

Ghost Hunt

RONA MORRIS WORKMAN
ROCKING W RANCH

Alexander Wolcott retells in "Long, Long Ago" on oft-told ghost story about two men meeting in the half-dusk of an old English picture gallery. One of them shivered. "Rather spooky, isn't it?" "Oh," said the other, "so you believe in ghosts." The first speaker laughed. "I do not," he said, "do you?" The second answered, "Yes"—and vanished. Everybody believes in ghosts, even the "wise guys" who try so

hard to prove there are none. If they didn't believe in ghosts—and fear them—they wouldn't be interested enough to attempt a denial of ghostly existence. Now I believe in ghosts. I expect to become one some of these days and I have a long list of folks out of whom I hope to scare the living daylight just as soon as I learn the correct technique of haunting. When that time comes I'll probably be the only ghost in this neck of the woods. No ghost with any sense would stay here in this rain if he had a nice hot dry place where he could have full right of entry.

Of course our ranch house isn't old enough to have a ghost; it is only old enough to give me a pain in the neck (and how I would love to make a ghost of the man who designed it and threw it together) but I remember a delightfully haunted old house where a restless shade walked the upper halls and descended the stairs. I was always going to spend a night there, but as evening approached by courage retreated and I was never able to remain long enough to hear the eery footfalls. That house, where no one dared to live, has been burned and cattle now graze over the haunted spot, so my opportunity to meet that visitor is gone forever.

Nevertheless, even if we can't rake up a ghost at the Rocking W, we did manage a touch of the eery a few nights ago. Sheppie, our collie, called the Big Boss from the ranch house. The B.B., investigate a strange light that was dancing in the darkness of a narrow ravine across the road from the ranch house. The B.B., being a practical man, deduced a hunter with a flashlight and went to investigate. He and Sheppie could find no one. Knowing my insatiable curiosity about anything unusual, he routed me from pleasant dreams and dragged me out into the darkness. From the somber woods of the hill came the sound of rain-drip, a little wind rustled through the shrubbery behind me, and as I watched where he pointed I saw a sudden flashing ball of light. It swayed slowly upward, paused a moment, then complete blackness only remained. Again the light came, and again and yet again, and now tiny cold fingers began playing a dance tune up and down my

vertebrae, even though I told myself and the B.B. that it must be someone trying to escape the meat shortage. "There is no one there," he insisted stubbornly, "so it must be lightning bugs." I hooted. I used to catch lightning bugs in my early days and no bug ever made a light like that. Someone must be prowling around over there and if it wasn't a hunter for deer, it was probably some modern Diognese trying to find an honest man, and therefore he was crazy as a loon, so somebody had to go over and chase him out.

So the Big Boss, craving company, awakened the ex-marine and the two bravely advanced to take the enemy by assault. I, like all wise generals, remained to direct the attack from the home front.

I could hear them scrambling through the brush toward where the light waited. Then, suddenly against the dark hillside, appeared two balls of white light about three feet apart, moving slowly upward toward the crest of the hill which my brave men were climbing. I let out a startled yelp. "Now there are two and they are coming closer to you." I think—though I will not swear to it as fact—that the ranks hesitated for a moment, but rallied and moved on. The B.B.'s light and the Unknown moved closer together. I broadcast this fact to the surrounding territory. Shivering in the damp darkness I watched the beam from our flash sweep among the dripping trees, explore the ravine, pass over the strange balls of white fire without pausing and search the farther hillside. "Nothing up here," boomed the Big Boss. The ghost lights moved closer to him. "They are almost on you right now," I squeaked shrilly. "They're not fifty feet from where you are standing."

Now I wouldn't want to go on record as saying that my two men hurried down from that hill and back to the house, but I will say that never before have they made such good time from up there, not even when I call them in for food, and yet they swore there was nothing up there. Oh, well—

The next morning the big dictionary and I held a long conference. Webster insisted stoutly that it must have been an ignis fatus, those dancing lights caused by methane gas, and frequently called "fox fire." He is probably right, but it isn't nearly as much fun to think about. I'd love to have a ghost living in that ravine. It would give such a nice spooky feeling when darkness walks through the valley. Perhaps, though, I'd better keep

to Webster. If even an ignis fatus could make me dive for the house and slam the door behind me, what would a real ghost do? Of course, once I know the ghost of a little red dog—but that, as Kipling says, is another story. Sometime, perhaps, I'll tell it to you.

Visits of Past Few Days Mentioned; First Grandchild Born

RIVERVIEW — A birth announcement received by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Mills this week reads like this—Name Ronnie Bert, date June 27, 1946, weight 7 lb. 14 oz. Place, Oregon City hospital. Parents, Mr. and Mrs. Cleone Woodruff of Portland. This is the first grandchild of Mr. and Mrs. Mills.

Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Kennedy and son, Robert Hall, and his daughter, Bobby Ellen, of Seattle were week end visitors at the George Carl home.

Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Callister and son Ronnie, spent Friday and Saturday at Rockaway at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Struchen who had been luncheon guests at the Callister home on Tuesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Wasser of Goble spent Sunday of last week at the home of Mrs. Wasser's sister, Mrs. Albert Nelson.

Raymond Kono of the State Forestry who is stationed at Wilark, spent the week end with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Kono.

Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Martingale of Portland were week end guests at the Guy Herd home.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dial and infant daughter, Roberta, of Moses Lake, Washington, spent from Tuesday until Friday with Robert's sister, Mrs. Earl King. Having arrived on this mundane sphere prematurely with only four pounds of avoirdupois to her credit, Roberta, after several weeks sojourn in an oxygen tent, can now be rated as an active, healthy babe.

Property Improvement in Riverview Noted; Clams Are Magnet

RIVERVIEW—A surprise was in store for Mr. and Mrs. Walter Moore and his mother, Mrs. C. T. Moore who is their house guest at present when Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Shoemaker and daughter, Darlene, of Seattle, drove in Saturday for a three-day visit. Mrs. Shoemaker is a sister of Mr. Moore.

Goingson that indicate improvement here this week are: Bulldozing activity on the Art Owens acreage where a clearing of several acres is being made and the follow up work of blasting, piling roots and plowing; Merle Cline has a double garage well under construction; the George Bell property has a new picket fence enclosing three sides; and A. F. Schalock and his handy man, Roy Oakes, are improving our water system by placing new pipes during their spare hours.

Clams acted as a magnet to draw a goodly number of our people to the Oregon beaches Sat-

urday and Sunday. We have the following names—Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Fowler, Sr., and Mrs. C. R. Fowler, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Lindsley, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Lindsley and Claribell and Kenneth Lindsley who tried their luck at Gearhart and Johnson Szooff and son Jimmie who got their limit of clams both Saturday and Sunday at Seaside.

ARTISTRY

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