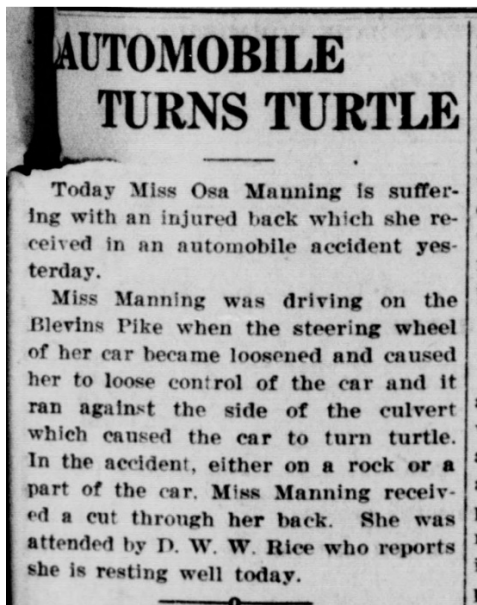


REFLECTIONS NO. 14 (MARCH 1, 2021)
By Jerry McKelvy

TURN TURTLE

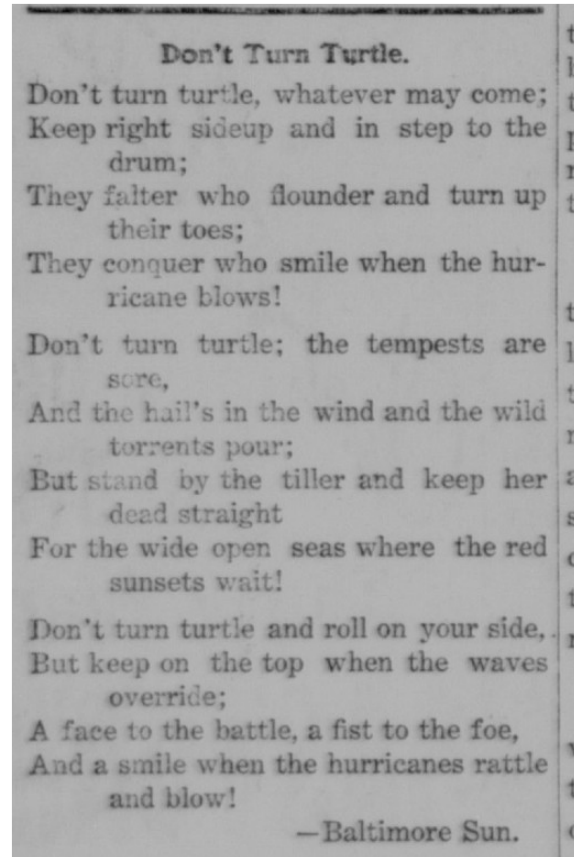
While browsing through the old Nevada County newspapers from 1921, I came across a news story about an automobile accident with the headline “Automobile Turns Turtle”. I was not familiar with that phrase. I assumed it meant that the automobile turned upside down. A turtle on its back would be helpless. I then did a search for the phrase “turn turtle” from other newspapers and found many hits from the early 1900s where that phrase was used. The phrase was also used in describing other types of accidents like an accident involving a boat or ship which overturned.

One newspaper from Elk City, Idaho had a poem reprinted from The Baltimore Sun entitled “Don’t Turn Turtle” which I thought was pretty good. So, as we go about our daily lives, let us be careful that we don’t turn turtle.



Nevada County Picayune – 1921

Elk City, Idaho newspaper – 1908 >>>>>>



Comments from readers—

1. Turn turtle sounds like an appropriate term for today’s time. – Joanne
2. Good to know – Amy

REFLECTIONS NO. 15 (March 8, 2021)
By Jerry McKelvy

Paying Off on an Election Bet

Col. Otis Moncrief of Prescott supported Mr. Kirby for governor of Arkansas and Mr. J. B. Stone supported Mr. George Donaghey. Col Moncrief bet Mr. Stone that Donaghey would not be nominated by the Democrats and he lost the bet. He had told Mr. Stone that if Donaghey was nominated, he would roll Mr. Stone through the streets of Prescott in a wheelbarrow.

So, on a Saturday in April, 1908, a large crowd gathered to watch the show. The men met at McDaniel's Hardware store. Mr. Moncrief began by giving a speech in which he stated that he was a Confederate veteran and had dodged bullets in the war, but nobody could say that he was not a man of his word.

After his speech, Mr. Stone who weighed over 200 pounds climbed into the wheelbarrow and Mr. Moncrief pushed him across the railroad tracks to the Bank of Prescott, a distance of about three city blocks.

Mr. A. W. Newth, a well-known Prescott photographer, took a picture and offered copies of the picture for sale. A post card picture was ten cents and a 6 ½ x 8 ½ photo was 40 cents.

The Daily Picayune printed the picture but the quality is not too good since it was on the edge of the page.



=====
Comments from readers--

1. That's a funny story? Jerry. Too bad more politicians don't keep their word now!! --
Gloria

2. Interesting story - never heard that one. Certainly remember Mr Newth. He took our family pictures always. I seem to remember his wife who played the piano for us in her home while my mother visited her. Thanks. – Irma

REFLECTIONS NO. 16 (March 15, 2021)

By Jerry McKelvy

Snakes

I'm not a big fan of snakes. I can tolerate them as long as they stay out of my way. I know that many species of snakes are now protected by law. According to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission wildlife code, all native snakes, including venomous snakes, are protected by law and are illegal to kill unless they "pose reasonable threat or endangerment to persons or property" on your private property.

Many years ago, it was common to see a picture in the county newspaper of someone holding up a big rattlesnake they had killed and proudly proclaiming the number of rattles and buttons on the snake.

Rattlesnakes are really one of the more friendly snakes. By that I mean they will usually leave you alone if you don't bother them. You can easily walk very close to one without even knowing it. I was on a field trip in Mississippi one time with about thirty other men looking at some hardwood timber. Most of the group had passed within two feet of a rattlesnake before one of the men happened to notice it. The snake never rattled.

I did have one scary experience with a rattlesnake one time when I was working cruising timber with another guy. I stepped within a foot of a timber rattler that was five feet six inches long and had seventeen rattles. When I noticed it, I quickly jumped back and the snake started rattling with its head up in the air ready to strike. I was very lucky that I didn't get bit. We killed that snake and the experience ruined our day as far as work was concerned. The only problem was we had to go back to the same place the next day. That tract of land became known as "the rattlesnake tract".

I worked for a timber company for over 31 years and only came across about four or five rattlesnakes at work. Copperheads and water moccasins are a different story. They can be found anywhere and are much more aggressive than rattlesnakes.

I was following another guy one day in the woods and watched a copperhead bite him on the heel of his boot. He didn't see the snake and did not know the snake had tried to bite

him. We usually wore snake leggings which covered our legs up to just above the knee cap.

Some snakes are beautiful when you consider their colorful markings. Snakes generally have had a bad reputation ever since the serpent appeared to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. People driving along the highways will go out of their way to run over a snake but will also do their best to avoid hitting a terrapin trying to cross the road.

Some snakes are venomous while many are harmless to humans. They say more people are killed by wasp and bee stings than snake bites. It's a good idea to become familiar with the different species of snakes you might encounter wherever you might be.

One snake I try to protect is the king snake which can eat poisonous snakes. They scare me when I first see them just like any snake, but when I identify it as a king snake, I leave it alone.

I've never been bitten by a venomous snake, but know of several people who have been bitten. The bite can cause much swelling and pain, so it's not something to be taken lightly. When I first started work for the timber company, I was given a snake bite kit containing a sharp blade to make a cut at the bite and a suction cup to draw out the poison. Those kits were soon discarded as being too dangerous to use. Making a deep cut was likely to get infected and so that method was no longer recommended. We were told in our safety meetings that if we ever got bit by a snake to stay calm, avoid exercise, and get to a hospital as quickly as possible. That looks good on paper, but in the real world, how are you going to avoid exercise when you are a half mile or more from the truck. Staying calm is impossible for most people after being snake bit.

I met a beaver trapper one time who the company had hired to break beaver dams that had water backed up killing the timber. He would wade out into a beaver pond while wearing tennis shoes and reach up with his bare hands and pull branches out of the beaver dam. Beaver dams are a favorite place for water moccasins. I asked him if he had ever been bitten by a snake and he showed me a sore on his thumb and said that was where he was bitten a few days earlier. He said he had been bitten so many times, he was pretty much immune to the venom. He may have been pulling my leg, but he seemed to be telling the truth. Later that day, I saw him jump out of the truck when he saw a large turtle crossing the road. He grabbed it by the tail, threw it in the bed of the pickup, and said he would have some turtle soup for supper.

The best advice I can give about snakes is to watch where you step and watch where you put your hands especially in old storage sheds and around wood piles. And, if you get bit, remember to stay calm.

=====

Comments from readers—

1. Interesting snake stories. I envy your work profession in forestry. Esp. In South Ark. the best Loblolly-Pine growing conditions on planet earth.

Fortunately, I had an undergraduate course in Forestry, steeped with Dendrology, and Silviculture. Unfortunately, it was limited to only one course. That, along with Entomology, had life-long benefits for me. Can you believe that college tuition in the mid-sixties was only \$90 per semester? Today, it is between five and fifteen thousand \$ per semester.

I am glad we got it when it was a cheap bargain. Aren't you? -- James

REFLECTIONS NO. 17 (March 22, 2021)

By Jerry McKelvy

Enough Food to Feed Cox's Army

A common saying back when I was growing up was "There's enough food here to feed Cox's army". I always wondered who Cox was. Many years later in history class I learned about a man named Jacob Coxey who led an "army" of unemployed men on a protest march to Washington D. C. in 1894 trying to get the government to provide jobs during a period a depression. So, the expression should be "Coxey's army" instead of "Cox's army". It just means you have enough food prepared to feed a large number of people.

It's funny how some of these old sayings get started. Some of them just sort of become popular and nobody really thinks about how they first started.

I'm sure you have heard "What in the Sam Hill is going on?" or something similar. Who was Sam Hill? I think the name Sam Hill was substituted for another word. It was an attempt to make it more acceptable.

"Oh, for Pete's sake" is another expression. Who was Pete? Pete was a substitute for Christ and was used to make it more acceptable. The phrase "for the love of Mike" is another similar type phrase.

Another common phrase is "jerry-rig" meaning to sort of half-way fix something or to describe something poorly made. I wasn't around when that phrase started so I'm not responsible for it even though some of the fixes I do might fit that description.

Some say the phrase "Gives me the willies" probably was originally "gives me the woolies" and refers to underwear made from wool which was scratchy to the skin.

The same thing goes for "to Jimmy" a lock meaning to force a lock open. I don't know who Jimmy was but this phrase gives a bad impression of all men named Jimmy. Maybe all the Jerrys, Willies, and Jimmys in the world should demand that these phrases no longer be used.

The phrase "go bananas" became popular in the 1950s about the time the phrase "go ape" became popular. It means to exhibit crazy behavior.

"I heard it through the grapevine"—grape vines have lots of tendrils, twists, and turns, so it means you didn't hear it from the source but in a round-about way from other people.

“The whole 9 yards”—In World War II, fighter pilots were given a strip of ammunition nine yards long, so if they shot all of their ammunition at the enemy, they said they gave them the whole nine yards.

“Waking up on the wrong side of the bed”—The left side of the body was associated with something sinister. Early innkeepers would position the left side of the bed against a wall so that the guests would be forced to get up on the right side of the bed.

It is interesting to search on the Internet about the origins of old expressions we have heard. There are hundreds of them.

=====

Comments from readers—

1. I think you have just about covered the waterfront. Or, at least you might neigh covered the water front! – James

2. Very interesting! -- Amy

3. These expressions are all so interesting. My husband is a big fan of these types of discussions, so many years ago (at least 20), the kids and I gave him a book for his birthday. It's called, "[The Facts on File Encyclopedia] of WORD AND PHRASE ORIGINS" by Robert Hendrickson (754 pp). We have referenced it many times. – Julie

4. Thanks for sharing! --- Peggy

5. I just had to print this one for my files. So glad you made these observations. Many of us I am sure have heard these expressions and never stopped to wonder from whence they came.—Irma

6. Have heard of the sayings. Have often wondered where they came from. – Wanda

7. Thanks for sharing! – Neva

REFLECTIONS NO. 18 (March 29, 2021)

By Jerry McKelvy

The Tooth Fairy

I remember when I had a loose baby tooth, a string was tied to the tooth and the other end to a door knob. When the door was shut, the tooth popped out. Children are much more likely to agree to having a loose tooth pulled if they know the Tooth Fairy will leave them some money for it if they put the tooth under their pillow. A quarter was the common amount left by the Tooth Fairy when I was a kid.

The amount left has increased over the years due to inflation. In 2013, a poll was taken that showed the average money left for a tooth was \$3.70. Three percent of children received less than a dollar and eight percent received \$5 or more. I have heard of some kids who received \$20 for their tooth. Sometimes, more money is left for the first tooth lost and then less for future teeth.

Families have different traditions regarding the Tooth Fairy. One family puts the tooth in an envelope with a note addressed to the Tooth Fairy telling what they would like in exchange for the tooth.

A tradition in England required the baby tooth to be burned. This was supposed to prevent hardships in the afterlife. Another tradition was that the tooth had to be burned or buried because of the fear of witches. It was thought that if a witch got the tooth, they would have total power over the person for the rest of their life.

Some families are no longer practicing the tradition of the Tooth Fairy. It is a common tradition in America and in some other European countries. Some say the origin of the Tooth Fairy can be traced back to a play in 1927 by that name.

There is a new practice of saving baby teeth for the stem cells which might be beneficial in later life. From what I read about it, the tooth has to be pulled by a dentist before it falls out and has to be stored a certain way. Doing this can be quite expensive (up to \$1700) plus about \$120 per year for a storage fee. Most families are not willing to pay the added expense of preserving baby teeth, but it is an option which some doctors recommend.

RAINFALL RECORD

January – 4.7 inches

February – 7.0 inches plus about 15 inches of snow

March – 10.3 inches