

I fear I am lost. I stole away on one of the fishing boats after a fight with my ma the other morning. After the men made a good catch, they put in at the city and sold their lot. I slipped off the boat at that time and began walking up and down the wharf.

Before long night came and I crawled inside this hull to rest. I was asleep in the morning when the pounding and hammering started. At first I ignored it and went back to sleep. When I finally awoke, it was too late. The hole I had crawled into had been sealed over.

Though I've pounded on the walls, no one seems to notice. I fear I will meet my last days here, trapped between the walls of this ship. Already hunger has made me thinner and my throat aches for water.

So here I make my dying oath. Some day I will make it back to my ma, one way or another. And from that day forward I will never set sail on the sea again. It was signed Jack Priory.

GHOST SHIP ON THE CAY

A Ghost Story For Brave Souls



By Caitlind L. Alexander

A LearningIsland.org
15 - Minute Book

Editor: Jennifer Robinson

LearningIsland.org

©Copyright 2006 LearningIsland.org. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, or stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted by any form or any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without written permission of the publisher.

If you have paid any amount of money for this book, it is a violation of copyright laws. Please contact us at LearningIsland@yahoo.com.

Ghost Ship on the Cay/Caitlind L. Alexander

Summary: A chilling tale about a ghost ship that comes to rest on the beach at Brighton Cay.

1. Ghosts. Juvenile Literature. 2. Scary Stories. Juvenile Literature.

Created in USA

RL: 5.5

W: 1703

"See," Miss Mabel cried. "He doesn't want you to go. He's harmless, I assure you."

The women ignored the assurances and headed out the door.

Soon everyone in town knew of the ghost of The Providence. And some even took the time to visit Miss Mabel to confirm the stories themselves. Everyone was introduced to the ghost, and everyone heard the mysterious knocking on the walls.

Before long no one dared to visit Miss Mabel any longer. She lived out her last days in the hull of the ship, completely alone, except for Jack.

When she died, the ship was to be auctioned off as part of her estate, but no one cared to buy it. It was no longer seaworthy, and besides, it was still haunted.

Finally it was decided that the ship would be broken apart and each family would be given a share for firewood for the coming winter. Perhaps once again the ghostly ship would provide Providence for the village.

Quickly everyone set to work ripping apart the hull, and that's when they discovered it.

There, imprisoned between the inner and outer hull of the ship was the body of a boy. Scratched on the walls about him was the tale of his last days.

came the sound of tapping on the wall. Miss Mabel smiled pleasantly and invited her guests to sit down and join her for tea.

Reluctantly they agreed. Miss Mabel disappeared into a rear portion of the hold which had been converted to a kitchen. While she was gone, the visitors decided she had been playing a joke on them.

Quietly, in a voice too low for Miss Mabel to hear, they asked a question. "Jack, how old are you?" They were quickly answered with thirteen distinct knocks.

Just as they were trying to decide whether or not to run, Miss Mabel appeared with the tea tray. She offered some to her guests and poured a cup for herself, but none was offered to Jack.

As you can imagine, the conversation was rather uncomfortable for several moments. Finally one of the guests decided to bring everything out into the open.

"Miss Mabel, who is Jack" she boldly asked.

"Why he's the ghost of my youngest son," Miss Mabel said boldly. He lives within the walls of the ship. But you needn't fear him, he's quite friendly.

But fear him the women did. They quickly set down their teacups and collected their purses.

Suddenly the tapping on the wall became rather insistent.

GHOST SHIP ON THE CAY

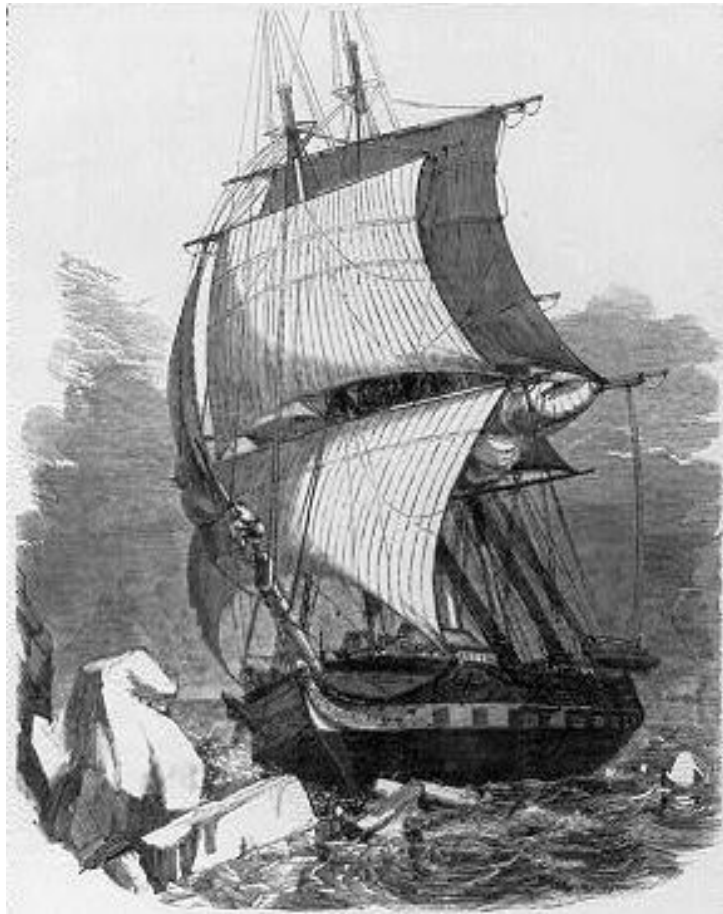
Its rotted timbers still sit today on the beach at Brighton Cay. The haunted ghost ship.

Brighton Cay stretches off the coast of Virginia, reaching out into the waters of the Atlantic. The rocky shores provide a treacherous passing before ships can anchor safely on the beach. If one knows the way among the rocks, the place provides a beautiful safe harbor for landing.

Pressing against the beach is the town, given the same name. The town of Brighton Cay has always been one of poorer folk who've made their life from the sea.

One day the fog came up around the cay, followed by the wind. The waves began growing higher and stronger. All the men folk quickly put their boats to shore, accompanied by the mournful sounding foghorn which warned of danger.

When all were safely in, they turned to see a horrifying sight. There, sailing out of the mist was a beautiful old three masted sailing ship. It was fitted out



At first the workmen thought it was one of their own playing a trick on them. But slowly they came to realize that the noises sounded even when all of them, including Miss Mabel were outside and the hold was entirely empty.

The workmen finished their job as quickly as possible, and soon the hold was pierced with a door and several windows. Miss Mabel moved in and all was well for a bit.

Then one day some old friends of Miss Mabel paid her a visit in her new home. As they advanced up the walk, they could hear Miss Mabel inside, talking to someone.

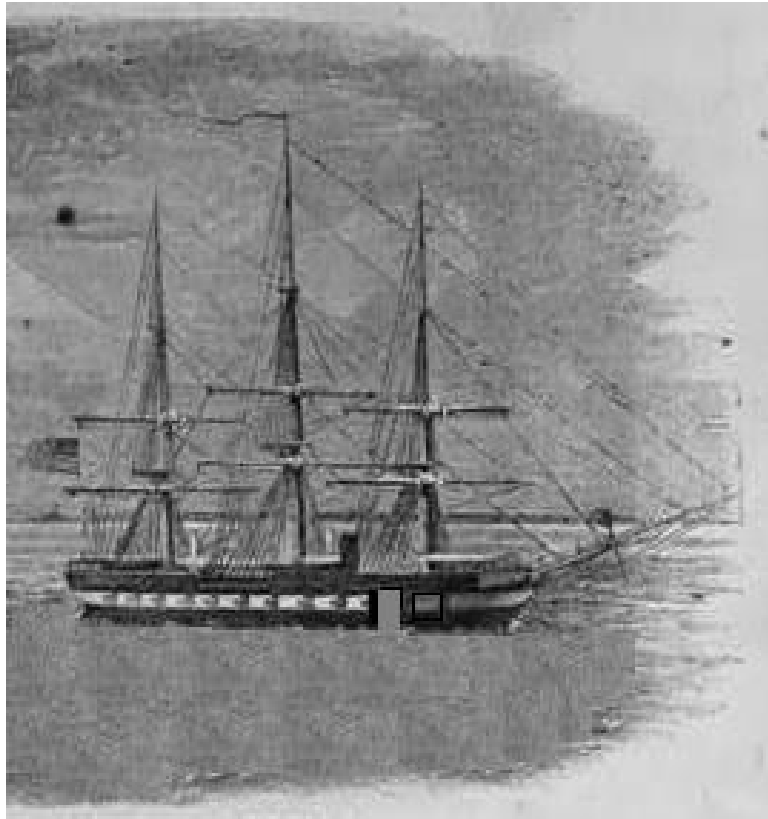
They decided that, since everyone knew everyone else in this small town, a second visitor would not inconvenience the first.

Soon after they knocked on the door, Miss Mabel opened it. Upon being ushered inside, the visitors noted that the elderly woman appeared to be alone.

"Oh, I thought you had company," came the remark.

"I always have company here," Miss Mabel replied. "For I no longer live alone. Jack say hello to our guests."

She turned to face an empty wall. The visitors stared. There was no one there, but suddenly there



But selling the ship wasn't what Miss. Mabel had in mind. Within a week she had sold her tiny patch of land and hired workmen to cut a door in the hold of the ship. She would need it to go in and out, for she planned to live in the grounded ship.

As the workmen began their sawing and pounding, a strange thing happened. Their thumping was answered by an echoing knock from inside the hold.

with the best of sails, which even now were billowed out to catch the wind.

"She's going for the rocks," everyone cried. And indeed, it looked like the destruction of the beautiful ship was eminent. She was headed full speed for the rocky cliffs.

"Jump," everyone whispered under their breaths as the foghorn tried valiantly to warn the men on board of the danger. But even though they strained their eyes, no man jumped from the deck into the icy waves below.

Suddenly at the last minute, the wind burst through one of the sails, ripping it to tatters. The other sail held firm, turning the ship toward the shore.

Somehow it steered its way through the rocks. As it neared the shore, the wind carried it to the crest of a large wave, and it bore in heavily.

Seeing the size of the wave, the villagers turned and ran. When they stopped to look back, they saw a sight which filled them with awe. There sat the ship, high upon the sandy beach. Its keel sunk deep into the sandy shore.

Children began scurrying to their houses, telling the townsfolk of the wondrous sight. The men and women pressed forward, eager to shake the hand of the

brave captain who had sailed such a large vessel to safe harbor.

But when they reached the ship, they were greeted with a ghostly silence. Though they haloed and cried out, no one appeared on the decks above them. They pounded on the sides of the ship, and from deep within came an answering signal. But still no one appeared.

A ladder was quickly brought and raised against the side of the ship. The villagers scurried up the ladder and over the side.

As it had below, nothing but silence greeted them. The ship carried no human passengers.

The ship's log was quickly located, and the last entry read aloud:

"Sailing full out for land, running ahead of a storm. Ship full of cargo and heavy in the water. Though the good Lord couldn't ask for better in the way of ship or crew, it appears we're doomed."

The entry was dated a year previous.

That winter had been hard on the Cay, and the provisions which were stored in the hold of the ship proved a blessing of life for the poor villagers.

The good ship had lived up to her name, for she was called *The Providence*. And providence she brought.

After her holds had been emptied of all that was of use or would rot, the townsfolk decided to hold an auction. The ship would go to whoever won, though none knew how they might find a way to get her back in the water again.

The name of every man and woman over the age of eighteen was placed in a bowl. Slowly the mayor reached in and pulled out the name of the lucky winner.

"Mabel Priory," he said to the crowd. They grew silent a moment, and then a murmur passed through them. Of all the people in the village, Mabel Priory would have had the least use for the ship. She was an old woman who had lost her husband and two sons to the sea. She had forbade her youngest son, Jack, to take a fisherman's life. One day when he was thirteen, they had quarreled over the matter and the boy had disappeared. He had never been seen since.

Miss Mabel, as everyone called her, now lived alone in an old shack on the outskirts of town, working or begging for what little she needed to sustain herself.

The townspeople quickly decided that the Lord knew best, for they were a God-fearing folk. Perhaps Miss Mabel could sell the ship and receive enough to move her into a comfortable house with enough left over to cover all the aches and pains of old age.