



Where Things go Bump In the Night

GHOSTS AND LEGENDS LORE TOUR

As the days grow shorter, the nights longer, the foliage brighter and the pumpkins larger, there comes the season of ghosts and goblins and other things that can go bump in the night or the woods.

This is the time of year when our senses are heightened, when you have to look twice to make sure that was just a leaf blowing in the light of the full moon ... and not a witch ... or something else.

Plan to take a ride around Coos County to enjoy the season of ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasts ... and ask yourself ... is that a breeze on the back of your neck?

Or something else ... ?

The Mystery Girl

Clarksville author Charlie Jordan, who wrote *Tales Told in the Shadow of the White Mountains*, tells of one of the most mysterious stories he's covered in his career

as a newspaperman, about the encounters back in the summer of 1979 locals had with a little girl of about 8, wearing a party dress, who did not stay around to speak with people.

In the weeks that followed the first report, media from around the country descended on the town, eager for information about what they now called the Mystery Girl. People reported seeing her and hearing crying and "unearthly sounds" in the woods, not attributable to local children. But whenever they tried to talk to her, she ran into the woods.

After a summer of curiousness, winter came on and residents saw the last of the Mystery Girl. Years later, one newspaper has proclaimed the incident one of 20th century New Hampshire's unsolved mysteries, for she was never seen again, nor was anyone ever able to determine who she was ... or if she was.



If you stop for a moment and hear a distant cry in the woods or a rustle in the bushes, it will make you wonder.

Fear Factor: 2 (higher after twilight)

Going Up... or Down?

Continue heading up Bear Rock Road and you come to South Hill Cemetery, where Jordan wrote about another curiosity - the grave markers

here with images of a finger pointing skyward, with simple messages, like "Going Home," "Gone Above" and "I'm Going Up."

The stones are fairly close together and there's never been a reason determined for the finger pointing. (Further south, at a cemetery in Whitefield, there's a stone with a finger pointing down.)

The cemetery looks out over a lovely vista of northern New Hampshire and into Canada. The atmosphere is benign, but it is a graveyard.

Fear Factor: 1.5

The Success Lumberjack

A few miles outside of Berlin is Success, an unincorporated place that once teemed with lumberjacks who felled trees that were taken by rail to feed the paper mills along the Androscoggin River.

Today, the logging operations are long gone, replaced by camps and a network of ATV trails. The old Success Pond Railroad is also gone.

Or is it?

Many a visitor has reported hearing the sound of a steam whistle cutting through an inky black night. One man tells a story he still can't explain.

"My personal experience happened at the northernmost camp site. I was all set up for the evening to spend the night, had my fire going and I just sat down for a minute in my tent, to be woken by someone asking if there was

anyone there. There was an old-time lumberjack standing in front of me with ax on shoulder. He stated my fire was dying and that I should feed it some wood. The style of his clothing and the boots on his feet and the fact he had an ax, not a chainsaw, is what made me wonder. The icing on the cake, when my hair stood on end, was when, in a blink of and eye, he was gone, no sounds of footprints or anything ... but the log he threw on the fire was burning nicely."

So on your next visit to Success, stop and listen for sound of a train whistling across time and, lest you get an unexpected visitor to your tent, keep an extra log on the fire.

Fear Factor: 3

North Country Woods Devils

You've heard it called Bigfoot, Yeti and Sasquatch, but in these northern woods, the elusive creature is called a Woods Devil. Reports about them being seen or heard have come out of several towns, from Stewartstown to Stratford, for decades.

An account on the website www.BigFootEncounters.com may just change the way you walk through the woods.

Some of the old men would talk about things called "wood devils" that live in the woods. There were a lot more of these creatures back in the 1930s than there are now. They hide by standing upright and staying completely still against a tree. They freeze. As a person approaches it, the creature will stand against the opposite side of the tree. As the person passes it will move so that the tree is always between the person and the tree. If it cannot hide, it will still stay perfectly still until it knows the person sees it. They make awful screams. They have a semi-human shape, but their faces don't look at all human. I have never seen one, but the people who said they did were regular churchgoers and would strap their kids for lying.

Of course, our northern woods are full of moose, bear and deer, so what are the odds there is something on the other side of that tree over there?

Fear Factor: 4.7