

# A 'Ducking Stool' For Public Scold

By AL BALLARD  
The Greenville Piedmont  
Written for The Associated Press

GREENVILLE, S. C. (AP)—Did you know it's unlawful to carry a lighted torch across a wooden bridge? And you can be arrested for holding a white cane in an extended position on a public street?

Glancing through South Carolina's code of laws, it seems the state once was plagued by nuisances who made a practice of walking on rooftops, growing cobwebs in kitchens, eavesdropping on their neighbors' conversations, or helping to promote divorce.

So many laws cover so many subjects, it's enough to make the average citizen cower at the sight

of a badge or jump at the sound of a whistle.

The ancient laws have been spotlighted here in recent weeks by theater owners who contended "blue laws" are outdated and do not apply to them. They could claim oddities in other statutes.

A common law brought over from England permits arrest of a public scold.

A public scold?

Well, any woman who uses loud and profane language in a public place is one.

Indicted, the punishment provides that she be placed upon a ducking stool.

A ducking stool?

It's a chair to which the offender is bound by the sheriff. The citizens may then pass by and throw water on, or pelt, the victim.

About the cane, now. It's true, unless a man is blind or incapacitated.

Hula hoop contest?

It's against the law for anyone to sponsor an endurance contest that is scheduled to last more than eight hours.

For you horsetraders: any suspicious character who travels about the country selling and trading horses can be locked up for vagrancy unless he has a certificate vouching for his character. The paper must be signed by the magistrate in the suspect's home county.

Fines can be meted out to hotels that allow a cobweb to form on the kitchen ceiling or to anyone who erects an outhouse on the same lot upon which the courthouse or jail is situated.

The jailers who reside in jail, however, are exceptions to this law. They are allowed to erect such buildings for their own private accommodation.

Roofwalkers! Unless you have permission from the State Budget and Control Board, you can be fined up to \$100 for walking on the roof of the State House.

If you want to get rich, become an informer.

For example, it is unlawful for any tavern keeper to entertain any seaman for more than one hour out of every 24-hour period, unless

he has the written permission of the master or commander of the seaman's vessel.

The penalty for this offense is \$10.

The man who reports it, the informer, gets five bucks of the fine!

But there's a catch. To inform, you might have to eavesdrop. And that's against the law!

People who reside within the fire limits of the city and own a high-jumping pet must use an iron fence to control the animal. Its a violation of the code to construct a wooden fence over eight feet high.

You may install lightning rods on houses if you have a license.

If you're a traveling magician with your own show, you can hold your performances in a tent if you have a sponsor.

For those who are tired of their spouses, they can't find an advertisement for aid, even in the yellow pages. No person can print and distribute handbills, cards or other notice offering aid in procuring a divorce.

What's that?

For this story?

Get me a lawyer!



Jo Anna Phillips, of Greenville, contrary to appearances of avoiding detection, is not preparing to commit arson. She is merely showing how one might violate an old state law that prohibits carrying a lighted torch across a wooden bridge. (Greenville Piedmont photo by William D. Cromer.)

-Evening Herald, Rock Hill Wednesday, July 29, 1959

## OLD ORDINANCES OF CITY APPEAR A LITTLE QUANT

City Fathers Insisted On Gongs Being Sounded By Bicycle Riders.

Ordinances published by the Town of Lancaster in May, 1903, are of interest today as the provisions of these ordinances are out-of-date in many instances. At the time these ordinances were published the Model T Ford car was considered a luxurious vehicle which only the rich could afford. Among the general ordinances of the town at that time were the following:

"That it shall be unlawful for any persons or persons engaged in hacking or hauling passengers or baggage or soliciting patronage for any hotel or boarding house or soliciting the carrying grips, valises and satchels upon the arrival of any railroad train or cars at any railroad depot in said town to approach nearer the train or cars on any track there at less than fifteen feet."

"That it shall be unlawful for females of questionable chastity and persons unable to satisfactorily account for themselves to be found upon the streets of the town on any night after 10 o'clock."

"That it shall be unlawful for any person, or persons, to use or ride upon the pavements of Main or Broad street of said town any bicycle or other like vehicle. That every bicycle or vehicle shall have attached thereto a bell or gong which shall be kept in use at all times in good working order and which shall be rung when approaching any person or persons at least twenty-five yards distant from such persons or persons and shall so continue to ring until the same shall have passed and said bell or gong shall be rung when turning the corner of any street or approaching the crossing of any street or alleyway within the corporate limits of said town at least twenty-five yards distant from said crossing and shall be rung continuously until said crossing shall be turned or passed. It shall be unlawful to use or ride within said corporate limits during the night time any bicycle or other like vehicle without having thereunto affixed in some conspicuous place thereon a bicycle lamp which shall be kept lighted and burning. It shall be unlawful to "coast" upon any of the pavements of the town by riding with the feet off the pedals or turn any corner of a street at a greater rate of speed than five miles per hour or to ride on any of the streets of said town at a rate faster than ten miles per hour."

"That it shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to erect, make or have made any gate, door or other appliance that shall open outward toward the pavement street or public way of such town, thereby obstructing the ready passage of any such place. That all doors, gates or other appliances shall be so altered

within thirty days of date hereof as to swing in upon premises of said occupant or owner."

"That it shall be unlawful for any person or persons to allow or permit the dead body of any animal or fowl or human being to remain on any premises within the corporate limits of said town, belonging to him, for a longer period than twenty-four hours without written permission of the board of health."

"That it shall be unlawful for any person to ride or drive any animal or vehicle through any of the drives of the cemeteries of said town at a greater rate of speed than a walk or to ride any animal or vehicle across the lots or plots of the cemeteries."

"That it shall be unlawful to bury, deposit or throw the dead body of any animal or fowl within any of

the cemeteries."

"That the water in all the wells in town shall be drawn off at least once in every year and the same thoroughly cleaned. That it shall be unlawful to allow stagnant waters to collect and remain in ditches, drains, branches and basins on premises owned, occupied or controlled in said town by any person or persons or corporations."

"That in any case where the police are resisted in making an arrest, or in suppressing disorder, police may call on any citizen of the town or other persons who may be near for assistance. If any citizen or other persons, so called on for assistance, shall

neglect or refuse to render the same, the name of such person shall be reported to the mayor by the police without delay."

"That before any person, firm or corporation can receive back any animal taken up by the town for running at large, besides the expense of keeping the animal, the owner shall pay to the town the following sums: For every horse, mule or cow, fifty cents; for every hog, sheep or goat, twenty-five cents.

THE LANCASTER NEWS,

Friday, March 15, 1940

In a description of the manners and customs of the up-country of South Carolina during early times, James Duncan, the son of the first settler in Newberry, related around the year of 1760: "The amusements with the first settlers were running foot races, jumping, fiddling, dancing, shooting, blind-man's buff, snaffle the brogue, selling of pawns, rimming the thimble, crib and taylor, grinding the bottle, black bear, dropping the glove, and swimming and diving, and the like."

# In Atmosphere Of Days Long Gone

By R. E. GRIER

**N**O NEWS travels faster today than that of death. Let a man or woman of any prominence in any field of endeavor die after a long illness or by the stiletto flash of a heart attack and within minutes, people thousands of miles away know of it and express their sorrow at the departure. Even people, obscure and near unknown, are given certain recognition when silence engulfs them.

Newspapers, some of them, list on their front pages, names of persons, in black-faced type, who have died the day before; radio broadcasting stations, if the person is of any prominence, carry the news into home and factory; party line telephones, the telegraph lines—all combine their efforts to make known the fact of death. Indeed it is nearly impossible for an individual to die and not to have just about every one advised of it and quickly.

But it was not always so—indeed there are people living today within range of the sound of Columbia's air raid warning system, who can remember when a telephone was not a common utility; when the radio was scarcely dreamed of; even when the telegraph was limited largely to use of the railroad lines.

For instance; here is a farm

house, miles from its nearest neighbor. It is near self-sufficient. About the only commodities purchased on rare trips to town are sugar, coffee and shoes. On such a farm, a mule kicks the master of the house, injuring him fatally; or an angry bull crushes him against a barn door until life is extinct.

How to notify friends and relatives in the community? Rush

down to the country store and call friends over the store's lone 'phone. Except that the store is distant a dusty five miles and also is without a telephone.

Write a letter? There is no rural delivery and ordinarily people get their mail perhaps twice a week—when they purchase supplies for the home.

So what?

These people are resourceful.

The mistress of the house takes charge. She gets her lap desk, places it on her knees as she sits near the center table in the hallway and writes with painstaking care.

Soon the writing is complete, and here is a verbatim copy of such a notice.

"The relatives, friends and acquaintances of Mr. and Mrs. J. Murray Nelson are respectfully invited to attend the funeral services of the former at the church of the Holy Cross, Stateburg, this afternoon at six o'clock.

With the notice complete, a colored man, Ephraim, is called and told to hitch the mule, in the barn yard to a sulky, a light two-wheeled vehicle similar to a racing cart but heavier. When the mule is in between the shafts and the harness adjusted, the notice is given Ephraim. He is told to drive down the road some five or eight miles, stopping at every house occupied by a white person and show the notice. After it has been read, he to regain

possession of it, get back in his conveyance and proceed, making an irregular circle, with many little side trips, returning home by a different route from that which he first followed.

And so, sitting erect in the cart, the messenger departs. The country-side, drowsy in the white hot sunlight, is deeply silent. The deep quiet is broken only by an occasional "Caw! Caw!" of a crow in top of a pine tree, acting as sentinel for his marauding fellow-fowls.

The iron bound wheels, making a sibilant "Ch-e-c-p" in the deep dry sand, is the only sound on the road as the vehicle and its passenger move ahead, turning in here and there to thread narrow paths, to private yards where the notice is shown to the people there living.

And by sunset people all around have been notified of the death and the time of the funeral.

So, without telephone, radio or even mail, the news gets about, and the final rites are well attended.

The relatives, friends and acquaintances of Mr. and Mrs. J. Murray Nelson are respectfully invited to attend the funeral services of the former at the church of the Holy Cross, Stateburg, this afternoon at six o'clock.

Funeral notice of long ago, carried from house to house by a messenger. This was found by Mrs. E. L. Craig and her sister, Mrs. Mark Sullivan of Lee Street, Columbia, as they looked through a file of old papers.

SEPTEMBER 20, 1959 The State: