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## **SNAKEBITES PUT MANY EARLY SETTLERS IN QUANDARY**

**Byline: Weona Cleveland**

I have had two people, over the years, relate to me some rather unusual experiences that occurred to them while bicycling.

The late Frieda Kroegel Thompson of Sebastian was the first to tell me her story. When she was about 10 years old, she was riding her bicycle to school when she saw a dark place in the road up ahead, but she realized too late that it was a rattlesnake. She just put her feet up on the handlebars, rode right over the serpent and kept going! That was in 1911.

More recently, Vincent Glatter of Malabar, now 83, also was riding his bicycle when he unexpectedly rode over a rattlesnake on a rural road. The difference in these two incidents is that Glatter got off his bicycle and killed the rattlesnake.

Rattlesnake bites during pioneer days in Brevard County were fairly common, and the settlers were always anxious to find a "sure cure." And those "sure cures" often turned up in the pages of the local newspapers.

A snake catcher in the town of Griffin (near Lakeland) in 1894 told the press that he had no fear of snakes because he could cure the bite of any rattlesnake. But in August of that year, he was bitten by a rattler and was dead within 40 minutes. His "sure cure" - whatever it may have been - went to the grave with him. The Indian River Advocate made the comment: "Si Foman, the Jacksonville snake man, will some day meet a similar fate, notwithstanding the fact that he possesses a 'sure cure.' "

In November 1894, someone from California wrote in Scientific American magazine that two herbs could be used to cure rattlesnake bites: la golondrina (the swallow) and rattlesnake weed. But he admitted "not everyone can identify them, even when they see them." The two herbs grow in "arid plains," he wrote, so probably were not found in Florida.

In August 1895, Dr. W.L. Hughlett of Cocoa was credited with saving the life of W. Heisler when he was bitten by a rattlesnake. The wound was in the leg, and, apparently, Heisler was able to reach Hughlett's office soon after the snake struck him.

Hughlett administered a hypodermic injection of permanganate of potash, injected into the spot where the fangs penetrated the skin. If the poison had made the wound swell, Hughlett said he would have cut the flesh sufficiently to draw blood and then would have injected the permanganate of potash entirely around the wound. The Indian River Advocate wrote that Heisler was in a serious condition when he reach Hughlett's

office, but three weeks after the treatment the wound was healed and Heisler was back at work.

No one can argue with this "sure cure," no matter how primitive medical science might consider it today.

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