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This is the house that Don Pedro built. Who killed him? And why? And who lies under the hearthstone?

Tales From Beyond The Pale

By D. ROGER MARTIN

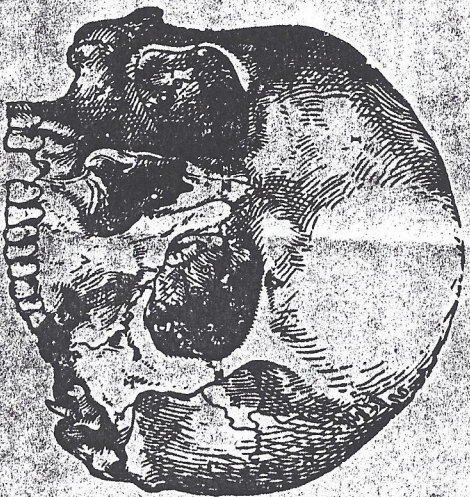
Thomas Edison possessed an interesting theory to the effect that energy is indestructible. He was convinced that every word uttered upon the earth, every sound or vibration, still existed, was, indeed, retrievable.

The theory, of course, has never been proved, but it has occasionally been supported. Ham radio operators have picked up the signals or radio programs long since removed from the air waves. Television programs from the '50s have been received, usually during electrical storms or other comparable atmospheric disruptions.

Dr. Nandor Fodor, the late psychoanalyst, borrowed from Edison to fit his own theory to the supposed hauntings of certain houses or landscapes. Places that have been subjected to great emotional or violent strife, he said, were particularly prone to ghostly hauntings. Former battlegrounds, for example, are a common site in reports of such spiritual goings-on, as are houses whose inhabitants did not get along.

Ocean Born Mary

In the year 1720, aboard the sturdy ship Wolf, a group of Scottish and Irish immigrants made their way toward the promise of the New World. They were under the charge of one Captain Wilson, whose wife, as it happened, gave birth to a daughter somewhere on the Atlantic.



On the day that land was sighted, there was, briefly, no emotion, save joy, on the ship. A hundred hearts surged with dreams and the hope of fulfilling them. Suddenly, an evil looking ship, ragged and looming between

the Wolf and the distant shore. It was, unmistakably, a pirate ship. The buccaners, led by a man called Don Pedro, swarmed aboard the Wolf, grabbing up booty.

Unsatisfied, Don Pedro felt there was gold about. Determined that it would be his, he stormed below deck to Captain Wilson's quarters, where he found Mrs. Wilson and the infant.

It must be true that a baby can melt the heart of the most vile of beasts. Or, perhaps, Don Pedro simply was not as ruthless as the run-of-the-mill 18th century pirate.

He demanded to know what the child's name was.

Frightened but brave in the face of what must have seemed to be imminent death, Mrs. Wilson replied, "The child was just recently born and has not been baptized."

The swaggering pirate softened. "If you will name her after my mother, Mary, I will spare everyone aboard the ship."

Mrs. Wilson agreed.

Supposedly, after Don Pedro persuaded his unhappy cohorts to return their booty and retreat to their own ship, he returned to the Wolf alone to give Mrs. Wilson a bundle of silk for Mary's wedding gown. Regardless, Mrs. Wilson kept her word and the baby was christened Mary, and the child would forever be dubbed Ocean-Born Mary.

The Wolf landed safely at Boston from where the Wilsons pressed on to Londonderry, New Hampshire. The years passed, and Mary Wilson grew to be a tall and regal woman.

lustrous auburn hair. She married, a few years later, Don Pedro, a handsome man with five sons. And through all these years, Don Pedro kept in reasonably close contact with his wife and Ocean-Born Mary.

Don Pedro had put away his cutlass and his ruthless ways. He acquired a land grant of some 6,000 acres in the area which is now Heniker, New Hampshire. Upon this piece of land, his ship's carpenters erected a large house that still today shows the style of the ship builders.

When he heard that Mary's husband had died, leaving her to support the four children, the aging buccaneer invited the widow woman to live with him as a housekeeper. Don Pedro was older now. His house was large enough for many and, in truth, too large for one.

Mary accepted. Over the years, Mary became interested in art, and did several paintings. Above the front door of the house, an eagle she made still prominently resides.

Then one day Mary discovered Don Pedro dying, a cutlass in his chest, assaulted apparently by a former shipmate. All the pirate had time to ask for was to be buried beneath the hearthstone in the kitchen.

The house then fell to Mary and she lived out her life of 94 years, passing on in 1814. And that is the story of Mary Wallace.

Now for the house. It has a dark, brooding look about it, easy to understand given that the ship's carpenters who built it were more concerned with durability in a rugged land than with a cheery appearance.

Ghost hunter Hans Holzer was so impressed by the house as an example of positively haunted real estate that he secured the services of renowned psychic Sybil Leek to conduct a seance.

This was all brought about by a Vermont psychic who would only allow herself to be identified as Lorrre, who had already had several rather unnerving experiences with the Heniker home — and apparently, with the stately spirit of Mary Wallace.

It should be immediately mentioned that Lorrre bore a vivid resemblance (tall, red-headed) to Mary Wallace. Lorrre feared that Mary wanted to possess her.

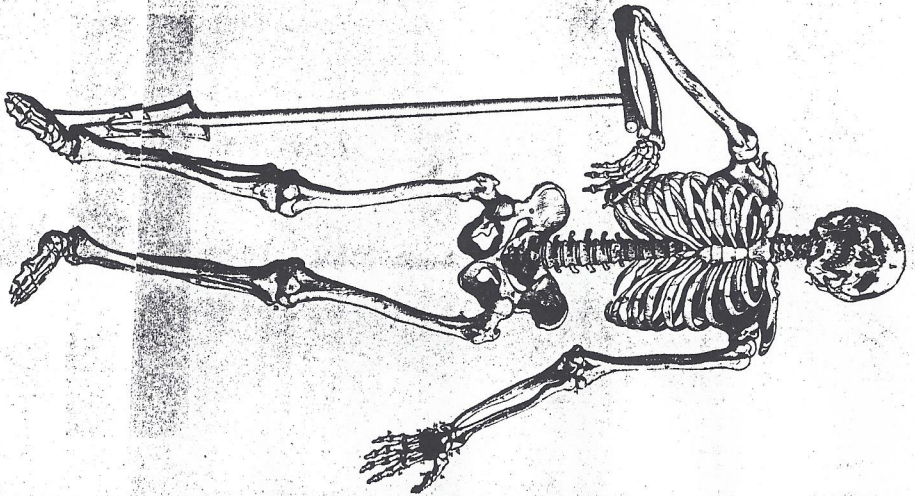
Among the experiences she related to Holzer was one that occurred as she strolled outside the house on a warm afternoon. Wearing shorts, Lorrre suddenly found she had strayed from the safety of the path and was faced with a gurgling tangle of bushes that grew in great tangles beyond the house.

"But I never got a scratch on my legs," she claimed. "Because I kept feeling heavy skirts covering my legs. I could feel the brambles pulling at this invisible skirt I had on. I felt enveloped by something, or someone."

Holzer believed what he heard, or at least enough of it to

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— GHOSTS





Ghosts

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get in touch with Sybil Leek. Lorie was not, as Holzer knew, the only person to have met the spirit of Mary Wallace. Two New Hampshire state troopers saw Mary walking casually along the road dressed in Colonial costume. One owner, Corinne Russell, reported that a fire once broke out out in the stables, only to be mysteriously extinguished before her family's eyes, as if someone was smothering the growing flames with a blanket.

Once in trance, Sybil Leek did not get in contact with Mary Wallace. Instead, she reported being immediately engulfed by the spirit of a dead servant girl named Mary Degan. Supposedly, through the servant girl, Sybil told of other spirits close by, including a pirate named Jonathan Harrison Flood, a Daniel who may also have been a pirate or a relative, and the lurking personage of Mary Wallace herself. Mary Degan told of Dutch gold buried on the premises dating back to 1647 and related to her astonished listeners that Flood was buried nearby.

constantly referred to Jonathan Flood as Johnny, and fondly so. Perhaps Mary Degan had also used her own womanly charms in an attempt to mine a little pirate gold for herself.

The riddle will probably never be solved, but the alleged spirit of the servant girl, Mary Degan — by way of Sybil Leek — certainly painted a more believable situation than that handed down by lore, of peace and tranquility amongst a mixture of pirates, desirable woman and Dutch gold.

Little Girl Lost

West Stewartstown, New Hampshire, lies in the northern part of the state near the point where Quebec, Vermont and New Hampshire meet.

On July 6, 1979, a 14-year-old girl named Alberta Buffington was baby-sitting two younger children at a nearby elementary school playground. Spotting a little girl who was a stranger to her, Alberta decided to invite her to play and went to fetch her.

The little girl was suddenly not to be found, but when Alberta and the two children went into the woods in search of her, they discovered the child sitting on a tree stump.

gathering mystery on a more personal basis.

Living not far from the elementary school, Placey was one evening busily at work on his trailer with a drill and welder. He paused a moment to inspect his handiwork, and in the momentary silence thought he heard a child softly crying. He made note of it but passed it off as a nearby private family affair, perhaps a neighbor's disciplined child.

Placey returned to his work. But after a couple more such interruptions, Placey became curious. It seemed to him that the sound was coming from the schoolhouse.

He went to the school and let himself in, but he found no one. Taking a powerful police flashlight in hand, Placey then searched along the edge of the darkening woods. Again, he could hear the child's crying, still soft, but clearer, much closer to him, as if he could reach out and touch the child. Yet despite the distinct advantage of the sweeping beam of illuminating light from his hand, Burtleigh Placey saw nothing.

Alberta was most assuredly affected by her sighting of the mystery girl, faintly refusing to return to where she had first spotted the little girl for fear that "she might hurt me." The "creepy" blue eyes had left a lasting impression on the teen-age girl.

Charles Kenney of the Boston Globe talked with Chief Placey about the "ghost girl" and Placey was openly puzzled, as he discussed Alberta's story of the girl racing down the hill, seemingly with little interference from the blackberry bushes which Alberta and her father had to struggle through.

"No ordinary girl can vanish that quick," he told the interested reporter, going on to point out that such berry patches generally require heavy trousers, boots, and a certain amount of good old Yankee caution.

"Do you believe in ghosts?" Placey suddenly asked Kenney. After a non-committal shrug from the correspondent, Placey said that he didn't really, but that "some of these kind of things happen, not only here but all over."

With the Manchester Union Leader reporter, the police chief turned philosophical. "There's no question it's quite a mystery. I don't actually believe in ghosts but it's awful funny down there."

Who is the girl? And more importantly, why is she suddenly there? Was she trying to lead both Alberta Buffington and Police Chief Burtleigh Placey somewhere? If so, where?

At the time, there was a Manchester, New Hampshire family, certain researchers. They had a fascination about the night

...and others of Don Pedro, Holzer knew that Mary Wallace has been in reality an Englishman's sister, and Philip Babb. But now he was listening to a contradiction from the grave, apparently naming Jonathan Flood as Don Pedro.

Holzer wasn't entirely convinced that Mary Degan wasn't really Mary Wallace incognito, as spirits, so most ghost hunters believe, are generally a cunning and playful lot not always willing to reveal accurate information back from the beyond. To add to Holzer's suspicions, the Degan spirit stated the house had been owned by a Mary Birch. When questioned by Holzer, the spirit incorporated Mary Birch with Mary Wallace. Had Ocean Born Mary taken another husband other than Mr. Wallace? Involved with Don Pedro and his gold-tooting crimes, had she perhaps married one of the old pirates' trusted crew?

Interestingly, according to the Degan spirit (at all times, through Sybil Leek), Mary Birch (Wallace) and Jonathan (Don Pedro) did not get on well in his later years. In fact, Mary Wallace was the old pirate's mistress, not simply his housekeeper. It would also seem if ghosts can be believed, that Jonathan and Mary fought particularly over the gold and her immodest selection of meat while he was off at sea. This is perhaps where the enigmatic Mr. Birch entered the ghostly picture.

Through his own research, Holzer had learned, he thought, that Don Pedro was really an English buccaneer named Phillip Babb, but the Degan spirit further lampooned that theory by stating that Jonathan and Babb did not get along too well either, before or after death.

So one is left to wonder just who embodied the outcast in Jonathan Harrison "Don Pedro" Flood's chest that long ago evening. The suspects are numerous, including, so it would seem, the beautiful Mary Wallace herself.

To add one further note of interest, the Degan spirit spoke of the Mary Wallace spirit with fear, while conversely, she

Alberta was immediately struck by the strange little girl's attire, black patent leather shoes, a white dress with ruffles at the hem, white stockings and white tights, a pink bow at her waist, and a handbag that seemed to match the outfit. The child's brown hair was bobbed. When the teen-ager approached the little girl who appeared to be between 7 and 9 years of age, the child ran deep into the woods, which slope at a rather steep descent away from the school.

Alberta went no farther. A good baby-sitter, she had her own children as her foremost concern. Besides, one aspect about the strange little girl troubled young Alberta — what she would later refer to as the little girl's "creepy" blue staring eyes. Instead, the West Stewartstown teen-ager sought the assistance of her father, and together they searched the area for the little girl.

Later, Alberta told Jon Seaver of the Manchester Union Leader that she sighted the girl "way up" in the woods. I saw her and yelled for my father. She was in the bushes looking at me. She started to run, and I chased her but I couldn't catch her."

State Trooper Howard Weber was concerned. Even in mid-July, New Hampshire can be pretty chilly at night. And this northern area of the state is still rather open, rugged country. While he outwardly formed a search for a possible lost child, he later voiced his inner uneasiness about the lost girl.

"The thing that made me curious was the way they described her as being dressed. . . . That's the way a kid dressed in the early 50s or late 40s or something. I haven't seen a kid dressed like that in a long time."

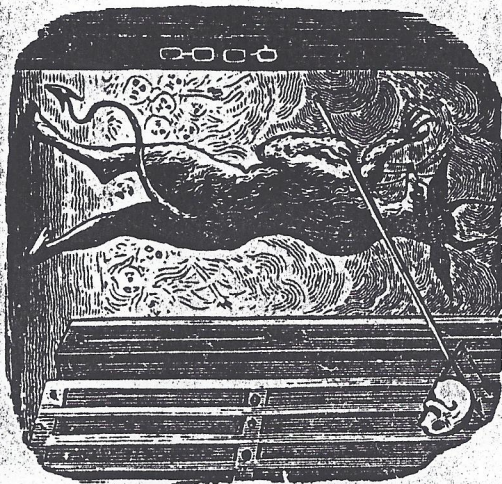
Police Chief Burtleigh Placey also acknowledged that an unidentified woman (many respectable people withhold their names in such instance for fear of ridicule) reported to his office having seen the same little girl.

Placey says he believed that report and the story told by Alberta Buffington even before he was thrust into the

age, but the father stated that she never wore anything but jeans. Still, town officials secured a photograph of the girl and included it with a number of other photos for Alberta and the other two children to look over. None of them gave the Manchester girl a second look.

Both New Hampshire and Vermont abound with tales of the supernatural, such as the Vermont favorite about freezing the dead to thaw them back to life the coming spring. But this is the stuff of folklore and hearsay, making such legends most difficult to scientifically research.

On the other hand, Mary Wallace's house and the woods where the little girl was lost can be easily investigated. If you



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