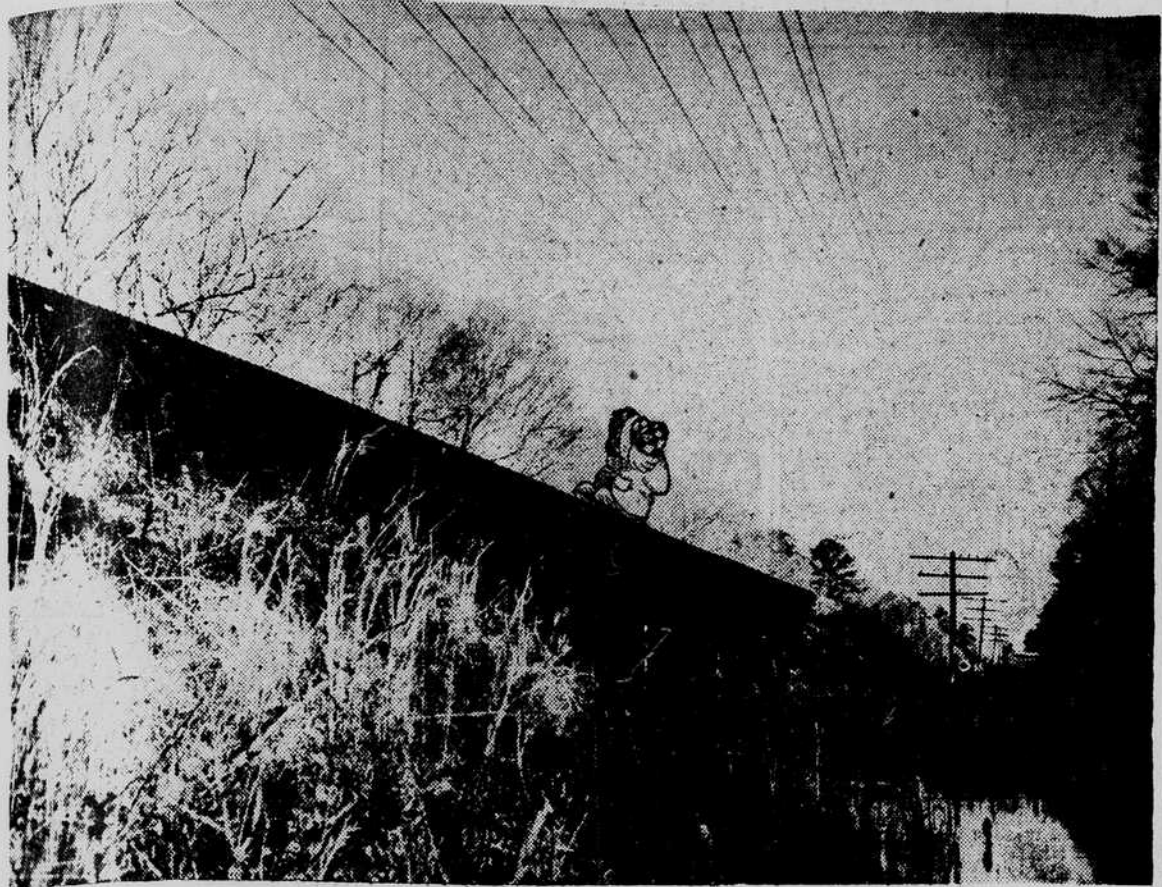


ANYTHING WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?



Star-News readers looking at this picture are helping to make history. Someday, this photograph may appear on the cover of the Journal of the American Medical Association as the first picture of a human's mental stability. If you look at this picture and see nothing but an ordinary Atlantic Coast Line Railroad company trestle at Maco station, 14 miles west of Wilmington, you do not believe in ghosts. If, however, you see a headless train conductor walking along the trestle in the picture—well, you're like a host of other New Hanover and Brunswick county citizens who attest to the fact that "Joe Baldwin's Ghost Light" is a fact and not a myth. Pete Knight, Star-News photographer who snapped the picture, didn't see the headless conductor when he clicked his shutter. But when he developed the negative, there was the hunk of ectoplasm as big as life. At night, the legend goes, Joe Baldwin, a conductor killed in an accident near Maco about 1867, carries his eerie lantern across the trestle as he looks for his head; obviously, since this picture was taken in daylight, Joe didn't need his lantern.

Legend Of Headless Trainman Grows With Passing Of Years

It was in 1869 and the presidential train bearing Grover Cleveland, President of the United States, passed near Maco station, 14 miles west of Wilmington on the Atlantic Coast Line railroad, to let the train, a wood-burner, take on wood.

The day was balmy, so President Cleveland alighted from his coach to take a stroll along the tracks. While walking along, he saw a train signalman with a red and a green lantern. "Tell me," said the President, "what is the purpose of carrying two signal lanterns?"

Before the presidential train began rolling toward Wilmington again, President Cleveland had the full story of "Joe Baldwin's Ghost Light." He also found out that the two lanterns were used at Maco station so that ACL engineers would not be deceived by the ghostly weaving of the Joe Baldwin light.

B. M. Jones, of the auditing department of ACL, was on the scene when the presidential train stopped. He was a small, barefooted boy, but he remembers well being hoisted up so affable President Cleveland could shake his hand. He also remembers the Joe Baldwin light.

"One night I was in a group of boys who were walking along the track," Jones says, "when we saw the light. It seemed to be weaving along, directly over the tracks at a height of about five feet. Then the light described an arc and landed in a swamp beside the track."

The legend of the Joe Baldwin ghost light was born in 1867. In that year, a section of the ACL track near Maco station was rebuilt. During that primitive era of railroading, rail cars were joined by pins and couplers. Joe Baldwin, the legend has it, was a conductor on a car that became uncoupled and crashed into another car, killing him at the trestle.

First Appearance Shortly after the fatal accident, the mysterious light appeared. Scores of witnesses say it still appears. A popular explanation for it is that Conductor Baldwin, decapitated in the accident, is taking the nocturnal trips in search of his head. And in 1873, railroad men say, a second light appeared and the two lights, shining with the brightness of a 25-watt electric light bulb, would meet one another going in opposite directions.

It took an earthquake to stop Joe Baldwin's nightly jaunt. For a short while after the quake of 1886, the two lights disappeared. Soon thereafter, however, weaving silently along the tracks near the trestle, they reappeared. Folks knew then that Joe Baldwin was again in search of his head; maybe, they speculated, the other light was Joe's head in search of his body.

The ghost light story gained credence enough to cause a Washington, D. C., investigator to visit Maco and try to explain the thing scientifically. But Joe was too fast for him. He saw enough to convince him, he said, the lights were not "jack-o-lanterns," or, as he called it, "ignis fatuus."

A machine-gun detachment from Fort Bragg encamped briefly in Maco to try to solve the mystery, but at least perforate it. They did neither.

An ACL operations official, veteran of 40 years of railroading, has actually seen the light from the cab of a locomotive. He knows of instances when the trains stopped on account of it. On at least one occasion he and the engineer with whom he was riding began to stop for the light, when it disappeared.

Three ACL employees have seen the light recently. J. R. Blinn, after viewing it from the south, circled and looked at it from the north. "It definitely is not car lights, because the light lasts too long," says Blinn. "It also rises

BARDEN TO SPEAK ON DUKE PROGRAM

DURHAM, Feb. 23.—(P)—Principal speaker at Duke University's commencement exercises to be held at Page auditorium Monday morning, 11 o'clock, will be Congressman Graham A. Barden, from the Third district, chairman of the house committee on education.

Dr. Wyatt A. Smart, professor of Biblical theology at Emory University, will deliver the commencement sermon in Duke University Chapel, 11 o'clock tomorrow morning, as a part of the graduation program.

Degrees at Monday's exercises will be conferred by Dr. Robert L. Flowers, president of the university and commissions will be presented by Capt. A. N. Kowalzyk, Jr., USN, in charge of the Duke unit.

Forty-five candidates will be eligible for graduation at the mid-winter commencement Monday. Thirty-eight are to receive commissions as ensigns. Men to be commissioned have been trained in the ROTC unit at Duke; seven will be graduated under the V-12 program, which include commissioning at graduation.

Fifteen men are candidates for the degree of A. B.; 25 men and two women are candidates for the degree of B. S.; and three men are candidates for the degree of B. S. M. E.

It is estimated that before the war, one-third of the U. S. families had incomes under \$1,000 a year.

and falls, being visible for five minutes at a time before it disappears."

A. B. Love has seen the ghost light, says he knows the explanation for it lies in the realm of natural phenomena, but that he can't explain it.

Miss Frankie Murphy is another witness. "Sometimes," Miss Murphy says, "it (ghost light) is so bright that you can read by its light. It rises up from the side of the track, comes toward you and disappears. You can see the reflection along the rails."

Recently some heedless youngsters have adopted the dangerous habit of parking across the Maco railroad tracks for a better view of the lights. Unless the practice is stopped, say ACL officials, Joe Baldwin is going to have company.

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Lost Colony Re-Opening To Be Planned At Parley

Trustees Of Roanoke Island Association Meet In Raleigh Tuesday

RALEIGH, Feb. 23.—(P)—The board of trustees of the Roanoke Island Historical association will meet here Tuesday to lay final plans for the reopening this summer of the pageant-drama, the Lost Colony, in Roanoke island's outdoor theatre.

Former Governor J. M. Broughton, chairman of the board, said plans would be laid to raise a fund of approximately \$75,000 needed to rebuild the theatre, and for initiating a nation-wide publicity campaign.

Samuel Selden of Chapel Hill, head of the Carolina Playmakers and director of the Lost Colony production, which was written by Paul Green, native author and playwright, will report on plans for revising the play and assembling a cast.

Albert Q. Bell of Manteo, who is in charge of reconstructing the theatre on the site of Old Fort Raleigh, also will report at the board meeting.

Broughton said many islanders would be used in the new cast as they were in the past, and several Carolina playmakers probably will be assigned roles. During previous performances of the drama, the islanders and playmakers made up the largest part of the cast, but several major roles were taken by actors from the WPA's New York stage. These no longer are available.

Broughton said he had received word from Green, who is now in Hollywood, that he had completed the revision script for the new production. However, Green will not be here for Tuesday's meeting but probably will return from the west coast in time to assist with preliminary tasks.

While a definite date for reopening the drama has not been set, Broughton said the date had been tentatively set for July 1.

VISITOR RECALLS TOUR HERE IN '18

J. C. Larmondra, Derry, New Hampshire, returned to Wilmington yesterday after an absence of 28 years to see if he could renew friendships formed in the first World War period when he spent several months in the city.

Time has erased from Larmondra's memory names of his acquaintances of 1918, but he does remember that Wilmington "is an unusually good town."

"I had some fine times here," he said. "One of my best friends—I can't recall his name—was a contractor of German descent. We used to sit for hours in the Elks club here playing pinochle."

Larmondra came to Wilmington Oct. 10, 1918, to recruit candidates for an officers' training school in Camp Fremont, Calif. He stayed here until after the Armistice was signed.

En route to his New Hampshire home from Jacksonville, Fla., where he had been to visit his son, Larmondra visited the Elks club last night in an effort to pick up clues as to the whereabouts of his old friends. He still had a courtesy membership card to the Elks club given to him during his 1918 visit.

"I would certainly like to see some of the fellows I knew then," Larmondra said wistfully. "We had some fun together."

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Job Applicants Will Get Additional USES Help In Counseling

Interviewers of United States Employment Service offices are to be given special training in employment counseling to job applicant; needing the additional service.

Training assistants have spent a week in the Raleigh office of the USES studying employment counseling and acquainting themselves with its practice.

The training in this area will be conducted by Mrs. Myrtle Watters who will train personnel in Lumberton, Feb. 26-27, Fayetteville, Feb. 28-March 1, March 7-8 and March 12-13.

THE COLONEL IS TRIGGER HAPPY

FORT OGLETHORPE, Ga.—(P)—Col. John A. Hoag, commanding officer of Fort Oglethorpe, not only is an ardent collector of firearms but from the models on his

shelves he designs his own guns and tailors them to his shooting tastes.

Until about 100 years ago, books were usually bound in wooden boards or temporary covers.

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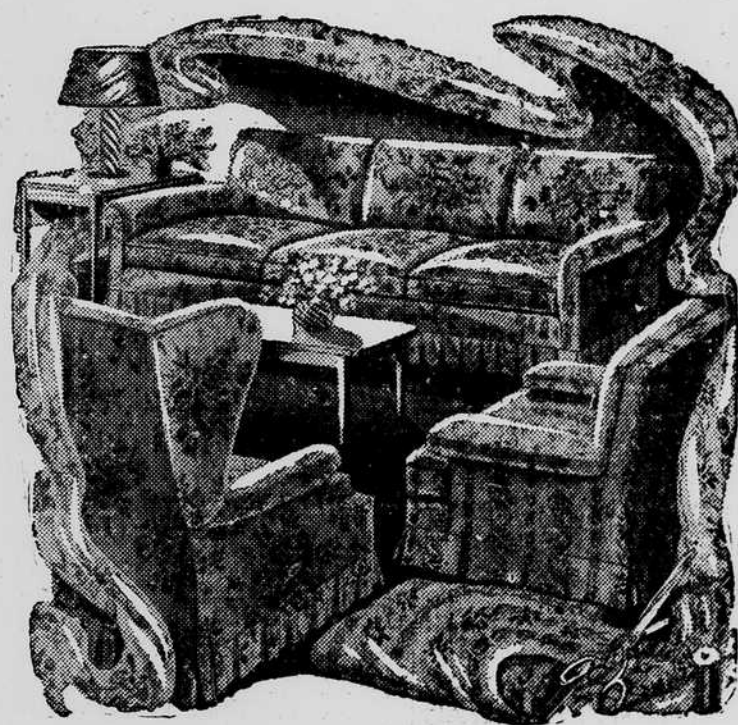
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