



## Outdoor Lore . . .

# Ghosts Are Usually Found Around Backwoods Cemeteries At Night

**THERE ARE** haunted houses, of course, but generally speaking, ghosts are creatures of the outdoors. They are mostly seen in the dead of night around lonely backwoods cemeteries and at spots where dark incidents of cruel and violent death took place.

**ALSO MOST** phantoms reported seen are other ghosts, too — spectres of dogs, horses, and other animals that suffered unmerciful treatment and death at the hands of brutish masters.

**ONE SUCH** ghost in mind is that of a friendly little puppy dog that on occasion would materialize out of the darkness on a lonely, heavily-wooded footpath in a certain section of the Kentucky mountains. This tiny wraith never tried to bite anybody or cause any harm otherwise. It would just suddenly appear, trot along in front of the traveler for a short distance, and then at a place where a rail fence crossed the path, vanish like a puff of smoke.

**THE DOG** never made a sound while in view of the traveler, but after disappearing at the fence, disturbing, pleading

sounds of a dog in deep distress could be heard emanating from a willow thicket below the path. A few with a surfeit of courage investigated the sounds, but could find nothing.

Over a period of several years, persons of good repute, who used this footpath on nocturnal journeys reported seeing this little dog and one even tried, or so he said, to pat it on the head. But when he reached down, his hand met only empty air and the action brought forth such piteous cries of pain from the little animal that his blood almost curdled in his veins. After that, as he said, the promise of a horse and a hundred dollars couldn't get him on that path again after dark.

**THESE SPECTRAL** sightings became quite a neighborhood mystery and conversation piece. Then an old farmer, whose boundary line ended at the fence mentioned, died and after that, the little puppy was seen no more. For several years afterwards, people living in the neighborhood wondered about the "ghost dog" and why it quit haunting the foot-

path. Then the widow cleared up the whole thing to the satisfaction of most.

**THE PUPPY**, she said, had been a beloved pet of her two sons. Everywhere they went about the farm, the puppy went too. Angered because the boys spent so much time petting and playing with the dog when they should have been out cutting firewood, picking blackberries, or chopping weeds, her husband decided to put an end to such foolishness. One day while the boys were at school, her husband looped a rope around the puppy's neck, dragged it down to the thicket below the path, and cruelly hanged it to a willow tree. The boys never forgave their father for this misdeed. As soon as they became of age, they left home and never returned until after he was dead.

**ALL THIS TOOK** place many years ago and while many swore the story to be a fact, it is, at this point, a bit difficult to prove. After hearing the tale many, many times, I have often wondered whether it was a ghost that made the story or the story that made a ghost.