

MY DAD'S GHOST HUNT

My Dad married the first time in the early 1900s. He was sixteen and his bride was thirteen. I think she came from a large family who needed to get rid of one or two so the others would have enough to eat. Anyway, these two children married and set up housekeeping.

Dad had rented an old one-room log house with a lean-to attached to the side. The house was located in a hollow by itself. He and his young wife only had a bed with a feather tick, a small step stove, a small table, two pots, two plates, and I suppose two of everything else.

The stove and table were in the lean-to and their bed was located in the main room. The house had one door, one window, and a shutter over a hole in the kitchen wall.

The first night they spent in their new home was a warm night and so Dad left the door open, but a bat flew in the house and scared his wife so, that he promised to shut the door after this.

The following night, true to his word, Dad shut the door and he and his wife went off to sleep in the comfort of their very own home. Sometime during the night, Dad heard a creaking, and the door came open. Dad thought the wind had blown it open and since Rosie, his wife, was blissfully sleeping, he just went back to sleep and left it open. When Rosie awoke the next morning, she thought Dad had lied to her and not shut the door.

She was upset and said she was not going to stay if he didn't keep the door shut. Then Dad told her what had happened which didn't help the situation. She became really scared now, since she felt the house was haunted.

Dad, who had been raised to not believe in ghosts, laughed and told her that there were no such things as ghosts. She was still unconvinced, but he assured her that she could watch him shut the door that night. That night Rosie made sure the door was closed and fastened before she would go to bed.

Sometime around midnight, the same creaking occurred and again the door came open. This time Dad got up and went outside and looked around. The moon was full and there was no wind. Puzzled as to the cause, Dad finally went back to bed with the final thought that he would investigate this thing in the morning.

His investigation revealed nothing to explain what was happening, but night after night, this phenomenon occurred. Dad put a chair against the door, hammered in a nail and turned it over the door, and finally put up two metal sleeves to hold a crossbar across the door.

With a satisfied grin, Dad said, "That door can't come open tonight". He decided to stay awake just to make sure. Rosie was crying and so insistent on moving that something had to be done. He was even beginning to wonder if just maybe there were ghosts.

Midnight came and went, and the door was still closed so Dad drifted off to sleep. A storm blew in with rain and strong winds between two a.m. and three a.m. and the door came open again. The storm awoke Dad and he realized that the door was again open. Getting out of bed to close the door, Dad saw that the crossbar wasn't broken, it had just

slipped out of the sleeves. Closing the door again and putting the crossbar back in place, Dad crawled back in bed but was too puzzled and scared to sleep. Sometime in those long, fretful hours he made up his mind to look for another place to live. With this decision made, he finally drifted off to sleep.

Awaking with the sun, Dad heard a banging and thrashing outside and ran to the door. A big rawboned mule was rubbing its back against the side of the house. Knowing the house was old and anything banging against the walls would cause something to happen, Dad laughed in relief. He ran in to wake Rosie with “Come outside and see our Ghost.”

Once his reasoning was explained to Rosie, they both laughed and were much happier than they had been since their wedding.

They spent a pleasant day picking berries and gathering hazelnuts and were tired when night came. Since they now felt their problem was solved, night did not seem so terrible, and they gladly placed the crossbar over the door and tumbled into bed. The mule had been taken back to Uncle Cam Horn’s, its owner, who shut him up in a barn stall.

Rosie woke Dad with a wild scream as she watched the bar slowly slip sideways, fall down to the floor, and the door slowly open. Neither of them slept any more that night.

The next morning, Dad told Rosie to cook them some breakfast and then they would go over to his Pap’s to see if they could stay there until they could find another house. Rosie looked in the wood box and there wasn’t any wood, so Dad picked up his

axe and went out to the corner of the house to chop kindling wood from the log he had pulled in the day before.

He had almost chopped enough when he gave a great swing and the axe slipped. The blade struck the post that held up the corner of the house, knocking it completely out. Dad pulled the post out, or at least part of it, because it was so rotten that it came away in two pieces. A light came on in Dad's head, but he didn't say anything until after breakfast. Then he said, "Rosie, if I can prove to you that there are no ghosts will you be satisfied to stay here?" Rosie agreed because she was so sure he couldn't prove it.

When the dishes were cleaned, they went up and over the hill to Dad's parents' house. Grandpa was out in the cornfield and Dad went out to talk to him. Soon Dad and Grandpa left and were gone a long time. Rosie helped Grandma to cook dinner and when the men folk came back, they all had a good meal. Dad then told Rosie if she would agree to stay one more night in the house, he could prove there were no ghosts. With encouragement from Grandpa, Rosie finally agreed.

Feeling that there would be no sleep that night, Rosie still crept into bed to lay trembling until she finally fell into an exhausted sleep. Neither of them awoke until the sun was high in the sky and shining through their one window and the door was tightly shut. Dad jumped out of bed dancing around in his glee. He had proven there were no ghosts. He still had to take Rosie outside and show her the new post that he and Grandpa had put under the house.

"See, you little scaredy cat, there wasn't a ghost," explained Dad as he described what happened. "The post on that corner of the house was so rotten that any movement or pressure made the post give and when it did, the house was out of square and that put too

much pressure on the wall, so the door came open.” Rosie didn’t know how he knew that, but he was older than she was, and she took his word for it, but she still wondered if a ghost had been trying to scare them away.