

KILLED A HORNED SNAKE.

W. E. Toler came to town Tuesday with a snake story that is entitled to be chronicled among the best. They were engaged in mowing hay. Mr. Toler, in walking across the field after the machine had passed, noticed a dead snake, or rather the headless body of one. It was very black in color and at first he thought it was a blacksnake. Something impelled him to look more carefully and he picked up the body. At the end of the tail was a horn several inches in length. He repaired to the shade of a nearby tree and began an investigation. He felt the horn, or protuberance, and it seemed to be hard. He carries a sharp knife, like all progressive farmers. But the keen blade would not sever the horn.

He recalled then that when he was in Louisiana during the war he had seen a reptile exactly alike in appearance, and they had called it a horned snake. So he concluded that this was another individual of the same species. The head could not be found, having probably been mashed into the ground by the wheels. Evidently the reptile had heard and seen the mower advancing toward it. The instinct of self-preservation led it to rear its head and the sickle amputated it, with a good portion of the body.

In the early day, when this section was a pathless forest, hoop-snakes were not uncommon. While there is no authenticated record, tradition tells many weird stories of this reptile. It grew to be several feet long. On its tail was a spike, or horn, very slender and pointed. When confronted with an enemy this snake took its tail in mouth and formed a hoop. The peculiar muscular construction enabled it to propel itself forward at a considerable velocity and to imbed the spike in any object against which it struck. Stories have been told of hoop-snakes found dead with this spike buried in a forest tree. Naturalists say this is a mistaken notion, but the species became extinct before the naturalists began to write, and why should their word be taken in preference to that of the pioneers?