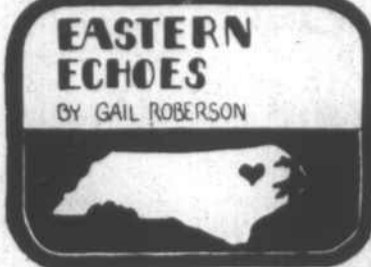


PERSPECTIVE

The Ghost Who Rocked the Cradle

"Come out to my house when this is over," she whispered as we stood in the hall waiting for the meeting to begin. "I've got something to tell you." Two hours later, I was settled in at her kitchen table, sipping cold tea and learning about a ghost who had inhabited her house from the first day she and her newborn daughter arrived home from the hospital, until the day the girl left home to begin her own life with her new husband.



"I didn't used to believe in ghosts," she confided a bit shyly, "but my feelings about the supernatural have changed considerably through the years due to our friendly ghost, 'Anastasia.' My husband and I were so pleased to find this house that for three years we absorbed ourselves with renovation and restoration. But, when our daughter was born, this place began to change. Oh, it was nothing horrifying or blood-thirsty, mind you, but little things began to happen that had not happened here before her birth. You see, 'Anastasia' suddenly came into our lives. I've never heard of anything quite like it. Once my husband and I had reason to investigate more thoroughly, the more fascinating 'Anastasia' became to us. Eventually, we uncovered the reasons that accounted for us having her friendly presence here in our home."

She continued. "First of all, we learned that all the other occupants of this house before us had no experience with 'Anastasia.' But, we also discovered that none of them had daughters either. Only sons. As we dug further, we found that the last family to live here that DID have a daughter, suffered that daughter's death only three days after her birth in the very room upstairs that our own daughter was raised in. The dead infant's mother, 'Anastasia,' was distraught with grief for her child, and never left her

room, eventually becoming a recluse and an invalid. It was said that she would sit by the cradle for hours at a time, empty though it was. She also hummed a little tune nearly the whole night long, and would sleep peacefully during the day. When she died, she weighed no more than a child herself, and was nearly seventy years old. Old family letters state that she was found dead, clutching the empty cradle, and that she was buried near her infant daughter in a family cemetery just across the yard there by the edge of the field. I've looked at her gravestone and her name is there, along with that of her daughter nearby. Everything fits.

The names, the dates of birth and death. Everything fits the documents and what has been recorded in writing."

I decided to stretch my legs and walked to the kitchen window to gaze out at the beautiful mellow moon that silhouetted the old gray headstones by the edge of the field as she continued her story.

"If we hadn't been so certain that this woman was merely protecting our daughter, we would have moved out long ago. But, from all the evidence, we actually felt a little relieved that she was sharing our daughter's life. It was sort of like having a guardian angel, I guess. At least that's the way we came to think of it."

"In the beginning, I could never understand why our daughter's cradle was always swaying slightly every time I came into her room. I'd put my hand out to stop the motion, but every time I'd check back, it would be swaying again while my daughter slept peacefully. But then, after the photographs, everything began to come together."

"Photographs?" I questioned, as I took my seat and poured more tea. "How did a photograph solve the mystery?"

"We didn't sleep for weeks after they were developed," she confided. "It was a fitful time for us, but the photographs also explained away many strange things, like the rocking cradle and the soft humming our daughter eventually heard each night as she grew older. In EVERY picture, there was a ghostlike fig-

ure standing by the cradle. It had a fog-like density and you could see through it, but it was definitely a woman's shape. That's when we began to investigate the background of the house itself and found out about 'Anastasia.' It was then that we realized that the ghostly white apparition always beside our daughter's bedside was her."

"As she grew older, our daughter refused to move out of the room. She said that 'Anastasia' was her friend and her protector who came to her in the night in her dreams. She also said that she loved the little tune, and could not go to sleep without it. My husband and I had never heard the tune, but on the eve of our daughter's wedding, all three of us heard it. We were laying out her wedding dress that night for the morning service the next day. It was quite the most beautiful thing I have ever heard. It made me want to cry and smile at the same time.

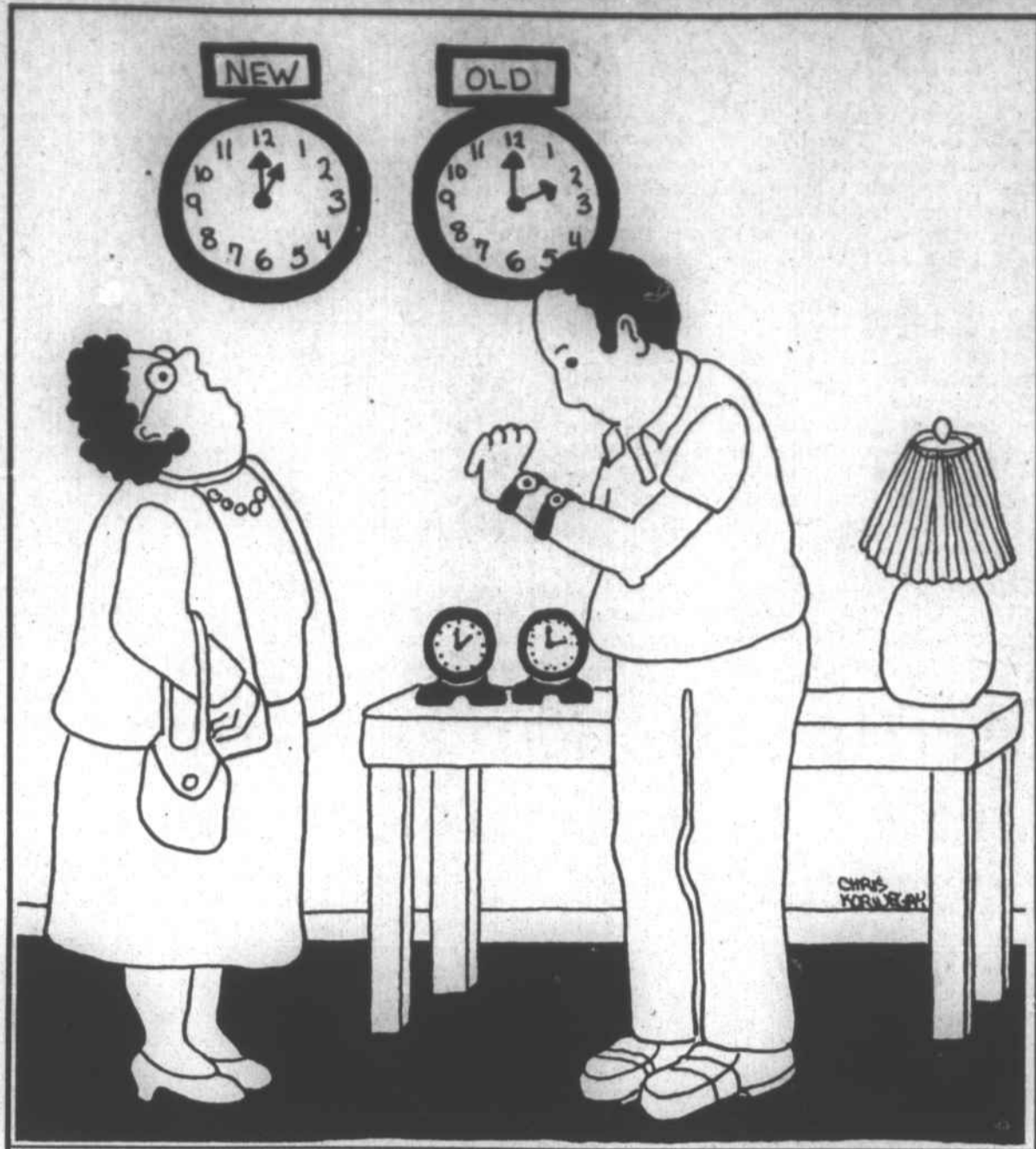
Our daughter said that 'Anastasia' was merely saying goodbye to her and wanted us all to know how much she had loved living with her here. There has been no evidence of 'Anastasia's' presence here since my daughter left this house. None whatsoever. Not until recently."

"How recently?" I questioned again. "Well, you know I have a granddaughter now," she replied. "She's started sleeping in that room some when she visits here. Her mother no longer feels 'Anastasia's' presence nor hears the song, but my granddaughter does. However, what's stranger than anything else though... are the names."

By this time I had already started putting some pieces of the puzzle together by myself, and a calm acceptance had come over me. She smiled softly.

"My name is Ann. The ghost was named 'Anastasia.' Her daughter was named Annie. My daughter was named Anna. And my granddaughter is named Anny."

I could hardly wait to open a particular book on my shelf when I returned home that night. My fingers followed the lines down to the name, "Anastasia," and silently I registered the meaning—"Anastasia...the resurrection. Rebirth."



Always hard for me to adjust to the time changes

Squirrel eviction underway

November's almost here, and cool weather has arrived just in time to welcome the month.



Now I guess we can stop complaining about the heat and start complaining about being cold. It

seems funny that in the summertime you'd give anything to find a spot that was about 60-degrees, and then once the temperatures reach that point outside (or inside if you're building's in the shape that our office is right now) you're trying your best to find a nice warm spot.

I really didn't relish the thoughts of cooler weather coming this year though. Some of you may know the problems that we incurred last year when the cooler weather broke, but for those of you that don't know I'll fill you in.

It seems that surrounding our office are several large trees. These trees seem to be a favorite spot for many of the squirrels that reside on Grubb Street and the surrounding community. The pecans probably are a major attraction for them, but anyway... The squirrels also want to find a nice, warm spot on cool days, and they decided that our office was as good a place as any to get away from the cold north wind.

We didn't exactly like our new patrons, but what could we do about it. At first it wasn't too bad. They confined themselves to the attic, and although they were a little noisy, they pretty much kept to themselves.

As autumn turned to winter they seemed to get a little braver, and on rare occasions they found their way down into the office through a hole in one of the closet ceilings. All attempts to rid ourselves of the problem failed. We tried rat poison, which didn't tempt the little varmints at all, not even when mixed with crushed pecans or peanuts. Someone suggested moth balls. The smell of those sure got to us, but it didn't deter the squirrels at all.

We finally decided to take pot

shots at the little varmints with a BB Gun. We've got a few dents in the walls now, but it still didn't slow those squirrels down a bit. I guess they thought that they'd gotten the best of us. They certainly didn't seem willing to give up their newly found home.

On several occasions they proved to be quite a source of embarrassment to us. Whenever the squirrels decided to come down from their roost and run rampant through the office the girls that work here jumped up onto their desks to wait for the varmints to depart. More than once as we stood on our desks waiting for the squirrels to go back where they belonged we were visited by area business people. Explaining our predicament didn't help much, because the noise that they made opening the door always sent the squirrels into hiding. I think a lot of folks just thought we'd taken leave of our senses. Honest guys, there were squirrels.

The more work that is done on our building now, the more obvious it becomes that we aren't the only inhabitants of this domain. Fortunately the noise from the contractor's crew has sent the squirrels in search of a more peaceful place.

We have been assured that since the building is being re-constructed the squirrels will not be able to find an access spot. And just to make sure, the contractor removed the limbs that were hanging over the building that the squirrels were using as stairs into their home.

I know I complained a lot last week about the noise that we were having to endure, but believe me it's worth it already. The building is starting to shape up and the squirrels are gone. It's worth it.

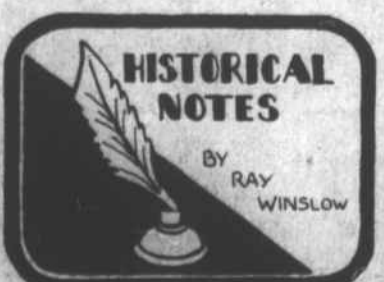
When individual rights infringe on others

There has been a great deal of debate in recent years concerning the right of Americans to have access to materials dealing with sex, incest, homosexuality,



"Show Boat" background

"Show boat's coming!" Excitement always greeted the arrival of the "Cotton Blossom" bringing music, dance, and melodrama to the towns along "Ol' Man River." The classic tale of life among waterborne entertainers was told by Edna Ferber in her novel "Show Boat" and transferred to stage and screen in the melodious musical by Jerome Kern (born a century ago this year).



Cap'n Andy's "Cotton Blossom" was an impressive paddle steamer floating grandly on the Mississippi. The inspiration for that fictional vessel was a much humbler craft traveling such lesser waterways as Perquimans River.

Researching her novel, Ferber spent time on the "James Adams

adultery, and violence. Many believe their right to indulge in such matters is guaranteed by the constitution and object strongly when attempts are made to limit access to such materials. The right of "freedom of speech" is often quoted as a defense in allowing pornographic materials to be displayed openly in society.

I've long supported the notion of an individual's right to possess whatever he wishes in the privacy of his home, and feel that

right should be protected. When that right infringes on the rights of others, I believe controls are in order.

I am fully convinced, and rising sex-related crime statistics support my belief, that the easy availability of sex oriented materials has had an adverse effect on our society. Open exposure to sex and violence has become such a normal part of our daily lives that we hardly notice it. But our children are and so are many warped elements of society.

Floating Theatre." That craft looked more like a house sitting on the water than a real boat. It had no independent power of movement and had to be towed to its landing places.

Former circus and vaudeville performer James Adams had the craft built in 1913 at Washington, N.C. It was 122 by 34 feet overall, drawing 14 inches of water. It had two main levels, the lower one containing the 30-by-80 foot auditorium and 19-foot stage, the upper having quarters for the owners and managers.

In the era between the two world wars, the Adams Theatre and its complement of twenty-six multi-functioning persons played the towns along the North Carolina sounds and the Chesapeake Bay. The annual tour started in Elizabeth City in February or March, with Hertford as the second stop.

At Hertford the Theatre probably tied up at the east end of Grubb Street. Tickets cost the great sum of 35 cents for the main show (50 cents would reserve a seat) and another 15 cents to see the variety show which closed the evening.

Leading man-director Charles Hunter described the typical show as "the old-fashioned hokum—all about mother love, faithful and unfaithful sweethearts, the lamp in the window, an occasional villain, and all in a play full of smiles and tears, but mostly hilarity and fun."

A performance at Hertford one night was particularly engrossing. Sweet little Beulah Adams (the "Mary Pickford of the Chesapeake") played the demure damsel in distress being offered a drugged drink by the dastardly villain. Suddenly from the audience came a heartfelt cry from a farmer's wife, "Don't drink from that glass! Without losing a beat the actress instantly the play and threw down the potion, saying, "You are right; I won't drink that stuff!"

(Another time Beulah broke her ankle. Changes were made in the program, Hunter remarking that it was easier to rewrite the play for her than to shoot her.)

Motion pictures and the Depression eventually killed the "James Adams Floating Theatre" which had presented live entertainment to Hertford in the 1910s and 1920s.

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY
Established In 1932
A DEAR PUBLICATION

Published Each Thursday By Advance Publications Inc. Elizabeth City, N.C.
Second Class Postage Paid at Hertford, N.C. 27944 USPS 428-060

Jane B. Williams
Editor

Anzie L. Wood
Advertising Manager

Debbie T. Stallings
Circulation Manager

ONE YEAR MAIL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| In-County | Out-Of-County |
| \$9 ⁰⁰ | \$10 ⁰⁰ |

119 West Grubb Street
P.O. Box 277
Hertford, N.C. 27944

Member
North Carolina Press Association
National Newspaper Association