



Jan. 24, 2024

## TOURING SULLIVAN COUNTY'S MUSEUM . . . while dusting

From an August 1966 Sullivan Review comes the following story:

“Boy Kills 45-inch Rattler – A buzzing, a peculiar odor, a tingling of the spine and Grant Lejedal, 14, of Estella (Forksville RD 2), reached for a club to dispatch a large rattlesnake he came upon in the woods in the vicinity of Hoagland Branch, to the rear of the Alfred Wissinger property and on State land, about 11 o'clock Tuesday morning, August 9.

“After killing the rattler, Grant's father, Charles (Red) Lejedal, helped him skin it and discovered it measured around 45 inches in length. He is not certain how many buttons it had, since they were ruined in the killing process.

“Grant and his brother Curtis, 13, had accompanied their dad to the woods while he was working and were searching around the area for items of interest when he came upon the rattler. He has not said what he intends to do with the skin of the reptile, but he has saved it.”

While it is not unusual to find snakes of various varieties, this one's length is impressive. Many times people have reported seeing snakes sunning themselves on the rocks at High Knob Lookout and other similar outcroppings throughout Sullivan County. This writer even found one in a hay bale (dead, of course) when opening the bale to feed the animals. Tho not nearly as striking (no pun intended), the find was no less surprising.

Some interesting facts about snakes are that they have 'solar power', in that they rely fully on external heat and light sources. And, that they smell with their tongues, do not have eye lids and that they sleep on average 16+ hours a day. Some species go winter dormant, called brumation. Also, that even after cutting the head off of a snake, the body can live for up to an hour.

This brings up a funny story told by a man's grandson many, many years afterwards. The man had killed a rattler and brought it to the Hillsgrove Ranger Station. While there, two young boys vacationing with their families, happened on the scene. They came over to the man with the snake lying on the ground to have a look-see. As they leaned over to get a better look, the man quietly stepped on the snake's tail. The explosion of fear when the headless snake rose to strike must've instilled a life long aversion to snakes in both boys, while the man and others there only saw the hilarity of the moment. And as the retelling of this episode has gone on for generations, here's hoping that this will be the last telling, coupled with apologies to the now old men who were told upon.

For this and more, you can make an appointment to visit YOUR museum by phoning 570-945-5020 or emailing [scpahistory@gmail.com](mailto:scpahistory@gmail.com). Note – this is our NEW EMAIL ADDRESS - [scpahistory@gmail.com](mailto:scpahistory@gmail.com)