

News Report

TORONTO DAILY MAIL

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headline gives
the main idea of
the report

Actor's coffin finds its way home nine years after death

(CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND) Nine years after the death of the famous Canadian actor, Charles Coghlan returned on the waves in his coffin to his native Prince Edward Island.

What happened

When

Where

Who

A barnacle-covered, water-logged box was discovered early yesterday morning by fishermen in the Gulf of St. Lawrence just off the north coast of Prince Edward Island. When they opened the box, they saw that it was a coffin with the body of a middle-aged man inside. A silver plate in the coffin gave the name of Charles Coghlan, and the date of his death: November 27, 1899.

The fishermen believed that they knew the deceased, who was born nearby and, until his death, had a summer home in a nearby village. They immediately contacted the local authorities.

The authorities confirmed that the body that the fishermen had found was that of famous Canadian actor Charles Coghlan, who had died nine years earlier and had been buried in a cemetery thousands of miles away in Galveston, Texas.

Puzzled, the local authorities telegraphed the police in Galveston, Texas. They learned that on September 8, 1900, one year after Mr. Coghlan's burial, a huge hurricane had struck Galveston, Texas. Six thousand people died and there was much damage to property. Apparently, the huge storm had turned the city's cemeteries into rivers. Coffins were washed into the Gulf of Mexico and out to sea.

Why/How

It is believed that the coffin carrying Mr. Coghlan's body was caught by the West Indian Current and carried east to the Gulf Stream. Then the Gulf Stream probably took Mr. Coghlan's coffin northward at a rate of about seventy miles a day. The coffin drifted as far north as Newfoundland before it was blown toward Prince Edward Island by a storm.

direct
quotations
from involved
parties

Mr. David Martin, a spokesman for Mr. Coghlan's family, said that the family intends to hold a second funeral for Mr. Coghlan to bury him in the cemetery of the local village. "It is obvious that Charles Coghlan's soul could not rest until his body reached his native soil," Mr. Martin said.

background
information not
necessary to the
report, but adds
detail

Charles Francis Coghlan was born on Prince Edward Island in 1841. His talents as an actor took him to London, England, in 1860, where he became a famous Shakespearean actor. He was appearing in a play in Galveston, Texas, in November 1899, where he died, and was buried there until the force of a hurricane took his body home to its final resting place.

(from Grade 9 English Unit *Mystery and the Unexplained*,
Toronto District School Board)