

Strange... But True?

by: Tonya J. Cook



*The Flying Dutchman:
The Phantom Ship
Part II*

In last week's column, the Flying Dutchman was discussed. It is known to be a phantom, or ghost-ship that sails the seas, never to reach port. It has a crew of cursed dead men. Whoever encounters this ghostly sight will be cursed, too; usually meeting doom on the sea.

The name of the ship is the Flying Dutchman according to legend. However, there is another legend that begs to differ. The "Flying Dutchman" was the captain of what became a phantom ship. The story begins along the Cape of Good Hope in the Atlantic Ocean on the coast of South Africa. There was this Dutch captain and his ship that met a fierce storm with gale force winds as they were trying to sail around the cape. The gale was threatening to sink the ship with all aboard. The sailors and passengers begged the captain to turn around but he refused to change course. He went below deck to his cabin, either mad or drunk.

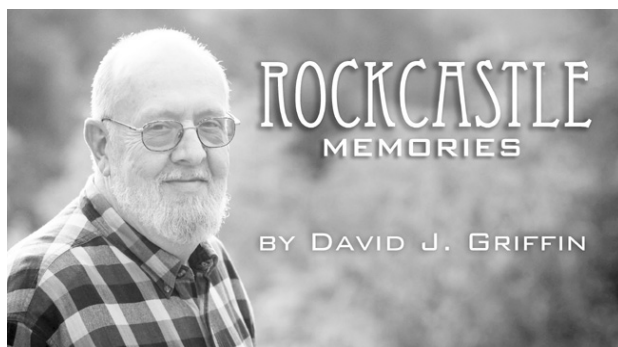
Soon, there occurred a mutiny on board. The captain awoke and shot the leader of the mutiny and

threw his body overboard. Upon his body hitting the water, the clouds parted and a shadowy figure materialized on deck. The shadow told the captain, "You're a very stubborn man." The captain replied, "I never asked for a peaceful passage. I never asked for anything. So clear off before I shoot you, too."

The shadow didn't move, so the captain shot as he said, but the gun exploded in his hand. The shadow told the captain that he was accursed. This was the curse to follow the captain: "As a result of your actions, you are condemned to sail the oceans for eternity with a ghostly crew of dead men, bringing death to all who sight your spectral ship, and to never make port or know a moment's peace. Gall shall be your drink and red hot iron your meat," said the shadowy figure. "Amen to that!" said the captain.

The Flying Dutchman's ship and crew have been seen through the centuries. Sometimes the ship lures other ships to jagged rocks where they are smashed in the churning sea. If the food aboard a ship goes bad, the ghost ship usually gets the

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Cummins Grocery

Recently I stopped in a country grocery store just outside of Mt. Sterling to pick up a Coke. I instantly noticed the owner in the back cutting up pork to carefully place in his meat display. The site of him wielding a large meat cleaver reminded me of my uncle, Jesse Cummins. Uncle Jesse owned a quaint grocery on Main Street in Mt. Vernon when I was in high school. His store on Saturdays overflowed with elderly couples purchasing their weekly supplies.

The main reason so many folks chose this particular store was because Uncle Jesse was known for his home delivery. When I was just getting my driver's license, one of my friends, Penny Nunneley was the delivery boy. Penny was a friend of mine, and he let me ride with him on Saturday afternoons. After a few weeks, Uncle Jesse asked if I would be interested in taking Penny's job after he graduated and left for college. I was thrilled to be considered for this fun job and accepted without hesitation. I think I was paid a whopping one dollar per hour. That was actually a good salary at that time.

After Penny's graduation from high school, I was allowed to work with him during the summer in order to learn the routes that were used for the deliveries. Uncle Jesse owned a 1956 Chevrolet Nomad station wagon that we used to transport the groceries.

Most of the time, customers would simply call in their orders. We then took the groceries to their homes. When we answered the phone, we were ordinarily told to "jot down the order." That meant that Uncle Jesse would charge the supplies to an account, which were paid once a month. I believe the term "jot 'em down store" must have come from this practice. Some families, especially those who lived far out in the county, caught rides to Mt. Vernon in order to go to the bank, to the Post Office, or maybe the drug store. The last stop they made was at the grocery for their weekly supplies so that Uncle Jesse would take them back home. It was an arrangement that worked well for everyone involved.

Uncle Jesse was noted for his wonderful cuts of fresh meat. In the very back of the store he had a chopping block on legs, and I loved to watch him cut up pork chops, steaks, and ribs.

He even ground his own hamburger, and it was the freshest in town. On many occasions, my mother, Bee, would call me just before I was to get off work to tell me to bring home some of his pork chops or a couple pounds of hamburger. I think my family shopped there because Uncle Jesse was so good to me as well as because the groceries were the freshest in town.

My routes took me all over Rockcastle County. It was normal to drive to Livingston, Brodhead, and many other places in between. Occasionally, a single delivery could take over an hour. The back of the Chevy Nomad might have 15-20 paper bags of groceries. When I was discussing this article with Bud Cox, he mentioned a site that I remembered called Lamer. That was approximately 12 miles from the store on a very narrow, gravel road.

During the summer between my junior and senior year at Mt. Vernon High School, I was dating a girl that lived in Dayton, Ohio. She moved away when we were juniors. But her family came to visit on a regular basis, so we had to spend time together whenever we could make the time. One Saturday, Barbara called the store and said, "I am in town; could you come by my grandmother's house?" I asked Uncle Jesse if it would be alright if she rode with me on my home deliveries. His answer was, "We will give it a try, and see if it affects your work." That particular Saturday was unusual and interesting. Barbara saw for the first time

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Points East

By Ike Adams



For decades my wife has been telling people that she has been getting stuff out of "her garden." "Her" tomatoes are getting ripe, "she" has an abundance of cucumbers and zucchini and yellow crook-neck squash and "her" peppers and eggplant are all coming in all at once and, "what on earth do you do with all that stuff", she inquired of colleagues, friends and neighbors.

The truth of the matter is that after seeing a little garter snake there among the bean vines many years ago, Loretta did not set foot in "her" garden unless it was to pick a big tomato where the vine had inadvertently fallen onto mown grass and the fruit was lying there like a big, lost, red, croquet ball there on the edge of the lawn.

And sometimes, when the vines got away from me, she might find a straight-8 cucumber in her parking spot there at the end of the drive, twenty years ago, when we were living in a big rented house up on 52 that had the best, big, vegetable garden spot I've ever seen or ever will unless I get to Heaven and St. Peter is passing out garden plots and all the seeds and stuff you have to have to grow one.

But this year has been remarkably different. Because of my ongoing disagreement with Mr. Parkinson and the residual effects of a stroke more than a year ago, Loretta came to realize that "her garden" was not going to happen unless she got right out there with me in the dirt and clay we call a garden. I should have taken pictures because we seeded the garden together and have hobbled through it with Ralph's

Miracle Hoe and sort of kept the weeds down.

So we've had a ton of veggies throughout the spring and early summer and Loretta can give stuff to all her family and buddies and legitimately claim that it came from "our garden."

And then, two weeks ago, the two, 100-ft. rows of Bodacious sweet-corn commenced getting full and the silks dropping off and the kernels started bursting to roasting and boiling perfection and we'd had corn on the cob three nights in a row and the ears were more than 18 inches long and bigger around than my wrist because wet weather agrees with sweet corn

Almost every stalk had one huge and one smaller ear on it and we were bragging and sharing with everybody we knew for three or four days when the black winged devils discovered what Loretta can truly call "her" corn patch because she planted every hill.

The winged vermin moved in at dawn on Thursday, a nasty, allied drove of evil, feathered bodies, consisting of starlings, grackles, regular old black birds and common cowbirds, and bent on destruction.

By Saturday morning, half of our, (and Loretta can legit it call "hers") sweet corn crop was destroyed so we picked it and commenced hauling it by the dozen-ears or more to our friends and loved ones but there was a big bunch still left in the garden and Loretta maintains that she put up enough last year to last for several and that it'll keep for years so we might as well give this crop away cause we sure can't eat it.

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