

Government Swindled In Carbine Affair

By LON K. SAVAGE

A telegram from New York arrived in St. Louis 100 years ago this week for Mrs. Gen. Charles Fremont, "The Pathfinder" who had explored the West, helped make California a state and was once the Republican Party's first nominee for President in 1856.

It was to be an answer to Fremont's fondest wish. I have five thousand Hall's rifles, cast-steel carbines, breech-loading, new, at twenty-two dollars, government standard, fifty-eight (caliber). Can I hear from you? (signed) Simon Stevens.

Overjoyed, Fremont wired back "I will take the whole five thousand carbines . . . send by express . . . I will pay all extra charges."

And thus was consummated the scene in the Hall carbine affair. This morning, our eight-year-old came in with a question held in a battered tin can. He had dipped a so-called "hair snake" from the water's edge.

At one time or another most of us have shared with him the common superstition that a "hair snake" is a horseshair which has dropped into the water to be miraculously turned into a live snake.

THE TRUTH IS that over the years both children and adults have mis-named this little understood creature for it is neither "hair" nor "snake" but a common species of small round worm with a very interesting life cycle.

The lowly worm family is ignored by most people, yet its incredible numbers are very important in nature's economy.

Many species of this family like leeches, flukes and tapeworms are dangerous parasites to both man and animals.

Worms are divided into two great groups: the Nematoda, or round worms, which have smooth unsegmented bodies like the hairworm, hookworm and trichina; and the Annelida, which have segmented bodies, like the earthworm, the tapeworm and the leech.

HAIRWORMS ARE sometimes treated as a separate group named Nematophora, but more frequently they are considered as a class of Nematoda. They vary in length from a few inches to two or three feet and are dark brown in color.

My hand lens reveals the hairworm with a sucker-like head and a long tail characteristic of the male. There are no circulatory, respiratory or excretory organs present in the adult stage.

The sudden appearance of the hairworm with a sucker-like head and a long tail characteristic of the male. There are no circulatory, respiratory or excretory organs present in the adult stage.

"SOME OF THEM leave their motors running or if it's going to rain they call us to run up the windows."

"Oh, yes, my hobbies," he said. "About once a week we get together most every Saturday night for a game of poker. We've been meeting for the last 25 years."

This man who says "sometimes go for months without seeing a train" helps some 400 to 500 commuters make their daily trek. He works five days a week and two hours on Saturday.

"Sundays I go hide in the woods," he added.

He pulled out a sheaf of papers to illustrate the extreme care given the needs of children traveling alone and said "we've had them as young as five or six years old. There's something about railroad people. They are so used to being around that they'll never let you get a child where he's going and safely."

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The Birmingham Eccentric Features

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NATURE NOW By Lydia King Frehe Special Writer For The Birmingham Eccentric

'Hair Snakes' Snag Curiosity of Many

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LOOK WHAT'S UP!

IT DOES NOT seem very long since you scribble a little girl with time on her hands, would sometimes on lazy summer mornings dip a "hair snake" from the watering trough outside her grandfather's barn. And for all she knew she had captured a real snake.

But whatever its name, she soon learned it was harmless. It was something a curious child could see in the adult stage. It was something to wonder about. And it still is.

DOWN TO EARTH Gardeners Reap Fruits From Landscaping Plan

By ALICE WESSELS BURLINGAME Special Writer For The Birmingham Eccentric

Gardeners are beginning to enjoy harvest time as they reap the small fruits which they incorporated into their landscaping plan such as raspberry bushes. The tomato plant is truly a fruit, too, due to its seed construction.

Last year, I wrote a feature about our local fruit fancier, Robert Nitschke, who has sought the best flavored fruits from all countries.

As his hobby he had a test plot to ascertain the best selections for the home fruit garden.

He says: "There are over 41 apples of outstanding flavor, yet only two kinds are commercially available. Only the home gardener can really know the exquisite sparkling flavor of a frosty pear or plum sun-ripe at its peak of perfection."

"BY MEANS of grafting and budding, the home fruit gardener may have several varieties on one branch and thus in the same space multiply his enjoyment."

"I have one apple tree with 42 different varieties of varieties and it bears from July to November with the little Fall Russet and the great Greening Smith to the brilliant red Orin."

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B'ham Girl Celebrates Fourth of July in India

Julia Hoopengardner, 1414 Lenox, Birmingham, is in India on the Experiment in International Living Program. Here is another of her letters telling of her experiences.

Dear Friends and Neighbors: While all of you were having delicious hamburgers on your Fourth of July picnics, the other 11 Americans here in Bhavnagar and I were having an Independence Day celebration, too.

We had a dinner for our hosts and dignitaries. Even the Maharajah and his family attended. Although the Maharajah lost his power in 1947, he is still treated as royalty as ever.

WE HELD the event in the local Rotary Hall. Apparently the Rotarians of Bhavnagar are very active. My host, Mohendra, is one.

For dinner, we served Indian food: chappatis, or wheat cakes, potato patties (with a few more spices than you'd use in Birmingham), some vegetables I don't recognize, several fancy rice mixtures, and bananas and mangoes in cream for dessert.

By now, all of us Americans could sure go for a chicken leg.

We pooled our efforts in giving a short program. The history of July 4 was given, several representative songs were sung, and we closed

with the Indian and American national anthems.

THE ATMOSPHERE was patriotic as any celebration I've attended in our own country. The red, white, and blue banners and homemade flag helped in that regard.

We are beginning to feel right at home here.

Julia Hoopengardner

Bhavnagar Likes Julia, Official Tells Our Mayor

To the Mayor of Birmingham: I am very much thankful to you for your letter dated 14th June, 1961, introducing Miss Julia Hoopengardner of City of Birmingham.

This city of Bhavnagar has thoroughly enjoyed her and her friends' visit, which has gone a long way in bringing our two hemispheres closer in mutual understanding and interest. We have got glimpses of your Country's way of living from her.

INDIA IS a big country, many visitors and students come from foreign lands; mutual exchanges of ways of living and culture do take place.

However, this experiment of international living is a novel one by itself and I hope its purpose of bringing peoples of two hemispheres closer together may well be served.

I request your feelings to send visitors from our city to yours and thank you in anticipation for your courtesy.

Yours faithfully, GANGADAS C. SHAH, President, Bhavnagar, India

single penny in my pocket and I had to get off the interurban here. Didn't have money to go any further. I remember the snow was above my knees," he said.

Luckily Wichman met a friend from his hometown who "kidnapped" him until he found a job. For several years he worked as a spare telegrapher for the Grand Trunk line and to the walls and back again. Occasional moments of death were interrupted now and again by the rumble of a train.

"That one's headed for Chicago," Wichman commented. "You can travel from the Birmingham station to almost any point in the country."

HE SWIVELED in his chair and pointed to the rack full of timetables. "Too many people think of this as strictly a commuter station," he said. "Actually, Birmingham is a major Grand Trunk station and that's based on volume of business. You know, freight and passengers."

The grey-haired agent has supervised the local station since 1954 and has been in railroading "since I was an office boy in grade school, in Dundee, Ont. He skillfully avoids pinpointing the date.

"There's a thing being going around here—sort of a guessing game about my age—see I'll just keep it a trade secret," he said with a grin.

And don't ask me how big around I am, either," he added. "Let's just say I'm half an inch short of six feet tall."

WICHMAN SAID his first railroad job was with the TIB line (Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway). "Known by railroaders as 'To Hell and Back,'" he commented with a straight face.

He learned telegraphy "at my father's knee" and later was "upgraded to telegraph operator with the Canadian National Railways."

In 1927, he came to Detroit and after a week at his aunt's home headed for the Grand Trunk offices in Pontiac to apply for a job.

The fare from Detroit to Birmingham was 24 cents.

"That left me with just one

allowed to employees on the basis of length of service.

"The telephone rang. Wichman answered it and then dashed outside. A few minutes later he came back and explained that he had gone out to turn off the lights on a commuter's car.

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