

Please respect our copyright! We encourage you to view and print this document FOR PERSONAL USE, also to link to it directly from your website. Copying for any reason other than personal use requires the express written consent of the copyright holder:

Survival Research Institute of Canada, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 Canada
Email: info@survivalresearch.ca Website: www.survivalresearch.ca

First prepared in October 2006 by the Survival Research Institute of Canada (Debra Barr and Walter Meyer zu Erpen). Capitalization of any name or subject in the text below indicates that you will find an entry on that topic in the forthcoming third edition of Rosemary Ellen Guiley's *Encyclopedia of Ghosts and Spirits* (October 2007).

Montgomery, Lucy Maud (1874-1942)

Teacher, journalist, poet and fiction writer. Lucy Maud Montgomery was born in Clifton, Prince Edward Island (PEI), on 30 November 1874, the daughter of Hugh John Montgomery and Clara Woolner Macneill. Her mother died before she turned two years old, and her father then moved to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

Montgomery (called Maud by family members and friends) was raised largely by her maternal grandparents, Alexander Marquis Macneill and Lucy Woolner, at their homestead in Cavendish, PEI, but as a teenager lived briefly with her father and his second wife in Prince Albert (1890-91). She formed some longtime friendships during her stay with them, and it was there that she was introduced to the practice of TABLE-TILTING. On PEI, she grew up among many cousins; two of them, Frederica Campbell and Alec Macneill, were also to become lifelong friends and would be connected with her interest in SPIRITUALISM as well.

In 1894, Lucy Maud Montgomery graduated from Prince of Wales College (Charlottetown, PEI) and received a teacher's license. Through her first teaching position in a PEI school, she saved enough funding to cover one year of English Literature studies at Dalhousie University (Halifax, Nova Scotia), then returned to PEI for some further teaching appointments. This was followed by short tenures in other fields of employment back in Nova Scotia, including a year as a journalist at the *Halifax Daily Echo* (1901-02). At this point Montgomery relocated to PEI and devoted a decade of her life to the care of her grandmother Lucy, who had been widowed in 1898.

While assisting on the farm, Maud published many short stories, poems and articles. The first of her famous children's books focusing on a lively auburn-haired young orphan, a novel called *Anne of Green Gables*, was released by a New York publisher in 1908. It was an immediate success. From that time onward, through the publication of *Anne of Avonlea* (1909) and other material, Montgomery was in great demand as a writer and speaker.

After her grandmother's death in 1911, Maud was free to marry Ewan Macdonald, to whom she secretly had become engaged in 1906 prior to his departure to take up studies at the University of Edinburgh. After their wedding at the home of her Campbell cousins on PEI, they honeymooned in Scotland and England then moved to the village of Leaskdale, Ontario, where Ewan was now the minister of a Presbyterian parish. The couple had three sons, Chester

Please respect our copyright! We encourage you to view and print this document FOR PERSONAL USE, also to link to it directly from your website. Copying for any reason other than personal use requires the express written consent of the copyright holder:

Survival Research Institute of Canada, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 Canada
Email: info@survivalresearch.ca Website: www.survivalresearch.ca

Cameron Macdonald (1912-?), Hugh Alexander (stillborn in 1914), and Ewan Stuart Macdonald (1915-?).

During the family's fifteen years at Leaskdale, Montgomery was very busy as a wife, mother and participant in her husband's many parish duties. In addition, it was here that Ewan Macdonald started to experience bouts of clinical depression, an affliction that lasted the rest of his life and caused Maud much grief. Nonetheless, she found time to produce further titles in the "Anne" series, create a trilogy about another heroine called "Emily," and write many other books; as well, she published a huge number of articles and biographies, over 500 short stories and another 500 poems. During her lifetime she received several awards, including Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (Great Britain, 1923), Member of the Literary and Artistic Institute (France, 1935), and Officer of the Order of the British Empire (Great Britain, 1935). In 1943, she was declared a person of Canadian national historic significance.

Montgomery's husband's illness, her homesickness for the PEI landscape, her enjoyment of motherhood, her writing projects and many other aspects of her life are documented in her extensive journals, which record her life from the age of fourteen onwards. It is through the journals, released after her own death and the passing of her husband and sons, that her views on the occult have become known.

A passage dated 19 July 1918, written during a visit home, reveals her experience with table-tilting. She recounts her suggestion the previous evening to May Macneill, the wife of her cousin Alec Macneill: "Let's call up Jane for a bit of fun tonight." In the entry she explains that Jane was the name that they assigned to the SPIRIT CONTROL for the table movements, although it becomes clear that Maud did not believe entirely in spirits as entities existing separately from the minds of the sitters. She adds: "It is twenty-eight years since I first learned to 'make a table rap.' We used to do it out in Prince Albert for an evening's fun. When I returned home I introduced it among the Cavendish young fry and it was the fashionable amusement of the winter. Then we grew tired of it and dropped it. About ten years ago something started it up again and one winter we had lots of fun over it." Subsequently she dropped the practice as she was annoyed at the suggestion of other participants that she might be pushing the table, and also because local "ignorant gossip" about "dealings with devils" was circulating. However, she and May "kept it up in private for our own amusement."¹

¹Lucy Maud Montgomery, journal entry cited in Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston, eds., *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery, Volume II: 1910-1921* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987). All quoted material is from this same source.

Please respect our copyright! We encourage you to view and print this document FOR PERSONAL USE, also to link to it directly from your website. Copying for any reason other than personal use requires the express written consent of the copyright holder:

Survival Research Institute of Canada, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 Canada
Email: info@survivalresearch.ca Website: www.survivalresearch.ca

Montgomery's ambivalent feelings about Spiritualism and table-tilting were apparent here. She claimed not to believe in Spiritualism and suggested that all phenomena produced by various attempts to communicate with the dead come from "some strange power existent in ourselves . . . the subconscious mind." Stating that it was "for the fun of it," she and May chose to assume that spirits were indeed present and wishing to communicate. Nonetheless, she provided evidence of actual communication: "We got no end of messages from this source — and some of them I must admit were strange enough. For one thing, they were always true to type — quite characteristic of the people as we knew them in life." In the session of July 18, she described how she and May had been "putting Jane through all her old stunts — such as walking around the room on two legs exactly like a human being, bowing, dancing, keeping time to music, etc."

Maud's interest in Spiritualism took on a more serious tone a few months later, after her beloved cousin Frederica Campbell Macfarlane (known as Frede) died on 25 January 1919 of the Spanish influenza. Maud fervently wished for ongoing contact with Frede. On 29 March, in a journal entry sparked by a book written by Canadian author ALBERT DURRANT WATSON, she wrote: "Tonight I enjoyed the treat of 'a good read.' I read '*The Twentieth Plane*,' the book which has made such a sensation in Toronto. I was much disappointed in it. It was absolute poppycock — utterly unconvincing. And I was so ready to be convinced for since Frede died I would give anything if I could only be convinced that she still exists and that there might be a faint hope of getting some communication from her, even by the medium of the Ouija-board."

Montgomery's summary of *The Twentieth Plane* is that it's an interesting indication of "the subjective mind" but "that as a proof that communication is possible with the spirits of the dead, it is nil." In particular, she objects to the parade of well-known people purportedly being channelled: "I will say that Dr. Watson is choice in the spook company he keeps. There isn't a single non-famous spirit on his calling list, except his mother. Shakespeare and Plato and Wordsworth and Lincoln etc., etc., etc. jostle each other for a chance to expound through the Ouija board — and all use precisely the same literary style and a very awful one at that."

Another reference to Frede and Spiritualism appears in the journal entry for 13 April 1919, recorded in Leaskdale. On this occasion some very specific information was received through a Ouija board, about a sum of money allegedly left by Frede for Maud: "Has she cashed the second check?" Montgomery had not received it, and wonders: "Is there any meaning or truth in that 'second check'? Shall I ever know?"

Please respect our copyright! We encourage you to view and print this document FOR PERSONAL USE, also to link to it directly from your website. Copying for any reason other than personal use requires the express written consent of the copyright holder:

Survival Research Institute of Canada, PO Box 8697, Victoria, BC V8W 3S3 Canada
Email: info@survivalresearch.ca Website: www.survivalresearch.ca

During this SÉANCE she was amused by a teasing approach on the part of the spirit control, which suggested that another of the sitters should dance, and that because there was no music available, Maud herself should “whistle.” Montgomery adds that a third participant’s father “believes that the power behind Ouija is a demonism. He may be right. But evidently some demons have a sense of humor!”

As well as trying her hand at table-tilting and Ouija boards (see PLANCHETTE), Lucy Maud Montgomery analyzed the meaning of dreams, sometimes experienced premonitions, and came to believe that her cat (Daffy) had psychic abilities.

Following their time at Leaskdale, Lucy Maud Montgomery and her family spent nine years at Norval, Ontario. In 1935 she and her husband moved to Toronto, where their grown sons (Stuart, a doctor, and Chester, a lawyer) had taken up residence. Montgomery died in Toronto on 24 April 1942. Arrangements were made for her burial at Cavendish on PEI, an isle which held the landscape and seaside that she had missed so much. Since then, every year thousands of visitors from Canada, the United States, Scandinavia, Poland, Japan and other parts of the world journey there to find the sites featured in her novels and stories. The publication of her journals has enriched their knowledge, while her accounts of her experimentation with table-tilting and Ouija boards now form an important part of the history of Spiritualism in Canada.

Further Reading:

Rubio, Mary, and Waterston, Elizabeth, eds. *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery, Volume II: 1910-1921* Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Rubio, Mary, and Waterston, Elizabeth. *Writing a Life: L.M. Montgomery*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1995.