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Several years have passed since Paul Harvey penned lines you'll read in this column today. Because of their excellence, and continuing timely nature, we offer them to you for thoughtful perusal.

BY PAUL HARVEY

Youngster, let me tell you what it was like in the Old Country.

Once, milkin' an old cow in the back barnlot, I got tired of her swattin' me in the face with a tail full of cockleburrs.

So, with a piece of binder twine I tied her tail to my leg.

I hadn't gone around the barn but about four times before I realized my mistake.

We had fun in the Old Country, though.

We played darts with a corn-cob. I had three chicken feathers in one end and a nail in the other. But if I picked the wrong target, like the sugar sack draining cottage cheese on the clothes line, Mom would likely thump me on the head with her thimble finger.

So we didn't have much of what you'd call juvenile crime in the Old Country.

Oh, every farm boy had to try smokin' corn silk or grapevine once--until he got a mouthful of toasted ants--or until he got caught and got stropped.

And the grocer might fill the apple basket with the best ones on top.

But we didn't concentrate on learnin' the tricks of a trade, we learned the trade.

And stealing things or hurting people was almost unheard of in the Old Country.

Religion and education were all so mixed up together when I was a boy you couldn't tell where one left off and the other began. Patriotism was taught in every school class every day. Our national heroes were honored, almost revered.

Political speeches and religious sermons and civic celebrations always rang with patriotic fervor.

Soldiers were somebody.

Civil servants were servants, not masters.

Freeloading was a disgrace. Ice cream was homemade.

And marriage was forever... in the Old Country.

A boy or girl could play alone in a public park on a summer night and nobody worried. Or they could play together and nobody whispered.

A farmer could plant anything he liked anyplace he wanted on his own land. Folks who worked harder were rewarded for it, so everybody worked harder.

Most everybody had one idea about life; to leave the woodpile a little higher than he found it. And most everybody did.

We had no card-carrying Communists; we had Cross-carrying Christians... in the Old Country.

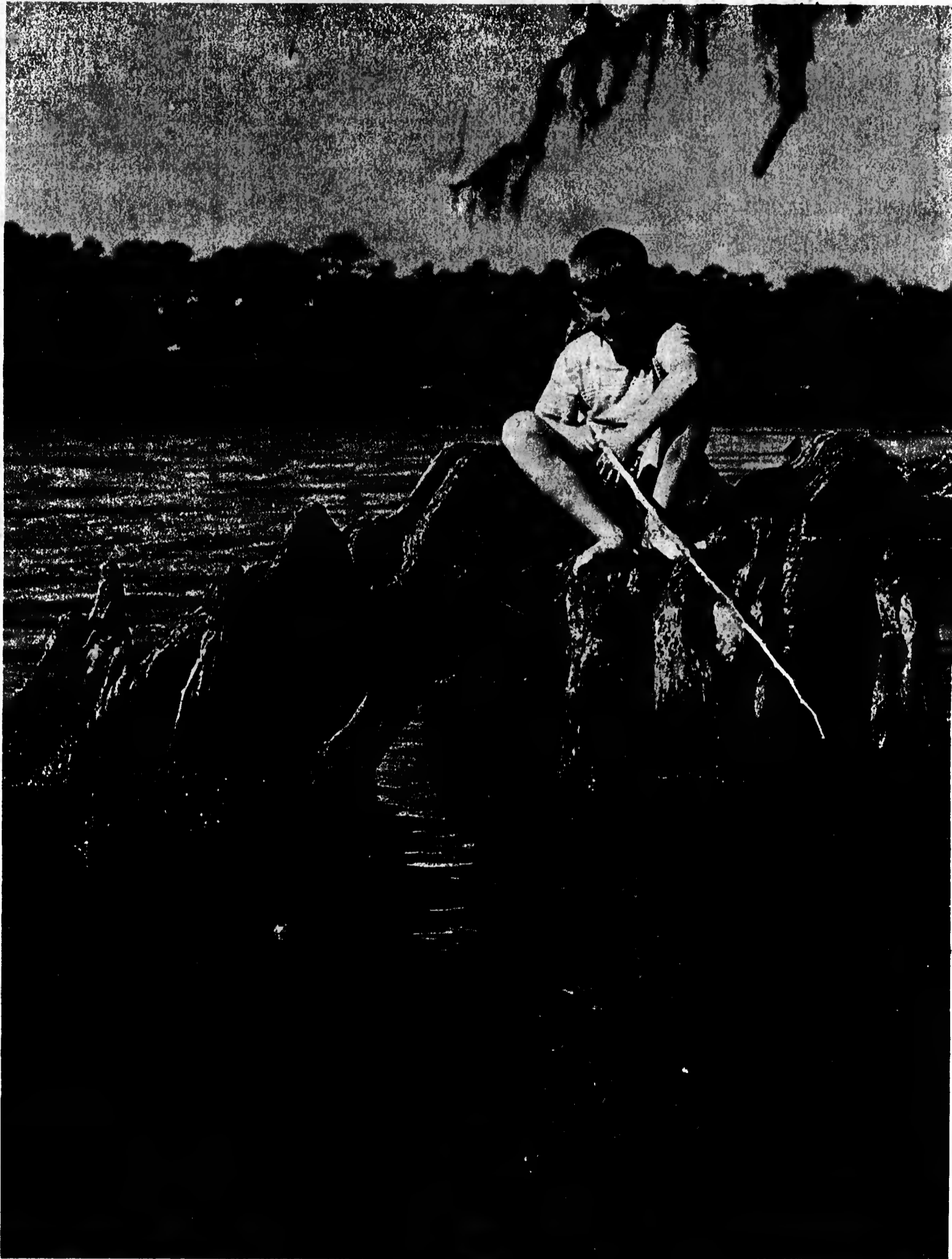
We told dialect jokes and everybody laughed, because all of us were "mostly something else" in the Old Country.

You ask me why I don't go back. Seeing as how I liked it so much, why don't I go back to the Old Country? I can't.

It isn't there anymore.

I am a displaced person, though I never left my homeland.

I am a native-born American. I never left my country.



A FELLOW WITH A POLE, UP A LAZY STREAM,
CAN CATCH A FISH, OR MOSTLY DREAM.

—Photo by Theodore Baxter.