. One of her ghost stories in the *Brooklyn Eagle* states that she is said to haunt the Senate of the United States still seeking justice. She swore to her dying gasp that she had been unjustly convicted for treason, conspiracy and plotting the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln.

Reverdy Johnson Defends Mary Surratt

Like John Wilkes Booth, Mary Surratt suffered a life of dramatic downward spirals. There is a large cast of characters in Mary Surratt’s eternal drama. Her lawyer Reverdy Johnson defended her before the military tribunal on May 8, 1865 in a courtroom on the third floor of the Old Arsenal Penitentiary in Washington D.C. One end of the Senate chamber resounds with Reverdy Johnson’s indignation. He is castigating at Judge Joseph Holt, who supposedly withheld the Tribunal’s recommendation for mercy for Mary Surratt until after she had been hanged.

On the other end of the chamber, Mary Surratt confronts John Armour Bingham, the Republican congressman from Ohio and the judge advocate in the trial with complicity in her murder. The Ohio lawyer sits back, pale and trembling at the accusation. The shadowy Senators sit silently watching.

Did Secretary of War Edwin Stanton Rush to Judgment?

Mary Surratt glides through the Senator chamber to the little back office of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. She stands in the doorway, staring at him accusingly, until he looks up at her. Then he takes his pen in hand, documenting

the fact that the trial of the Lincoln conspirators began on May 10, 1865, a little less than a month after the president's assassination on April 14, 1865. The scratching of the pen on paper is the only sound in the office. There is no breathing.

Mary Surratt's ghost next confronts President Andrew Johnson during a recess of his Senate impeachment trial and he takes up his pen to explain why he hadn't granted her mercy. He doesn't deny his statement that her boarding house was the "nest where the egg was hatched."

Facts as Cold as a Haunted Cemetery At Midnight

Some of the stone cold reality issues around Mary Surratt's conviction include the fact that military tribunals had less strict rules of evidence than civilian trial courts, and it was very unusual for a military tribunal to try a civilian. The military tribunal trial began on May 10, 1865, and the three judges spent almost two months in court waiting for a jury verdict.

Judges Bingham and Holt tried to cover up the fact that there were two plots existed. One called for kidnapping president Lincoln and holding him hostage in exchange for Confederate prisoners. The second plot called for assassinating President Lincoln, Vice President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William H. Seward to throw the government into electoral chaos. The prosecution hid the fact that a diary found on Booth's body clearly showed that the assassination plan dated from April 14, 1865. The defense didn't call for Booth's diary to be brought to court.

The shadows that swirled in Washington D.C. and across the United States in the aftermath of the Lincoln assassination created rumors, mob rule, and uncertainty that has tinged the history record for centuries. The question of Mary Surratt's guilt or innocence is one of the biggest uncertainties.

The Killing of Mary Surratt, and The Conspirators- the Movies

A twenty five minute movie by Chris King called *The Killing of Mary Surratt*, tells her story and rephrases the question of her guilt or innocence. According to Chris King, Mary Surratt was at the epicenter of the passions stirred by a brutal, divisive four year war and an equally brutal assassination. He feels that mob rule and political expediency played a large part in her execution. He said, "Talk about wham-bam. Within 24 hours of official final sentencing, President Johnson had the prison build a scaffold overnight to hang them. Unbelievable."

The Killing of Mary Surratt won the Best Drama award at the Cape Fear Independent Film Festival held between April 29 and May 2, 2010, in North Carolina. *The Killing of Mary Surratt* was shown at the Alexandria, Virginia, film Festival on Saturday, November 6, 2010. It won the third place trophy at the Short Film Drama category of the Indie Gathering International film in Festival in Cleveland, Ohio, and was a finalist in the Fifty Second Rochester International Film Festival in New York.

On April 15, 2011, Robert Redford premiered his film, *The Conspirators*, at Ford's Theater in Washington D.C. *The Conspirators* tells the story of the Lincoln assassination and the capture, trial, and conviction of the Lincoln conspirators, including Mary Surratt. In an NPR interview, Robert Redford said that he worked to present a balanced view of Mary Surratt. He said that he didn't intend for the film to be a commentary on current military tribunals and trials in the War on Terror, but that he just wanted to show both sides of the story

The Surratt House Museum

The Surratt House Museum in Clinton, Maryland, is offering a free museum tour with a movie ticket stub from *The Conspirator* through the end of November 2011. The Surratt House Museum staff said that they were pleasantly surprised by the movie and recommended it to illustrate the conditions in America after the Civil War and the aspects of military justice.

The Judicial Murder of Mary Surratt?

In 1873, Judge Joseph Holt published a letter in which he claimed that he had presented President Andrew Johnson with a document signed by five of the Military Tribunal members recommending life in the penitentiary for Mary Surratt instead of hanging. Andrew Johnson counterclaimed that Judge Holt had come to the White House and he and Judge Holt discussed the matter and agreed that Mary Surratt's gender didn't affect her crime or sentencing.

History hasn't yet resolved the question and the ghost of Mary Surratt may still haunt the Senate Chambers until there is a resolution and justice for Mary Surratt.

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Farmer Brunett's Ghost Lantern- A Canadian Pacific Railroad Ghost Story



On dark nights near Ste. Scholastique, a ghostly farmer swings a red lantern alongside the Canada Atlantic Railroad tracks searching for his missing body.

Almost every railroad has a ghostly lantern story and the Canada Atlantic Railway is no exception. Its brief 35 year existence from 1879 to 1914, makes its own existence relatively ghostly.

Lumber Baron John Rudolphus Booth Creates Companies

Lumber baron John Rudolphus Booth created the Canada Atlantic Railroad Company and during its short life it handled about 40 percent of the grain traffic from the Canadian west to the St. Lawrence River valley. In 1889, he established the Canada Atlantic Transit Company of the United States to operate between Depot Harbor and American ports like Chicago and Duluth, Minnesota.

In 1898 he set up the Canada Atlantic Transit Company to run steamships on the Great Lakes from Depot Harbor to what is now Thunder Bay, Ontario. In 1905, he sold all of these companies and the Canada Atlantic Railway to the Grand Trunk Railway which was later absorbed into the Canadian National Railroad. The American Company dissolved in 1948 and the Canadian Company in 1950. The Canada Atlantic Railroad also had its own ghost story that John Rudolphus Booth couldn't squelch.

At Midnight on the Canada Atlantic Railroad Tracks

In the late autumn of 1888, when enough snow had fallen to record footprints, a farmer named Brunet walked along the Canada Atlantic Railway track about a half mile on the other side of the St. Scholastique station in Quebec, Canada. The late hour – about midnight – convinced farmer Brunet to walk the single track instead of walking through the inky, black woods, although he could barely make out the outline of the tracks as he trudged along through the darkness.

Imagination sees farmer Brunet trudging through the darkness shading his eyes to track the glow of lamplight from a distant farmhouse, possibly a lamp that his wife put in the window to light his way home. Imagination hears the train whistle and the headlight fastens farmer Brunet in its fierce glare. He jumps off the track and the Ottawa Express whizzes by.

The real story goes that the Ottawa Express sped by, ran over farmer Brunet, and threw his body 100 feet into a clump of trees growing alongside the track. His

body landed in separate pieces that scattered through the tree branches.

An Ottawa Express Engineer Talks Confidentially to the Montreal Correspondent of the St. Louis Globe Democrat

Imagination has farmer Brunet's family searching for his body and finally finding it scattered in the clump of trees growing alongside the Canada Atlantic Railroad tracks. They buried the parts of his body that they could recover and tried to go on with their lives. Farmer Brunet didn't give up so easily. He determined to stop the train by waving a red signal lantern before it could hit him. Every night he stands beside the tracks swinging his red lantern as the Ottawa Express thunders toward him.

The real story goes that five engineers ran the Ottawa Express since that fateful autumn night in 1888 and everyone of them asked for a transfer from the route. The last of the engineers asked for a transfer from the Ottawa Express in April of 1889, and he decided to tell his story in confidence to the Montreal Correspondent of the St. Louis Globe Democrat..

The engineer said that he couldn't stand running the Ottawa Express any longer and that he had requested a transfer. When the Canada Atlantic Railroad officials asked why the engineer wanted to transfer, he was too ashamed to reveal his reason, but he had a ghost story to tell.

According to the engineer, after he left St. Scholastique station, he opened the locomotive engine's throttle wide because he had to make up time. He had just built up a good head of steam when he saw what looked like a red star floating in the air about a mile ahead of him. The red star grew larger as the Ottawa Express sped nearer and the engineer saw that the red star really was a red lantern. The red lantern swung so high in the air the engineer thought it had to be a signal.

The Red Lantern Hovers Where Farmer Brunet's Body Landed

The engineer also noticed that the red lantern hovered over the clump of trees where farmer Brunet's body had landed. As the Ottawa Express got within 200 yards of the trees, the red lantern seemed to jump across from the trees right over the track. All of this happened as quickly as it took the engineer to tell the Montreal Correspondent of the St. Louis Globe Democrat the story.

The engineer was terrified. The light was unmistakably a signal lantern and it hung directly in the way of the train. He didn't have time to alert the fireman before he was on top of it. Fearful that there was something wrong with the track, the engineer shut off the steam, put on the air brakes and stopped the train. George Welles, the conductor, ran forward and he and the engineer walked back down the track to investigate.

There was nothing wrong with the track. There wasn't a house within half a mile of the place, and the men couldn't see any foot prints in the snow to show that anybody had been in the neighborhood. Up until this point, the engineer had never heard of the ghost, but he noticed that the conductor looked nervous and the fireman looked scared.

The Same Red Lantern Flashes Two Nights Later

A walk a half mile ahead of the engine convinced the engineer that nothing was wrong with the track, so he started the train and arrived in Ottawa twenty five minutes late. The engineer had expected that his bosses would ask him to account for his unscheduled stop, but they didn't. Conductor Welles said no more to him about it. The engineer again made the trip the next morning and scrutinized the spot where he had seen the red signal lantern the night before. All he saw were trees and railroad track.

On his next trip which was two nights later, the engineer saw the same red lantern. He had no doubt the lantern was supernatural and despite an inclination to ignore the ghostly warning and keep the train going, his hands mechanically turned off the steam and put on the air brakes.

Again, the conductor came forward and again the engineer explained what happened. Again they went on with their trip after failing to discover any reason for a red warning lantern.

The Engineer Asks to be Transferred from the Ottawa Express

The engineer discovered that four other engineers had seen the red lantern, but railroad officials convinced them to keep quiet about what they saw because they were afraid that a farmer Brunet ghost story would ruin passenger business.

The engineer decided to ask for a transfer and to speak out about what he saw because he believed it might be an omen of a railroad catastrophe to come. Two of

the engineers who had given up the Ottawa run because of the ghost, Alexander Swindon and James Roberts, corroborated the engineer's story.

Lumber Baron John Rudolphus Booth Couldn't Stop the Ghost Story

The inhabitants in and around St. Scholastique soon heard the story of the red lantern and crowds of brave people went to the clump of trees where the lantern appeared. The Canada Atlantic Railroad couldn't keep the story quiet.

The Canada Atlantic Railroad Hires Detectives

At first, John Rudolphus Booth and his employees believed that the story of Brunet's red ghost lantern was a hoax. The Canada Atlantic Railroad hired detectives who crouched by the side of the track all night and hid in the clump of trees. Despite their efforts, the red lantern shone and the trains stopped, but the detectives couldn't find any human hand holding the red lantern.

Next, the Canada Atlantic bought the trees and put men to work cutting them down to see if that had any effect on the ghostly signal man and his lantern. The lack of trees didn't stop the ghost.

The clump of trees where farmer Brunet landed, John Rudolphus Booth, and his Canada Atlantic Railway have all passed into history, but local tradition says that the red lantern still signals a phantom Ottawa Express to a stop and the perplexed engineer and conductor can still be seen searching the track for danger.

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The Ticonderoga's Haunted Blue Bell with the Bewitching Tone



The spirits always ring the watch bell nine times instead of eight. In the middle of the deep sea nights when the moon rides the sky like a ghostly galleon, the haunted blue watch bell on the Ticonderoga once again chimes nine times.

The haunted blue bell, the one that sailors claimed had the best tone in the Navy, earned the Ticonderoga the reputation for being a “haunted ship” everywhere it sailed. Sailors would not stay aboard the Ticonderoga and some blamed its decommissioning on the high sailor turnover.

When the Navy sent The Ticonderoga to Rotten Row in the Brooklyn Navy Yard in 1881, it stored the old bell that had the best tone in the Navy in the old loft of the Equipment Department. Then, Lt. Emory came along.

In 1884, Lieutenant William H. Emory of the Navy ship *Thetis*, a three masted, wooden hulled steam whaler in the United States Navy, had an important mission. The Navy wanted him to find the Lady Franklin Bay Polar Expedition.

The Lady Franklin Polar Expedition Is Missing In 1881, the same year that the Navy retired the Ticonderoga and her haunted blue bell, the United States government gave First Lieutenant Adolphus Greely command of the ship *Proteus* and the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition.

The U.S. government commissioned the expedition to establish one of a chain of meteorological-observation stations as part of the First International Polar Year. The Government also directed the Expedition to collect astronomical data and polar magnetic data and search for traces of the lost *USS Jeannette* which had disappeared north of Ellesmere Island in the Canadian Arctic.

Lt. Greely had never been to the Arctic, but the *Proteus* and his expedition arrived there safely and explored many miles of the coast of northwest Greenland. The Expedition achieved a new record for exploring the most distant reaches of the north and discovered new mountain ranges in 1882. Then the Expedition camped at Fort Conger on Ellesmere Island to wait for two relief ships that never came.

Lt. Emory Prepares to Sail for the Arctic Three Navy ships, the *Bear*, a former whaler, and the *Alert* and the *Thetis* were commissioned to locate and rescue the Lady Franklin Expedition. Secretary of the Navy William Collins Whitney gave Lt. Emory a free hand to make the *Thetis* as comfortable as possible in case the ship got caught in the frozen seas and the men would have to spend the winter on board, far from human habitations and comforts. One of the comforts that Lt. Emory placed in the *Thetis* was a big blue watch bell that he found in the old loft of the Equipment Department.

The bell weighed over 400 pounds and its metal was five inches thick. It had a brilliantly polished surface and was the most conspicuous feature on the deck of the Thetis. It had a deep and musical tone and naval officers believed there was no bell in the world of its size that could be heard at a further distance across the ice by a sledge party returning to the ship after a voyage of discovery.

The Blue Ticonderoga Bell Haunts the Thetis It didn't take long for the haunted blue Ticonderoga bell that Lt. Emory had ordered installed in the Thetis to cast its spell. Strange feelings and impulses traveled among the crew. The bell evidently objected to sounding the daylight hours. Instead, all through the night it awakened the sailors ringing the old fashioned watches.

In the daytime, when Quartermaster Cooke approached to ring the changes, it's said that he felt repelled by an unseen force. He reported that the day before when he went to ring the bell it turned a cloudy blue right in front of his eyes. He hurried over the rail to get on dry land several mocking peals rang out and completely unnerved him.

No one on board had slept a wink since the bell came. It rang all night long, sometimes in low tones, sometimes clanging violently, as if the yard were on fire. "None of the men will ship with the bell. We will beg Captain Emory to get a new one," the Quartermaster said.

Captain Emory Finds the Lost Expedition Captain Emory didn't get a new bell. After about five weeks of preparation, the Thetis departed New York on May 1, 1884. Commander Winfield Scott Schley commanded Thetis and the relief squadron. Thetis did not even reach Upernavik, Greenland, her jumping off point until late May. Accompanied by the *Bear*, the Thetis and her haunted bell, headed north, searching for the lost expedition.

The haunted blue watch bell seemed to bring the Thetis good luck because on June 22, 1884, the Thetis and the Bear rounded Cape Sabine and while battling a ferocious storm, they found Lt. Greely and six companions, all weak from exposure and malnutrition but alive. The other nineteen expedition members had died of starvation, drowning, hypothermia, and one from gunshot wounds. The rescue ships arrived in New York on August 8, 1884.

The Haunted Bell is Returned to the Equipment Department On 20 November 1884, Thetis was placed out of commission and was recommissioned and renovated at the Brooklyn Naval Yard to serve as a revenue cutter for the Navy.

On a Pacific voyage, the entire crew deserted because of the haunted blue bell. The Navy returned the bell to the old loft in the Equipment Department at the Brooklyn Naval Yard – the same place where it had been discovered by Lt. Emory.

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Does Columbus Haunt His Ships in Chicago’s Jackson Park Lagoon?



After the World's Columbian Exposition closed in October 1893 , the replicas of the Christopher Columbus ships Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria were moved to Jackson Park Lagoon. Is Columbus still sailing them?

The World's Columbian Exposition opened in Chicago, Illinois, in May 1893 after Chicago beat out New York, St. Louis, and San Francisco for the honor of hosting the fair. The Exposition officially closed in October 1893, but it has left a lasting fingerprint on history with buildings, social customs, legacies, and- ghosts?

A Cyclist Sees a Ghostly Mariner in Jackson Park's South Lagoon

According to the *Chicago Chronicle*, on a clear morning in early August of 1900, just after dawn, a cyclist sped along the path around the south lagoon in Jackson Park in Chicago. Just as he reached the *Santa Maria*, which lay tilted to the north yards away from her sister ships the *Nina* and the *Pinta*, he spotted a shaggy head covered with mats of snarly hair rising slowly above the gunwales close to the *Santa Maria's* prow.

The cyclist immediately stopped peddling and watched the rugged body that was attached to the head materialize. The ghost wore a tattered coat clinging closely to his shoulders and the early morning breeze caught the pieces of the coat and waved them like flags as the ghost slowly seized the rotted stays still clinging to the mast and pulled himself up. Then, the ghost shaded his eyes with his hand and scanned Lake Michigan as if he were searching for some

distant land or an approaching sail.

The cyclist gave a startled exclamation and with that, the ghost disappeared. The cyclist, who lived near Jackson Park, told other cyclists who rode around the south lagoon to see for themselves. Some people didn't see anything, but others claimed that they saw the mysterious mariner at different times on the decks of the *Nina* and *Pinta* as well as the *Santa Maria*. Everyone who saw the mariner reported that they saw him scan the lake far and wide, and when he felt them looking at him he would disappear into the hold of the ship.

Is the Mysterious Mariner the Ghost of Christopher Columbus?

All of the people who saw the ghostly mariner saw him only on clear mornings, just after dawn. Many people believed that a harmless recluse was living on the three ships which had been in the lagoon since the end of the World's Columbian Exposition in October 1893. The Jackson Park policeman insisted that no one could be living on the ships because every night policemen visited the boats to make sure that one stayed on board.

The World's Columbian Exposition Opened in May, 1893

The World's Columbian Exposition which celebrated the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus landing in America, actually took place in 1893, a year later than its founders had planned. The Exposition's founders included Chicago shoe tycoon Charles Schwab, and Chicago Railroad magnate John Whitfield Bunn and many other industrialists and financiers across the United States. Dedication ceremonies were held on October 21, 1892 to adhere to the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Columbus in the New World commemoration, but the World's Columbian Exposition didn't open to the public until May 1, 1893.

The World's Columbian Exposition Area Included Jackson Park and its Lagoons

The World's Columbian Exposition was situated on 630 acres of land that included Jackson Park and its lagoons, the South Shore, Jackson Park Highlands, Hyde Park and Woodlawn. The Exposition featured nearly 200 new buildings crafted in the classical architectural style, canals, and lagoons. Frederick Law Olmsted created the layout of the grounds and Daniel Burnham directed the architecture of the buildings.

People from forty-six nations participated in the Exposition, constructing exhibits and pavilions. The Exposition attracted nearly 26 million visitors during its six month run and it far outshone other world fairs, becoming the symbol of American pride, unity, emerging empire and industrial optimism.

Patrick Prendergast Assassinated Chicago's Popular Mayor Carter Harrison, Sr.

On October 9, 1893, more than 716,881 people attended Chicago Day, commemorating the anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 and symbolizing Chicago's rising from its ashes. The exposition closed on October 30, 1893, with the Exposition goers and the entire country in shock. Patrick Eugene Prendergast, a disappointed office seeker, assassinated Carter Harrison, Sr., Chicago's popular mayor and Exposition directors cancelled closing ceremonies for a public memorial service.

The Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria Sailed to the World's Columbian Exposition

When the World's Columbian Exposition ended, the organizers returned Jackson Park to its public park status in much better shape than its original swampy state. The Exposition organizers reshaped the lagoon to a more natural appearance, but retained the straight line northern end which still laps against the steps on the south side of the Museum of Science & Industry building. During the World's Columbian Exposition, the replicas of the *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria* were moored in the south lagoon of Jackson Park and crowds of people visited each ship.

Two years earlier in 1891, William Curtis, an official with the U.S. State Department in Spain, had proposed the idea of building replicas of the *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria* to Queen Maria Christina of Spain. The Queen endorsed the idea and established a commission in Spain to build the ships and sail them to Chicago as a commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Columbus in America.

Building the *Santa Maria* went smoothly, but the construction on the *Nina* and the *Pinta* which Americans in Spain were building, went more slowly. Instead of building new ships, the builders used the hulls of two rotting ships for the replicas of the *Nina* and *Pinta*. Initially, Congress refused to appropriate the money for the

ships and by the time Congress finally passed legislation to finance the construction, it was hopelessly behind schedule.

The *Santa Maria* was finished and sea worthy by July 1892, but officials ruled that the *Nina* and the *Pinta* were not sea worthy. The *Santa Maria* sailed for Puerto Rico under its own steam, while two United States Navy ships towed the *Nina* and *Pinta* from Spain. All three of the replica ships were towed through the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago where they drew large crowds.

The Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria After the World's Columbian Exposition

After the World's Columbian Exposition, the three replica ships remained in the south lagoon of Jackson Park. In 1901, they were turned over to the City of Chicago. Tourists still came to see and tour them, but the city of Chicago didn't maintain them. By 1913, the three ships had deteriorated significantly, but the city of Chicago decided to use them in the ceremonies for the opening of the Panama Canal. They planned to sail the ships from Chicago to the new Panama Canal and then on to San Francisco.

The three ships ran into rough seas on Lake Michigan near Milwaukee, and the *Pinta* and the *Nina* nearly sank. The *Nina* and the *Pinta* managed to reach the shores of Lake Erie, where they had to be beached and eventually towed back to the Chicago docks. The *Santa Maria* struggled on to Boston, where a crew from Harvard University took over operating her. Backers had scheduled the *Santa Maria* to stop at ports along the East Coast, gambling that curious sightseers would tour the ship in droves. Almost no one showed up.

In 1917, the *Santa Maria* finally headed back to Chicago, but Canadian authorities impounded it because its owners couldn't pay wharf charges. In 1918, the fees were settled and the *Santa Maria* returned to Chicago.

The *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria* weren't reunited for long. The *Pinta* sank at its moorings and in 1919, the *Nina* caught fire and sank. In 1920, the *Santa Maria* was rebuilt and drew tourists until 1951, when it, too, burned.

A Cyclist Sees a Ghostly Mariner in Jackson Park's South Lagoon

On a clear October morning just after the dawn of the Twenty First Century, a

cyclist sped along the path of the south lagoon in Jackson Park. Just as he reached the *Santa Maria*, he spotted a shaggy head covered with mats of snarly hair rising slowly above the gunwales close to the *Santa Maria*'s prow.

The ghost shaded his eyes with his hand and scanned the lagoon, searching for some distant land or an approaching sail.

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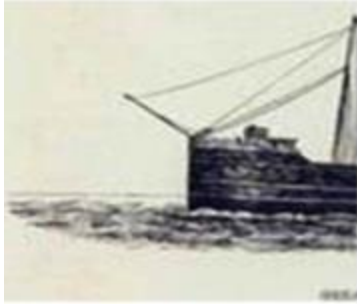
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Two Great Lakes Ships, the Western Reserve and the Gilcher, Still Make Ghostly Voyages



Two Great Lakes Ships Still Make Ghostly Voyages, Steaming Silently on Lakes Superior and Lake Michigan.

A flying Dutchman is a ghost ship that is doomed to sail forever. The *Western Reserve* and the *W. H. Gilcher* steam forever toward their sheltering ports, but never arrive.

In the late 19th Century, ships on the Great Lakes with wooden hulls were proving to be unequal to the task of hauling heavy cargo like iron ore and they could only be built to a certain size. Ship building companies began to produce experimental vessels with iron and steel hulls. Cleveland Shipbuilding led the construction with the *Western Reserve* built in 1890 and the *W.H. Gilcher* in 1891. Both ships had steel hulls, both were longer than a football field, and both were two of the largest ships of their era.

Both ships surpassed the expectations of their owners for speed and efficiency. The *Western Reserve*, owned by the Peter Minch family of Cleveland, Ohio, immediately proved its effectiveness in carrying loads of iron ore and the *Gilcher*, owned by the Gilchrist Shipping Company of Vermilion, Ohio, immediately captured the grain carrying record by transporting 113,885 bushels of wheat from Chicago to Buffalo, New York.

Captain Truedell Has a Bad Night and a Bad Dream Two captains are important figures in the *Western Reserve* story. Captain Benjamin Truedell tossed and turned in his bunk at the Great Lakes Life Saving Station at Deer Park, Michigan. He couldn't shake off a vivid dream and he didn't know what to do about his dream.

Captain Truedell had dreamed that he saw the *Western Reserve* sink, taking its passengers and crew to the bottom of Lake Superior with it. Captain Truedell's dream was so real that later he recognized Peter Minch's body when it washed up on shore near Deer Park.

A pragmatic and serious man, Captain Truedell hesitated to share what he considered his fanciful dream with anyone. He didn't try to stop the *Western Reserve* from leaving Cleveland. The *Western Reserve* steamed out of Cleveland bound for Two Harbors, Minnesota to pick up a load of iron ore. The morning of August 30, 1892, found the *Western Reserve* bucking against a summer storm on Lake Superior.

Captain Peter Minch Takes His Family Aboard In addition to her regular crew, the owner Peter Minch, his family, guests, and the Captain Albert Meyers and his sons were aboard the *Western Reserve*. At about 9:00 p.m. that evening, a sudden jolt shuddered through the hull and the mainmast crashed to the deck.

Forward of the spar, a break appeared in the deck, and the break widened with the passing of each wave. The crew launched the lifeboats. One wooden boat held Peter Minch, his family and some crew. A metallic yawl held the rest of the 27 people aboard.

The yawl capsized, and the lifeboat picked up two survivors. The 19 occupants of the lifeboat bailed and drifted in inky black Lake Superior for ten hours. Within a mile of shore, a wave suddenly capsized the boat and all but one man drowned. Twenty six of the twenty seven people aboard the *Western Reserve* drowned.

Reburial and Reform Harry Stewart, the wheelsman, and the lone survivor struggled ten miles along the desolate and uninhabited Lake Superior coast to reach the Deer Park Lifesaving Station.

News of the tragedy spread by word of mouth and by telegraph. Bodies from the lost ship began to wash ashore, and the Deer Point Lifesaving men buried them above the wilderness beach in solitary graves with just a simple prayer for a funeral service. As the weeks wore on, most of the Minch family members were removed from their simple shoreline graves and taken to Cleveland for a permanent resting place.

Criticism as harsh and powerful as Lake Superior breakers swept over the owners and builders of the *Western Reserve*, and investigations questioned the safety of steel ship and lifeboat construction. Tests were conducted and review boards ruled that the Bessemer steel used in building the steel hulled ships was too brittle. New laws for the testing of steel for shipbuilding were subsequently passed.

The *Western Reserve* Still Sails Lake Superior produces mountainous waves and

fog around off of Deer Park, Michigan, in all seasons of the year and the Ghost Ship the *Western Reserve* has been seen gliding across the waves all in all seasons of the year. On warm, calm nights the sounds of voices and laughter can be heard across the gently rolling Lake Superior waves.

Two Months Later, the W.H. Gilcher Two months later on October 28, 1892, the *Western Reserve's* sister ship, the *W.H. Gilcher*, left Buffalo, New York, carrying a cargo of coal and bound for Milwaukee. Captain Lloyd H. Weeks of Vermilion, Ohio, commanded the *Gilcher*.

The *Gilcher* passed through the Straits of Mackinaw and into storm swept Lake Michigan. Unlike the *Western Reserve* which had carried no cargo and traveled in water ballast, the *Gilcher* was ideally loaded for heavy weather. The storm peaked in the late afternoon and early evening.

During the light of the next day, the weather calmed and ships let their protective anchorages for their ports. The *Gilcher* failed to arrive in Milwaukee. Passing ships sighted wreckage that was believed to be part of the *Gilcher* and some mariners speculated that it had collided with a smaller ship called the *Ostrich*. The entire crew of 21 sailors sank to the bottom of Lake Michigan with the *Gilcher*.

The W.H. Gilcher Still Sails News reports of the day noted that the *Gilcher* was last seen when it passed Mackinaw on its way through the Straits at 2:20 p.m. on Friday, October 28, 1892. These reports were incorrect.

The *Gilcher* can still be seen mysteriously appearing through the fog off Mackinaw Island exactly as it appeared on that fateful day in 1892. When shafts of sunlight piece the fog, the figure of Captain Weeks at the wheel appears and the sound of a fog whistle skips across the waves like a stone.

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A Bicyclist Encounters a Phantom in Brooklyn's
Prospect Park



One night-not Halloween but it should have been- in 1896, a young woman cyclist went for a ride in Brooklyn's Prospect Park. Her encounter with a phantom cyclist helped her immediately appreciate her bicycle and peddle it as fast as she could peddle.

The *Brooklyn Eagle* version of the phantom cyclist story begins one balmy spring night in June 1896. According to the *Eagle*, the young woman stood on the veranda of her Brooklyn home and decided to take a spin through Prospect Park on her bicycle. The *Eagle* story follows her through her ride and her encounter with the phantom bicycle rider.

The Complete Bicycling Costume

It took the young woman several minutes to put on her bike cycle riding costume. *The Godey's Lady's Book* recommended that the female cyclist of 1896 wear a straight, side pleated skirt of serge over one underskirt, and full trousers lined with flannel and made of material to match the dress. A warm jersey and jacket trimmed with fur with a matching cap completed the outfit. In *Bicycling for Ladies*, published in 1896, Maria Ward recommended a lightly boned blouse without a corset, a serge skirt, low shoes with spats to keep out the gravel, and a walking hat. Mrs. M. Cooke favored a cycling costume known as the "Londonderry." It was made of gray green hopsack which was a coarse, loosely woven cotton or wool fabric. The coat had long, full sides and it was worn over full knickerbockers with either a shirt or a double breasted cloth, wool or leather vest.

The Cyclist Dresses and Gathers Up Her Bicycle Gear

The well-dressed woman cyclist also wore leggings, a hat, doeskin gloves and a pair of the rubber soled cycling shoes that had first appeared on the market in 1891. She also wore a bicycle belt, complete with a small leather purse. Mrs. Ward urged women taking a bicycling trip or expedition — any trip over an hour — to outfit her bicycle with a lamp and to carry matches, tools, a repair kit, a sewing kit and a first aid kit.

The Young Woman Cyclist Enters Prospect Park

Eventually, the young woman cyclist finished dressing and wheeled her bicycle down Flatbush Avenue, turned into Fort Hamilton Avenue and entered Prospect Park through the Ocean Avenue gates. The balmy night had enticed hundreds of other female and male cyclists to take a spin and the main drive in the park that ran parallel with Fort Hamilton Avenue was crowded with cyclists. The female cyclist hadn't anticipated such a crowd and she steered her cycle to the west drive which led to the more secluded parts of the park. She soon found the privacy that she sought in the more secluded section of the park and breathed a sigh of relief as she cycled down deserted roads and paths.

The Cyclist Chooses a Secluded Path and Regrets Her Choice

By this time, the moon had climbed high in the sky. The *Brooklyn Eagle* story sets a sinister mood when it describes the female cyclist spinning along the road to the top of the hill. She glanced to each side where the inky blackness of the woods pressed against the road. Her heart fluttered and she speculated that anyone could be lurking in those inky woods and jump out to ambush her. As she considered the possible phantoms lurking in the woods, she pedaled faster so she could get back quickly to the more crowded paths. She turned into a road leading south that she thought would lead her out of the park. Quite matter-of-factly the *Brooklyn Eagle* account continues. Suddenly she noticed a bike and a rider bent over it like a racer draw alongside her. The cyclist's heart gave a leap of joy. She felt quite relieved to see another person on the lonely trail.

The Young Woman Meets the Phantom Cyclist

It's said that the young woman took a second look at the bicyclist and almost fell off of her bicycle. The *Brooklyn Eagle* story described the phantom cyclist as

wearing a flowing white transparent robe that plainly revealed the skeleton underneath. The phantom bent over in a double curve and the place in the skull where the nose had been almost touched the handle bars. The skeleton's bony hands held the handlebars with a firm grip. The phantom's bones rattled as it approached and shot past the female cyclist. Then the phantom rider slowed down as if to show the shivering female cyclist that she couldn't escape by fast riding.

The *Brooklyn Eagle* story graphically describes the terror of the female cyclist. She felt her blood freezing in her veins, but she pedaled as she had never pedaled before. She would escape by fast riding if she could! The phantom rider effortlessly kept pace alongside her. The female cyclist closed her eyes so she wouldn't have to look at the phantom rider, but she felt a mixture of terror and fascination. She peered through her lashes at intervals to see if the phantom rider still kept pace with her.

The Phantom Cyclist Leads the Way, Wins the Race, and Vanishes

According to the *Brooklyn Eagle* story, the phantom rider led the young woman in a ride around the park as if she had no will of her own. Utterly exhausted, finally she found the Prospect Park gate where she had entered what seemed like a lifetime before. The female cyclist peered at the phantom rider through her lashes one more time and discovered that it had vanished. She lost no time in speeding her bicycle home through the dark streets of Brooklyn.

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The Phantom Plowman – A Spring Ghost Story From Pennsylvania



One night in March 1886, Albert Cooper, a young farm hand from Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, went courting. As he walked home from his pretty maiden's house, his thoughts remained back on the porch swing with her. On this evening carrying the scents of spring, amorous Albert Cooper didn't think much about the history or geography of Lower Merion Township, especially after he saw the ghostly farmer plowing his field.

Lower Merion Township

Farm fields had not always been a part of Lower Merion Township. Before European immigrants settled there, dense forests that sheltered creatures including bears, cougars, wolves, otters, beavers, weasels, turkeys, woodland bison, and bald eagles covered the Township. When the Europeans arrived, they gradually cleared the forests for farm fields and settlements.

The northwestern corner of Lower Merion Township is tucked between Upper Merion and the River Schuylkill to the north. Philadelphia borders it to the south, the Schuylkill River from the east, and Delaware County from the west. In 1886, the Township measured about six miles long and 4 ½ miles wide and it contained about 15,360 acres of land. The soil, a rich loam, helped farmers grow abundant crops of corn, wheat, beans, and other vegetables as well as potatoes, apples, and peaches.

According to township historian William Buck, so many Welsh immigrants from Merioneth, Wales, settled in this section of Montgomery County that it was called Merion Township and divided into Upper and Lower Merion. These pioneer families included names like Holland, Pennock, Robert, Woods, Humphreys, Ellis,

and Jones. William Buck writes that William Penn granted land to the pioneer settlers and many of them belonged to the Society of Friends. Shortly after arriving in Lower Merion, they arranged to have meetings for public worship.

Valley Forge is located within Merion Township and during the Revolutionary War, George Washington and his Army's stay at Valley Forge and the British occupation of Philadelphia from September 1777 to June 1778 made the Township an active place for both sides. The pioneers of Lower Merion suffered severely from British raids during the Revolutionary War, but only one person from Merion was accused of treason. Bryn Mawr, Welsh for "great hills," is also found within Lower Merion Township, and in 1886 already featured "a modern female college.."

In 1880, Lower Merion had a population of 6,287 people. The population was about to increase by one farmer.

After An Evening of Courting, Albert Cooper Sees a Phantom Farmer

Hurrying home, Albert Cooper was not thinking about the history, geography, or population of Lower Merion Township, if he ever knew them in the first place. He sped along the woodland path, anxious to get home and dream about his lady love. As he came to the end of the path that followed an old forest for miles and emerged from the trees, Albert Cooper heard someone say "Woah!" to a team of invisible horses.

Quickly he stopped in mid stride, and looked around for several moments, trying to discover what farmer he knew was plowing his fields at night. His eyes strained to make out the shape of the night plowing farmer and his horses, but he couldn't see anything. Albert sighed. His imagination had to be working overtime. After all, the woods were dark and he had been courting! He moved down the path once again, toward home and his soft pillow. He sighed. The pretty maiden had told him that she would use her pillow to dream about him.

"Woah!" Albert heard the same farmer commanding his horses; this time the creaking of their harnesses and their whinnies sounded directly in front of him. The first phase of the new moon occurred on March 7, 1886, and Albert watched this new moon creep over the dark tree tops, bathing them in misty light. The shadow of the phantom farmer and his horses and plow blotted out most of the moonlight like an eclipse. Albert could see the farmer gripping the plow with two powerful hands guiding a pair of spirited horses that were hitched to it. The horses trotted

quickly with their heads held high and their eyes flashing fire.

Albert stared and stared to make sure his imagination mixed with love sickness hadn't gotten the best of him. He closed his eyes and opened them. The phantom farmer and his horses were still there. Albert shivered in time with the jangling of the harnesses. He had just started to run when suddenly the farmer and his horses and plow vanished. Shaking with terror, Albert raced to the safety of his home and bed. He didn't even wonder if the phantom farmer would spend the night plowing.

The Phantom Farmer Had His Choice of Plows and Crops

The phantom farmer plowed his field at both a good and bad time for farmers, assuming that he hailed from the Nineteenth Century. New inventions helped farmers meet some of the farming challenges in the late 1800s. John Deere had invented a steel plow capable of slicing through tough sod in 1838 and James Oliver had improved it in 1868. Windmills especially adapted to the plains pumped water from deep wells to the surface and barbed wire allowed farmers to fence in land and livestock. Reapers made harvesting crops easier and threshers helped farmers separate grain or seed from straw. Farmers doubled their production of wheat from 1860 to 1890.

During the last years of the Nineteenth Century, the price of farm crops fell drastically, and farmers believed that low produce prices caused their economic problems. The United States Department of Agriculture reported that wheat prices fell from \$1.06 a bushel to 63 cents a bushel, corn from 43 cents to 30 cents a bushel, and cotton from 15 cents a pound to six cents a pound between 1870 and 1897.

American technological advances in farming equipment and methods and increases in farm land and increases in yields per acre stimulated the overproduction that lowered farm prices. Newly created agricultural colleges also contributed to these improvements and their consequences. Could the phantom plowman be a symbol of farming past, present, and future? A prophet? A messenger from the past?

Albert Cooper, the Evening After the Courtship and the Ghost

The next morning Albert Cooper may have cast uneasy glances at the fields surrounding the farm where he worked. Had the phantom plowman followed him home with his horses and plow alongside him? As he went about his farm chores the next day, Albert Cooper probably wondered if he had dreamed the events of the night before and if he had really seen a phantom farmer plowing the field with two

horses. After supper he decided to visit Silas Brown's corner grocery and try out his story on his friends.

Albert told his story to the store loungers sitting around the pot bellied stove in Silas Brown's corner store.

The store loungers scoffed and told Albert to "reform" his story. When Albert insisted that he was telling the truth about the phantom farmer and his horses, a heated discussion flared up and several of the loungers accused Albert Cooper of "drawing the long bow," which meant exaggerating or lying. Finally, the store loungers decided to visit the scene of the plowing to see if Albert Cooper had been telling the truth or a tall story.

Seven Men Sitting Shivering on a Wooden Rail Fence

Seven men and Albert Cooper sat on the wooden rail fence listening and watching for the phantom plowman. Albert heard them first, the same sounds from the night before. First the phantom farmer halted the horses, and then the creak of the harnesses and their whinnying. Albert and the seven store loungers were so frightened that they had to wrap their legs around the wooden fence rails to keep from falling off when they saw the phantom farmer. He didn't wear any hat, so his long white hair streamed alongside his long white beard in the wind. The only visible part of the farmer's face were his glistening eyes which were at least seven feet from the ground, making the ghostly farmer taller than the average human. A phosphorescent glow blurred the outlines of his body as he leaned forward on the plow and guided his steadily moving horses.

The store loungers and Albert thought the plow appeared to be as skeletal as the farmer, but soft, moist earth flew behind it like waves behind a Delaware River steamer. The phantom plowman drew closer and the horses with erect and tossing heads, seemed to breathe fire. The men heard their hoof beats as clearly as a dinner bell. At the corner of the field, the phantom plowman gave them the command to turn and they turned obediently and passed in front of the frightened fence sitters once again. All of the store hangers jumped off the fence and ran home to tell their story.

The Phantom Plowman Finishes Plowing the Field

The next morning, the seven fence sitters, Albert Cooper, and other curious folk

went to the field to see if they could find any trace of the phantom plowman. As they reached the field, one of the men said, "I'll be durned if the thing doesn't plow sure enough."

Everyone stared and gasped in astonishment. One half of the field had been plowed with furrows less broad as an ordinary plowman would create, but they were neater, deeper, and straighter than a mortal plowman could manage.

A few days later, the same group of onlookers went out to examine the field again. This time they discovered that the phantom farmer had completed his plowing. The field resembled a brown wavy lake flowing to the horizon. One of the men owned the field and he solemnly swore that he had not plowed an inch of ground in his field. The phantom farmer had plowed the entire field.

Multiple Albert Coopers and Silas Browns appear in the 1880 and 1890s census waiting for the dedicated historian and genealogist to find the ones that witnessed the phantom plowman. The phantom plowman and his horses and plow haunt that particular field in Lower Merion Township, waiting for the fancies of young people to turn to courting journeys and the March new moon to signal that it is time to start plowing again.

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The Train Chaser



Thomas Ainsworth is the name and selling Whipple Brushes is my game. You want short brushes, tall brushes, big brushes, small brushes, I'll sell you any size Whipple Brush. And I'll go anywhere in this here country to do it, even though my regular run is the big M- Minneapolis to the little B-Butte, Montana.

Things were going along pretty much normal in my brush selling game, until one day I saw that Indian and then my life got switched around quicker than a person chooses a Whipple Brush over any other kind of market. I still ain't sure I really saw that Indian. It was one of those things where you're between being asleep and awake and you're not sure if it really happened or not.

I tell you, I remember that first night I saw the Indian like I had sold a case of Whipple brushes. I got on the train in Minneapolis like always and made the acquaintance of several of the folks in my compartment, 'specially the ladies. I asked every one of them to have dinner with me at my hotel in Butte except for the bent old lady dressed in a black dress with a black lace shawl pulled around her shoulders. I was making polite conversation with her and she says to me, "I'm getting off in Fargo, North Dakota young man. I'm going to my son's farm because I'm getting too old to live by myself in the city. Do you know how to milk a cow, sonny?"

She reached in her suitcase and pulled out a thick book. "Here's the best book on milking cows you'd ever want to see. Look at these pictures of that fella milking cows. Isn't he good?"

"Thank you kindly, granny, but I already know how to milk cows. I grew up on a farm you know, out east in Pennsylvania and I've been milking cows since I was

knee high to a fence post.”

“Well, then sonny, you surely know how. Is this the best way to place your fingers?” She cupped her hand and made milking motions with her fingers. “Am I using my fingers right? I sure do want to be useful to Albert.”

“You’re just a bit off center. Here, let me show you,” I said. We spent the next few minutes practicing milking positions with our fingers. Then the old lady started nodding. It must have been all of that exercise. She closed those blue-veined eyelids of hers and went to sleep. I slid across to the gentleman in the seat opposite me. He was dressed in one of them tailored, dark suits that made him look a lot like Deacon Peabody from the Sunday meeting. His expression was tailored too.

“Howdy sir. P Thomas Ainsworth is the name and how are you this fine day?”

“I bet your pardon,” the deacon said.

“P. Thomas Ainsworth at your service, sir. Here’s my card. Yes sir, that’s right. I’m a Whipple Brush Man.”

“What is a Whipple Brush Man?”

“A man who sells Whipple Brushes. Whipple Brushes are the best brushes in this entire United States, and mark my words, someday we’ll conquer the world!”

I took a Whipple Brush from my case and slapped him on the back with it.

“Will you please watch yourself with that brush sir?” he said, rubbing his back.

“Oh certainly, certainly.” I brushed his shoulders. “There, is this better? A Whipple Brush is guaranteed to keep you spic and span for the finer moments of life. Use a genuine Whipple Wisk Brush for assorted lint, powder, dust, and anything else your best black broadcloth collects. I made the Wisk Brush myself in our factory in New York. I worked there since I was nine years old, so I know how to make a brush from straw one to the handle.”

“I use paint brushes a lot,” the Deacon said. “Do you have any of those?”

By the time I’d gone through my childhood at the Whipple factory, I had The Deacon convinced that I had indeed custom made every Whipple Brush. Next, I

moved over to sit next to the Indian who was sitting next to The Deacon. I can say the Indian was sure dressed like an Indian. He wore buckskin leggings, a buckskin jacket and a red feather in his hat. I didn't let the fact that he was an Indian stop me at all. No sir, not me. I just went up to him and said, "How."

"How do you do? My name is Chief Soaring Eagle and I am a descendant of Chief Sitting Bull," he said to me in schoolmarm English.

"What are you doing riding a train?" I asked him. "Aren't you supposed to be dancing around a campfire and war whooping?"

"I've been to visit the president in Washington and I'm returning to my people to tell them of his words."

"What did the President say?" I asked him.

"He said we must sell more land," the chief said. With a bitter twist of his lips he added, "At least he asks us now. For many years the white man just took our land without payment."

"The white man has always been mean to us Indians," I told him. "Did you know that I was an Indian, or at least some parts of one? My daddy was a half breed and I grew up on a reservation in Oklahoma. And it was brutal, I tell you, brutal. All the white man wants to do is rob Indians and I think we should get together and do something about it. At least we can protest to somebody."

The Chief stared at me, his face stony. "We protest, but our words bounce off the white man's ears," he said.

"Well, my daddy- the Great Spirit keep his soul- always said that you can't get a fair deal from Washington, because there aren't many Indians in the White House."

We talked some more and pretty soon the Chief was asking me if I knew Black Feather and Red Bird and some of his other relatives. I guess I had him convinced of the Indian blood in me, and me being Scotch Irish!

Well, the afternoon raced away with all of the talking and such and pretty soon night slipped over the plains like a gunny sack over a pile of corn and the shadows played tag with the moonlight. I lifted up the curtain that was hanging over my

window and I saw a full moon hanging in the sky like one of them Japanese lanterns. I was sitting there holding the curtain back, admiring the moon when the old lady in black tapped me on the shoulder. “Say young man, turn around and answer a question for me,” she demanded.

I turned around and there was the Indian Chief and The Deacon standing right alongside the old lady.

“I just want to know one thing, young man,” she said. “How did you manage to grow up in a factory in New York City, on a farm in Pennsylvania, and on an Indian reservation in Oklahoma all at the same time?”

Since I couldn’t come up with a good answer, I tried to change the subject. I grinned at the Deacon and the Indian Chief. “How about a game of five card stud?”

I pulled a bottle of whiskey out of my brush bag. “And a drink to go along with it?”

The Chief pushed me and the bottle away.

The Deacon looked doubtful. “I shouldn’t....”

“But you will,” I told him. “Just because you look like a deacon doesn’t mean you have to act like one.”

I got the two glasses out of my case that I always pack with the bottle and we tipped a few. The little old lady in black flounced off, so that left The Deacon and the Indian Chief and me to ourselves.

“I’ll play with you if you can keep a straight story long enough to play,” The Deacon said, watching me deal. “And don’t try to sneak in any new cards, either!”

“Deacon, when it comes to poker I’m as straight as an arrow. No offense meant,” I said to the Chief’s stony stare.

So we sat down in the row of seats, me by the window, the Chief across from me and The Deacon beside me. We played a few hands and I took more swigs from the bottle and pretty soon I was feeling pretty good about the world and our part in it. The Deacon was feeling so good he blew a straight and I got the pot, which was fine with me.

“I was thinking about a new painting,” he said, by way of explaining, but I knew better.

The Chief, he sort of sat there solemn-like, with his cards up in his hand like a sign post and his eyes fiery with war dances. I had to nudge him to make his move, and then he got me stuck. I had to try to bluff him or lose the game. I said I had a pair of aces in my hand and he called me. Since I only had a ten and a Jack, I knew I had to do something fast. I grabbed the whiskey bottle.

“Need another drink,” I muttered.

Sort of accidentally I swung the bottle and whiskey splashed all over the curtains in our compartment. It also splashed all over the Chief and a few drops even landed on The Deacon and me.

“Clumsy white man,” the Chief scowled. He reached over and took the edge of the curtain and mopped his face with it. He pulled on that curtain so hard it tore completely off the window and the night was in our railroad car quick as a star twinkling. There was the full moon just hanging there like a lamp and it looked so close I wanted to reach out and turn it off.

“Hey, look at that moon,” I said. “Sure is pretty, ain’t it Chief?”

The Chief scowled at me. “Don’t try to get me to take my eyes off my poker hand,” he said. “Come on, show me your two aces. I got my eyes wiped now and I can play real good.”

“Sure Chief, but first take a gander at that moon. It looks like a yellow glass ball out there.”

I pointed, meaning to show him some of the moon markings, and by Golly, I gulped and almost swallowed my uppers. Would you believe that there right alongside the window, close as a telephone pole was an Indian? Right away quick I looked for the Chief. Had he jumped out the window? But no, he was still sitting there, holding his cards in his hand. I looked back out the window to see if the other Indian was still there.

Maybe my eyes were still playing poker. You know, being so far away from Minneapolis and all and drinking whiskey and playing crooked poker. But no, he was still there all right. He bent over the neck of his horse and the horse’s mane

flew so high in the wind that it slapped him in the face.

And what a face that Indian had on him. He had paint on him like a rainbow- red and green and yellow bands across his face and some on his chest and arms too. His skin was the shade of brown like coffee with milk in it and it glistened in the moonlight like he had rubbed his body with oil. This Indian bent real low on his horses' neck and he didn't look to the right where the prairie was or the left where I sat gawking out the train window. He just looked straight ahead and kept urging on his horse. I saw him digging the horse in the ribs with his knees and pulling on his mane. And all the time behind him hung that moon like a big, yellow face, staring at us.

“Hey Chief, is that guy anybody you know?” I asked him.

The Chief looked out the window and grunted. ‘He’s a Sioux.’”

“Well, what’s he doing out there,” I asked him.

“I have to paint him. The Deacon said. “Even if he isn’t real, I have to paint him.”

“Hey Chief, you saw him too. Tell old stuffed shirt here that there’s an Indian on a horse outside the train window.” I leaned across The Deacon and pointed. “See, there he is. The horse’s hooves are stirring up puffs of dust from running so fast. And look at that! That Indian is making his horse go so fast he’s pulling up even with the engine. Listen Deacon, can’t you hear him? He’s war whooping! Listen to him! It sounds like he’s going to attack the train. And look at that horse, why don’t you! He’s running so fast the sweat is just pouring off his body. Looks to me like that fool Indian is trying to beat the train!”

The Chief glared at me. “You saw him, white man. You saw him the way the Indian used to be, wilding and free and running with the wind. I hope something in your life will disappear just like the Indian’s way of life disappeared when the iron horse came to the plains.”

“What the devil are you talking about?” I blustered.

I sounded tougher than I really felt. I was really trying to cover up how scared I was. Watching that Indian and his horse trying to beat the train made me think of some real old movies I’d seen when I was knee high. They looked solid, but if you peeked real close the figures in the film seemed to have a kind of shimmering

around them and a wavering like they was—well, like they was ghosts.

Suddenly, just like the engineer decided he had to win, the locomotive picked up speed and the train pulled away from the Indian. I watched him, urging his horse to go faster and somehow he increased his speed enough to keep even with the train and look at me through the window. He had a calm, determined, honest look in his eyes that made my soul shrivel and made me wonder why I couldn't be an honest man.

Then he and his horse faded into the blue night shadows behind us. I pulled my handkerchief out of my pocket and mopped my dripping face. “Whew, I thought for a minute that Indian was going to beat the train. Where the devil did he come from anyway? And what in hells bells was he doing out here racing a train?”

“My people couldn't stop the iron horse from traveling across the plains,” said the Chief. “They just kept coming like iron buffalo until they covered the plains and the land was no longer ours. The land belonged to the rails gleaming the in sunlight and moonlight. Maybe now since my people have gone to the happy hunting grounds, they have faster horses. Maybe now, they can beat the iron horse. Maybe they think if they win the race with the trains there is still a chance to force the white man to leave their hunting grounds.”

“That's a bunch of soft bristles and you know it, Chief!” I scoffed. “There ain't no Indian here or in the happy hunting grounds that can outrace a train with a horse. That just ain't gonna happen.”

“Maybe not, but did you notice the muscles of the horse straining and bunching and pulling with the effort he was making?” The Deacon asked. “Did you notice the determination and intensity of the Indian that made him race harder as the train went faster?”

For a second I didn't know what to say, so I picked up one of my Whipple brushes and looked at it.

“I'm going to paint him,” The Deacon said. “I'm going to paint that Indian chasing the train.”

The Deacon whipped out a pad of paper and some charcoal pencils and started to draw lines on the paper.

The Chief nodded solemnly and laid his cards on his lap. "The game is over," he said, rising slowly and stalking out of the car.

The Deacon didn't even glance at me, but just kept drawing. I figured he was through playing poker, too. I peeked over his shoulder and watched the Indian on the horse take shape. "You draw that horse real enough so he looks like he's going to start running any minute. You're a pretty good drawer, Deacon."

"Thank you," he said, filling in the yellow moon behind the horse and rider. "I like to think I am."

Then sudden as lightning I had this lightning flash idea. It was such a good idea it was better than winning any old poker hand. "Hey, Deacon, how's about doing lots of those drawings and let me sell them for you. I could be your salesman, you know. People are always crazy to buy Indian stuff and I'll bet these things would sell like peanuts at a circus. There is something about that Indian now that I look at the picture close. There's something in his face that no white man can steal away from him."

"I hoped it would show," the Deacon said. "If I've managed to capture that, then I've done a good painting."

"So what if the Indian is a ghost," I said. "The fact that he and his horse are ghosts will make a good selling point. How many people have pictures of a ghost hanging over their fireplace?"

The Deacon spent the rest of the night and the next morning while we were on the train drawing that Indian and his horse. By the time I got off in Butte that evening, I had about 25 pictures to sell and the Deacon promised to draw as many as I need. I looked for the Chief as I got off the train, 'cause I wanted to tell him it was nice meeting a real Indian Chief. I didn't see him nowhere. So the little old lady with the black lace shawl and The Deacon was the only two of my friends I got to tell goodbye. I put my pictures under one arm and got off the train.

Let me tell you, I made so much money selling those pictures in Butte and back and forth on my run that I finally gave up my Whipple Brush spiel and just sold pictures. I sold all of that batch, and when I got back to Minneapolis, I got in touch with the Deacon and he drew me some more. We kept doing things this way until I got comfortable enough off to buy a ranch in North Dakota near where the little old lady in black lived. I got to be such a substantial citizen that I even married a

rancher's daughter who is almost as rich as me. All of this because of an Indian on a pony racing a train.

You know what? I even see that Indian and his pony sometimes now when I'm traveling through the Dakotas and Montana on the local train. And now when he looks at me, my conscience makes me blink.