

A Night In Sylco

It happened during deer season in 1960. I went into the forests of the Sylco Campground down near Jack's River on the Tennessee - Georgia State line. Early that evening I returned to the Sylco Campground after a day in the forest searching for the illusive deer, with no luck on my part. The deer saw it differently. It was a primitive Campground, one without lights, toilets or water. The Sun did not shine all day and at dusk as I was pitching my camp it began a light, cold rain. I had no tent and was all alone in that vast wilderness. All of the other hunters had sought out the warmth of their homes for this cold, dank night in response to their good sense.

I put a plastic ground-cloth down and opened my sleeping bag on the plastic. I staked the flap of the bag so it would cover my face and shield me against some of the wet. I was laid-out just about ten or twelve feet from my car. I crawled into the bag with my 30-30 rifle loaded and at the ready by my side. Cloudy and with no lights the forest can be very dark in those weather conditions.

Now, I don't know if I was just dropping off to sleep, or dreamed, that I heard a noise not too far away from where I was bedded down, but that completely awakened me. I lay there in the stillness for maybe five minutes and distinctly heard the noise again. It was a snort much like a wandering wild boar would make. It is unfortunate for a man to be on the ground when a boar is going about. Those long, sharp tusks can rip the life out of a person very shortly. Unzipping my bag and holding the rifle at ready, I continued to listen.

A few minutes later the snort came again through the dark, wet night. I arose and went to the front of the car and listened. Nothing! I was getting chilled and wet from the falling rain. I was all alone and I felt it in this condition. As I stood leaning against the car there again was that snorting noise, but alas it was coming from the car. As the radiator cooled it was taking in air through the spring loaded radiator cap with a loud, distinctive snort or gurgling sound.

I broke camp and got into the car and drove home. I was shivering from chill and excitement and it took many miles of driving with the heater going in the car to get me warm again. Audrey was surprised to see me when I entered the house. It was good to be back with her and our sleeping children in our warm dry bed.