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By

### RICE ISLAND – RE-VISITED...

Nobody ever found the cashbox full of money rumoured to be buried on Rice Island by Kate Rice and her partner Dick Woosey. At least no one has ever publicly proclaimed they found the treasure. Perhaps the story that the pair of prospectors received a large sum of money for their nickel-copper property on the west side of Wekusko (Herb) Lake, and stashed it on one of their islands is just another piece of Northern Manitoba folklore.

Now it appears that their ghosts may have come back and are stirring up problems for several modern day prospecting entities who are battling over the mineral rights to Kate and Dick's buried treasures, albeit cash or nickel-copper ore. Sound farfetched? Well, consider that both Kate and Dick should have had 'money in the bank', but died paupers. There wasn't even enough money for headstones. Consider that Inco held onto this mineral property for well over 75 years and considered it a possible future asset. Consider that I approached Inco's exploration office in Thompson, a few years ago, to acquire an option, but there was no interest. Suddenly now, they have let their lease over the deposit expire and come open for staking. Was their action inadvertent or by design?

In addition, long time Manitoba explorationist, Peter Dunlop from The Pas, has locked horns over the mineral rights to the nickel-copper deposit with Wolfden Resources, a junior exploration, publicly traded company, in what appears to be a 'knockdown, drag out battle', which involves the Manitoba Mines Branch. Both Dunlop and Wolfden participated in a modern day claim rush back in the Spring of 2015, in order to be the new holders of the mineral rights. No expense was spared to stake the claims, which involved expert stakers from out-of-province, helicopters, and 'rubber

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Jim Parres

stamps' to facilitate speed at inscribing the claim posts. The Manitoba Government had a claim inspector on site to witness that proceedings were fair and legal.

Details have not been made public yet, and both parties are withholding comment at this time. It appears that Dunlop had been initially successful recording his claim, but subsequently Wolfden was awarded the ground covering the deposit after disputing Dunlop's title.

One thing is certain. After Wolfden received title, they spent considerable monies drilling the nickel-copper deposit; receiving encouraging results. Dunlop, I am told, is fighting back and has petitioned for a Hearing on the matter before the Manitoba Mining Board. The Board, is comprised of three members who are very knowledgeable in these types of dispute matters, I would think.

It is hard to predict a clear cut outcome at this point, or even comment on the pertinent crucial evidence in the staking procedures followed by the two parties, until all the testimony has been heard by the Board. From what little scuttlebutt I have heard, it could be a very interesting case.

As I have been on both sides of issues like this, as an individual prospector and also as President of a junior mining company, I am watching the proceedings closely. Once the smoke has cleared and I have read the transcript from the Hearing, I will give you my comments. I predict this case will become a very important precedent in modern Manitoba exploration history. Severe ramifications may result in some people even losing their jobs. Who knows, but, we will see!

Isn't it possible, if you believe in spirits, that all this discombobulation over their treasures could have riled up Kate and Dick?

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Consider that my father, Lew, seeking shelter from a raging storm on Wekusko Lake, landed on Rice Island in 1938, and was greeted with the business end of Kate's shotgun. He was warned not to try to steal any of her strawberries, which she had planted in her garden. After he identified himself as Chris Parres' son, she warmly welcomed him inside her cabin for a cup of tea, but he still didn't get any offering of strawberries!

There is a story of another stranded visitor who made advances towards Kate during the night only to be rebuffed not only by her shotgun, but by her axe as well. The North wasn't always a friendly place for a woman prospector.

The fanciful images of Dick Woosey dancing around an outdoor bonfire on the island while entertaining a group of youngsters from Herbtown was recounted to me by Gus Olson, one

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of the "kids". Woosey emitted wild whoops and screams while he danced which apparently he had learned while in the Service in Africa. The young group were fascinated.

If there is such a place as the spirit world, I could understand why Kate and Dick could be riled up over all the angst being focused on their once tranquil habitation. Although their physical beings rest at separate locations (Woosey in the Pas, Manitoba, and Kate in Minnedosa, Manitoba), I could imagine their spirits, along with all the unfortunates the waters of Wekusko has claimed over the years, combining to create quite a commotion. Perhaps you can hear them in the sound of a wailing winter blizzard howling by your cabin door, or in the torturous grinding and cracking noises made by the ice moving on a night at -35 degrees.

~ *London, Rome... Parres?*