



## Small Worlds Around Us

By Lynn M. Watkins

### Horseshoe Crab, Unchanged, Has Been Around A Long Time

Allied to the spiders, scorpions, mites and the daddy-longlegs, the horseshoe crab is classed as a rachnid.

By rights they should have died out long ago. The Paleozoic Age is supposed to have had its day about 300 million years ago. It was in that dim and distant time when these animals, including the horseshoe-crab, first appeared on the misty scene. That was some little time before the age of the dinosaurs.

The common horseshoe crab, or king-crab as it is often called, has survived unchanged throughout all those aeons of time. Animals of many kinds much stronger than the king crab came upon the earthy scene, lived their time and passed; the list of these creatures is long. The passing of the huge dinosaurs has never been fully understood; perhaps they died from over-specialization.

### Grew Too Fast

The dinosaur probably ate himself to death; he grew faster than the food he needed; his very size became a millstone that drowned him in his own mudhole. Maybe he died because he progressed too rapidly. Yet the horseshoe crab, a creature of almost ab-

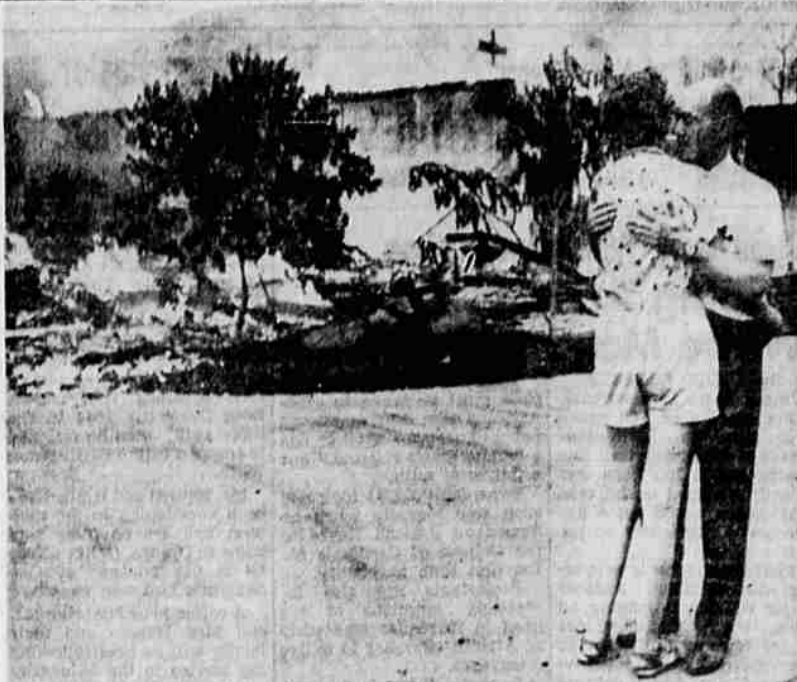
solute stagnation, survived and possibly because he stood still.

These crab-like animals hung stubbornly on a rung of the evolutionary ladder, allowing the other animals to climb past and upward.

Time, for the horseshoe crab, has stood still for all these millions of years; those alive today, and there are many, are exactly the same as their ancient ancestors that lived so long ago. With an ancestry that reaches back into the very antiquity of time it is easy to understand why they have been named "cancerous crabs" in some parts of their range. This peculiar shape, of course, is the reason for the common name "horseshoe." The scientist knows this creature as "limulus"; named after a naturalist named Limulus.

In some areas where the king-crab is plentiful they are gathered for hog and chicken feed. In some remote sections of the world they are served as human food. In the animal scale these creatures are placed somewhere between the real crabs and the spiders as they possess some of the characteristics of each.

The horseshoe crab breathes air, although he spends his entire life in water and right



**EXPENSIVE HOME DESTROYED**—Walter Braunheim comforts his wife as the couple watch a fire completely destroy their \$55,000 home in the Verdugo Hills above Sausalito, Calif., Wednesday. Eleven homes and 400 acres were burned over before the fire, one of many in southern California this week, finally was brought under control late Wednesday. (UPI Telephone)

on the bottom of shallow seas. Due to his sluggish movements, or an ability of conserving oxygen, he can remain under water all his life, a rather tricky manner of life, specially when he accomplishes all this with primitive bookgills.

But very few beings alive on this earth today have a stranger history than these spade-shaped creatures. As crude and prehistoric as they are, they have outlived all or most of their contemporaries and many that came later; creatures from out of the past, animals older than the "hills" themselves.

**Pantsless Teacher Goes Along With Gag**  
Sharpness, England — UPI — Headmaster R. E. Jones smiled happily Thursday when his pupils de-pantsed him and tossed him into the water at ceremonies opening a new swimming pool. "This must be every school-boy's dream," he said.

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### Whistles Blamed For Ship Collision

Long Beach, Calif. — UPI — Ship whistles drowned out verbal orders that might have avoided a collision between two destroyers off Newport Beach Tuesday, a naval board of inquiry was told today.

Eleven seamen were killed when the Collett knifed into the side of her sister ship, the Ammen. Seven other men were injured.

The skipper of the Collett, Cmdr. Albert Ford, told the board he shouted an order to his helmsman to turn right when the Ammen loomed out of the fog.

"I could see the helmsman did not hear the command because of the noise from emergency signals, so I reached inside the pilot house window and signaled with my hand," Ford testified.

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### Fish Hatchery Can't Handle Ike's Request

Gray, Maine — UPI — The Maine Fish Hatchery has been unable to furnish a trout supply requested by aides of President Eisenhower.

The hatchery Wednesday received a telephone call from the summer White House in Newport, R.I., for 300 trout weighing 2 1/2 to 3 pounds each.

The caller said that the trout were wanted to stock a Rhode Island pond for the President, but the hatchery was not able to fill the order.

### Navy Will Order Five Polaris Subs

Washington — UPI — The Navy will order the five New Polaris submarines authorized by Congress instead of the three missile carrying atomic subs proposed by President Eisenhower.

The Navy decision was announced Wednesday just as the Polaris missile passed a crucial test in two successful underwater launchings from the submarine George Washington.

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