

THE SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

According to the American Red Cross First Aid booklet (1993), about 8,000 snakebites occur annually in the U. S. with about 12 deaths. The Red Cross recommends washing the wound, immobilizing the injured area since movement will help spread the poison, and keeping the bitten part lower than the heart if possible. Remove any rings, etc. since swelling will occur. Do not apply ice to a snakebite. Do not cut the wound. Do not apply a tourniquet. Do not use electric shock. Take the victim to the nearest hospital. If over 30 minutes from the hospital, consider suctioning the wound using a snakebite kit if one is available.

I've never been bitten by a poisonous snake, but I have had some close encounters with them. When I started doing forestry work in 1974, the company I worked for required us to carry snake bite kits with us at all times. These kits included a sharp knife or scalpel to be used to make a cut over the bitten area and had a suction cup to be used to suck the poison out. I don't remember anyone who ever had an occasion to use this method. Later, we were told to discard the snake bite kits since some bad infections could be caused by our amateur attempts at surgery. We were told to stay calm and get to the nearest hospital. Our problem was that we were sometimes a half mile or more from our truck and might be working a long distance from a hospital. Trying to get back to our truck walking quickly through brush would only accelerate the spread of the poison, and I don't think it's possible to stay calm after being bitten by a snake.

We were required to wear snake leggings during the times when snakes might be out. There were several types of these. Some were made from plastic that reached above the knee with zippers in the back. Another type fastened to your belt and provided protection from the upper leg to the foot. They also served as good protection from briars and thorns.

Fortunately, in over thirty years of working in the woods, none of our workers was ever bitten by a snake. I take that back. I did see one of my co-workers get bit by a copperhead one time but he never knew it. I was following him through the woods and saw the snake bite the heel of his boot. When I told him he just got snake bit, he didn't believe it until I showed him the snake. I once stepped very close to a rattlesnake over five feet long. It began to rattle and was coiled up and ready to strike. We called it a day after that experience.

I did meet a beaver trapper one time who claimed to have been bitten by water moccasins 19 times. He showed me a sore thumb which he said was caused by a snake bite a few days before. He said he had been bitten so many times that he had built up some immunity to the poison. I'm not sure if he was telling me the truth, but I did see him wade off into a beaver pond wearing tennis shoes and tearing out beaver dams with his bare hands which are favorite places for cottonmouths.

I know of several people who were bitten by snakes around their homes which resulted in some very painful swelling. Be careful, especially late in the evening and keep an eye out where you are walking or get a flashlight. Snake bites are to be taken seriously, but remember that more people die from wasp stings each year than snake bites.

There are four types of poisonous snakes found in the United States--the rattlesnake, the water moccasin, the copperhead, and the coral snake. All four of these are found in our part of Arkansas, although the coral snake is rarely seen. There are several varieties of rattlesnakes. A

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common variety is the timber rattler which can grow very large and can climb trees. A few years ago, a tree service employee found a rattlesnake high up in a tree he was cutting. Rattlesnakes tend to leave you alone if you don't get too close to them. We also have what we call ground rattlers (or rattlesnake pilots). These do not get as large as the timber rattlers. Water moccasins, especially the cottonmouth, are another story. These snakes are very dangerous and will bite with little provocation. Look for them close to water or wet areas. Copperheads are often found in piles of discarded wood, piles of leaves, around stacks of firewood, around fallen trees in the forest, and in storage sheds. Coral snakes are usually found in dry, sandy areas. These snakes are very colorful with red, yellow, and black rings around their bodies. A non-poisonous snake has similar rings, so you need to know how to tell which one is poisonous. There is an old saying, "Red on black in good for Jack. Red on yellow will kill a fellow". If the snake's red rings touch the yellow rings, it is a coral snake.

MEMORIES

Bicycle--

Getting your own bicycle was something every boy looked forward to. Most of them appeared as a gift under the Christmas tree and was a major milestone for a young kid, similar to getting your first car or truck.

I remember my bicycle, but for some reason we didn't keep a picture of it. It was a fancy one and even had a horn, a headlight, and a fender over the back wheel. I used a bale of hay to help me get on the bicycle and after a few mishaps, I learned to ride it.

I even had a siren for my bike. It was mounted near the front wheel and had a wire or string that reached to the handle bar. When the string was pulled, part of the siren moved so that it rubbed on the front wheel which activated the siren. I would ride up to the top of the hill near our house and coast down the hill with my siren screaming.

I can't remember what happened to my old bike. I may have worn it out or it might have been passed on down to my younger brothers, but I do remember it being one of the greatest Christmas gifts I ever received as I was growing up.

Croquet--

We had a croquet set when I was a kid. I wonder whatever happened to that game. You never see anyone playing croquet today and I'm not sure if you could even buy a croquet set. It's a nice game for the girls or ladies or those who don't like rough games. In earlier times, it was a very popular game.

Citrons--

A citron was a type of watermelon that grew wild on our farm years ago, but I haven't seen one in years. They looked just like a regular watermelon, but they were hard as rocks. You could throw one up in the air and it would just bounce when it hit the ground. We could even run over one with our small tractor and it would not burst.

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I remember one time we took a good-sized citron to a roadside park and left it sitting on a picnic table as a joke. I wish I could have seen the reaction when someone found it.

Heroes--

Television was popular as I was growing up, especially the TV westerns. The good guys usually wore white hats and were our heroes. We looked up to The Lone Ranger, The Cisco Kid, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, and Matt Dillon. I even had a double set of cap pistols and a cowboy hat when I was a kid. We practiced our quick draws and fancy twirling of our guns and were out to get all the bad guys.

Comic Books--

I enjoyed comic books as a kid, especially Superman and all the other super heroes. I also enjoyed Donald Duck, Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Archie and Jughead, and the western comic books like The Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, and Lash Larue. Those comic books only cost a dime or a quarter and would keep me occupied for hours. I wish I had kept some of them.

The Mickey Mouse Club--

This TV show was very popular as I was growing up. All the boys especially liked Annette.

Winky Dink--

This was a children's show that ran from 1953-1957. The main gimmick was the "magic drawing screen" which was a piece of plastic placed over the TV screen held in place by static electricity. Children used Winky Dink crayons to draw on the TV screen to connect the dots such as drawing a bridge to cross a river. It was the first interactive TV show. Parents sometimes complained about the children sitting too close to the TV set.

Coonskin caps--

The Wonderful World of Disney TV show brought about the Davy Crockett craze of the mid-1950s. Fess Parker played the part of Davy Crockett and "The Ballad of Davy Crockett" was very popular. Many coonskin caps were sold. The Disney show was a good family show at that time, but it always came on on Sunday nights when we were at church. Too bad we didn't have VCR's back then.

Black and White TVs--

We grew up with black and white TVs with no remote controls. The sets had 13 channels starting at channel 2. Out of the 13 channels, we might be able to get one or two stations depending on how the antenna was turned. The stations went off the air late at night.

We had a TV set before some of our neighbors. I can remember neighbors visiting mainly to watch TV. Before long, almost everyone had a TV set despite the old folks saying that watching them would ruin our eyes and how the shows were not fit to watch. I wonder what they would say about the shows on TV these days!

Transistor Radios--

These radios were very popular since they were portable. I remember when radio station KTPA

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in Prescott first came on the air. Everybody listened to it and they would dedicate songs to someone if you requested it. Hearing your name mentioned on the radio was something special. It was an AM station and usually went off the air about dark.

Fads--

Flat-top haircuts for boys were very popular in the mid-1950s. Judging from my old school yearbooks, it looks like about 50 percent of the boys had flat-tops. I broke down and got a flat-top in 1956. I remember having a jar of Butch wax to keep it standing up. Not every head of hair was meant to be a flat-top, but we thought we had to follow the crowd.

Buying jeans extra long and then rolling up the legs to make a cuff was also in style. I guess every generation has certain fads, if for no other reason than to irritate their parents. Don't they look silly now when you drag out the old pictures?

Free Prizes, etc.--

When I was a kid, it seemed that many cereal boxes had some sort of toy inside or something you could make by cutting it from the box and folding Tab A into Slot B, etc. The prizes offered played a big part in our decision on which cereal to buy. Kids were more interested in the prizes than the cereal. Cracker Jacks even had much better prizes back then compared to what they offer today.

Free gifts--

Many products, especially detergent, had some sort of free gift when you bought the product. It might be a dish towel or maybe a glass. Some brands of oatmeal had glasses packed inside the container. Some stores and gas stations gave stamps with each purchase, like S & H green stamps which could be redeemed for valuable prizes at stamp redemption stores in nearby towns.

Feed sack clothes--

I remember when sacks of chicken pellets had colorful sacks which were saved to make clothes. Ladies tried to get enough sacks with the same pattern to make whatever garment they wanted.

Catalpa worms--

These worms make very good fish bait. They appear each summer and feed on the leaves of catalpa trees. They can completely strip a tree in a few days. A mature worm is about three to four inches long and has to be picked by hand or shaken from the trees and then picked up. They can be used immediately or frozen for a future fishing trip. Just don't get them mixed up with the frozen vegetables.

Ferries--

Arkansas once had several ferries operated by the state highway department. Most, if not all, of these have now been replaced by bridges. I remember riding the ferry across Lake Norfolk in north Arkansas which was interesting. Another time a friend and I decided to ride the Toad Suck ferry across the Arkansas river while we were in school at the University of Central Arkansas at Conway. We got on the ferry late in the afternoon and while we were crossing the river, we asked the operator what time he closed for the day. He said, "This is our last trip." We ended up having to drive 70 miles back to Conway because we didn't read the sign when we got

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on the ferry.

Star Route--

Our postal route out of Bluff City was once called a "star route". I never learned exactly what that meant. I just remember we used to put that as part of our address in the old days. I think it referred to routes that were contracted out by the postal service. Tommy and Lucille Kirk carried the mail by our house back then. Another route out of Rosston served the folks living in the Rocky Hill area near Bluff City. The lady mail carrier on that route even checked on the old folks on her route to see if they were OK or needed anything from town.

Cornbread and milk--

Crumbling up cornbread in a glass or bowl of milk was common at our house. We also spread butter on cornbread and served it with syrup. Sometimes we did the same with our homemade biscuits. Johnnie Fair and Blackburn's syrup were our favorites. I think these dishes became popular in the Depression days of the 1930s when times were hard.

Wahoo--

This was a popular board game when I was a kid. It involved a player rolling a dice and moving one of his or her marbles that many spaces on the board. I believe up to four people could play and each player had four marbles of the same color. The first one to get all of their marbles to a certain place was the winner.

Picking pine cones--

Believe it or not, there once was a time when you could sell pine cones. The Forestry Commission nursery near Bluff City would buy these to get the seeds for growing a crop of pine seedlings. I believe they paid about \$1.50 per bushel, but I could be wrong about that. For those people who made their living hauling pulpwood, it was another way to get a little extra money from the trees they harvested.

Baptisms--

It was not uncommon in the old days for someone to be baptized in a farm pond, a gravel pit, or at the river. The congregation would gather at the designated spot to watch the baptism. I guess the last time I saw something similar to this was when I was staying at a motel in Starkville, Mississippi about 25 years ago. A nearby church used the motel swimming pool for a baptism.

Making sorghum--

Many of the farmers in this area once raised sugar cane and made their own sorghum syrup. My grandfather had a sorghum mill at his house, but I was too young to remember the process of how the syrup was made. I do remember chewing on some of the sugar cane to get the sweet juice. Some of the farmers sold their molasses, but government regulations soon forced them out of business.

Tom walkers--

Some people called them stilts, but we always called them tom walkers. They were simple to make and provided hours of fun for kids in the old days. I wonder who Tom was? Or was the inventor named Tom Walker?

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Hookworms--

This malady was common in the old days, especially when children went bare foot around the farm. The parasite lived in the soil and would enter the body through a cut or scratch and then attach itself to the walls of the intestines causing cramps and abdominal distress. I was afflicted with this malady when I was about 15 years old. One doctor had diagnosed the problem as appendicitis and had scheduled surgery, but a second opinion and some tests at the hospital confirmed that it was hookworms. The cure was to take five pills about the size of a peanut M & M at one time followed by drinking a large dose of castor oil. This was to be repeated in about two weeks.

Chicken for dinner--

One of the tasks for farm women long ago was to cook a chicken for Sunday dinner. This required a chicken, so a chicken was selected from the flock and had to be killed. Some women would wring the chicken's neck and others used a chopping block to cut off the chicken's head. Most people who grew up on a farm can remember seeing a chicken flopping around the yard after the head was removed and the unpleasant chore of removing the feathers. It's so much easier these days to buy a nicely packaged chicken at the grocery store and leave the preliminary steps to someone else.

Flying Jenny--

We had a homemade flying jenny. It was an axle and hub from a truck stuck in the ground at an angle with a board attached. It was similar to a see-saw, but the board went round and round instead of up and down. It was fun to ride, but was actually a very dangerous piece of equipment. We were lucky that none of us got hurt riding our flying jenny.

Swinging from the trees--

Almost every house where children lived had a rope swing attached to the limb of a large shade tree near the house. You rarely see a tree swing these days.

Party lines--

We were excited to finally get a telephone, but at first we had to put up with a party line. Our system had four houses on a line and each house had its own ring such as "two longs and a short". If it was not your ring, you just didn't answer unless you wanted to eavesdrop. How well the system worked depended on who was on your line. Some folks would talk for hours. If you needed the phone really bad, you might have to interrupt their conversation and ask them to please let you use the phone. Our phone numbers had a word prefix back then. Camden's prefix was Temple, so the number would be TE6-1234. The prefix for Bluff City and Chidester was Overbrook, so the number might be OV6-1234.

Salamanders--

We always referred to gophers as salamanders. I don't know how that got started, since it doesn't fit the dictionary definition of a salamander. I have read that it is derived from the term "sandy mounds". Trapping gophers was necessary because of the damage they could do to our growing crops. I can remember my father paying me 25 cents for each gopher I trapped.

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The Bookmobile--

The bookmobile once made a stop at Bluff City. This was a traveling library where patrons could check out books to read and check them back in the next time the bookmobile came.

Sleeping on the front porch--

On those hot summer nights when I was growing up, I would sometimes put up an old army cot and sleep on our front porch. I hung a mosquito net over the cot to keep the bugs away. The family dogs usually slept nearby to keep me company.

Write and tell me about some of your memories from the old days and I'll publish them in the next issue.

BEMIS & WHITAKER MILL AT PRESCOTT (from the 4-2-1891 issue of *The Nevada County Picayune*)

The Bemis & Whitaker mill, located in the western suburbs of the city has begun active operations. We were present and witnessed the sawing of the first log which was successfully and quickly done. Manager G. W. Harrington had everything in good shape and a considerable amount of lumber was turned out during the afternoon. The lumber will be used in the erection of large buildings for the planers, etc. Carriage runner, S. J. Chester, handled the carriage and saw dexterously. Capacity of the mill is about 60 MBF per day. The mill will give employment to about 200 hands.

Dr. R. L. Powers has contracted to furnish timber for the mill for a year to come. As the new railroad, the Prescott & Northwestern, will reach thousands of acres of the best timber, Dr. P. will have no trouble in furnishing timber for the mill.

Excursion to Arcadia

Saturday at 2 o'clock, the first excursion on the Prescott and Northwestern railroad started from the foot of Front Street in charge of engineer L. W. Knight. There were about sixty or more in the crowd, composed of quite a number of our prettiest young ladies, young gentlemen, preachers, teachers, a lawyer, the editor and wife and a number of boys. It was a jolly crowd. Seats were improvised of boards arranged on a flat car.

First stop was made a Bemis & Whitaker's big mill where all alighted and inspected this new Prescott enterprise. As the first log was being cut, the ringing of the engine bell signaled all aboard and we were soon gliding along across the beautiful prairie DeAnn toward our destination, Arcadia which was soon reached. Enroute several laughable incidents occurred--a seat broke and several suddenly found themselves on the car floor; sparks from the engine burned holes in clothing of a number and passed through the hat of one young man, singeing his hair.

At Arcadia, most of the crowd took to the woods, picking wild flowers, violets, daisies, etc. Some went down to the post office and mill. We noticed Dr. Powers and several assistants

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superintending the laying of track across a deep cut just beyond Arcadia. We noticed a large number of pine logs piled up and ready for transport to the big mill at Prescott. Arcadia is over seven miles from town.

An hour or more was pleasantly spent ere the return trip was made getting back at five o'clock, having made the run in about 25 minutes. In some places the track is quite rough owing to the continued wet weather, but taken as a whole, was much better than expected.

CONTINUING TO LOOK BACK

Yes, January 1970 found the Hensons beginning a new year, looking toward a new decade, living on a new continent, and beginning a school year with a different race of people.

To make a long story short, the students worked----and I worked. Fast forward to the conclusion of four years, and what a joy it was that all of the students I had taught for these four years (with the exception of one) passed the Cambridge test. This is THE BIG test a student is required to pass before he/she can receive a high school diploma. Do I need to say we all learned a lot during these years? And that I had a real sense of fulfillment and accomplishment in the job that I was once so very apprehensive about.

I was also with these young people outside the classroom as well. Once when it was my time to supervise the girls' work program, a waterline needed to be covered. Undaunted, the girls and I undertook the task, and surprised everyone (including ourselves) with the amount of work they did. One thing I found out during this period was that they are good at killing snakes—they killed two!!! Each day it seems I am learning not to take a lot of things for granted, and one of these was being safe from snakes.

I have learned, too, that I should never take for granted a student's ability to follow a simple direction or even to use a simple preposition correctly. The Tonga does not have this simple words in their language. If you think teaching about little words such as IN, ON, FOR, and OF is easy, you might be as surprised as I was! How would you answer a student's question such as, "Why do you ride ON a bus, but IN a car?" Or "Why do you say that you live ON a street, but the British say IN a street?" One Sunday morning one of the students was making a talk and relating the story of the prodigal son as recorded in Luke 15:11-32. When he came to the part where the father was welcoming the son home, the student said, ". . .and the father made a feast OF his son." So you can see what I task I had before me. There was no time to waste!!!!

One of our problems as I write this is with the power--no electricity coming into our house. The power is "cut off" two nights a week, and often through the day because of a "fault." They have announced that we will be cut off Friday and Monday nights. When a "fault" is the cause, we have no warning. Can you imagine how upsetting it is to be in the middle of preparing your family's meal when all of a sudden there is a "fault" to deal with??? One

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missionary used to say when this would happen, "Zambia wins again." But I don't believe anyone wins!

We have recently experienced some cooler weather, but one day in October 1969, I wrote to my sister telling her how hot I was. There was no fan, and certainly no air conditioner—not even a breeze! I reminisced with her about the fans we used during our protracted meetings (revivals)—and Bluff City was noted for these back in those days. These were furnished by Harvey and Upton Store, and how I wished for even one of these on that particular day. It is my understanding these are still furnished today by various companies—one being Proctor Funeral Home in Camden. They were cardboard with a pretty picture on the front, attached to a wooden handle. As I wrote her that day, I could see all those fans going back and forth as the preacher stood before us teaching and preaching from the word of God.

I remember a good bit about those gospel meetings. The week before they began our Mama would start getting everyone's clothes washed, starched (ouch!!), and ironed. We would certainly wear something other than our "Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes" during that week. I remember one afternoon when my sister and I went down to Mama's Cousin Etta's house to play with Stell. When she saw us, she said, "You girls are cutting high waters today!" She laughed as only Cousin Etta could, so we knew we could stay and play with Stell. I'm sure my sister and I started the mini-skirt fad—a far cry from the way some Zambians dress.

The dress commonly worn by the Zambian women is called the chitenge—and it is a very practical piece of clothing. It is a long piece of cloth wrapped around the waist and extending to the ankle. These are outdoor people and do much of their work on the ground; hence the chitenge is practical and useful. It can be used for a skirt, a blanket to place the babies down for a nap, or a blanket to wrap them in and tie them to their back, leaving the hands and arms free to be used for other things. Yes, it is a far cry from the American mini-skirts and other things worn by females, but even in 1970 the modern Africans were catching on to the "western ways", and wearing their skirts very short.

Life seems to be filled with uncertainties, and we all have to stay busy and remain flexible. The run rises at 6 o'clock here, and Lloyd and I arise with it. It is not unusual, however, for Lloyd to be "out and about" before this time, because he and Mike are involved in many outside duties that require them to arise early. I requested morning classes, if it could be arranged, because this scheduling would help me with transportation. At that time I could still walk a mile to school if it were necessary. (My sister remembers those days of walking when we were younger!) I do most of my preparation at home, but there are times when I need to stay on campus and supervise the girls' work program. One example of this is mentioned earlier in this report, and in my next article, I want to tell you about "running water" in our house! But for now. . . .

That's all, folks,
Pearl Louise Henson