



No. 221  
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# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

## Remembering Aunt Eunice



"We were so poor we couldn't afford to pay attention," is how Eunice Merrell described growing up in rural Madison County. "But my parents taught me that the most precious thing you could have were your friends."

With that thought in mind, she opened up a small restaurant and though she never became a business tycoon, her friends soon numbered in the thousands.

And somewhere along the line, she became Huntsville's favorite Aunt.

*Also in this issue:* Huntsville's First Airport

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*Domie Lewter*  
*Mae Lewter*

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# Remembering Aunt Eunice

"We were so poor we couldn't afford to pay attention!" is how Aunt Eunice, with a twinkle in her eye, described growing up in rural Madison County.

Eunice Merrell was born into a society, in 1919, that had not changed much since the Civil War. Madison County was still largely agricultural with most people living on small farms and raising cotton as their sole cash crop.

Her father, Joseph Franklin Jenkins, had moved to Madison County in the 1880s with his mother when he was three years old. Known as a hard working and industrious man, he married Mary Madgeline Hornbuckle and purchased a small farm near Piney Woods, now known as Cave Springs. Even for a hard working man with little money to hire help, raising 250 acres of cotton with a pair of mules was a backbreaking task. "I started working in the fields before I was even old enough to go to school," recalls Eunice. "I re-

member when I was just a little girl and Mama made me my first (cotton) picking bag out of a flour sack. I never was very good at picking cotton but we were all expected to do what we could."

If Eunice wasn't very good at picking cotton, her brothers and sisters probably made up the difference. In all, there was a total of twelve siblings, six brothers and six sisters.

"My father was a minister and named all of his children after figures in the Bible. My brothers were Phillip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James and John, and my sisters were Martha, Ruth, Mary Madgeline, Naomi and Elizabeth. My friends used to tease me by saying we had the whole Bible sitting at the supper table!

"We had a two-horse wagon when I was young and I remember once when we were coming back from church and Mama started counting heads. No matter how she counted, she kept coming up one short! Finally, Mama made Daddy turn the horse around and go back to church where we found one of my sisters curled up under a bench, asleep.

"My father was a deeply religious man who never missed a church service the whole time I was growing up. He and my mother were called on constantly whenever there were sick folks in the community. I remember many times when there would be a knock on the

**"They used to photograph Shirley Temple through gauze. They should photograph me through linoleum."**

**Tallulah Bankhead**



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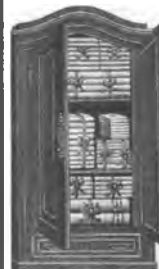


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door in the middle of the night from someone needing help. My parents never said no to anyone.

"He performed a lot of marriage ceremonies. I remember one time when a couple, wanting to get married, came to our house late at night after we had gone to bed. Daddy never said a word. He just married them, wished them luck and went back to bed. Another time, he married a couple in a cotton field, at the end of the rows. I've often wondered if they picked cotton for the rest of that day!

"All of us had our own chores and one of mine was helping with the washing. Mama had this big black wash kettle that we would build a fire under in the backyard, my job was stirring the clothes with a big wooden paddle. We put bluing in the water to make the clothes whiter. Later, when I was grown and got my first washing machine, I thought that was the most wonderful invention in the world.

"As a family we were pretty self sufficient. We raised most everything we ate and Mama made a lot of our clothes out of flour sacks and fertilizer bags. I remember carrying lunch to

school in a tin bucket. Sometimes, if I was lucky, I would trade a couple of ham and biscuits for a peanut butter sandwich. At that time I thought only rich people ate peanut butter.

"I was twenty years old the first time I ever came to town. It was at the end of cotton picking season and as a special celebration Daddy carried us to the County Fair. I had never seen so many lights and so many people. The thing that really impressed me the most though was the cotton candy. I had never tasted anything like it.

"I suppose it's difficult for anyone who never picked cotton to understand how happy we were when it was finished. We would get out in the fields at first light, sometimes freezing to death, and work all day long bent over picking cotton. There was no comfortable way to pick it. If you bent over, your back killed you and if you worked on your knees you got gouged by sharp rocks and thorns. If I was working for someone else I got paid 50 cents a hundred pounds, or 50 cents a day for chopping cotton.

"The only good times of the day were lunch time and quit-

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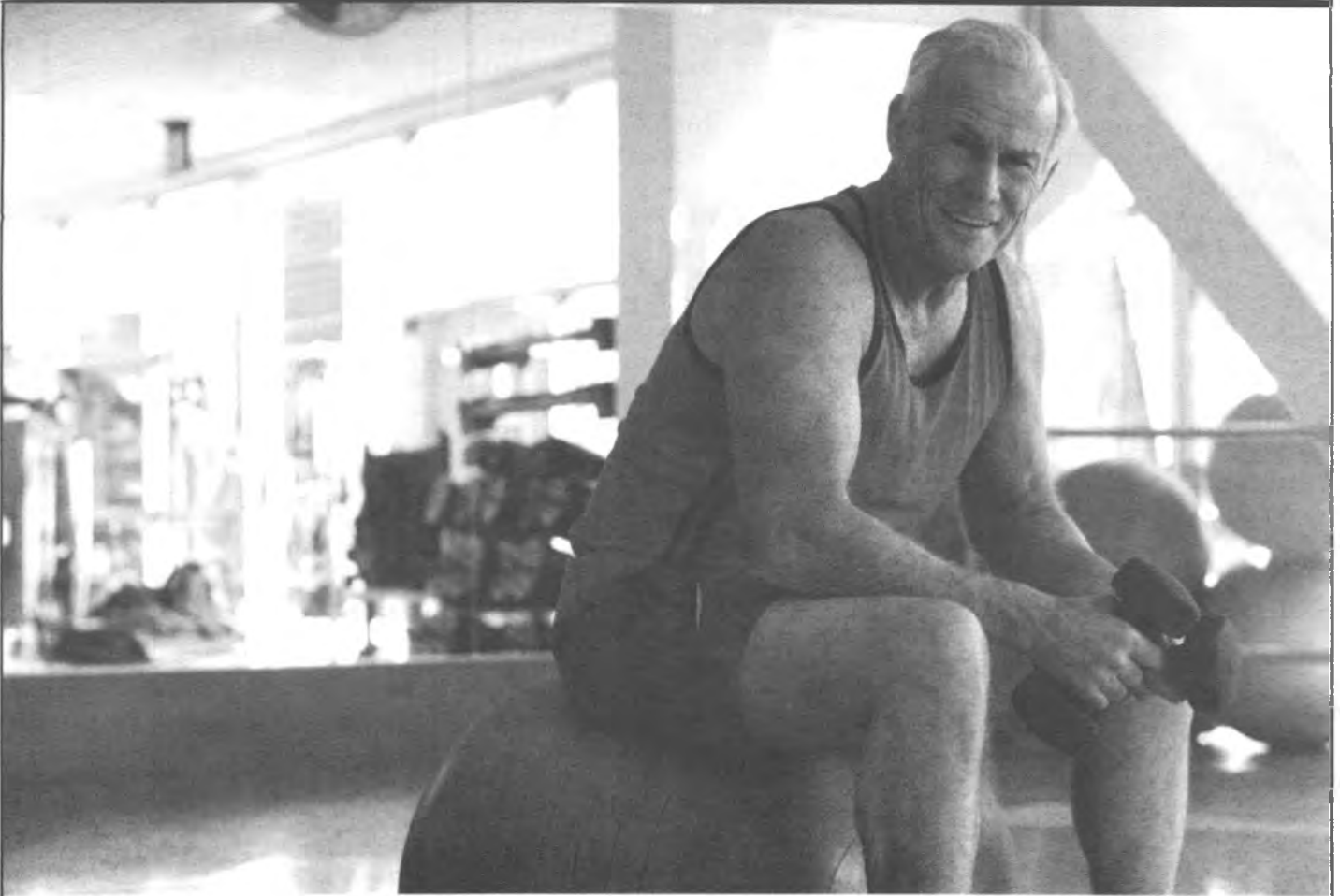
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ting time."

In 1940, Eunice met and married a local farm-worker named Leonard Merrell. Though the couple soon had three children, any thoughts of her becoming a typical housewife soon vanished. The area was still recovering from the worst depression this country had ever known and simply putting food on the table was often a Herculean task.

"I did housework for Mrs. Butler, who lived down the road, and also helped take care of her children. I was paid six dollars a week for six days a week. It doesn't sound like much money now, but we did whatever we had to do back then.

"Later I went to work for my brother-in-law who owned a small restaurant in Farley. I made \$15.00 a week and the first time I got paid I was scared to death. That was the most money I had ever had at one time!"

The restaurant was a popu-

lar gathering spot for local politicians and people wanting favors. One local wag claimed there was more business conducted at the restaurant than at the courthouse. For a young country girl like Eunice, it provided a valuable insight on how politics were conducted at the time.

"There was a back room in the restaurant with a big wooden table and every Monday morning the sheriff (Oliver McPeters) would do his business there. People who wanted to pay a fine or wanted a favor, would wait their turn to see him. Of course, all the business was done in cash. Sometimes the whole front of the restaurant would be full of people waiting to see (or pay) some politician in the back room.

"The first thing I learned in the restaurant business was how to pour coffee and the second thing was how to keep my mouth shut!"

After a few years Eunice decided to open her own place, called the Butler Grill, across from the old Butler High School.

"I borrowed seventy-five dollars on my life insurance policy to open the restaurant with," recalls Eunice. "I don't

**"Is a lie really a lie, if it's only not true?"**

**William Jefferson Clinton**

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think I was ever so scared in my life as I was at the thought of losing that money.

"I opened at 5 o'clock in the morning and stayed open until about 9 or 10 o'clock at night. Sometimes I would run out of food before I had a chance to go to the store. I remember late one night when a bunch of rough looking men came in and ordered hamburger steaks. They had been up for several days gambling and you could tell they were all drinking. Anyway, I had to tell them I was out of hamburger steaks. Next they ordered pork chops and again I had to tell them I didn't have any.

"Finally, one of the men grinned at me and said, 'Miss Eunice, you just cook us anything you have!'

"I cooked them the biggest breakfast you ever saw and before they left they told me that if anyone ever tried to bother me, to just give them a call.

"I didn't think much about it until they started to leave and I saw they were all carrying guns!" Although Eunice worked long hours and tried everything she could think of,

she finally realized that if she was going to make a living from the restaurant she would have to find a different location. Its location across from the school proved to be a magnet for the kids during recess and lunch. Though the restaurant was often packed, she simply couldn't make a living on the nickels and dimes the children spent.

The one legacy from the location however, was the addition of "Aunt" to her name. While most of her friends called her Eunice; to a youngster, calling an adult by their first name was unheard of. The kids solved this problem by simply calling her, "Aunt Eunice."

In 1952, Aunt Eunice moved to her final location on Andrew Jackson Way. Though at first her business seemed to thrive, the new location brought problems she had never faced before. The city began widening the street in front and her customers were forced to run a gauntlet of construction work to get to the restaurant. Whenever it came a hard rain, the nearby drainage ditch would flood, often leaving the restau-

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rant with six inches of water covering the floor.

Thankfully, the city soon finished the road construction, but though it would be several years before the flooding was fixed, her customers solved this problem by simply sitting on the tables when necessary!

Needless to say, by this time Aunt Eunice had built up a loyal following who were willing to put up with such "minor irritations."

Part of her success had to do with the country ham and homemade biscuits she had begun to specialize in.

One of her loyal customers was Homer Atchley, who at the time was the Weights and Measurements Inspector for service stations across North Alabama. Many of the service stations, in an effort to make extra income, sold country cured hams which were displayed prominently in their front windows. The fact that the stations did not have a permit to sell food made the practice illegal. According to legend, Atchley also had an insatiable appetite for country ham and biscuits, which at the time, Aunt Eunice didn't sell.

Atchley allegedly solved this problem by simply confiscating the hams and delivering them to Aunt Eunice; who would then cook him all the ham and biscuits he could eat.

With her business starting to make a small profit, Aunt Eunice decided it was time to take care of another problem. She had never learned to drive and had for years depended on other people for transportation.

"I didn't know nothing about cars but I decided it was time to learn. I called Ray's Auto and told them to bring me a car.

They must have thought I was crazy because when they asked me what kind of car, I said one that I can drive! They brought me a 1956 Buick."

"I talked a friend of mine into teaching me and the first time I got behind the steering wheel she told me to just keep going until I hear glass breaking. When I looked over at her a few minutes later, she was sitting there with her eyes clenched shut and holding onto the door with both hands!"

As the years began to pass, Aunt Eunice and her restaurant became a fixture in the community. It was no longer just a restaurant where you went to eat, it was more like visiting with a favorite member of the family. If you received a promotion on your job, you stopped by to tell her. If you became the proud parents of a new baby, Aunt



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Eunice was one of the first people you told. For many people who had moved here from out of town, she became the replacement for the family they left behind.

Politicians began stopping in to take the pulse of the voters and editorial writers visited in search of stories. Astronauts, Generals, sports legends and movie stars all ate breakfast and rubbed elbows with whoever might be sitting next to them. For people with out of town guests, Aunt Eunice's Country Kitchen became a place they had to go to.

Most people however, returned time and again for the warmth of the lady who had become everyone's Aunt. Everyone who visited left with a kind word, a smile or a hug.

A devout Christian, Aunt Eunice has made it a practice to treat everyone the same-- a fact that Congressman Bud Cramer can testify to. Shortly after being elected to his first term, Bud walked in one morning

and started to sit down when Aunt Eunice stopped him.

"Don't sit down yet," said Aunt Eunice. "Help clear the table off first!"

Jeff Enfinger recalls ordering breakfast one morning, only to have Aunt Eunice tell him that if he's going to be a politician he needs to learn how to pour coffee. With that, she thrust a coffee pot in his hand and told him to go wait on the tables.

Being well-known can also have its pitfalls; a fact Aunt Eunice discovered in the predawn hours of October 19, 1995, when she was brutally attacked and robbed. Though left for dead, she managed to attract the attention of a next-door neighbor who immediately summoned help. Within minutes she was transported to Huntsville Hospital where doctors worked to stabilize her condition.

As Huntsville began to wake up to a new day, the news of the brutal assault on Aunt Eunice was greeted by an incredulous mixture of outrage and

disbelief. The district attorney's office and the police department were besieged by phone calls from citizens demanding swift justice. Television crews did live updates from the hospital and newspapers across the country headlined the phenomenon of a woman whom a whole city claimed as their Aunt.

Aunt Eunice recovered from the attack and within days was back at the restaurant, once again greeting visitors with a smile and a hug.

As Aunt Eunice has grown older she has fallen victim to the crippling disease of arthritis. Partly because of it and partly because of a desire to help others, she became involved with the local Arthritis Foundation. "I'm too old for them to help me," she said with an impish smile on her face. But after a moment's serious reflection, she added, "Though I pray they might be able to help someone else."

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one else in Huntsville, Aunt Eunice has become the symbol of good will for people visiting our city. Hardly a week went by that she didn't get a letter from someone who has visited her restaurant. Often times they are addressed simply "Aunt Eunice, Huntsville, Alabama."

Driving down Andrew Jackson Way today you almost had to know what you were looking for to find Eunice's Country Kitchen. Surrounded on three sides by a gravel parking lot, the little brick building was almost nondescript in appearance. If pressed, Aunt Eunice would proudly tell you that she purchased all the gravel herself, a reference to some politician who years ago offered a "favor" in return for her support.


It's only when you walk inside and sit down that you began to discover the uniqueness that has made it a Huntsville attraction. The chairs are mismatched. You can still get

sorghum syrup if you ask for it and if you have been there at least one time before, you are expected to help pour coffee.

The walls are still covered with autographed pictures of the famous and infamous and there's always a group of people sitting at the Liar's Table.

And, I'll bet you a cup of a coffee that you see Aunt Eunice give a hug to someone before you leave.

*Editors Note: Aunt Eunice passed away on Feb. 17, 2004. A replica of her restaurant with all original chairs, pictures, booths etc. is located behind the Roundhouse Depot. She received national attention when she was recognized as an Arthritis Hero for Alabama by the Arthritis Foundation for her fundraisers and generosity to that and other organizations.*




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# The Youngest Soldier

By Norman Shapiro

Of the many claims that prevailed after the War Between the States as to who may have been the youngest Confederate soldier, Berry H. Binford's chronicle was certainly one of the more valid ones. Berry was a member of the large Binford family who were early and prominent residents of Limestone, Madison and Morgan counties, Alabama.

His first cousin, once removed, Peter Binford, volunteered for the infantry despite being almost forty-four years old and was probably the first person from Huntsville to die in the war. He fell sick and died in Virginia on May 20, 1861.

Berry was born in Limestone County, Alabama, on April 14, 1854. His father, Dr. Littleberry H. Binford, was a surgeon in the Confederate Army. The boy, when about nine years old, struck out to find his father and reported to General Wheeler, who took him to be a

Federal spy sent in by some of the Union people. The General kept an eye on the little chap and finally turned him over to Col. Josiah Patterson, Commander of the 5th Alabama Cavalry, who knew Dr. Binford and at once assumed care of the boy. As he would not go back home, a pony was secured for him, a gun was sawed off at the proper length, and he was recognized from that time on to the end of the war as a soldier.

It is said that young Binford and another boy, not much older, undertook to do a little special service at one time. They went out between the lines, somewhere up in North Alabama, threw up some small breastworks and awaited the advance of the Federals on the opposite side of a small river.

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a whole day and when night came on they scampered off and rejoined their command several miles away.

Berry H. Binford died while on a business trip to Monroe, Louisiana on September 12, 1889. Some years later, Col. Josiah Patterson wrote, "B.H. Binford came to my Regiment when a mere child. I would say that he was not exceeding twelve years of age. He was the son of Dr. Binford, a well known physician in North Alabama, whom I knew well. The father, when I saw him, represented that the boy had such a passion for the army he thought it best not to control him because otherwise he might run away and join some other command. Binford was certainly the youngest soldier I ever saw and he performed the duties of a soldier with alacrity. He was a child in arms, but bore himself in an astonishingly manly way."

With regard to "a child in arms," a Mr. W. R. Johnson of Nashville, Tenn., also wrote in 1897 in the CONFEDERATE VETERAN: "I am the youngest Rebel in existence; was fourteen months of age when, on the 19th of May 1863, I lost my right arm while held to my father's breast when fighting in the saddle for our dear but lost Confederacy."

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### Sandwiches

- Pork Sandwich
- Turkey Sandwich
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### Sides

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# Huntsville's First Airport

By Jack Harwell

It's well known that Huntsville is a center of research and technological development; U. S. News & World Report has named it one of the ten best job markets in the country for technology workers. But it's easy to overlook the rapidity with which Huntsville transformed itself from a nondescript small Southern town to a city that is home to the nation's second-largest research park. Beginning with the arrival of Wernher von Braun in 1950, it took less than twenty years to get America to the moon. And just twenty years prior to Von Braun, Huntsville didn't even have an airport.

This made Huntsville pretty much like most of America in those days. Although there were over 800 airports in the United States in 1930, many of these were of the grass-field variety; the few airlines then in existence subsisted mainly on government mail contracts. But the 1920s had been the era of the barnstormers, as war veteran pilots performed in farmers' fields all across the country. Many Americans got their first glimpse of a flying machine during this time.

In 1927, Charles Lindbergh became an instant hero when he became the first person to fly the Atlantic solo. That same year, Pan American Airways was founded, and international air service began between Key West and Havana. Clearly, air travel was the wave of the future.

Determined not to be left off the path of progress, city leaders, prodded by the Junior Chamber of Commerce, began the process of bringing

air service to Huntsville. A plot of land covering 150 acres was purchased about a mile south of town, just west of Whitesburg Pike; four runways were laid out, and this became the first Huntsville airport.

The opening of the airport would become one of the most memorable events in the city's history. Days before the facility's scheduled dedication, set for June 27, 1931, teasing announcements were published in the Huntsville Daily Times. Two days before the opening, one such ad featured a drawing of a biplane in majestic flight with the words, "Now, Huntsville is a real city."

The big day finally arrived on a hot Saturday in June, and according to Southern Aviation magazine, a crowd of 4,000 spectators braved the summer heat to see local history in the making. This number may be placed in perspective by observing that the city's population at the time was less than 12,000, which was fewer people than live in Scottsboro or Athens today.

The Jaycees had invited as many aviators as they could to fly in and be a part of the celebration. The highlight of the day was a flyover of the city by all aircraft, which had to be delayed until 4:00 when some of the pilots were late in arriving. At that hour, a Stinson flew over the field piloted

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by Bob Baumann, manager of the Birmingham Air Service. His passengers were Lorraine Quick, niece of Cady Quick, one of Alabama's first female pilots, and Jaycee President William Pierce. As the Stinson crossed the center of the field, Lorraine dropped a bottle containing a quart of wine out the window, thus "dedicating" the field.

The celebration lasted all day, with air races, parachute jumps, a dead-stick landing contest, and a demonstration by National Guard planes. That night, a dance was held for the aviators at the Russel Erskine, and on Sunday, the party continued, although delayed until 1:00 so as not to interfere with church services.

The airport operated for ten years. The 1934 edition of Department of Commerce Airport directory stated that the Huntsville Airport had four dirt-sod runways, with the longest being 2,400 feet. Although initially referred to as the Huntsville Flying Field, it was also known as Mayfair Airport.

Easily the most exciting day

at the field was March 15, 1938, when eighteen Seversky P-35 Army fighters were forced to land there by bad weather. The fighters were en route from Selfridge Field in Michigan to Tampa, Florida for maneuvers and were attempting to land at Montgomery until storms forced them to turn back to Huntsville. State troopers went to a local radio station and broadcast an appeal to citizens to drive to the field and illuminate the runways with their headlights. The Army pilots were treated as celebrities and left the next day, after the high-octane fuel their planes required was brought in by truck from Birmingham.

The lack of modern facilities such as aviation fuel, runway lights, and a proper terminal may have forced city leaders to the realization that the landing field was obsolete. In 1941, a new airport, with paved runways and a terminal building, was built to the south and west, and the old field was abandoned. The new airport saw the beginning of jetliner service to Huntsville, and operated until

1968, when the current facility opened on Alabama Highway 20.

Today, no trace remains of the Huntsville Flying Field. The land where it was located, west of Alabama Street between Thornton and Bob Wallace Avenues, is now occupied by residential homes and Mayfair Park. Huntsville has moved on. In 1941, the same year the new airport was opened, Redstone Arsenal was built for the U.S. Army, and the city began its long association with the federal government; first through the military, and later, space flight. But among the ball parks and tract houses in the Mayfair neighborhood is the place where Huntsville first got off the ground.

**"When there are two conflicting versions of a story, the wise course is to believe the one in which people appear at their worst."**

**Joe Blackwell**



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# The Truth about Archie Bridges, The New Market Thumper

By Cathy Bowen Bridges

"New Market Thumper" was just one of the titles used when referring to Archie Bridges. Let's just say it was fitting that he worked as a bouncer at the Cedar Gap Honkytonk at one time. A lot of people knew who he was, especially around the New Market, Ryland and Brownsboro areas.

I am married to the youngest son of Archie Bridges, and along with him and other family members, we are writing the truth about Archie. We do not condone anything that he did, but he was after all my husband's father. We feel that the truth about Archie should be shared. We will not mention any other names in this article, as we feel that at this time it is not right to do so.

For example, a lot of people

did not know that when Archie was young, he got really sick and had a high fever which affected part of his brain, or that at one time he had a tumor on his brain. He was not "normal", and was sent to a mental hospital at one time, but he did not stay long.

He definitely had a mean streak in him and would do things like throw nails in the road, which would cause flat tires. He seemed to enjoy doing things like that. Archie was in jail numerous times, and was bad about beating up other inmates. He seemed to stay in trouble most of his life.

He had some friends in New Market that have shared stories about him. One of them was my great-uncle. Those that knew and grew up with him under-

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stood how Archie's brain worked, at least most of the time. Some of them would even say that Archie was not as bad as people let on. Others have said that when Archie walked down the street, people stepped aside.

Archie and my mother-in-law had 5 children together, but divorced when my husband was a baby. He never did much for these children that he fathered, and my husband never really knew him. Archie also had a son by someone else, and there have been rumors that he fathered others also. He was a handsome man with dark curly hair. His looks fooled lots of women, and unfortunately my mother-in-law was one of them. He was not a responsible person, and not capable of being the dad that he should have been to his kids. There was one thing that he did that he thought was helping his family, and that was to kill the man whom their mom had chosen to live with back in the sixties when the kids were young. She needed someone to provide a roof over their heads. That was about all that this man did for them, other than beat on them every chance he got.

Archie would sneak around at night and look in the windows to "check" on his kids. He saw things that he did not like, and was told about how mean this man was when his older kids came to New Market to visit him. They told him of the beatings they received, and how their mom was treated by this man. She took beatings just so they had a roof over their heads. Archie later told this man that he would get him one day.....and he did. Archie shot him in downtown New Market one day, and then waited for the police to come get him. L.D. Walls was sheriff of Madison County at the time, and he knew Archie very well, so it did not surprise him when Archie did not try to run.

He was sent to Kilby for this murder, and was not there long before he was stabbed in the back while asleep by another prisoner. My husband has the belt that Archie was wearing when he was killed. It has blood stains all over it. This is the truth about how Archie was killed. His body was shipped back to Huntsville on a train and he

was buried in New Market. He was 40 years old.

Also, the family does not know of any other murders by Archie's hands, although he was bad about cutting people. I'm sure a lot of them wore scars thanks to Archie Bridges. Through the years stories get misconstrued by different people who think they know what they are talking about. We all know that is not necessarily the way it truly is.

So now you have the truth about Archie Bridges.



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# Heard On the Street

by Cathey Carney



Congratulations to **Estelle Jackson** for being the first correct caller to identify the sweet little boy last month who was **Bruce Walker**, renowned storyteller & owner of Walker Real Estate. Estelle says she is just a homemaker who heard one of Bruce's story telling events and loved it!

It was so good meeting **Barbara Stevenson** recently. She works on the 7th floor of Huntsville hospital and is one of the nicest people you'll ever meet. Her mom is **Thelma Stevenson** and she loves reading stories about Huntsville. Working alongside Barbara is **Kim Langford**, who is really good at her job.

Congratulations to **Rosemary and Bill Leatherwood** of Hazel Green, who celebrated their 34th wedding anniversary in June. The lovebirds celebrated by having a romantic dinner at home.

Also celebrating an anniversary were **Ken & Diane Owens**, who have now been married for 41 years! And who said it would never last??

We are thinking about our

good friend **John Bzdell** who recently had heart valve surgery - we know he'll be fine!

We want to send love to that well-known musician and writer from the Ryland area, **Malcolm Miller**. He is such a legend there and lets readers know how life was around here many years ago. He's had some health issues recently so I want you to know you're in our thoughts every day, Malcolm.

**Deborah Dalton** works as a License Inspector at the Madison County License department. We met her recently and she was really interesting to talk with! Deborah is married to **Jim Dalton**.

Here's a little trivia for you - in 1943 Huntsville's Binford Court - its first public housing project - opened, named for **Henry C. Binford**.

Also, in 1933, a quartet of mu-

sicians comprised of **Charles O'Reilly, Dudley Smith, Hilding Homberg and Sam "Canada" Broyles** 'knocked 'em dead' at Huntsville High with their rendition of "Minnie the Moocher."

**Roger Parton** wanted to send special love to his wife **Shaunnah Parton** who had a recent birthday on June 18.

**Sue Clark** asked us to put the word out that the Rison-Dallas Association's 39th Annual Reunion will be taking place on August 6 this year, starting at 10am and including a covered dish luncheon & program. The Huntsville Fire Department is presenting "The Farenheit Singers" which should be fun. It will be at the Jackson Way Baptist Church on Andrew Jackson Way. Contact Sue at 256-464-9432 for more information.

**Ashley Dinges** is the very talented and BUSY Marketing Manager at Merrimack Mill and recently celebrated her birthday - Happy June birthday to you Ashley!

**Scottie Brier** of Scranton, PA

## Photo of The Month

The first person to correctly identify the youngster below wins a full one-year subscription to "Old Huntsville" magazine.

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Hint: This little boy wasn't born here but he put Huntsville on the map.



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wants to say hi to his friends that he used to know here in Huntsville. He says he misses it here every single day!

**Doug Raney** lives in Stafford, VA but really keeps up with Huntsville's happenings. It's just amazing how many people have moved away from here but always keep Huntsville close in their hearts.

We are so very proud of our young friend from Woodstock, GA. - **Faith Sutherlin** - who recently graduated from Sequoyah High School with honors. She maintained a GPA of 4.4 and was named Salutatorian for the Class of 2011. With this honor she had to give a speech to an audience of 2,000 and did an amazing job. In addition, she has received a full scholarship to BYU in Provo, UT. Her mother **Felicia Sutherlin** and grandmother **Cheryl Tribble** are just in awe of her accomplishments.

A special hello to our friend **Tillman Williams** who is not feeling too well, we love you Tillman.

If you are a **dog owner**, you should know that there is a new disease that affects only dogs and can be fatal. Nearly all dogs exposed to this virus will become infected and the flu spreads very quickly, if you have multiple dogs. Be sure and ask your vet about this.

Our very busy friend **Chuck McCrone**, the oldest EMT in

the state of Alabama, just celebrated his 80th birthday. A surprise birthday party was planned for him by **Glenn Switzer** and **Martine Rober-son**. Many people showed up to congratulate him including **Louie & Jane Tippett, Marie Hewett, Leroy Cunningham, Ron & Barb Eyestone, Janice Hunter, Johnny Johnson, Peggy Boatwright, Glenn Watson** and many others. They enjoyed **Lee Ann's** famous chicken wings.

We were so sorry to hear of the death of **Helen Acuff**, well known to many in Huntsville. Helen had worked at the Russel Erskine Hotel and retired from Thiokol after 35 years of service. She was a member of the East Huntsville Church of Christ. We send our deepest sympathy to her many friends and family.

A special hello to **M.D. and Judy Smith** - one of the most interesting and accomplished couples you'll meet anywhere.

Happy 25th wedding anniversary to **Stan and Donna England** on June 28. They were so smitten with each other that they married just barely two months after they met and they've been happy ever since!

Mark your calendar for Sunday, July 10 when **Bruce Walker** will present his storytelling series which is funny, poignant and always interesting. It'll be held on the Historic Lowry

House lawn and costs \$5, bring your own libations and lawn chairs. It starts at 2:30 pm.

One of the nicest people you'll ever meet is **Terry Hatfield**, Huntsville Public Works Director. He recently broke some bones in an accident and we just want to say we're thinking about you for a quick recovery!

Have a safe & fun 4th and be sure and watch out for your older neighbors who might need some help. If you get out and walk be sure and take cold water with you!

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# RECIPES

## Cooking with Nancy

*Remembering Nancy Holliman, a really good cook.*

### Crispy Cauliflower

- 1 med. cauliflower
- 1/3 c. hot water
- Salt to taste
- 2 T. butter
- 2 T. heavy cream
- Paprika & chopped chives

Wash cauliflower & remove tough bottom stalks. Separate upper stalks until very small flowerets. Bring water and salt to boil in skillet and add cauliflower.

Cover and cook for 5-7 minutes til crisp-tender. Don't drain before adding butter and cream. Heat 1-2 minutes, tossing flowerets to coat.

Remove to warm serving dish and garnish with paprika and chives before serving.

### Vidalia Onion Casserole

- 1/2 c. butter
- 4 Vidalia onions, cut in rings

- 6 oz. butter-flavored crackers, crushed
- 1/2 lb. shredded Cheddar cheese
- 3 lg. eggs
- 1 c. milk
- Salt & pepper to taste

Sauté onions in 1/4 cup butter. Combine remaining butter with crumbs, set aside 1/4 of the crumb mix for topping. Pat balance of crumbs onto the bottom of the casserole.

Spread with onions and sprinkle with cheese, salt and paprika. Combine eggs and milk and pour over ingredients. Top with crumbs. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes in 350 degree oven.

### Pineapple Casserole

- 2 lg. cans chunk or crushed pineapple
- 1 c. sugar
- 5 T. flour
- 1 1/2 c. Cheddar cheese, grated

- 3/4 c. Ritz cracker crumbs
- 1 stick butter, melted

Drain the pineapple and place in a greased glass baking dish. Mix flour and sugar together and pour over pineapple. Top with cheese and cracker crumbs.

Pour butter over all and bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees. Serve hot with your meal. This is especially good with pork and poultry.

### Chicken Imperial

#### Mix together:

- 1/2 pt. sour cream
- 2 T. lemon juice
- 1 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 t. celery salt
- 1/2 t. garlic powder
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/4 t. pepper
- 1 t. paprika

Pepperidge Farm dressing crumbs

Dip 5 to 6 boned and skin-

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less chicken breasts in the sauce above, then roll in Pepperidge Farm dressing mix.

Put chicken in a casserole or baking pan and sprinkle with 1/2 cup melted butter. Bake 45 minutes to an hour at 350 degrees.

### Shrimp and Wild Rice Casserole

- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 2 T. chopped green pepper
- 2 T. chopped onions
- 2 T. melted butter
- 1 T. lemon juice
- 2 c. cooked wild rice
- 1 t. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 t. dry mustard
- 1/2 t. white pepper
- 1/2 c. Cheddar cheese, cubed
- 1 lb. uncooked shrimp, cleaned

Mix all ingredients together thoroughly. Pour into greased 1.5 quart casserole and bake in 375 degree oven for 30-35 minutes.

Recipe may be doubled or tripled. Just make it in the right-sized casserole dishes.

### Claire Gau's Coconut Pound Cake

- 1 1/3 c. shortening
- 2 1/2 c. sugar
- 6 eggs
- 1 t. baking powder
- 3 c. plain flour
- 1/4 t. salt

- 1 c. milk
- 1 c. flaked coconut
- 2 t. coconut flavoring

For best results, all ingredients should be at room temperature. Cream the shortening, sugar and coconut flavoring til light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time.

Sift flour, baking powder and salt together. Dust coconut with 2 tablespoons of the dry mixture and reserve.

Add flour mix to the creamed mix alternately with milk. Fold in the coconut last.

Pour into greased and floured tube pan and place in the middle of a cold oven. Turn temperature to 325 degrees and bake for 1 hour and 25 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool in pan before removing sides and bottom.

### Pineapple Cheesecake

- 1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple
- 12 oz. cream cheese
- 1/2 c. sour cream
- 1 egg
- 1/2 c. granulated sugar
- 1 T. lemon juice
- 1/2 t. grated lemon peel
- 1 graham cracker crust

Drain pineapple. Remove foil and soften cream cheese in microwave. Combine all ingredients, mix well.

Pour into crust and bake 1 hour and 15 minutes at 300 degrees. Cool to room temperature & serve, or chill first. Delicious either way!



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# A Personal Kind of War

David Howard was a peaceful man. In a time when the Tennessee Valley was torn apart with the ravages of the Civil War he stood apart as a man who did not believe in violence or the taking of lives, regardless of the reasons. This made him unpopular with many of his neighbors as the tides of war swept back and forth across his small homestead near the Marshall County line.

No one is sure exactly where Howard came from. Most accounts have him moving to Madison County in the late 1840s from South Carolina.

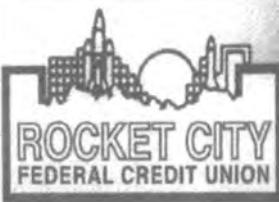
One account says his parents were devout Quakers, which would explain his life-long aversion to violence.

David Howard settled on a small homestead in the foothills near the Madison/Marshall County line where he quickly became a respected and compassionate member of the community. Rarely did a neighbor suffer a misfortune without Howard stopping by to offer his condolences and help. The area was secluded, well off the traveled path, with only an occasional preacher stopping by to minister to the religious needs of the small community. Although nondenominational in his religious beliefs he soon became the community's spiritual leader, often presiding at funerals and weddings and offering words of comfort to the bereaved.

His wife, Elizabeth, was the epitome of gentleness. She was an extremely attractive woman with long dark hair and manners that hinted at a cultured background. Her single goal in life was the welfare of her family.

As the winds of war swept across North Alabama, the small community was torn asunder with almost everyone taking sides. Brothers fought brothers and sons turned against fathers, in the midst of this turmoil Howard continued working on his farm, hoping against hope that the war would pass him by.

For the first couple of years the only contact the family had with the war was an occasional stray Confederate soldier who would appear at





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the door asking for something to eat, or maybe a place to spend the night. Howard remained adamant in his refusal to take sides but never-the-less offered help to everyone who stopped at his farm. A crippled leg kept Howard out of the war but he was undoubtedly worried that if the conflict continued it would some day involve his sons, who were 10 and 13 years old.

As the war dragged on, and Federal troops occupied the Tennessee Valley, the conflict spread to every remote homestead. The Union troops disrupted the Rebel supply lines and the Confederates were forced to confiscate provisions from local farmers.

The Union troops in turn began a policy of burning any farm suspected of aiding the Confederates. Adding to the hardship was the fact that many soldiers, blue and gray, used the conflict to plunder the helpless families.

Soldiers from both sides visited the Howard farm searching for deserters, enemy patrols and plunder. The chickens were the first to disappear, followed by the meat hanging in the smokehouse. The horse and wagon went next, along with the shotgun and family silverware. Within a few months the family had lost almost all of their possessions.

Howard had managed to keep a mule and several cows by hiding them in the foothills. With soldiers constantly going back and forth across the farm, Howard was often forced to tend the stock and plow his fields at night time in order for the mule not be seen, and stolen.

In the spring of 1864 a small detachment of Confederate soldiers stopped at the farm. After the customary search, the soldiers had begun to prepare their lunch when a sentry gave the alarm - Union soldiers approaching! Quickly the Confederates mounted their horses and fled

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to the nearby foothills.

The Federal forces chased the Confederates a short distance, firing their guns at the fleeing enemy, before finally giving up and returning to the Howard homestead. After lining the Howard family up in front of their home, the officer in charge ordered the grounds searched. When the search revealed no hidden guns or hiding Confederate soldiers, the officer began to question Howard.

Howard, in his quiet manner, tried to explain that he was neutral, taking no side in the conflict. All he wanted, he explained, was to be left alone to tend his farm and raise his family.

Suddenly the officer's attention was diverted when a sentry raised an alarm. On a nearby hill, out of gun shot range, was a small group of Confederates, sitting on their horses, watching the proceedings at the farm.

The Union officer, apparently frustrated at his inability to capture the Confederates, began to question Howard again. This time the questioning took a harsher tone, accusing him of being a Rebel sympathizer for allowing the soldiers to camp in his yard. When Howard tried to explain that he had no choice, the armies did what they wanted, the officer angrily walked away. Motioning to the squad of soldiers standing nearby, he gave the orders, "Burn it!"

Within minutes the home was a blazing inferno. Years of hard work was being wiped out in a few short minutes. Howard and his wife rushed to try

to stop the soldiers, begging them to spare what little was left. When Howard grabbed a soldier's arm he was brutally beaten with the butt of a gun, leaving a long bloody gash on the side of his head.

Moments later the soldiers mounted their horses and rode away, leaving a lifetime of hopes and dreams lying in the smoldering ruins.

With no other choice available, the Howard family began to re-build their lives. Pots and pans were salvaged from the smoldering ashes and several old horse blankets provided bedding. Fortunately the barn had been spared and it became the family's new home. As cruel as fate had been, the family still held hope that the war would pass them by.

Weeks later a small detachment of Confederates arrived at the farm. After watering their horses and resting, the soldiers inquired about a trail they had heard about. The trail was little more than a path cutting across the mountain toward New Hope but it would save hours of riding. Howard tried to give the men directions, even drawing them a map, but the directions were still vague and confusing.

Finally one of the soldiers

suggested that Howard let one of his sons accompany them to show the way. Howard protested vehemently, saying he did not want his family involved in the war. An argument ensued with the soldiers accusing the family of being Northern sympathizers. The more Howard tried to protest, the angrier the soldiers became.

The confrontation ended abruptly when several soldiers grabbed a torch and began setting fire to what was left of the homestead. At the same time they accosted the oldest son, demanding to know how old he was. Howard pleaded with the soldiers, explaining that his son was only 13 years old and too young to know anything about the war.

Finally, the soldiers left, with the admonition that the Howards had better choose sides. "If you aren't with us," they warned, "then you are against us!"

Once again the family set about trying to rebuild. The fires had only partially burned the smokehouse and it became their new home. Fortunately, Howard

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had taken the precaution of hiding some of their belongings in the woods during the daylight hours and now they were the only possessions the family owned.

Like so many other families caught up in the war, the Howards realized they could no longer ignore the conflict. If they remained on their farm, the best they could expect was more visits by marauding soldiers. The worst, however, was the knowledge that if the war lasted much longer one, or possibly both, sons would be forced to serve in the military. In the end, Howard realized the family had no choice but to flee, hopefully to a place where the war would pass them by.

After much discussion within the family it was decided that Texas was their best hope. Elizabeth, however, had seen too many families dispossessed by the war and wandering aimlessly with their few possessions in the back of a wagon. She insisted this was not going to be her family's fate; if they had to leave, she wanted a home to go to. Reluctantly Howard agreed to make the journey by himself, find a homestead and

then return for the family. So, in the late fall of 1864, David Howard mounted his mule and began the long trek to Texas. He estimated the trip there and back would take three, maybe four, months.

Howard had left the family as well provided for as possible under the circumstances. There was no reason for anyone to venture off the homestead and if an emergency arose there were

neighbors only four or five miles distant. There was an abundance of vegetables in the root cellar and several bags of flour and corn meal carefully hidden in the woods. The oldest son was a fairly good shot and could provide occasional squirrels and rabbits for the table, although Howard cautioned his sons to keep the guns well hidden.

The next few months passed uneventfully. Several times

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soldiers stopped to water their horses and rest but always left without unduly disturbing the family. It was almost as if a peaceful calm had settled on the little cove. Elizabeth even began having doubts as to whether moving to Texas was the right decision.

Late one afternoon the calm was shattered when a small group of neighbors rode into the yard. The remains of a body had been found near the river. The body was unrecognizable, it had been lying there for months and wild animals had scattered the bones.

"Is this your husband's?" they asked while handing her an old weather-beaten felt hat. They already knew the answer. David Howard had worn the hat for years, in fact he had worn it for so long that no one could remember him without it.

As reality began to sink in, Elizabeth seemed to age before their eyes. Her shoulders sagged, wrinkles showed around her eyes and her gleaming black hair now hung dry and listless. One of the men spoke up to say he would build the coffin. Another asked if there was anything else they could do.

Elizabeth hesitantly called for a pencil and paper and after writing her husband's name, year of birth and year of death, asked if one of the men would see about getting a marker. She didn't want to bury her husband, she explained, until he could have a proper burial with a headstone.

A few days later Elizabeth, her sons, and a few neighbors gathered to bury David Howard. There was no preacher so the few words said were kept short. The grave was filled and a sprig of flowers rested next to the headstone, the only marker to a man who just wanted to be left in peace.

Several neighbors were worried about Elizabeth's state of mind and offered to share their homes with the family but she refused the offers. She had her two sons, she said, and they would be all right.

Supper that evening, in the partially burned smokehouse, was a dismal affair. Elizabeth sat in a dark corner of the room rejecting all at-

tempts by her sons to get her to eat. Regardless of how hard the young lads begged, their mother seemed to be sinking deeper into her own terrifying subconscious world of despair.

That evening, shortly before dark, the boys left to tend the stock. Almost at the same time a straggler, no one is sure from which army, appeared at the burned out homestead. After the customary drink of water the soldier asked where Elizabeth's "men folks" were. Receiving no reply, the stranger became bolder, demanding to know if any money was hidden on the farm. Still, Elizabeth remained mute, staring at the stranger with empty eyes.

Elizabeth's silence infuriated the straggler.

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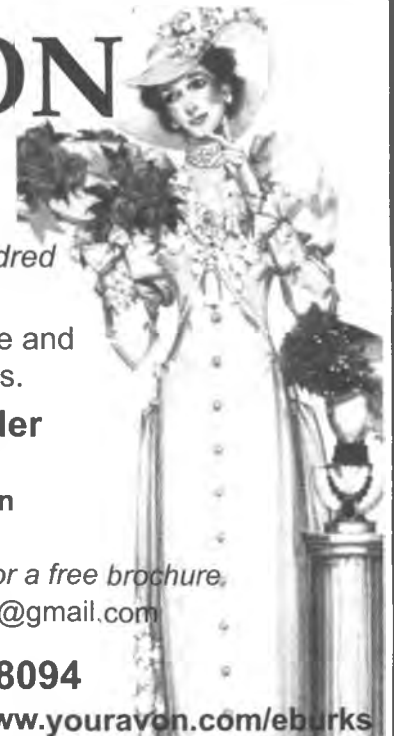
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Grabbing her arm, he tried to push her toward the door. When she didn't respond, he began slapping her about the face until finally she fell to the ground in a crumpled heap. Disgusted, the stranger began prowling through the family's few possessions, searching for money or possibly something to drink.

Perhaps the sight of the stranger ransacking her home triggered something in Elizabeth's mind. Perhaps she was past caring. For whatever reason, Elizabeth seemed to draw on an inner strength, fueled by a raging fury, as she grabbed a piece of fire wood and began beating the stranger. Her hopes, her desires, the loss of her home and her husband was driven home every time she raised the piece of wood to hit him again. Consumed by an indescribable rage, she kept hitting, hitting, hitting....

Minutes later her sons returned to a scene of horror. The walls and floor were splattered with blood and gore and their mother was crouched in the floor next to the lifeless body of a stranger whom she kept hitting and hitting with a stick of wood.

The next morning several neighbors appeared at the home to check on Elizabeth. The door was standing open, revealing the bloody terror of the night before. Immediately a search was begun and a few minutes later the terrified family was found hiding in some nearby bushes. The sight of the trembling woman was enough to make the strongest man recoil.

Elizabeth's gleaming black hair had turned white overnight. Her face was wrinkled and appeared to be that of an old woman. She had aged 30 or 40 years in the span of a few hours.

Without a word being spoken, the neighbors gathered the family together and placed them in the wagon. Until something

else could be decided, the neighbors reasoned, Elizabeth and her sons would stay with them.

Elizabeth didn't protest. She didn't say anything. Her mind, as well as her spirit, was completely broken, leaving her in a dark world of horror from which she would never recover.

Talk of the brutal attack circulated throughout the community. Before long, everyone knew of the terrible tragedies that had struck the Howard family.



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# "Baby Ruth" Beverly

By Chuck Bobo

Ozzie Beverly didn't ask for the name "Baby Ruth" Beverly, but it was given to him because he earned it. Beverly was the blacksmith for Huntsville Wholesale Nurseries during the 1930s and 1940s in the Gladstone community on Pulaski Pike about 12 miles north of Huntsville.

During the "budding" season for the nursery stock in the early summers, the nursery hired young boys in their pre- or early teens to crawl of slide down between the rows of nursery stock and clean the dirt back. Then the "budders" would follow them and slit the bark on each plant and slide a fresh bud of the desired variety in the slit. The slit would be wrapped with a special "bark" and the bud would adhere to the plant and grow.

Later the main branch of the root stock would be cut off and the tree that developed from the new limb would produce the desired variety of fruit. Later it would be dug from the ground and its roots and the soil around them would be wrapped in burlap and shipped to nurseries and orchards.

But I digress from the story of Mr. Beverly.

Each morning before the lads went to the work fields, Beverly would line up the youngsters, mostly in their early teens, and give them a task to do. One would be given the task of bringing fuel to the blacksmith shop, another bringing fresh drinking water, another water to fill the tank Beverly used to cool the metal after it had been heated and shaped in his shot. There was a task of a few minutes for each boy and he had enough tasks for each boy to have something to do.

My task was to hand-crank the blower on the

forge which heated the iron he was shaping. If a piece of equipment was broken or damaged on the nursery, no one was sent to town to get a replacement. It was the job of the blacksmith to make a replacement part in most instances, heat and "turn" the shoes for the horses and mules and to shoe them.

I felt I had the best assignment of all the youngsters. I learned as a lad of 12 years to shoe horses, a skill which served me well much later in life when in the Army Air Corps, I had occasion to shoe and care for the riding horses of one of the Air Corps generals. That may sound far-fetched for an Air Corps general, but Gen.

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Archie Old was from Dangerfield, TX, and kept riding horses at Westover Field, Chicopee Falls, MA.

I boasted one day that I knew all about horses, and had the "pleasure" of arising early each morning, going to the stables and helping the general with his horses.

But, I digress from the story of "Baby Ruth" Beverly.

After we lads completed our assigned tasks, Mr. Beverly would line up his young helpers and give each a "penny" Baby Ruth bar. A penny bar of that day was about the same size as 50-cent bar today. It was a great treat which had to be eaten before the heat of the day melted the chocolate coating.

After Mr. Beverly left Huntsville Wholesale Nursery, he moved his blacksmith business to Thach community in Limestone County where he was the "smithy" for years.



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# Olin Vann

By Austin Miller

Olin Vann was born in Ryland in 1919 and except for three years in the Army during World War II, lived his entire life on the spot where he was bora. He likely would have lived in the same house all his life, except that the old house was blown away in the tornado of 1974. Olin was one of many colorful characters that lived in Ryland over the years. He probably would not have won most colorful but without doubt, he was the most contentious. He would not agree with anybody on anything, often changing to the opposite position as soon as somebody agreed with him. As far as I know, he never set foot inside a church, didn't like policemen, politicians or preachers. His nick name was Plucky and few people knew that his

real name was Olin.

Olin was about 5 feet 7 inches tall with dark brown hair. I never saw him dressed up. He liked to tinker with electronics and had several tall antennas in his yard. He would sometimes use loud speakers to amplify music for the whole community, especially at Christmas time. On holidays, he would celebrate with commercial grade fire works and set off a stick of dynamite as a finale. He made home

brew and bootlegged out of a shed behind his house. Daddy always said that he was going to end up in the penitentiary. From our front porch, we had a clear view of the Vann house. It sat on a hill across Ryland Pike on about the same elevation as our house. We could see them sitting on their front porch and they could see us sitting on ours. When the wind and atmosphere was right we could hear them talking. By observation, we

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knew a lot about the habits and life of the Vanns. Except for the Shepards, they were our closest neighbors. Through most of the forties, Olin lived in the house with his wife Esther and mother, Mrs. Pearl Vann. Later two sons were born, Dennis and Tommy.

One Christmas, when I was in the first grade and we had very little, Mrs. Vann and Olin came to visit. They brought a big box filled with apples, oranges, nuts and candy. I enjoyed eating out of the box for days and it is one of my favorite childhood Christmas memories. After that, I always had a soft spot in my heart for the Vanns.

In the late fifties, we started observing a peculiar sight. About once a week, we would see Olin walking around with a toe sack in the tall sage grass that grew in his field behind the Sharp house, every once in a while, he would bend down, pick up something and put it in the sack. We pondered over this for a long time trying to figure out what he was doing. We finally found out that when Wayne Sharp came home drunk late at night, which was often, he would leave unopened cans of beer in his car.

Early the next morning, his mother, Audrey, would get the beer out of the car; take it to the edge of the yard and toss it as far as she could into the grass. The mystery was solved; Olin was picking up Wayne's beer that Audrey had

thrown away. He told people at the Ryland store that he didn't have to buy beer any more because Audrey and Wayne kept him well supplied.

In the summer of 1955, Daddy, Uncle Malcolm and Olin planned a weeklong fishing trip on Flint River. We had finished laying by and both Uncle Malcolm and Olin took a week vacation. We got the trotlines out on Monday and ran them through Saturday. Daddy would join us at times but it was mostly Uncle Malcolm, Olin and me. The three of us spent the week on the river. I don't know why they let me come along but they didn't seem to mind. We rode up and down the river in Olin's

motor boat; we swam, pried open live muscles in search of pearls, threw cherry bombs at snakes and waded the estuaries and puddles hunting for bait.

Olin had a tarpaulin over the boat supported by six sticks about four feet high. This provided shade at mid-day and enabled us to stay dry when it rained. Our food that week was a full stick of uncut bologna, crackers, moon pies and double



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colas. As far as I was concerned there was no better or tastier food than this known to man. The best part was listening to Olin and Uncle Malcolm talk. They didn't talk about their jobs, their troubles or that Madison county's prosperity was passing them by; they did talk about playing basket ball at Central, big fish they had caught and good times they had in their youth on the river.

The stretch we were fishing included the spot known as Miller's swimming hole. It was named that because my grandfather sharecropped the land adjoining the river. Daddy and his good friend Clyde Gossett tied a rope to a large tree that leaned about halfway across the river. To make the swing work, you stood on the bank, took hold of the rope and ran off the bank. When your feet left the ground you sailed in a high arc until you were above the middle of the river. When the rope swung to its highest point, you turned loose and dropped into water about eight feet deep. I am told that it was an exhilarating ride that drew men and women from all over the community. There were always huge crowds on hot summer afternoons. In 1955, the old swing was gone but the trunk of the tree still leaned out over the river.

There was no place else in the world that week that I wanted to be or anything else I would have chosen to do. It was the best week of my growing up years. I did, however, have some troubles in my life; I had failed the eighth grade and was facing a return to school to repeat the eighth grade with a new class. I hated school, didn't have any friends and was hopelessly lost in my school-work. I was wondering how I would ever make it


to sixteen so I could quit. When I got back to school, I would sometimes sit in class and day dream about that week on the river, it always seemed to help things go a little easier.

From that time on, I never saw Olin when we didn't talk about that fishing trip. Uncle Malcolm said the trip was a good omen for him because soon afterwards he was able to latch on to Madison County's prosperity. Before the year was out, he quit his job at the shoe factory and went to work for the post office.

In 1990 when my father

was sick and I was home every weekend, I saw Olin often. A little before dark on Saturday afternoons he would drive to our front yard and talk. I enjoyed the talks and could not help but notice that the quarrelsomeness of his earlier years was gone.


Although he was in his seventies he did not look much older or different than he did in 1955. He had not gained any weight, was not stooped and had no gray hair. In one of our talks, I told him that I still remembered when he and Mrs. Vann brought us fruit and candy on that Christmas night



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so long ago. He had no recollection of that but his memories of our fishing trip 35 years earlier seemed as fresh in his memory as in mine.

Olin served in the army during World War II. But he took no pride in it or had anything good to say about the army. Being one of the Ryland boys that went off to help save the world didn't mean anything to him. In his last years he got to do what he loved most; that was fishing on either the Flint or Tennessee River. His favorite place was where we fished on the Flint in 1955. He spent countless days there during the last days of his life. Always alone on the river by this time; he set out trot lines, baskets and hook lines. When he was not running those he floated up and down the river fishing with a reel and cane pole. Mostly he seemed to just enjoy being on the water. It was no secret that this was the place in the world where he belonged and wanted to be.

He had been dead for several months before I heard. His passing saddened me. I was just as saddened by the fact that this son of Ryland, this neighbor for more years than I could remember, this man who let me go fishing with him when I was a young boy had passed from the scene with so little notice. He was more than a neighbor to us; it was like he was kin.

His son Tommy and his wife now live in the Vann house. Tommy is disabled but once made his living as a mechanic. Dennis owns the rest of the farm. It is good to have the Vann's there but it is not the same without

Olin, Esther and Mrs. Vann. Olin was more than a neighbor; he was part of my history, part of my childhood and part of my memories of the old Ryland when everybody knew your name. He also shared with our family the love of Flint River.

The last time I visited the river late in the day on a hot summer afternoon, I halfway expected to catch a glimpse of him running a trot line at Miller's swimming hole.

### Old Superstitions about Babies

\* According to superstition, if a baby saw himself in a mirror before he was a year old he would have an unfortunate life. Therefore, you never found many mirrors in the nurseries in the old days.

\* Another says that when a child first left his mother's room he should go upstairs before he went downstairs or he would never rise in the world. Since the mother's room is often the highest in the house, parents were told that it would suffice if the nurse, holding the new baby, stepped up on a chair before leaving the room.

\* Before the first diaper was invented, it was considered unlucky to wash a baby's first diaper or to hang diapers out to dry by the light of the moon.

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## Useful Advice

- Don't eat soft cheeses while pregnant - it could lead to complications. Some cheeses may contain a bacterium that can cause severe infections in the fetus. Don't eat feta, brie or mozzarella unless they've been pasteurized.

- Choose a bad habit to break this month. Then reward yourself heartily when you've succeeded.

- You can make your own deep-acting conditioner by simply placing a tablespoon or two of your favorite conditioner in a microwavable bowl and heating it for a few seconds. Use after shampooing as usual, and rinse with cool water.

- Whenever you have a meal or snack double up on the

amount of fruit or vegetable. This way you'll get all the nutrients, not many calories, and feel fuller all day.

- Write someone you have not had contact with in a long time - you'll make yourself as happy as well as the recipient.

- Sesame seeds help prevent high blood pressure. Make some candies from sesame by mixing the seeds with a small amount of honey, form into balls and keep in the freezer.

- To really relax, grab yourself a coloring book and a box of Crayola Crayons! More adults are doing this than you would think. Coloring is fun, instantly rewarding and lowers blood pressure. The smell of the wax will remind you of your youth.

- Some tasty and nutritious snacks are: fruit chunks dipped in yogurt; whole wheat crackers

topped with low fat peanut butter; a soft pretzel topped with low-fat cheese; English muffin topped with tuna and low-fat mayo; a flour tortilla filled with low-fat Cheddar and salsa.



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# The Dreaded Gold Star of World War II

by Patsy Sloan Stallings

My family lived in a very rural area of Madison County in 1941. It was south of Hobbs Island in a place I called Gunn Hollow. My sister, Effie, and I and two of my brothers, Phillip and Doug lived with our parents at the end of the road. My two older brothers, Buddy and Gene, were in the military serving in the Panama Canal Zone. They had joined the Army in 1938. Buddy got out and came home and Gene was sent to Europe when World War II started.

Being Mama's firstborn, I'm sure Gene had a special place in her heart. I know she had one in his. With some of his first Army pay he send her a large barrel of Homer Laughlin china. For the first time we all had matching plates. It was wonderful.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, fear and outrage spread across the country. I was scared, but I didn't understand why. I just knew the grownups were uneasy. I was eight years old.

Daddy took a job at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville and soon we moved into town. Every available space was rapidly being filled. Our new home was space in the back of a grocery store building on West Clin-

ton Street. The area was called Brogtown. The store had closed and gone out of business so recently that cakes and pastries were still in the glass cases in the big area of the store. This was not a part of our living quarters, but we were allowed to play there.

Later we moved to a house on Johnson Road in West Huntsville. We rented the house from a man named Eldridge. It was new and had no water source,

**"While theoretically the television may be feasible, commercially and financially it is an impossibility."**

**Lee DeForest, Inventor**

so Daddy dug a well in the yard. He said if you got down in the well and looked up you could see the stars in the day time. I tried it when the well was about three feet deep, but I didn't see any stars. I didn't try when it got deeper. I was scared.

Immediately many things were rationed and you had to

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have stamps for every purchase. This included food, especially sugar and coffee, shoes, gasoline, tires, etc. Each member of the family was issued these stamps and if you had visitors, they brought their own stamps. (Two things I remember about the food was that the eggs had a funny taste and we called them "cold storage eggs." Also, we had margarine which was in one pound blocks. It was white and you got a little package of orange powder which had to be worked into the margarine to make it yellow to resemble butter. Later on, the coloring came in a little bag and was liquid. This was easier to work into the margarine.)

We didn't own a car, so the shortage of gasoline and tires was not a problem for us. My sister Effie's boyfriend, Ralph Schrimsher, came to our house on horseback to visit her. They married soon after the war started and Ralph joined the army. Effie followed him from one camp to another all the way from Alabama to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania to San Diego, California. Ralph was shipped out from there to Australia. Effie and Ralph survived the war and are still living today.

When Effie came home from California, she joined the WAACs (Womens' Army Air Corps). She looked wonderful in her uniform. She spent her service time in Coral Gables, Florida. There was a long cylindrical thing called a "rat" that she put around her head and tucked her long blonde hair around to keep it off her collar - this was Army regulations. The women who worked in the

factories wore their hair in cloth bags which were called snoods.

There were no silk stockings. When you could get stockings of any kind, they had a seam up the back, in order to look as if they were wearing stockings, the girls covered their legs with pancake make up (applied with a wet sponge) and drew a line up the back of their legs with

an eyebrow pencil. The young ladies' skirts were worn well above their knees.

Everyone wore hats. The women's hats were small and close fitting. The hats the men wore were felt with a brim pulled down over the right eye.

There were people who walked around in the street with microphones and cameras. They

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**"Sure, marriage can be  
fun some of the time.  
Trouble is, you're married  
ALL of the time."**

*Maxine*

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interviewed people about their thoughts on the war and made candid photos of you as you walked by.

We were introduced to synthetic fiber materials. One of the first was nylon. My brother-in-law, Ralph, sent us a piece that he said was part of a parachute. We made some blouses from it. We loved the feel of the cloth.

We had an unusual tax which was payable in tenths of cents. In order to do this, we had tokens. It took ten one-mill tokens to make a cent. If you bought a popsicle, it cost a nickel and a one-mill token. We also had five-mill tokens.

The mail to and from people overseas was called V-mail. It was photos of the actual correspondence. The mail from the war zones was carefully edited to conceal its origin. The editing went so far as to delete even slang words.

Every night all the windows had to be "blacked out". Curtains had to be closed which allowed no light to show. This

was in case enemy aircraft was flying over. There were air raid wardens patrolling the streets. They were mostly old men.

Almost every window had a star displayed. This proclaimed that someone in the family was in the military service. A blue star was for a living son or daughter, when the star was changed for a gold one, it was a sign that that person had been killed in action.

We had a battery powered radio - used primarily for listening to the news. When the battery ran out, it was very hard to get a new one so it was

conserved as much as possible. However, I remember listening to "The Shadow" and "Stella Dallas".

There was a general feeling of patriotism, camaraderie, family ties and closeness with our community. Everyone stayed busy doing something for the war effort. Almost every family had a "victory" garden. Whatever yard space you had was

**"A word to the wise isn't necessary, it's the stupid ones who need the advice."**

*Bill Cosby*

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converted to raising vegetables. We collected tin cans, cut the ends out, put the ends inside the cans then flattened them out. This was one way of recycling.

Our school programs were geared to patriotism. We pledged our allegiance to the flag and sang the National Anthem every morning - with gusto. We saved our pennies and bought ten-cent war stamps and pasted them in a little book. The front of the book said if we put \$18.75 worth of stamps in the book, someday it would be worth \$25.00.

We went to the movies in the school auditorium every Saturday evening. This was at Joe Bradley School in West Huntsville. One part of the program was the news reels about the war. They always had the admonition - "Loose lips sink ships." We didn't know exactly what that meant, but we knew it was bad.

Everyone had a horrible dread of the men on bicycles in Western Union uniforms bringing the yellow telegrams. Ours came in May of 1945. A man named L. L. Gunn brought it. He had been our mail man several years before. I thought he brought it so it wouldn't be delivered by a stranger. If so, it was a kind gesture.

Mama and I were at home alone when he came. Her anguished cry is something I will never forget. I still cry every time I remember it. Gene was twenty-six years old. His body was buried in Belgium and two years later brought to the United States and now lies in Maple Hill Cemetery with our parents.

I have his Purple Heart medal and the flag from his coffin but I don't know what happened to the Gold Star.



# Poppycock

- 2 qts. popped corn, old maids & hulls removed
- 2 cups nuts
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 cup butter
- 1/2 cup white corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix popcorn and nuts. Mix sugar, butter and syrup. Bring to a boil and boil until it turns a light caramel color. Add vanilla. Pour over popped corn and stir. Makes 2 quarts.

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# To Live and Die in Dixie

by Helen Miller

I always knew the Good Book reminded us to "fear the Lord and keep His commandments," but I feared Dr. Durant a lot more and his commands were a lot harder to keep. "Sit still." "Open your mouth." "Close your mouth," "Get your hands out of my way."-- were just a few of his demands.

There was no such thing as novocaine back in the 1920s or at least Dr. Durant wasn't aware of it and I was sure the holy men of old had him in mind when they wrote about the man "down yonder with the horns and pitchfork."

His dental office was in a small brown building downtown next to the post office and on occasion I had to be all but dragged down there for the routine visit.

Back then I couldn't care less how my mouth looked but apparently Mama had other ideas. Perhaps she was planning to challenge a friend who had said that I could never be a silent screen star because I could never be silent.

I already knew I was the ugliest kid on my side of town with my face a total mass of freckles, ears that poked straight out from my head, fine straight hair that wouldn't hold a curl and legs that were much too fat, so getting one snagged tooth fixed wasn't going to help my looks much.

Dr. Durant's reception room was bare and boring. No receptionist or telephone - just a few straight chairs and a potbellied stove with a kettle on top. It had a strange medicinal odor that hit you right in the nostrils as soon as you opened the door and heard the little bell jingle.

I never smelled anything like it anywhere else, and if I had been kidnapped, blindfolded and carried there, I would have



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known exactly where I was, how to get out, which way to turn, and the quickest route home.

Dr. Durant would hear the bell and open the door from the small room where he kept the crucifixion chair. Looking over his glasses he always greeted Mama and then begin a thirty minute inquiry about the health and welfare of every neighbor of the Harrelson clan.

I wished to goodness he knew the Dukes and Moungers of South Georgia (relatives on my mother's side)-- there would not have been any time left for me.

Once inside the small back room he came at me with a buzz saw in one hand and a little mirror on a stick in the other. Every time he hit a nerve, overboard I would jump, for by then I was all alone in the middle of a storm at sea with the wind in my face and whitecaps forty feet high.

It was after sessions like this that I welcomed his most comforting command of all, "Now take a sip of water and spit!"

## News from 1911

### Says His Friends Drugged his Liquor

W. F. Canterbury, who claims to be here from Memphis, and who came here yesterday and registered at the men's boarding house on East Clinton Street, complained to the police that he had been robbed of \$200. He claimed that he went out early in the evening with a party of friends and alleges knockout drops were administered to him. When he awoke, he found himself in his room at the boarding house and his roll of money missing. Bloodhounds trailed the supposed robbers from the boarding

house to the railroad yards and it is thought the thieves have gone to Atlanta.

### Wife's Size Regulates the Fine of Wife-Beater

Decatur - Upon the size of the wife a man beats depends the size of the fine he must pay in Judge Carlisle's court here in the city.

Yesterday Luther Chambers

was fined \$25 for beating his wife. Chambers said he could prove by his wife that it was only his first offense. A sweet-faced little woman walked out of the crowd to take the witness stand.

"Is that little woman your wife?" asked the court, before she had testified.

"Yes," responded Chambers.

"Your fine is raised to \$500," said the judge.

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# Insomnia Help

According to Franklin Adams, "Insomniacs don't sleep because they worry about it and they worry about it because they can't sleep!"

Seriously, here are a few good remedies for insomnia:

\* Completely clear your head of all thoughts. When a thought of any type emerges, mentally make it just go away.

\* Get into bed. Before you lie down, breathe deeply 6 times. Count to 100, then breathe deeply another 6 times. Goodnight!

\* A very old remedy is to put your feet in the refrigerator for 10 minutes before turning in (hey wait a minute, just how old ARE refrigerators?)

\* An old Chinese acupuncture trick - press the center of the bottoms of your heels with your thumbs. Keep pressing

as long as you can, for at least 3 minutes.

\* Don't eat 2-3 hours before bedtime, and try to eat as little salt as possible.

\* Rub the nape of your neck with a clove of garlic.

A friend told us he starts to snore the minute he falls asleep. We asked him if it bothers his wife. He said, "It not only bothers my wife, it bothers the whole congregation!" To try to help with snoring problems, here are a few ideas:

\* Sew a tennis ball on the

back of the snorer's pajama top. This prevents him from sleeping on his back, which prevents snoring for the most part.

\* Don't drink before bedtime. Alcohol relaxes the respiratory system muscles and makes it harder to breathe, which in turn causes the snoring.

\* Try using a humidifier - dry air can sometimes make the problem worse.

\* Some people swear by those new strips that you put on your nose to keep it a bit more open.

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# Common Sense Diet Tips

The more you eat the more you'll gain - so cut down on those portions! Most people are just fine with much less than they usually ingest.

Up your water intake. Drink a glass before each meal, and several in between meals.

Keep a Ziploc bag full of fresh cut veggies in your fridge - that will make it easy for you to either toss them into salads or throw them in a pot for a quick steaming.

Watch the labels on those fat free or light foods - they're loaded with calories - often-times more than the original non-fat food.

Cut up fresh fruit and put it in a bowl with a couple teaspoons of sugar and some lemon juice. It'll keep longer that way, and again, be there when you have a sweet craving.

When you get home from the store with your fresh vegetables, be sure and wash them right away, pat dry put them in Ziploc bags in bite-size pieces so you can grab them right out of the fridge.

Exercise! Even if you just walk a quarter mile in the

morning, or lift a few small free weights in the morning. Morning is better because generally you'll be a bit tired out in the afternoon.

If you're in the mood for something fattening, eat "a little bit" of what you really like (real butter, cheese, chocolate, etc.) than A LOT the fat free variety.

Use meat as a garnish rather than a main dish - you won't feel nearly as bloated. For instance - have a plate full of veggies, grains and whole grain bread, with just a bit of meat.

Take your own food with you wherever possible. When you're starving at the office or on the road you won't be tempted to binge on junk food, fast food or high-calorie restaurant food.

Lighten up on yourself - don't beat yourself up for overeating one day - just start eating right the next day.

Avoid fast food restaurants that don't offer healthy alternatives.

Be the best you can possibly be - and be your own best friend.

**"I drink to make other people as interesting as me."**

**George Nathan**

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# News from the Year 1915

## News from Huntsville and Around the World

### Frank James Dead at 72 Years Old

The famous American outlaw Frank James, older brother of Jesse James, died on Feb. 18, 1915 at 72 years of age.

During his years as a bandit, he was involved in at least four murders between 1868 and 1876, resulting in the deaths of bank employees or citizens.

Five months after the death of his brother Jesse in 1882, Frank James boarded a train to Jefferson City, Mo. where he had an appointment with the governor in the state capitol. Placing his holster in Gov. Crittenden's hands, he explained, "I have been hunted for 21 years, have literally lived in the saddle, have never known a day of perfect peace. It was one long, anxious, inexorable, eternal vigil." He then ended his statement by saying, "Governor, I haven't let another man touch my gun since 1861."

James was tried for only two murders, one in Gallatin, Mo. and the other in Huntsville, Al. for the Mar. 11, 1881 robbery of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers payroll at Muscle Shoals, Al. He was acquitted in both states.

### British Liner Sinks; 1,198 Dead

Lusitania, liner under British registration, sunk off the Irish coast by a German submarine on May 7, 1915. In the sinking, 1,198 persons lost their lives, 128 of whom were U.S. citizens. A warning to Americans against taking passage on British vessels, signed by the Imperial German Embassy, appeared in morning papers on the day the vessel was scheduled to sail from New York, but too late to accomplish its purpose.

The vessel was unarmed, though the Germans made a point of the fact that it carried munitions for the Allies. The considerable sympathy for Germany that had previously existed in the United States to a large extent disappeared after the disaster, and there were demands from many for an immediate declaration of war. President Wilson chose the course of diplomacy and sent Germany a strong note asking for "reparation

so far as reparation is possible." Germany finally conceded its liability for the sinking of the Lusitania and agreed to make reparations and to discontinue sinking passenger ships without warning. The immediate crisis between the United States and Germany subsided.

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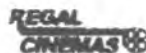
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## Ford Produces Millionth Vehicle

Ford is the car that put America on wheels. Through mass-production methods, Henry Ford developed one of the first well-engineered, rugged yet precise-made and dependable, cheap autos. Distinguishing features include a louvered hood, a metal cowl replacing the cherry wood dash, and discontinuing of the speedometer.

This year also marks the beginning of a tremendous publicity effort by Ford. They promise a \$50 return to each purchaser of a car before August 1915. Two new models are offered and electric lamps are offered even though the side and tail lights remain kerosene-powered.

## Popular Baby Names in 1915

For boys the most popular names are John, William, James, Robert & Joseph. For girls, they are Mary, Helen, Dorothy, Margaret and Ruth.

## Kiwanis International Club Founded

A new service club has been founded in Indianapolis, In. The name "Kiwanis" was coined from an Otchipew American Indian expression, "nunc Kee-wanis", translated as "we trade," "we share our talents," "we make a noise," or "we meet."

This is to become "We build" which is the original motto of the Kiwanis.

## Alabama Prohibition Goes into Effect

Statewide prohibition goes into effect in Alabama, five years before nationwide prohibition.

The sale and regulation of alcohol has often been a bitter issue in Alabama politics, and the 1915 ban was first vetoed by Gov. Charles Henderson, but the legislature overrode his veto. Despite prohibition, 386 illegal stills were seized in Alabama in 1914/15.

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*Seen on 4th grade exam*



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Ordinary Seniors Doing EXTRA-ORDINARY Work  
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# Confessions of an Old Reader

Sir,

I thought I would tell you a little about myself, first off let me say I've become a frivolous old girl. I have five gentleman friends I see almost every day.

When I wake up in the morning, Will Power helps me get out of bed, when he leaves I go see John - then Charlie Horse comes by. While he's here, he takes a lot of my time and attention.

After that, Arthur Ritis shows up and stays with me the rest of the day -

cause he don't like to stay in one place very long, we go from one joint to another. After such a busy

day, I'm ready for bed - Just me and Ben Gay!

Signed,  
The Old Woman



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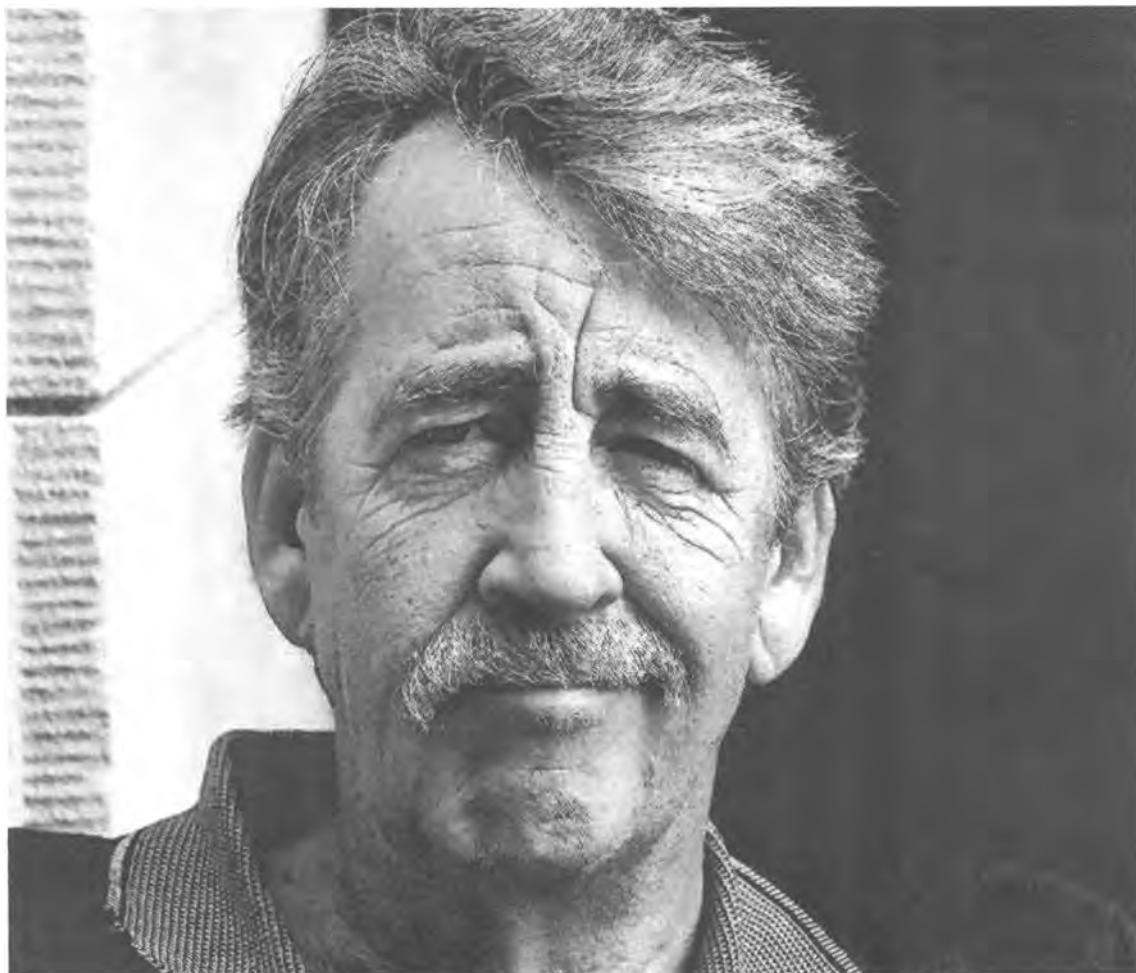


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# In Memory



**My husband Tom lost his battle to lung cancer & pneumonia on Thursday, June 16. For those of you who didn't know him he was a passionate, brilliant historian who loved Huntsville and the South. He was also very direct and you always knew where you stood with him. He was a true Southern Gentleman who was generous with whatever he had. He was a gentle, loving husband and my heart is broken. I can't imagine life without him. But I know I will see him again, one day.**

---

# From the Desk of Tom Carney

**As our readers may not know, all of the stories you have been reading for the last 22 years that had no author listed, were written by Tom. He just called himself the copy boy, but he was so much more than that.**

**So starting next month we will have a regular column called "from the desk of Tom Carney" and we will run his stories, either long or short, for you readers to remember. His legacy was in his writing, and I'm so very proud of him.**



Several years ago I wrote a short, nostalgic story about the closing of Bragg's Grocery on Hurricane Creek. It was about people, most of whom are long dead, who had traded at the store.

I had forgotten the story until late one afternoon when a strange car pulled into my driveway. An elderly, well-dressed woman got out and walked over to where I was standing.

After I introduced myself, she asked, "Please, my mother is in the car, could you say something to her?" The lady went on to explain that in the story I had mentioned her father, who had been dead for almost fifty years.

Walking over to the car, I introduced myself to the old woman sitting there. Her face was wrinkled from almost a century of living and on her left hand was a worn wedding ring that must have been almost as old as its owner. In her other hand she clutched a copy of the story I had written.

Slowly she turned her head to look at me and, after glancing again at the story, said in a low,

soft voice, "Someone remembered ... someone remembered his name."

I spent almost an hour talking to the old lady that day. She regaled me with tales about the Huntsville of her youth and the people she had known. She told me about dancing to the fiddle of Monte Sano Crowder and about working at Redstone Arsenal during the Second War when she would go home every day with yellow skin, a result of the chemicals with which she worked.

I listened as she described growing up in a mill village where preachers and bootleggers rubbed elbows at the local speakeasy. It was obvious that she enjoyed remembering.

Unfortunately, her body was weaker than her memory and soon her daughter had to take her home.

The memory of that old lady stayed in my mind for a long time. "A life of stories," I thought, "and when she dies, they will be gone forever."

For the next several years collecting these stories became an obsession. Literally thou-

sands of hours were spent talking to senior citizens and searching through old newspapers and manuscripts.

During this time I was confronted with many questions. Are ghost stories part of our history? Does a whimsical story about a neighborhood bar fit into a book about our city's history?

In the final analysis, the answer had to be yes. All of these stories helped to make our city special.

Old Huntsville Magazine makes no pretense of this being a literary work. That endeavor is best left to the scholars. I also leave to the historians the task of quibbling over people's middle initials, the exact date of some long ago occurrence and the thousand other trivialities about which they seem to be concerned.

My sole intention is to try and preserve that part of our rich heritage which has been ignored for far too long.

**Tom Carney, President**  
Old Huntsville Magazine,  
Inc.

## Making streets safe for Citizens -1923

Not only are the downtown streets of Huntsville being marked for automobile drivers wanting to park, they are being marked for pedestrians who may wish to cross the streets.

The marking is done in wide white strips, running from the sidewalk into the streets, between which automobiles are to be permitted to park for a specified length of time.

White lines drawn across the streets at intersecting corners are designed to stop the practice of crossing streets at any old place the pedestrian chooses, in other words, to prevent what has come to be known as "jay walking."

Under the new regulations pedestrians must cross at corners only and between the white lines drawn across the streets. If they attempt to cross at other points they are subject to arrest.

The marking is being done for a section of six blocks, from Holmes street to the Square on Washington and Jefferson streets, and is under the direction of Traffic Officer John Allison, who had his force working all yesterday and into the night in order that it be finished when the new regulations are put into effect.

### J. E. Nunn's Pioneer Work - 1919

J. E. Nunn, one of the wealthiest planters and merchants over the mountain in the Big Cove neighborhood, is

deserving of the plaudits the community is heaving on him due to the pioneering work he did some 9 years ago to have the handsome mountain road go his way.

For 7 years Mr. Nunn worked to win the goal and for the past 2 years the new road, which has brought the Big Cove section within 15-20 minutes of town, has been under construction. A temporary opening of the road was held recently and many were the pleased travelers that used the road, praising it.

It begins at Cobb's bridge and moves towards Huntsville,

coming over one of the most beautiful scenic mountains in all the world, and shortening the distance by nearly two miles and making you forget that there is any grade at all. Mr. Nunn, the Drakes, John Broad and enthusiasts all along the line are fine friends of the road and tireless boosters for this area's progress.

Sent by Patsy Giesecke

**"I grew up with six brothers. That's how I learned how to dance - waiting for the bathroom."**

**Edna Letson, Toney**

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Huntsville, AL

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## Ordinary Seniors Doing EXTRAORDINARY Work For Young People in Huntsville and Madison County

Ray Weinberg, right, Golden K project chairman, presents back packs with school supplies and soft pillows to Violet Edwards and Daniel Smith, of Christmas Charities Year Round. This is a part of the Alabama Kiwanis District project to collect school supplies for children affected by the recent storms.



### Groups We Support

Alabama Science Fair, Everybody Can Play Playground, Blount Hospitality House, Boy-Cub Scout Troop 400, Children's Advocacy Center, Court Appointed Juvenile Advocate, Downtown Rescue Mission, Huntsville Achievement School, Huntsville-Madison County Library, Reading Is FUNDamental, Head-Start Huntsville, Riley Behavioral & Educational Center, Huntsville Salvation Army, Second Mile, Toys for Tots, Madison County Special Olympics, Veteran's Memorial Museum and scholarships for Alabama A&M and Calhoun Community College

When you buy Old Huntsville from the paper racks and 'Honor' boxes the 50 cents you pay supports the activities above. We thank the many businesses and organizations which allow us to put the magazines in their locations.

Clyde BARCLAY, Don BISHOP, Chuck BOBO, Bill BROWN, Hugh CATE, Neil COCKER, Gordon DISON, Al FARRAR, Vic GRIMES, Jack GROSSER, Wilbur GRUNWALD, Ed HARDEV, Jim HOWELL, Hartwell LUTZ, Gene MAHONEY, Henry MATTERN, Bob MIDDLETON, Hank MILLER, Bob OVERALL, Darwin OVERHOLT, Roscoe ROBERTS, Dendy ROUSSAU, Don ROYSTON, Bill RUSSELL, Reggie SKINNER, Bob SMITH, Don SLAGLE, Walt TERRY, John VAUGHN, Jim WEBB, Ray WEBVBERG, Jim WHITE, Sam ZEMAN

*Golden K Kiwanians meet for breakfast and interesting programs each Thursday morning at 8 a.m. at the Downtown Rescue Mission, 2020 Evangel Drive, Huntsville.*

# Camp Taylor

April 13, 1862

Huntsville, Ala.

It may surprise you to hear from me so far south, but nevertheless we are today (Monday 13th) lying in camp on a plantation just outside the corporate limits of the very aristocratic and equally rebellious city of Huntsville. Ala.

I believe in my last letter I stated that we had "orders" to prepare two days rations and on Wednesday (8th) at 4 A.M. when we entered the town of Fayetteville on the gallop and without opposition. All the stores and houses were closed and what few citizens could be seen looked like they could eat the Yankees without pepper or salt.

Just before entering into Fayetteville we captured a Southern mail which among other things contained Memphis papers of a late date with news of the first days battle at Corinth in which our troops were worsted.

With encouraging news the citizens of Fayetteville were very haughty and defiant in their manners and if it had not been for the rigid discipline to which our troops are subject many a young rebel would have had the conceit knocked out of him with the butt of a musket or sabre.

We expected (if the Rebel Army continued victorious) to be ordered at once to Corinth and at 10 A.M. Thursday we received orders to be ready to move at a moment's warning. We thought that we certainly

would soon have a chance at them. At 11 A.M., we left camp on the Elk River and traveled a little after dark when we camped in the woods. (The only way we camped was to tie our horses to the fence and lie down and sleep beside them for we were making forced marches and our train was far behind us).

No fires were allowed and the camp kept as quiet and secreted as possible. About midnight Company E was ordered to move to Huntsville in such a manner as to be at there by daylight; take possession of the Telegraph and Railroad offices and Company.

A little while after the whole Division moved and travelled - until they were within 2 miles of town when they heard the whistle of several engines just ready to start: the advance had dashed into town and startled them and they were making off. The "Charge" was sounded and away went Cavalry and Artillery at full speed.

Soon a choo choo came into sight making for "Dixie" in fine style; it crossed the road in front of us about a fourth of a mile distant. There was a spot across a field where it came in sight again and a shell was fired at it but it struck first in the center of the track but 10 feet too far forward. Some of the 4th Ohio tore down the fences and took across the fields firing with their carbines, but the distance was too great.

A Negro on the surprise had a furrow ploughed in the top of his head by a spent ball but it did not hurt him much. The engine got away from us but a Wisconsin Regiment of Pioneers which was in our rear heard the whistle, tore up the track and saved it. Four more were secured in like manner before we reached town.

As soon as we entered, detachments were sent in every direction to guard public roads

and property. At the Railroad Station the most was found. Captain G. and several men had stopped a passenger train which was just ready to leave loaded with rebel soldiers. The train and passengers were taken. There were about 200 in all, a Lt. Col. Major, several Captains and Privates. They were unarmed and were mostly new recruits and sick men who had been on furlough.

There were a good many on the train who had been wounded at the battle of Corinth and were going home for medical treatment. The above mentioned prisoners were - the least valuable portion of our capture. Sixteen locomotives, two passenger trains, two pieces of cannon and some provision were found.

The same evening we arrived, 3 cannons were mounted on a platform car and with a regiment of Infantry sent down to the bridge over the Tennessee River at Decatur. When they arrived there they found the bridge already on fire and about 300 rebels on the other side fired at them, when they were "suddenly called away" and have not been seen since.

Six companies of the 4th are now stationed at Decatur. Col. K is in command. Lt. Col. B is in command of the remaining 4th companies at Huntsville where I am now.

I expect to go to Decatur tomorrow or the next day. There is a train that runs daily between this place and Decatur but I want to go the road through the woods and to do so I will be compelled to wait for company.

There was a skirmish at Wartrace, a small camp which we left behind us. The rebels

**"I knew my parents hated me - my bath toys were a toaster and a radio."**

**Rodney Dangerfield**

came upon the camp of some of our men at night and riddled the tents with balls and supposed the men were inside and would immediately rush out and fall on easy prey to them, but our men knew they were coming and had noiselessly left their tents. The rebels were somewhat surprised when they received such a fire from the rear as made them make tracks in double quick time.

You can judge by the manner this letter is written that I was in a hurry. Forrest's Rebel Cavalry is said to be in our rear and will no doubt interfere with some of our mails. Joyce has been in the Captain's tent nearly all day writing and you no doubt have some news in the papers. Capt. Mathews of Mt. Pleasant left here a few days ago for home on a furlough. He hears all sorts of news from Corinth. Sometimes we are whipped and retreating, again the rebels are retreating to Huntsville and we must receive them. I am well and so are all the folks.

Jim

---



---

## Heard on the Street - 1911

### Fight is said to be Caused by Insult

J. S. Clay, a well known merchant, and Frank Randall, a clerk in a clothing store, engaged in a sensational duel with pistols at the front door of Clay's resident on Adams street.

Randall is being seen by his doctor and probably fatally wounded - a pistol ball having passed through his head and tearing away a large portion of his right cheek.

Clay received two wounds, one in the shoulder and the other bullet striking him in the

mouth, shattering his teeth and almost cutting his tongue in two. He will recover.

Randall went to Clay's residence and demanded an explanation of an alleged insult to Miss Maude Ledford, the fiancee of Randall. Clay was arrested and held in bail of \$2,000 awaiting the outcome of Randall's injuries.

### Poses as Statue While Being Hunted

Notified by a burglar alarm that thieves had broken into the storerooms of the Scottsboro Loan Company, where gems and jewelry are stored, police ransacked the two floors at 6 o'clock this morning.

Then policeman John Keenan, who had been stationed on the 2nd floor of the building, idly tapped a sheeted statue with his mace. He hit the statue's funny bone and with a

yell it came to life, cast aside its sheet and started running for the door.

The supposed statue, which had been standing on a pedestal for two hours, was Fred Fitch. He is now held in the county lockup on a charge of burglary.

### Family loses Little Girl

The funeral of the little 5 year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Bell, of the Huntsville Wholesale Nurseries, was held yesterday and interment made in Maple Hill Cemetery.

Services were conducted by Rev. Carey Gamble of the Episcopal Church. Death was the result of pneumonia and was the second death in the Bell family in the past few months.

A sign on the lawn of a drug rehab center says, "Keep off the Grass."



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# Transportation of My Youth

by Malcolm Miller

Transportation always seemed to be a problem when I was growing up. In order to go to town you had to hitch up the two horse wagon and look forward to a long bumpy ride, or maybe we would walk out to the main road and hope to hitch a ride in one of the few passing cars. However, that created a problem of not knowing if we would have a ride for the return home. In case you had the money, which was rare for us, you could ride the train to town. Because of these problems we did not go to town often.

It wasn't just the long trip into town that could be a problem; just going to the neighborhood store could be a long tiresome walk. No doubt that is why folks lived so much slower lives in those days, it took so long to get anywhere that one just didn't bother to be in hurry and didn't go nearly as often.

One thing that really sticks in my mind about the transportation problem when I was growing up was the method to use if one was lucky enough to get a date with a young lady. You think this wasn't a problem? You see, out in the country where we lived there just weren't many girls, and what few there were always seemed to live several miles away.

There really weren't a lot of places to go back then, nothing like it is today. There were the big summer revivals at all the churches where the boys would go and hang around outside the church windows arguing over which girl we would ask to walk home with us. Suppose a pretty young lady agreed to let me walk home with her, and this did happen a few times, she

would always seem to live two or three miles in the opposite direction from where I lived, and brother, talk about being scared to death walking back home by myself on a pitch black night. We didn't have street lights in those days and I could feel something grabbing me all the way home.

Some of my problems along this line were solved when my brother Louis, who was off in the Army, bought me a bicycle. I was really hot stuff then, however have you ever tried to take a date home riding on the cross bar of a bicycle? I have a few times and I soon found out that this wouldn't work so there I was walking again when I had a date. Stop and think about it, it's pretty hard to get very romantic walking down a gravel road holding a girl's arm, and usually several others, including her parents, walking behind you. You were thinking all the time about the long walk back home alone, but to tell the truth I usually didn't bother to walk back home, I usually ran every step of the way afraid of what might be behind me.

After most of my older brothers, there were six of them, were married or off to the Army, Papa finally bought a one row

Farmall tractor. Now it is true you couldn't do much courting on a tractor, however we made the very best we could out of the situation. My brother Paul and I were the only ones at home by now and I'll have to give Paul full credit for the plan as he was very shrewd. You see Papa knew very little about a tractor, so almost every day Paul would tell Papa we really needed to take the tractor several miles over to the country store and check the air in the tires. You see there was a certain girl that Paul was interested in and she just happened to live on the road you had to take in order to get those tires checked. Well, Paul never got the girl but we should go down in history as having the most perfectly aired up tires in the history of farming.

Let's remember now I rode in a two-horse buggy, hitched rides with others, rode the train, walked, rode a bicycle, rode a tractor, but never really had a car for my own use until I returned home from the Army as a grown man.

**"Ever stop to think, and forget to start again?"**

*Maxine*

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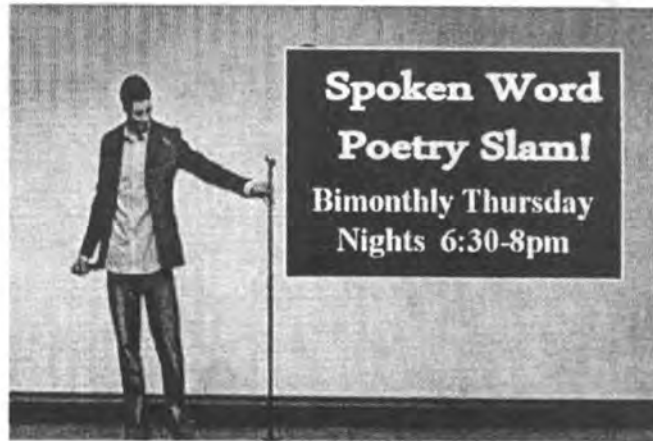
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## Shaver's

Top 10 Books of Local & Regional Interest

1. *Growing up in the Rocket City: A Baby Boomer's Guide* (over 200 photos/illustrations) by Tommy Towery \$15
2. *Remembering Huntsville: 131 Vintage Photographs* by Jacque Reeves \$16.95
3. *Reflections from the Front Porch: Mayberry Stories in Madison County* by Harold Fanning \$13.99
4. *Treasured Alabama Recipes (signed)* by Kathryn Tucker Windham \$15.95
5. *Life in the Skillet: Lessons from Lick Skillet, Alabama* by Harold Fanning \$13.99
6. *Count Those Buzzards (Southern Superstitions Remembered)* by Kathryn Tucker Windham \$7.95
7. *Shadows on the Wall - Life and Works of Howard Weeden* by Roberts & Fisk \$30
8. *A Sampling of Selma Stories (signed)* by Kathryn Tucker Windham \$12.95
9. *Historic Architecture of Alabama - Styles & Types* by Robert Gamble \$25.00
10. *Lost Writings of Howard Weeden* by Fisk & Riley \$20.00