

since 1963, she writes about the place where she lives. She "belongs here."

But the feeling of belonging took 35 years to develop. It crystallized for her while she was writing *The Root Cellar*, a world-acclaimed 1981 novel she based in her home on Pleasant Bay.

She, like the book's character, Will Morrissay, felt out-of-place while in Richmond, Virginia, to research his role. She realized that Canada was her home, as it was the home of the fictional farm boy who had joined his Yankee cousin to fight in the 1860's Civil War.

Through him, her own feelings were expressed. In the book, Will Morrissay tells his future wife, Susan Anderson:

"Susan," he said, "you was right. I stood there in Richmond. The rebs had gone. The town was all but burned right out. The war was almost done. I looked up at the flag going up over the Libby Prison, and it wasn't my flag. I listened to all them shouts and looked at all them joyful faces and I knew that what you said back in the orchard at home before I took off was true. It wasn't my war, Susan, it just wasn't my war."

One might question the reality of writing about the supernatural, but the stories Mrs. Lunn hears are akin to the mixture of fantasy and reality she devoured when she was a shy, timid girl. The stories are just there. You either believe them or you don't, but "I'm not so stupid as to believe I know everything."

Some of the stories she develops are close to home—in fact, as close as home.

When she and her husband decided to buy the house that overlooks Pleasant Bay, on a gravel sideroad that runs parallel to Highway 33, west of the Village of Hillier, it had stood empty for 20 years. People talked of strange sights at the house— after they settled in.

In 1968, while the Lunn's were living in Toronto, they travelled to the County on weekends. Over the years, the roof was repaired, plumbing and a furnace were ordered, years of neglect were cleaned away. The old west-wall shed was demolished, replaced just last year.

As they worked, they began to research the property. They found that a Crown land grant was issued in 1793. Generations of several families had lived there. With the help of the late historian, Jean Minhinnick, of Picton, they learned that the kitchen section— with its long brick fireplace and deep bake oven— was likely built in the 1820's. The middle of the house was added about the 1850's and other rooms were built up to the 1890's.

Soon after they moved into the house, the family began noticing strange things.

Two of their sons saw a wall across the upstairs landing— where there is no wall. During later renovations, evidence of an old wall was uncovered. Dogs will not enter the room above the kitchen, which is kept for visitors.

Then one day, Richard saw the ghost of an old

woman. She hasn't been seen since, but one Saturday, he heard her singing. And there are also the shadows which appear to change when they should be standing still.

Through the character of children's author Nan Henry, in *The Root Cellar*, Janet Lunn expresses her own frustration at having to rely on family members for descriptions of supernatural experiences.

"I think it's rotten, miserably unfair," she said. Richard "always used to laugh at me for believing in ghosts, and yet, he's the one who saw it."

In its first draft, *The Root Cellar* contained no time-shifting. The ghost simply appeared and bullied a young girl into getting her aunt and uncle to fix up the deteriorated house. Part of that sentiment was kept, but the main plot changed dramatically— for the better.

"I could have sold it, I'm sure," Janet says, but after a publisher rejected Mrs. Morrissay, she tackled the story from a new angle, with a new twist, and a new title.

The ghost still played a major role in *The Root Cellar*. But her sons' vision of a wall appearing and disappearing gave her the idea for time-shifting in the old farmhouse.

Perhaps because she becomes so closely involved with the history and the stories of the people she writes about, Janet Lunn has had difficulty weaning herself from the characters she creates.

When *The Root Cellar* was printed, she cried. It struck her that the loving relationship with the young people in the book, who seemed very real to her at times, had ended. She knew she could pick up the book and visit them, but she wasn't living with them or sharing the adventure she had created.

Over the years, that feeling of loss diminished, but the fondness for the characters remains, particularly since that book was set in her home.

Janet has moved on to create new characters, ones she has grown fond of. The setting, however, remained the same for *Shadow in Hawthorn Bay*. While it is not mentioned in the book, and is unimportant for the reader's enjoyment, the protagonist, Mary Uquhart, is the grandmother of the ghost in *Root Cellar*.

The connection is one of the many small pleasures Janet puts into her books— little tidbits to give friends and family extra enjoyment.

For instance, she called one of Nan Henry's books *Emily of Shadowbrook Farm*. Emily was a Jersey cow on one of the farms she grew up on.

Developing the people, places, action, dialogue and anecdotes for a story takes a great deal of work. "You just try and try. You write a little bit, then, no, that doesn't work. Then you try another little bit and that doesn't work. Then, suddenly, you get excited by and idea and it feels right."

Once ideas begin to flow, Janet says even the initial ideas are sometimes abandoned. "I've heard other writers talk about this and it seems to be not an