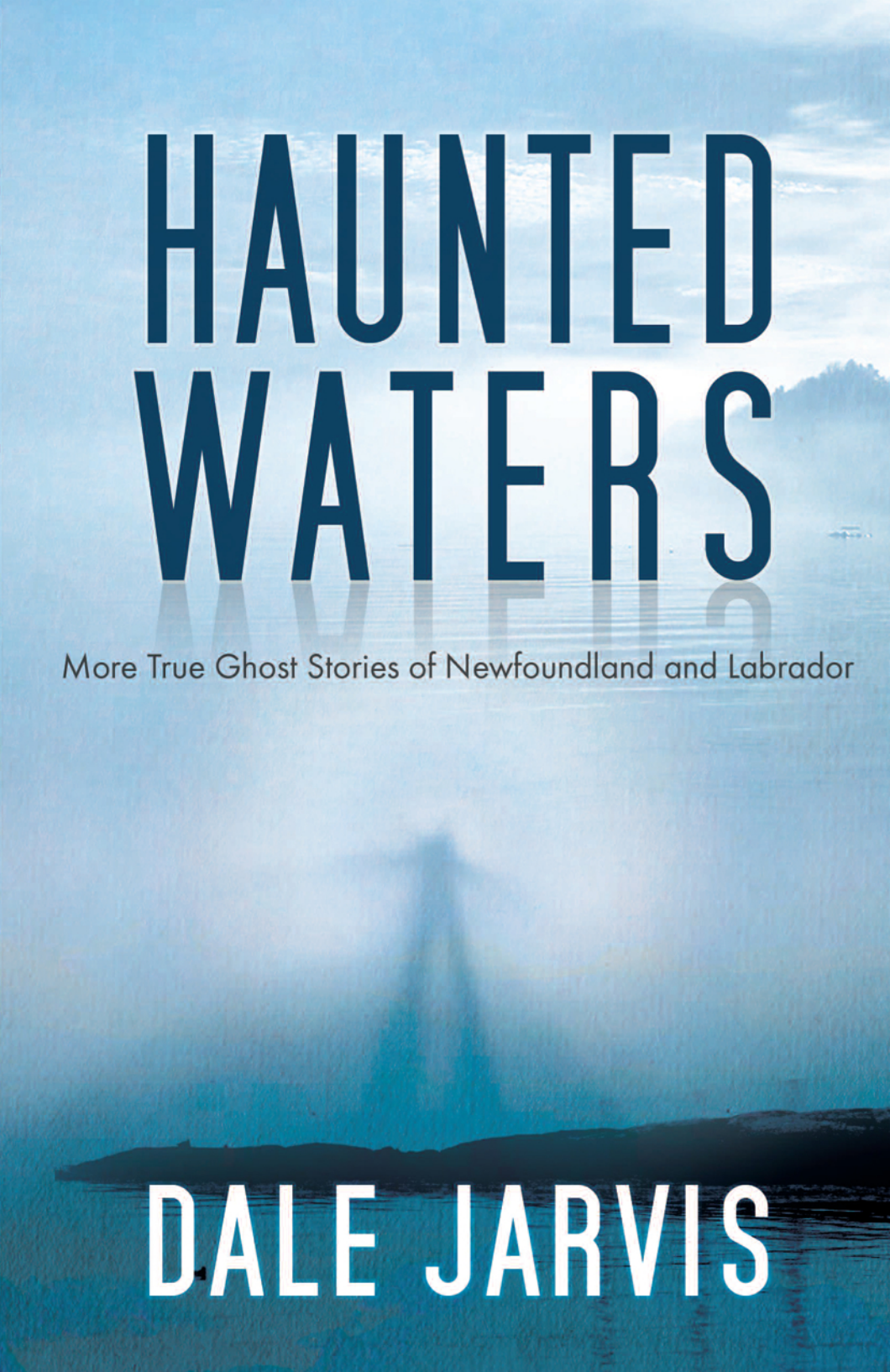




HAUNTED WATERS

More True Ghost Stories of Newfoundland and Labrador

DALE JARVIS

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*More True Ghost Stories of
Newfoundland and Labrador*

D A L E J A R V I S

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those publications has been fantastic, and thank you to my various editors. Thanks as well to the staff of Flanker Press, for their continued support of my writing.

INTRODUCTION

After the first volume of *Haunted Shores* came out in 2004, I was amazed at the number of people, all across Newfoundland and Labrador, who stopped me to tell me their own ghost stories. Ever since, I have been collecting stories, listening to people's memories, and asking questions about local hauntings and legends. I always love hearing a ghost story that is new to my ears.

For whatever reason, this province is blessed with thousands of tales of hauntings, tokens, ghost ships, and strange creatures. We are also extremely lucky in Newfoundland and Labrador to live in a place where the art of storytelling still matters. It is a place where the oral tradition is still a vibrant, important part of our living culture.

If you have a ghost story to share—one that you remember hearing from the place you grew up, or a memory of a true haunting you have experienced—please let me know!

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CHAPTER 1



Haunted Houses and Other Bothersome Buildings

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE BASEMENT

LIVINGSTONE STREET, ST. JOHN'S

WINTER NIGHTS SEEM MADE FOR THE SHARING of spooky tales. Wind swirling 'round the gables of old houses and theappings of skeletal branches against attic windows would certainly set the stage for many a ghost story.

In his book *Streets of St. John's*, author Jack White quotes newspaper columnist J.M. Byrnes. Byrnes reminisced of a particular poplar tree from his youth on Livingstone Street in the 1880s, "its stark branches now in the sleep of winter and ghostly with bandages of falling snow, sprawling over the gables of the adjoining houses and stirring restlessly with the ever-increasing wind which tapped and swirled against the attic windows."

Livingstone Street is more than just atmospheric, however. Indeed, it seems to have attracted a fair share of local legends.

It was not that long ago that there was a woman living on Livingstone Street with her young son. The boy, like many young children, was possessed of an imaginary friend. In this particular case, it was an imaginary dog. The boy would often go down into the basement to play with his invisible friend, and the mother thought nothing of it.

The basement was only roughly finished, and not the most comfortable of spaces. So the woman hired a contractor to come in,

tear up the old broken concrete floor and pour a new one, in order to finish the basement and make it more livable. When the workman pulled up the floor, there, underneath the old concrete, he found the skeleton of a dog.

Or so the local legend goes, anyway. Like many ghost stories, it is one that I have come across through second-hand sources, so it is difficult to judge its accuracy. What is interesting, however, is that it is a story which does not seem out of place on Livingstone Street. Haunted basements, in fact, seem to be a recurring theme in the neighbourhood.



Several houses along Livingstone Street in downtown St. John's seem to have problems with haunted basements. (Photo by Dale Jarvis)

Around 1972, a family with several children was living in a house on that street. By and by, several family members started to experience strange things. One of the eldest boys saw a strange face looking in at him through a window. The mother began to hear heavy footsteps coming up the stairs in the middle of the night. But

it was the two youngest children who witnessed the most terrifying event, down in the basement of the property.

“Caroline” was only a young girl at the time, about six years old. Over thirty years later, she still has a vivid memory of what she saw in that basement.

“Me and my brother were down in the basement playing,” remembers Caroline. “He wanted me to sit on top of an old oil barrel that was in our basement. I was afraid to sit on the barrel because I was afraid I would fall off. I reluctantly agreed to go up there only after he went first.”

Caroline’s brother started to climb up the barrel when the girl looked across the room.

“There in the middle of the basement was the most terrifying sight of my entire life,” she says, thinking back on the events of that day. “There was this giant head and face staring at me. It had black hair; the face was very ugly. The lips were the scariest part, and were snarled up and sneering at me.

“It was horrifying,” she remembers.

The image was in the middle of the basement, with an evil smirk on its face, about three feet high. Both Caroline and her brother saw the apparition.

“I ran out of the basement screaming. My brother ran after me,” Caroline describes. “I ran upstairs and told my older brother. He went downstairs to check out what I had seen.”

When the family went downstairs, the head had disappeared. The basement light, which had been on when the children had fled, was now turned off.

“I guess the darkness hates the light,” says Caroline.

THE HAUNTED SUITE

LEWISPORTE

OVER TWO DECADES AGO, Chris Becker had an unforgettable experience in the old Carson Hotel in Lewisporte.

“It used to be in front of the ferry dock but was torn down some fifteen or twenty years ago,” says Becker. “It is said that it was haunted and I, for one, can verify that because of an experience I had there in 1981.

“Some things that happened to me decades ago are as vivid now as if they had occurred last night,” says Becker. “My trip to Lewisporte in 1981 when I was playing with the band Ice Device is a prime example.”

That year, Becker and his band-mates played a small packed club in Lewisporte. When the gig was finished, they made their way to the Carson Hotel, where they had been put up for the night in a room called “the suite.”

Becker has clear memories of the hotel room. “The suite was a large room on the second floor with a door in the back. That door led to another room of like dimensions. In each was a king-sized bed. A light pole right outside the window shone through the pale green curtains. The light drowned out the town and the room was strangely lit, not quite flashing neon, but close.”

The musician fell asleep on the bed on the front room. Later that night, he found himself suddenly awakened from a deep sleep. He woke engulfed in complete silence, his eyes wide open.

“I was lying on my side,” Becker remembers. “A cold realization made me look down quickly to the foot of the bed.

“I swear I saw out of the bottom of my eye the figure of a man standing there,” he recalls, “his head and hands darker than anything else in the room, his body clothed in a long coat the colour of which was a paler green than anything else in the room, almost bright.”

When Becker turned to look directly at the strange figure, it had vanished. He shrugged off the incident and went back to sleep. “We all wake up feeling disoriented and confused at times, especially in a strange bed,” Becker rationalizes.

The man awoke the next morning and thought nothing of the previous night’s events. Later that evening, the band returned to the club for another performance. During a break, Becker socialized with the local patrons. Eventually, he got into conversation with a local woman.

“Where are you guys staying?” one of the girls asked.

“At the Carson Hotel,” responded the musician. “We’re staying in the room called the suite.”

“Oh, you’re staying in the suite,” said the woman with a sparkle in her eye. “Have you seen the man yet?”

“From that instant on, all is a blur as the sudden memory of that non-existent man jams back into my brain,” says Becker. “I sit stunned, the hair on the back of my neck standing straight out. I can’t remember if I responded to her or not.”

The band left Lewisporte soon after, and Becker never learned anything more about this strange man in the suite.

“Maybe I’m better off not knowing more, but I think about that episode too often to let it linger any longer,” Becker muses.

HERITAGE HOUSE WITH A HAUNTED HISTORY

BAY ROBERTS, CONCEPTION BAY

HERITAGE DAY IS CELEBRATED across Canada on the third Monday of February each year. It is an opportunity to explore the past to discover what shaped our communities and our history.

Sometimes our heritage is found in our buildings and arti-

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