

## **Ghost Story #1: Ever Seen a Ghost Dog?**

### **Don Creamer**

Ghosts appear to us humans in many forms. Some who have seen ghosts report a simple cloudy mist form while others see likenesses of people from their pasts. Few people report one as a dog, but I can make such a report as follows.

My parents were farmers in North East Texas and typical of the time and place their farm included cotton, corn, oats, a large garden, and pastureland on which several animals lived such as cows, pigs, and chickens. All farmers in their neck of the woods knew one another well as they often helped one another at times of special need or at harvest times. Every farmer knew every other farmer's dogs for sure.

One weekend long ago when I was a young married man, my wife and I were visiting our parents as were all the other siblings—two brothers, a sister, and spouses. Those with children at the time had them along as well. Two of the visitors were avid horse fans and had brought one or more of their horses for the weekend so folks who chose to do so could ride for the fun of it. Naturally, the children loved this riding experience.

Just after lunch on the Sunday of the weekend, a neighbor farmer drove up to inform my dad that his bull was out of our pasture and in a neighbor's pasture. Anyone who knows cattle and especially who know bulls realized that this was not an unusual event. Bulls especially were prone to find some opening in a fence and would go wandering. Use your imagination about the bull's motivation or what he might have been looking for. My best guess is that he was motivated by pure ornery-ness.

Well, it was a perfect opportunity for those who brought their horses to saddle up for a little cowboy type fun. My brother and brother-in-law mounted their horses and were ready for the adventure. My father, who was walking with a cane at the time, my other younger brother, the farmer who had informed us of the problem, and I came along to help. We quickly found the bull and knew exactly what we needed to do; that is, herd the bull into the neighbor's small pen around his barn where we then could load the bull into a trailer and return him where he belonged. None of us were novices at this task having rounded up stray cows and bulls many times to return them to their proper pasture.

Experienced or not, we failed time and time again to get this bull into the loading pen. Those on horses were working their rides hard. In fact, one saddle strap broke and the rider came tumbling to the ground. He returned to our home and found another saddle and came back to join the activity that was by this time becoming futile. Whenever we thought that the bull was trapped and had no place to go except into the loading pen, he would reverse course and run back to a place of his liking taking down anyone dumb enough to get into his escape path.

By this time, we were exhausted—people and horses alike—and not a little bit frustrated.

Then, the dog appeared. We all noticed him standing off to the side watching what we were trying to do.

Amid questions like, “Whose dog is that?” and, “Where did the dog come from?” he sprung into action.

He chased the bull biting his rear leg tendon. Of course the bull kicked, snorted, turned this way and that to rid himself of this painful nuisance but the dog persisted.

Then we noticed that the dog began maneuver or herd the bull toward the pen with the bull kicking furiously all the way.

We exercised our best judgment and simply got out of the way and watched with relieved amazement that the dog herded the bull into the loading pen as we had been trying to do all afternoon. We rushed to close the gate and amid self-congratulatory comments about “our” success. Then, we looked for the dog.

He was off a piece from us watching to see that the situation was under control, then turned and strolled away.

“Whose dog was that?” we all wondered. No one knew. No one had every seen the dog before.

And we never saw him again.

So, you tell me. Was this simply a stray and very smart dog wandering through the countryside that stopped to help out some stupid humans or was this a ghost who came to our rescue?

You know my conclusion from the title of this story. What do you think?