

Saturday, 13 June 2015

I remember waking up to Mom's cell phone ringing somewhere in the house and wondering if it was Dad. I hadn't talked to him in weeks. He had to call soon, right? Mom didn't seem the least bit worried he hadn't called. I turned over to catch a few more minutes of sleep.

Before I could dose off again, Mom knocked on my door and told me to wake up and get dressed as we had to make a stop before we went to the dig site. Some kind of "archaeology emergency." That usually means someone has uncovered a skeleton. Part of Mom's job included checking out such finds. People report them to local sheriffs or police. They call the Office of State Archaeology at the University of Kentucky, and they send an archaeologist to check it out.

I could tell the day was going to be a hot one, and here I was dressing in wool trousers! Mom had purchased an authentic leather knapsack, which I filled with my pocket knife, compass, sneakers, the Daniel Boone book, and a few Cookies & Creme candy bars, my favorite. I always plan ahead where food is concerned. I put some other things in my pockets, just in case I might need them. Besides, I always carry my cell phone.

At the last minute I tied the sleeves of the costume's jacket around the straps of the knapsack. I doubted I would need a jacket but Mom worked so hard on it. I didn't want to hurt her feelings. Also, the volunteers planned a barbeque for the end of the re-enactment. Sometimes it turned cool in the evening.

Mom and I drove to a place about three miles north east of the Martin's Station excavations. Sure enough, I was right. There stood a sheriff's car, a farm truck which held an irate Australian Shepherd dog, and a couple of large tractors. The sheriff, several men, and a boy, a little older than I, stood in a group near a grove of trees along a rock-bottomed creek filled with slowly running water. Mom and I walked toward the men as they approached. We listened to their story about how the skeleton had been uncovered.

Using a cultivator pulled by a tractor, they had been working to turn over the rich soil near the banks of the Hinkston's Fork. They planned a late corn crop for this bit of bottom land. The farmer's son had been driving the tractor and had glanced along the creek as he was driving. I think driving a tractor around in circles must be pretty boring. That's when he saw the dog pulling the jaw bone out of the creek bank.

I stopped as we neared the truck to pet the dog, actually a half-grown pup. She was a beauty, a red-tricolor named Katy according to the tag on her collar. She vigorously wagged her backside—Aussies don't have tails—as I approached the truck. The boy yelled up that she was friendly, but not to let her out. It seemed she had run all over the field with her *treasure* before they had managed to catch her and take it away. She was still panting heavily, drooling all over the seats and my hand. She had a bowl of water with her on the truck's seat, but didn't seem interested in drinking. I guess she wanted to explore for more bones. I didn't dare open the truck door since she would have tried to escape, so I petted her through a half-open window.

After a short while, Mom yelled for me to bring her equipment pack. It always contains her favorite trowels, a camera, measuring tapes, levels, maps, note pads and pencils, Sharpies, bug spray, and artifact bags. Figuring we would be here awhile and not having had much breakfast, I grabbed my knapsack as well and slung it over my shoulder. I guess I looked kind of funny dressed as I was, because the sheriff, the men, and the boy all stared. So, I swept my arm out to the side and bowed from the waist. My hat fell off. Darn.

Mom proceeded to shoo them all away from the discovery and carefully went to work. Mom is not trained as a physical anthropologist, but she can recognize an old skeleton and tell it from a more recent burial. This one had an arrowhead buried in the right shoulder and one in the breastbone—a dead give away (pun intended) it was an ancient burial. Not many people are shot with Indian arrows nowadays!

Mom photographed the entire site before drawing a sketch map and marking the site on a quadrangle map that showed we were on Hinkston's Fork of the South Fork of the Licking River. She took a GPS reading with her phone and marked the info on the map as well. Next, she would

call the State Archaeologist's office and report the find so it could be examined more thoroughly. Maybe she would excavate here next. Who knows?

Meanwhile, I took some pictures to send to Rose and Dad with my camera phone, waded barefoot in the creek, ate a candy bar, and tried to skip rocks. The water wasn't very deep. Basically, I was bored. I had just picked up my shoes and finished lacing them back on when I noticed what I thought was a deer hide sticking out of the bank near the skeleton. I walked over to point it out to Mom. She continued to be distracted by her maps and the skeleton and paid me no mind. So I reached down to brush off some of the dirt and rotted leaves. I bent lower to examine my find and had just touched the hide when it happened.

I time traveled - AGAIN!