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Couple remembers ghostly meeting

Kelleys still won't believe in spirits despite night sighting

BRAZORIA (AP) — It is a good thing Theo and Sammie Kelley do not believe in ghosts.

Their house sits in about the same spot where they saw the legendary ghost of Brit Bailey 20 years ago.

"What it was, I don't know," Kelley said. "Whether it was Bailey's ghost... I don't believe in ghosts."

It happened after a late night of domino playing with Sammie's parents in Angleton.

Both their kids were asleep in the back seat of the car as they headed to Brazoria at 1 a.m. or 2 a.m.

As they crossed the old Oyster Creek bridge they both saw a small orange light moving forward with them, to their right. They thought it was a low-flying airplane.

But as they continued to watch it, they were not sure.

"It was about like a basketball, or a beach ball," Mrs. Kelley said.

When they reached the intersection of Farm Road 521, they turned left.

And so did the orange light.

Their airplane theory was shot, as the light stayed about six feet off the ground, dodging in between trees.

"By that time, it sort of was getting weird," Mrs. Kelley said.

It appeared to be 100 to 200 feet to their right.

Kelley said it followed them for five or six miles. "We kept looking and looking and it stayed right along with us," he said.

Then it stopped, and as the Kelleys continued toward Brazoria, they lost sight of the bobbing ball of light.

They did not give it much further thought.

"We went home and went to bed," Mrs. Kelley said.

They had both grown up in this area, on the Clemens state prison farm. They were steeped in county folklore and legends, so they knew about Bailey's ghost.

Legend has it that James "Brit" Bailey, who settled Bailey's Prairie in the early 1820s, asked to be buried standing and facing to the west. He also asked that his gun be hung over his shoulder and a whiskey jug be set at his feet.

Reportedly, Bailey's wife would not allow the jug to be put in his coffin, and he now roams the countryside looking for his whiskey.

"I've heard about it all my life, but

I never thought about it that night," Kelley recalled.

The legend did come to mind the next morning, they said. They mentioned it to a few friends, who might have thought Theo had been drinking, but for Sammie's matching testimony.

"I don't think I told too many people, at first, about it," Kelley admitted.

Since that night, they have passed the same route a thousand times and never seen it again, they said.

"And as long as we've lived here, we've never seen it," Kelley said. They bought a house near where they saw the light 14 years ago.

They still are not sure what they saw.

"Well, you knew it wasn't a darn airplane," Kelley said. "It would have wrecked."

"I knew it wasn't a ghost," he said. Mrs. Kelley quickly added, "I couldn't hardly live here if I believed it was a ghost."

So now, the Kelleys have a good story to tell their grandchildren, who hear about it at every Halloween party.

This year, Grandpa dressed up in a rain slicker and sat hunched under a tree with a shotgun. It gave the little ones a scare, and the older kids got a little nervous.

"Brit Bailey is really a conversation piece," Mrs. Kelley chortled.

The Kelleys' home is set back off Farm Road 521, in the middle of their turf farm, which they began six years ago.

Over the years, Kelley has worked construction, rice farming and cattle ranching. These days, he stays busy with the turf farm and Mrs. Kelley works as a teaching assistant at Henry O. Tanner Preschool.

They have seen many changes since they were both children playing at the state farm back during the Depression.

"That means I'm getting old, when there are that many changes," Kelley said, chuckling.

Now married for 41 years, they courted from their childhood days. Theo said he cut the runners on his elementary school desk so he could sit closer to Sammie.

She was not so warm to him — he and his friends were too mischievous.

"They were mean as skunks," she said, quickly recalling the many times Theo would throw his text-

books out the second story window to aggravate the teacher.

They remember changes in the community and they remember the community before the changes took place, such as when the only way to Lake Jackson was through Freeport.

They can talk on about early Bra-

zoria and about Clemens, Sammie's father was also Theo's father.

Though they share theories with other longtime residents they have one recollection others can boast.

But, then again, they don't believe in ghosts.

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State Briefs

Judge denies access to transcripts

FORT WORTH (AP) — A federal judge has denied State District Judge Tom Cave access to proceedings of the grand jury which indicted him on charges of granting leniency to female defendants in exchange for sexual favors.

U.S. District Judge Mary Lou Robinson of Amarillo Tuesday ruled against the request made by Cave's lawyers.

The attorneys sought transcripts of the proceedings to determine whether hearsay had

been used as the basis for the indictment two months ago.

Robinson is hearing the case instead of the two federal judges in Fort Worth to avoid charge favoritism.

Cave, Fort Worth lawyer Ild Aultman and bail bondsman Joe Dorsey Adams were indicted on allegations that they had sex with Cave. All three are scheduled to go on trial May 10 in Fort Worth, have pleaded not guilty.

Military jet crash leaves 2 missing

BROWNWOOD (AP) — Two military jets crashed in flames in a remote area Wednesday, and two of the four crew members aboard parachuted to safety, authorities said.

Eyewitnesses said they saw three parachutes, one empty, fall to the ground after the collision, said Steve Wittenberg, Department of Public Safety dispatcher.

A search was launched for the other two crew members after the collision about 4 p.m. near Lake Brownwood, Fire Capt. Donald Reiger said.

Officers found smoldering plane parts in a field just west of Texas Highway 279, a half mile from Lake Brownwood, he said.

The RF4C Phantom II reconnaissance planes were from the about 140 miles to the southwest, said Airman Scott Hermy Bergstrom spokesman.

One crew member was taken to a nearby hospital and treated for burns. The other stayed in an area searching for the missing crew members, a spokesman said.

Travelers advisory continues in Texas

(AP) — A travelers advisory was continued Wednesday afternoon from the Big Bend into the lower Pecos Valley because of slick spots on roadways caused by snow Tuesday night.

High level clouds covered most of the Panhandle while low and middle level clouds prevailed over most of South and East Texas, the National Weather Service said.

An upper level disturbance over north-central Mexico in combination with a surface pressure system just offshore Texas coast brought rain and snow showers mainly over eastern Texas and the Oklahoma plains, the weather service said.

Northerly winds were common statewide at speeds from 5 to 15 mph.

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