



No. 236
October 2012



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



Murder in South Huntsville

The Mystery of Isham Hobbs

The demons came to him at night. He was beginning to have trouble remembering anything. Sometimes he didn't know his name or where he was from.

Even more terrifying were the mountains where he lived. It was, as he later said, as if the mountains "were holding a dark secret that he could not remember."

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Murder in South Huntsville

by Tom Carney

The name Isham Hobbs was a familiar one to the people living in the mountains surrounding southeast Huntsville. Some people said he was antisocial and didn't like people. Others said he was just a natural woodsman who felt more at home in the rugged wilderness than he did in civilized society.

Isham David Hobbs was born near the banks of the Tennessee River below Farley in 1917. His family was known as being God-fearing, hard-working farmers whose ancestors had helped settle the area almost a hundred years earlier.

As a youth, Hobbs developed a fascination with the mountains surrounding his home. With no supplies except for his .22 rifle, he would disappear into the forest for weeks at a time. While still a teenager, he earned the reputation as one of the most skilled woodsmen in this part of the country. A friend later recalled going hunting with Hobbs. "One minute he would be right next to you but when you turned your head he

would disappear. It was eerie." As Hobbs grew older he began spending longer periods of time in the mountains. Often he would disappear for months at a time, sleeping in caves and surviving off squirrels and rabbits he hunted. The few supplies he needed; ammunition, a pair of pants or maybe some salt - were easily obtained by pilfering nearby homes at the foot of the mountains.

Though the pilfering was petty, it still raised the ire of people in the community. A warrant was sworn out and Hobbs was quickly convicted and sentenced to probation. The judge, however, believing a stretch in the military might help Hobbs, released him from probation and allowed him to enlist in the Army.

Information about his time in the Army is sketchy. He was reported to have been an expert rifle shot, extremely shy and a loner who was never at ease around other people. He was also described as a "highly intelligent individual with an overpowering vocabulary, who hardly ever read a book but when he did, could quote entire pages from memory months later."

"All in all," a friend later said, "he just didn't fit in."

In October of 1943, Isham Hobbs deserted from the Army and returned to the mountains of Madison County. Although he had family living in the area, he spurned all contact with them



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and took up residence in a cave at the base of Green Mountain. Salvaging items from trash piles at night, Hobbs soon furnished the cave with bedsprings, dishes and cooking utensils. A fishing rod and a .22 rifle provided much of his food.

Many of the mountain families living in the area identified with Hobbs and were only too happy to supply him with extra food and information about the M.P.'s who were searching the mountains for him. For them the woods were a way of life and they, too, were suspicious of "government people poking around in other people's business."

Hobbs later described this period as "the happiest in my life."

All this was due to change, however, during the early morning hours of May 5, 1944 when Sheriff Henry C. Blakemore received a phone call about a homicide that had just taken place.

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Huntsville, like most small Southern communities in 1944, had its share of homicides. Most of them were caused by family feuds, drinking and an occasional robbery attempt. Normally there was nothing about them to merit headlines for more than a day or two.

Blakemore knew this case was going to be different. The murder victim was Mrs. Margaret Thornton Fleming, a member of one of the most prominent families in North Alabama. The Fleming family was reputed to be one of the largest and wealthiest landowners in Madison County. They were heavily involved in Huntsville cultural and social activities and were rumored to have political connections reaching all the way to Washington, D.C.

As investigators gathered at the murder scene in south Huntsville, they began to patiently reconstruct the events of the night before.

Mrs. Fleming had gone to bed shortly before 10 p.m., and the two ladies staying with her retired about thirty minutes later. Around 4 o'clock in the morning one of the women was awakened by the presence of a man in her bedroom who began beating her furiously about the head with a rifle he carried. She began screaming hysterically and within seconds the other women attempted to come to her rescue.

During the wild melee that followed, the women attempted to beat the assailant off by hitting him with an iron poker.

At one point in the furious struggle, the attacker's rifle was discharged into the ceiling. Overwhelmed by the sheer ferocity of the women's defense, the assailant pulled a hunting knife and began slashing about, trying to free himself.

By the time the stranger managed to escape, Mrs. Fleming was lying on the floor, dead of multiple stab wounds. The other ladies had suffered cuts, bruises and broken bones. Evidence of the ferocious struggle was easily apparent to the investigators. Overturned furniture, broken lamps, a broken end table and the pool of blood on the floor all bore witness to the violence of the brutal crime.

At first the clues seemed meager. There was no sign of forced entry, but further investigation revealed a small hole in one of the screens where an intruder may have used an instrument like an ice pick to unlatch it. The only other clues were the

murder weapon, a small fragment of cloth from a jacket, the magazine from a .22 rifle and a cap.

It was reported the assailant was about 17 or 18 years old, dark haired and with a very prominent nose. Investigators seemed confident of the ladies' abilities to identify the murderer.

The first break in the case

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came several days later when a person known only as Mr. X, and who has never been identified, told investigators the cap found at the scene had once belonged to him. Weeks earlier, he told the authorities, he had gone swimming with a friend named Isham Hobbs and had given the cap to him.

The identification of Hobbs as a suspect came as a total shock to the community. Though everyone agreed he was eccentric and a loner, no one could imagine him committing a murder. One friend later described him as "being gentle as a lamb - the last person in the world to do harm to anyone."

Bloodhounds from Chattanooga, Tennessee were sent for and dispatched to the murder scene. At first the hounds seemed to pick up the trail but as they entered the nearby woods they soon lost it.

Sightings of him were reported from all across the county. Skilled woodsmen from all parts of Alabama joined the search, hoping to collect the reward. It was an exercise in futility. The area being combed was larger than Huntsville and the Arsenal combined. A person who grew up in the mountains was quoted as saying, "You ain't gonna catch him until he gets ready. There ain't no one knows these mountains better than Hobbs."

Truer words were never spoken.

For the next 17 years, legend,

folklore and tall tales would all combine to make Hobbs seem invincible. Stories would be told of people meeting him on a mountain trail, carrying a rusty rifle and wearing a long straggly beard. Every time something was misplaced on the nearby farms, its disappearance would be blamed on Hobbs.

Hobbs was well aware of the manhunt in progress. At the least, if he gave himself up, he would have to face charges of desertion. And as a friend later recalled, "In the charged climate of Huntsville at that time, many people thought if he was a deserter he was probably a murderer, too."

For weeks following the murder, he easily evaded law enforcement authorities, often sitting on a bluff while watching the lawmen search the woods below. At one point he was discovered by bloodhounds, but rather than being the ferocious manhunters he had imagined, they jumped all over him in their excitement to be petted. Before sending the dogs back down the mountain, Hobbs removed their collars.

Hobbs would have been content to stay in the mountains but friends convinced him he had to get away. Three weeks after the murder he was smuggled out of the mountains and carried to Chattanooga where he boarded a bus to Ashville, North Carolina.

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Jack Perry, Hobbs rented a room across from the bus station. For the first few weeks he rarely ventured out of his room but as time passed he began to feel more comfortable in his new surroundings.

He worked as a house painter for a short period of time and then got a job on a surveying team. When that job ran out he went to work as an apprentice optical technician. For all outward appearances he seemed to be just another ordinary working man.

Nighttime, however, was a time of demons for him. For the past several months he had been having trouble remembering things. It had gotten to the point where sometimes he was not even sure what his real name was or where he was from. Even more terrifying were the mountains surrounding Ashville. Though he had once felt at home in the rugged wilderness, the mountains now represented something dark and evil. It was, as he later said, as if "the mountains were holding a dark secret" he could not remember.

The effort of trying to remember caused constant excruciating headaches accompanied by sickening nausea. The only relief he ever felt was at nighttime when he went to sleep. Hobbs later said that he would often write his name on a piece of paper before going to sleep so he would know who he was when he woke up.

In 1947, after almost two years on the run, Hobbs tried to commit suicide. He later spoke of being terrified of demonic memories hidden somewhere in the deepest recesses of his mind. "I wanted to know," he explained, "but I was scared to know at the same time."

Though Hobbs recovered from the suicide attempt, he knew he had to get away from the mountains. They were a constant reminder of something he could not remember, and could

not forget. With the few clothes he owned tied on the back of his motorcycle, Hobbs left Ashville, spending the next four months wandering through Tennessee and Georgia before finally settling in Florida.

Strangely enough, though the Sheriff's department and the FBI knew of Hobbs' possible presence in Ashville, the local authorities were never contacted to look for him.

Hobbs undoubtedly harbored a desire to be caught. In Atlanta, he mailed letters in his own name. In Macon, Georgia, when stopped by M.P.'s who were suspicious of the military-type shoes he was wearing, Hobbs again gave his own name. Through a bureaucratic blunder, his name did not show up in any records and he was soon released.

The farther south Hobbs traveled, away from the mountains, the calmer he became. The demons were still with him and haunted his dreams but in his mind he had forgotten where they had come from.

In Bartow, Florida he answered an ad for an optical technician and was immediately hired. After getting a room at a nearby boarding house, his life soon developed into a pattern. Up at 4:30 every morning, two pieces of toast for breakfast and then sit and look out the window until time to go to work.

The very qualities that made him a recluse also made him a valued worker. He never complained about pay or working extra hours. One coworker said Hobbs actually enjoyed working late and never seemed to care if he got paid or not. Years later Hobbs was asked how he spent his pay. Pausing for a long moment as if searching his memory, Hobbs finally replied, "I don't know."

After getting off from work at 5:00 p.m., Hobbs would go to a diner two blocks from where he lived and have the blue plate

special, at 69 cents, for supper. He always sat in the same place, never talked to anyone, ate his dinner and after leaving a nickel tip, would go back to his room at a nearby boarding house.

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out the window waiting for darkness to fall, or as he said later, "waiting to die."

A psychiatrist later described Hobbs as "an atheist with no sense of smell or taste; a person who did not smoke or drink and had never been intimate with a woman; a person who never had any fun and had nothing to live for."

Adding to his emotional turmoil was not knowing who he was. By this time he was suffering from complete amnesia. His memory had been sporadic for years, but now he no longer could remember where he was from, his real name or even his relatives. The only thing that stayed with him were the demons that returned to haunt him night after night.

In November 1960, Hobbs, no longer able to cope with the nightmares or the loneliness, tried to commit suicide once again by smothering himself with a plastic bag.

The landlord of the rooming house discovered him a few minutes later and called the police and an ambulance. Though he quickly recovered at the hospital, the police became curious when they ran a background check and discovered no one by the name that Hobbs was using existed. The police asked Hobbs to consent to fingerprinting - a request he eagerly agreed to. Within hours the police had an answer: Isham D. Hobbs, deserter from the United States Army and wanted for murder in Madison County, Alabama.

The news that Isham Hobbs had been captured in Florida hit Huntsville like a bombshell. Almost 17 years had passed since the murder and most people only had vague memories of it. Many people who remembered Hobbs believed he was still living in the mountains and had supposedly been sighted many times by hunters and hikers. As recently as 1960, a helicopter

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had been shot at near Green Mountain and people had automatically blamed it on Hobbs.

Before Hobbs could be returned to Huntsville to stand trial for murder, he had to face charges of desertion from the military. He was sent to Eglin Air Force Base and was confined to the psychiatric ward where a team of 11 psychiatrists examined him.

The doctors' reports were unanimous. Hobbs was suffering from complete amnesia and had no desire to live in his present state. This posed a dilemma for the military authorities. Hobbs could not be tried for desertion if he was not competent, and if he was released without being charged he would be eligible for seventeen years back pay, a sum amounting to almost \$70,000.

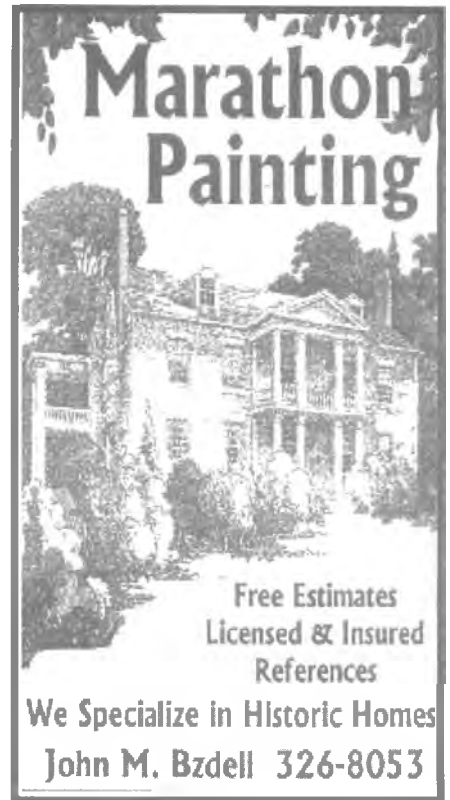
In a move that would be debated in psychiatric journals for years, the doctors sedated Hobbs with heavy doses of drugs and used the murder charges to jog his memory.

After extensive prodding, he finally confessed to the murder and signed a written confession.

Many doctors would later question whether Hobbs actually remembered the crime or whether it was implanted in his mind. Later, when questioned about details of the confession, Hobbs would have trouble remembering what he had said.

In his confession, Hobbs said he had gone to the Fleming house to steal a shotgun but when he saw the woman lying in bed, decided to knock her in the head and carry her back to the cave. No one ever questioned him as to how he expected to carry an unconscious woman five miles across the mountains at nighttime in the midst of a pouring rain.

Three months later, by a split decision, the doctors ruled that Hobbs' memory had been



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mostly restored and that he was competent to be tried. He was presented with a "less than honorable" discharge and turned over to the Alabama authorities to stand trial for murder.

Sheriff L. D. Walls and Deputy Earl Frazier traveled to Florida to bring Hobbs back. Frazier later described Hobbs as "a loner, though eager to please and extremely intelligent." On the way back from Florida, as they were crossing Monte Sano mountain, Hobbs told how years earlier he had ridden his motorcycle from Florida to that very spot on Monte Sano and had stood for hours staring at the city of Huntsville in the valley below. He had no idea why, he said.

After being returned to Huntsville, Hobbs agreed to show the authorities where he had hidden out on Green Mountain, seventeen years earlier. Handcuffed and accompanied by Deputy Sheriff Joe Cobb, he led the way to an isolated and overgrown spot near the base of the mountain where, after a few minutes searching an opening to a small cave was revealed.

Inside the cave were the few remnants of his life in the mountains; a rusted .22 rifle and telescopic sight, bedsprings, an ax blade and a fishing rod. Stacked against a wall of the cave, as if waiting for someone to return and prepare a meal, were numerous jars and rusty tin cans.

Hobbs sat on a nearby rock and watched silently as his belongings were removed from the cave. At one point he remarked, almost as if talking to himself, "I could have stayed up here for 17 years and you fellows would have never caught me."

Regardless of the military's decision, there were many people in Huntsville who questioned Hobbs' competence to stand trial. On May 23, 1961 the Circuit Court ruled that Hobbs should be transported to Bir-

mingham and be examined by another psychiatrist. Two weeks later Dr. Frank Keys, a noted Birmingham psychiatrist, ruled that Hobbs was sane, though "borderline and possessing a schizophrenic personality." The doctor further stated that, "Hobbs would probably commit suicide if released and the question remaining is whether he should be placed in an institution."

With the question of Hobbs' sanity established, the case should have been a foregone conclusion.

It wasn't.

The mysterious "Mr. X" who had stated 17 years earlier that he had given Hobbs the cap found at the murder scene now changed his story and denied ever owning the hat. He still swore that he had been swimming with Hobbs and his sister two weeks prior to the murder, but when the sister was interrogated in North Carolina she offered convincing proof that she had not seen her brother since 1943. Exhaustive lie detector tests given to Mr. X proved inconclusive.

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Mr. X's testimony was crucial to the prosecution as he was the only person who saw Hobbs in Madison County at the time of the murder. Though everyone assumed Hobbs was hiding in the mountains, no one had actually admitted seeing him.

When the case went to trial on June 20, 1961 James Baker, Hobbs' defense attorney, entered a plea of not guilty by reason of insanity. Reminding the jurors there was no evidence to connect Hobbs with the murder except that of a confession obtained during a "drugged state," he pleaded with them to examine the facts. He also reminded them that although the women who had been attacked the night of the murder had known Hobbs, they were still unable to identify him.

Macon Weaver, the prosecutor, asked the jury to sentence Hobbs to life imprisonment. Pointing to Hobbs sitting at the table he declared, "This boy would be happy to be institutionalized. The most cruel and inhumane thing you can do is to tell him to walk out that door. Where is he going to go? What is he going to do?"

"Life imprisonment," Weaver continued, "would be as much compassion as punishment."

After deliberating for over six hours the jury reported back to Judge Parsons that they were hopelessly deadlocked.

Hobbs expressed disappointment at the verdict, stating that if he was not sentenced to the electric chair he would kill himself.

A retrial was held September 13th. in Judge Parson's court-

room with Thomas Younger replacing Macon Weaver as prosecutor. The trial was much like the previous one, with the same witnesses being called and the same evidence presented. The only surprise came when Younger called one of the female victims to the stand and asked her to identify a 1943 photograph of Hobbs.

In a low voice that carried all across the courtroom, the woman positively identified the photo as a picture of the person who had attacked her. In seventeen years this was the only time identification of Hobbs had ever been made.

Later when asked why the photo had not been shown during the first trial, Younger pointed out that he was not the prosecutor in that trial.

After deliberating for a little over two hours, the jury found Isham Hobbs guilty of first degree murder and sentenced him to life imprisonment.

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Isham Hobbs, though disappointed at not receiving the death penalty, expressed happiness at the prospect of being locked up for the rest of his life.

As Hobbs was being led away following the verdict, he paused briefly in front of Thomas Younger, the prosecutor. After eyeing Younger carefully, Hobbs told him, "Thanks."

Startled by Hobbs' comment and not used to people he prosecuted offering thanks, Younger asked what he meant.

"Now I don't have to worry," Hobbs replied. "I don't have to worry about getting out, looking for work or trying to make a living."

Isham David Hobbs died in 1969 of stomach cancer while serving a life sentence at Kilby Penitentiary.

Although it has been over a half century since the murder, many questions are still being debated. Was the man whom people described as "passive" really a cruel murderer? Who was the mysterious "Mr. X" who fingered Hobbs as a suspect? Why did Mr. X change his story years later? Was Hobbs really insane? Why did it take seventeen years before his photograph could be identified?

No one will probably ever know.

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Sausage Soup for Cozy Days

Even simple enough for men to make, according to Joan Simmons

- 1 lb. link sausage
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 can black-eyed peas, black beans or pinto beans
- 2 cans tomatoes
- 1 can whole kernel corn
- 1/2 t. garlic salt
- 1/2 t. pepper
- 1/2 t. salt

Cut sausage into 1/2 inch lengths and fry in oil til crispy. Place sausage in soup pot and add rest of the ingredients. Cook covered over medium heat for 35 minutes.

Add water if needed. Serve with hot, crusty bread with real butter.

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Unusual Superstitions

* Catching falling leaves in the autumn will guarantee your freedom from colds all winter.

* If you laugh before breakfast, you'll cry before bedtime.

* If you spill make-up or face powder, a quarrel with a friend will ensue.

* On Halloween night, if you travel to a crossroads and listen to the winds, they will tell you all the important things that will befall you during the next year.

* If you have a sty, you can get rid of it by ringing a friend's doorbell, then running away.

* If the bubbles formed on the surface of a cup of coffee float in your direction, money is on the way.

* If you have a bad cough and want to quit, take a large dose of laxatives - you'll be afraid to cough.

* If you have a house guest and sweep the room within an hour of his departure, very

bad luck will come to a good friend.

* Straws tied in a cross and placed at the four corners of the bed will ward off nightmares.

* Should a bee fly into your home, expect a visitor soon.

* Bees remaining idle for a long period of time are said to indicate that war is coming.

* People in Mississippi believe that if you dream of a swarm of bees alighting a building, misfortune is certain for you.

* In Ireland, spitting upon a new baby is supposed to bring it luck.

* To find a future husband, a young girl should twist the stem of an apple for each letter of the alphabet. When the stem finally breaks, the last letter spoken is the first initial of her true love's name.

* If a person's death is reported in error, he or she will gain an additional ten years.

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My Memories of Years Ago

by *Charlie Lyle*

This article is an attempt to bring back memories of the forties and some other years.

Remember the giant oak tree that was at the end of Adams Avenue? You would have to go around it which made cars go one way, but no one complained.

Remember going to the drug store and sometimes ordering limeade or a Coke and reading the comic books at Tom Dark's drug store on the square?

Recall serious reading like Superman, Captain Marvel, Flash Gordon or newspaper comedies like Dick Tracey, Little Orphan Annie, Skezicks, Andy Gump, Gasoline Alley, Family Circus, Blondie, Popeye and Wimpy?

What about the baptisms at the Big Spring park where we kids would hide in the rocks above the spring and be terrified by the screams and hollowing of people who were laid back in the ice cold spring?

The Big Spring has a cave right where the water sprays out. Boats have been known to go through the cave under the court house. There was one day that was predicted that the courthouse was supposed to cave in. When that day came, no one went to work.

Some say that the cave extended to Maple Hill Cemetery. Others say there is a series of caves that starts at the Ruby Falls and works their way down to the Appalachians to our spring. They were basing this claim somehow on dyes that are put in the water and tracked.

What about the pony rides on top of Monte Sano? You didn't have to worry about getting lost because it was near impossible to steer the pony off his usual course.

Trains were of great interest in those days. When I was very young, I would want to see the train and the great locomotive spewing, banging, hissing, and clanging down the tracks. It literally scared me to death and I would run like mad in the opposite direction.

There was a great fascination for trains, and kids would get their parents to let them board the passenger train in Huntsville and go to the Chase Nursery.

Do you remember Chase Nursery covered with many

miles of nursery products and had its own railway stop?

Once at a nursery convention in Chicago, Mr. Chase was invited on Don McNeal's breakfast radio show. Mr. Chase was asked where he lived.

He replied, "Why, of course I'm from Chase, Alabama."



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Dallas Mill Memories

By Nolan Myrick

I remember the morning Dallas Mills burned. I was on Highway 231 going south, and when I crossed the state line from Tennessee to Alabama I could see the glow of the fire. We didn't know what it was, but you could tell it was big. My father and I were on our way to Hollywood, Alabama, where we worked at the Bellfonte Nuclear Plant. We were pipefitters (out of Local 377 in Huntsville.)

I've thought about it since I read the article in Old Huntsville. The best days of my life were spent across from the mill. I never gave the mill much thought when I was young. It was like Monte Sano to me because it had always been there and I never went past it. It was sort of a boundary line for me. My grandfather was D.W. Myrick and he often told me his brother Houston Myrick had been a bookkeeper at the mill. He was good with numbers and lived on Ward Avenue. He also fixed motorcycles and bicycles when I was young.

Our church, Fifth Street Baptist, was across from the mill. There was a VFW building between our church and the mill building. The church bought the building and we called it the annex. It had a gym and a 2-lane bowling alley. I used to set pins for people. It was all done by hand, picking up the pins, and you had to push a lever and it lowered the pins and set them up. Anybody could

play there. As I remember it, everyone was welcome at our church, you didn't have to be a member.

I can't remember when they tore the annex down, maybe I had already moved to Tennessee. I'm not sure but I think the mill may have built our first church. It was a little stucco building by the big ditch facing 5th Street. Mrs. Eunice's cafe was across the street and Carroll Grocery was there too. Later on Jimmy East had a heating and cooling business. The old R.C. Cola bottling plant was on the far corner. That little church was the beginning of my religious training.

When I sit here and look at the picture of the mill, I think of the neighborhood around the mill. If I were to stand on top of the mill and look out over East Huntsville, here's some of what I would see. On the

corner across from the annex and big ditch you would see Bob and Maurine Alverson's house on the corner. He worked for Montgomery Ward before it moved to the Parkway when it was uptown. He was a Deacon at our church and one of the best men I ever knew. Maurine was Secretary at our church.

On down the street was one of my favorite things. There was a lady who kept a Jersey cow and milked it. She tied the cow out in front of where the fire hall was, with a rope. I would ride my bicycle down there and talk to her. She was always glad to find someone to talk to.

There's more I could say, but I wish everyone could have had fun like we did around the mill and East Huntsville. I'm glad Mr. Dallas decided to build it.

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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**

Congratulations to the Photo of the Month Winner for September - **George Hall** was first to call and identify the picture as that of **Joy McKee**, who heads up our Operation Green Team and Maple Hill Cemetery, among other jobs. George is retired from Ala. Dept. of Transportation and in fact worked with **Cecil Ashburn (Ashburn & Gray)** when they were building the Parkway as well as Governors Drive.

It's great to hear about people in love. **Ronnie Gilbreath** and **Beanie Brady**, both formerly of Huntsville and now living in Tennessee, just got married Sep. 1st. They first met back in 1957 while attending Westlawn here in Huntsville. It sounds like a great story for the magazine. Congratulations to the newlyweds!

Ronnie also told me that he is so proud of his Mom, **Dorothy Sims Gilbreath**, who still lives in Huntsville, because she just had an 89th birthday on October 5th. Happy birthday to you, Dorothy!

Happy Birthday to **Lee Ann Lancaster**, owner of LeeAnns on Church street. She has an Oct. 14 birthday.

Can you believe that over 4,000 **Oak Leaf Hydrangeas** were given away to local residents by Operation Green Team in early September as part of the National Planting day? **Joy McKee**, who is over Operation Green Team, told me



it was part of the "Keep America Beautiful" project and there were so many people at City Hall that they had to turn people away. Well, it's happening again November 9 from 11-1 pm in front of City Hall downtown Huntsville, and Joy's goal is to make sure that everyone who wants one gets one - but you have to be there to get one (or more.) Call 256.532-5326 in case of rain or for any questions regarding the hydrangeas, which happens to be the Alabama State Wildflower. And they are perennials and so pretty!

Steve Gierhart is author of a book that is getting attention - "Shadow of the Conjuror" - that has roots & details of locations here in Huntsville. It's also available at Amazon - I'm reading it and so far it's very good.

Speaking of fun things to do, don't forget to mark your calendar for the annual Maple Hill cemetery stroll, Oct. 14 from 2-4:30, which is usually attended by thousands, is a free event and so interesting as you hear the history and the famous and infamous people who are located in the cemetery.

Charles E. Shaver III was just 45 when he passed away. He loved life; music art, literature, nature, people. He leaves parents **Charles & Katie Shaver**, sister **Holly Shaver Hall** and husband **Brad**, **Uncle John Shaver** and wife **Sue** as well as many extended family and friends. We send our deepest sympathy to the family in their loss.

John and Lori Walters are two of the sweetest neighbors you'll find anywhere. They just celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary on Sep. 14th. They act like they were married yesterday! They told me they were married in New Orleans, and would do it all over again!

Another big anniversary is that of **Hank & Judy Miller**, who have been married 60 years. They live at Brookdale Place and have two daughters, 4 grandkids and 4 great-grandkids! Congratulations!

Dorothy Vizzier worked at Huntsville Hospital and the VA Medical system for years as an RN. She was a loving, funny wife and Mom who will be so missed. We send deepest condolences to her husband of 68 years, **Ben Vizzier, Sr.**, their daughter **Yvonne Thaxton**, sons **Michael Vizzier, Richard Vizzier** and **Ben Jr.** along with their spouses and children.

Linda Denton sure does love her sister **Elizabeth Wright** in Delta Junction, Alaska! Linda is under-

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 boy went into law enforcement but is also a great cook with food that involves smoke!



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going some medical issues so we just want to tell her we're thinking about her & send love.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the **Liz Hurley Ribbon Run** in the fight against Breast Cancer, Oct. 18-20th. Liz is a great lady and I don't know anyone who loves animals more than she does!

Special hello to our Athens friends **Gregg & JoEllen Green** - they love reading about all the rich history in this area!

Local Realtor **John Richard** is a friend and recently was awarded the honor of Realtor Emeritus designation from the National Association of Realtors. John is 74 and has been in real estate, all of it in Huntsville, for 40 years. He is currently associate broker at Rise Real Estate. Congratulations to you!

Ashley Dinges is that talented, beautiful young lady who works at Merrimack Performing Center. Ashley was just appointed as Executive Director to the Center by **Alan and Debra Jenkins**, the owners. There was a party in her honor and everyone is SO proud of her - well deserved, Ashley!

We read that **Paul Allen** will be here in mid-October. He is the co-founder of Microsoft and I'll bet he hasn't seen our beautiful city yet. Huntsville company **Dynetics** is one of his partners and he's here for a really good cause. He will be speaking before the **Huntsville Chapter of the National Space Club**, at the 24th annual **Dr. Wernher von Braun Memorial Dinner**. He will be at the Space & Rocket Center and proceeds from his speech will help fund the National Space Club's college scholarships and sponsor space, science & technical education events for students. Welcome to our city, Paul!

So proud of that handsome **Clyde Barclay!** He turned 95 on Sep. 12 and is a charter member of the Golden K Kiwanis. He's still very active and there was a recent article about him in the Times that was really good.

Special hello to city patrolman **Charles Draper**, who was injured recently in a bad auto accident. We're thinking about you and hoping for a speedy recovery!

The Lowe Mill Concerts on the Dock are just so much fun. You'll see the most interesting people & their pets there - and the entertainment is awesome. The Beta Sigma Phi sorority were there one Friday night when the group **Unknown Lyric** was performing - they play bass, violin & guitar. They are amazing and should be international, they're so good. If you EVER get a chance to hear them, do it.

Another pair of lovebirds who just celebrated an anniversary is **Bill & Linda Drake** of Huntsville. They always refer to it as another year of "renewing our contract", and this year is their 40th. In fact, Bill (who is a member of the Metro Kiwanis) will celebrate his 80th birthday on Oct 26 so two big events - I think it's Party Time!

Barb & Ron Eyestone of Madison celebrated a 33rd wedding anniversary in October - best wishes to them on their big day!

Among the many accomplishments of **David Dishman** of Columbus, GA. were the development of "Real Life Playschools" and "Tot Town" in North Alabama. We send condolences to son **David Scott Dishman (Beverly)**, daughters **Pamela O'Brien (Michael)** and **Lauren Dishman** and stepson **Hal Littlejohn III (Renee)**, with many other family & friends.

Anyone who has ever been to LeeAnn's on Church Street has met **Lilly**, the pure white teacup Pomeranian whom Lee Ann and her family just loved. Lilly was 14 when she died in September, and losing a pet can break your heart just as much as losing a child or family member. Lilly was a feisty little pet who will always be remembered.

Sure do miss the kids & playground equipment at **East Clinton School**, it seems so quiet & sad over there now.

Have a great October, please watch out for people who like to walk, as well as those on bicycles & motorcycles, they are so hard to see and have to be super-defensive.

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- 2 - 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese
- 1 lb. Jimmy Dean Sausage
- 1 can Rotel tomatoes

Brown & drain sausage. While warm add the cream cheese and can of Rotel with all the liquid. Serve with Scoops corn chips.

Camille Cook, Esq.

Pickled Eggs

(an old Auburn U. delicacy)

Pickling Juice:

- 1-3/4 c. white vinegar
 - 3/4 c. water
 - 1/2 t. salt
 - 1/4 t. garlic salt
 - 5 peppercorns - whole
 - A few dill, coriander and mustard seeds
 - Sprinkle of dried red pepper
 - Sprinkle of celery salt
 - 18 hard-boiled eggs
- Put pickling juice over eggs in appropriate glass jar or con-

tainer. Let eggs pickle for at least 7 days in fridge. Eat with salt, pepper and Louisiana Hot sauce. **Note:** Pickled eggs taste alot better than they smell!

Judge William K. Bell

Ann Dollard's Famous Basting Sauce for Ribs and Chicken

- 1/4 c. oil
- 3/4 c. onion - chopped
- 1 clove garlic - minced
- 1 c. honey
- 1 c. catsup
- 1 c. red wine vinegar
- 1/2 c. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 T. dry mustard
- 1-1/2 t. salt
- 1 t. oregano
- 1 t. black pepper
- 1/2 t. thyme

Saute onions in oil til they are clear. Add everything else and cook on low heat 15 to 20 minutes. Stir a little while cook-

ing. Baste ribs or chicken often while cooking so a layer of the sauce builds up on the surface.

Toby Sewell has great results with ribs by using pork baby back bone ribs and baking them at 400 degrees for 40 minutes before putting them on the grill. After 20 minutes or so of being basted on the grill they are perfect. Try adding 1/4 to 1/2 cup of brown sugar if you like a sweeter sauce.

Note: Although this takes a little time to prepare, it's absolutely the best recipe in North Alabama by one of the South's finest gourmet cooks.

Compiled by R. T. McWhorter, Jr., Esq.

Brown Almond Rice

- 1 10-1/2 oz. can Campbells beef consomme soup
- 1 10-1/2 oz. can Campbells French Onion soup
- 1/2 stick butter

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- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/2 c. slivered almonds
- 1 c. white rice

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Put all ingredients in a 1-1/2 quart casserole dish. Bake at 350 for 1 hour. Stir once in about thirty minutes.

Bob Robertson, Esq.

Bourbon Roast

- 1 rump or sirloin tip roast
- 5 oz. soy sauce
- 1/4 c. bourbon
- 1/4 c. water
- 3 T. lemon juice
- 3 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 3 T. cooking oil

Mix soy sauce, bourbon, water, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce and oil together. Pour over roast. Marinate the meat for 2 hours in sauce in fridge. Place roast, still in the sauce, in oven and cook at 350 degrees for 2-3 hours, covered.

Jack Livingston, Esq.

Caramel Crunch Squares

- 1 c. flour
- 1/4 c. quick cooking oats
- 1/4 c. brown sugar
- 1/4 c. butter
- 1/2 c. pecans, chopped
- 1 qt. vanilla ice cream
- 1 jar caramel sauce
- Pecans, toasted

Combine first 5 ingredients until crumbly and pat onto a cookie sheet, spreading it thin. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes.

Stir to crumble while hot. Let cool completely. Spray a 9x9" pan with vegetable spray and spread half of the crumb mixture in the bottom. Drizzle half of the caramel sauce over the crumbs. Spread one quart of the vanilla ice cream over the crumbs. Add rest of the crumb topping and finish with the caramel sauce. Top with toasted pecans and keep frozen.

Trisha Ezell, wife of E. Mark Ezell, Esq.

German Chocolate Chess Squares

1 18-1/4 oz. pkg. German chocolate cake mix with pudding

- 1 lrg. egg - lightly beaten
- 1/2 c. butter, melted
- 1 c. pecans, chopped
- 1 8oz. pkg. cream cheese
- 2 lrg. eggs
- 1 16 oz. pkg. powdered sugar, sifted

Combine the first 4 ingredients in a large bowl, stirring til dry ingredients are moistened. Press into bottom of a greased 9x13x2" pan; set aside. Combine cream cheese, 2 eggs, and 1 cup powdered sugar; beat at medium speed with an electric mixer til blended. Gradually add remaining powdered sugar, beating after each addition. Pour over chocolate layer, spreading evenly. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Cool on a wire rack and cut into squares.

Lee Ann Pasker, Esq.



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19th. Century Folklore

Earrings

Earrings worn in pierced ears are commonly believed to be good for the sight. For this purpose, a pair obtained as a gift or a purchase is usually sufficient.

A further magical element was introduced in a case recorded by the "Exeter and Plymouth Gazette" on March 15, 1877. A woman at Braunston went round from house to house collecting pennies to buy a pair of earrings to cure her bad eyesight. She said the charm would not work unless the money was received from only men, that is, from those of the opposite sex. And the charm would work even better, if she could refrain from saying either "Please" or "Thank-you".

Plain gold earrings were also worn by most sailors, in the belief that they would protect them from drowning.

It should also be mentioned that only the type of ring that requires pierced ears is considered a cure for bad eyesight. The clip-on kind are merely worn for vanity.

Additional information from Lee, the sailor:

I am a sailor and I would like to let you know what I heard about the earring thing as well.....the version you have I have heard before but there is also another. First of all as you know, gold is very expensive, and seeing as sailors didn't have a lot of privacy or security for possessions, they needed something of value that was universally recognized. Gold was.

The purpose of the one solid chunk of gold in their ear was to ensure that they had a proper funeral if their body washed up on a shore in some distant land. Now for the tricky part.....they also wanted to ensure that they got a Christian burial and funeral. The international sign for Christian-

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ity was, of course, a cross. And where did they show that....tattooed on their chest!!.... hence the relationship between sailors and tattoos and gold earrings. You have my permission to use this info. Lee

The Eyes

Eyes, which reveal their owner's thoughts and feelings more clearly than any other part of the body, have always been considered vehicles of strong spiritual power. As a glance can convey a message of love or hate, scorn or encouragement to the person looked at, so it was from time immemorial believed that the eyes were capable of conveying a blessing or a curse.

Anyone, whose eyes were oddly set or colored might possess the "Evil Eye". Faith in the "Evil Eye" was almost universal and very ancient. This idea existed in ancient Assyria, Greece, Rome and Egypt as it still does in many parts of Europe today. The basic concept is that certain persons can bring misfortune or illness to human beings and animals by simply looking at them.

There are, of course, many charms against the "Evil Eye". Spittle, fire and the sign of the cross gave protection. Even today, fingers are often crossed or the ground is spat upon. Be careful where you spit, however, your boss might not understand if you spit during a meeting with the clients!

Eyelashes

If an eyelash falls out, put it on the back of the hand, make a wish and throw it over your shoulder. If it flies off the hand the wish will be granted.

The basis of such wishful blowing was once again the devil, who, occupying his normal position behind the left shoulder, presumably made a business of collecting human eyelashes.

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Foxglove

The wild foxglove is a fairy plant in folk-tradition, and has several other names suggesting its rather ominous character; such as Fairy Weed, Dead Men's Bellows, Bloody Man's Fingers, and Witches' Thimble. It is considered an unlucky flower which should never be taken aboard a ship.

Foxglove tea was an old wives' remedy for dropsy long before the plant's real medicinal value in that direction was known. Dr. Withering, who first discovered its usefulness in ailments of the heart, is said to have had his attention attracted to it by noticing the effects of foxglove tea prepared by a local wisewoman.

Frogs

Frogs, like toads, were once thought to have peculiar properties, and were frequently used in healing spells, and in others of a slightly less innocent nature.

A well known country cure for thrush was to hold a live frog with its head in the patient's mouth. As it breathed, it drew the disease away from the patient and into itself.

Warts could also be cured by rubbing a frog across them.

The dried body of a frog worn in a silk bag around the neck averted epilepsy and other fits.

Frogs were also used in love-magic. In one tale, a girl, whose lover was untrue, stuck pins all over a living frog and then buried it. The young man suffered extreme pains and eventually returned to her. She dug up the frog and removed the pins, after which the pains ceased. The man, perhaps rather unwisely, married her.

Garters

A garter worn by a bride on her wedding day brings good luck. If a bridegroom pulled off the bride's garters just before she entered the bedroom, this luck would also be passed on to him. Eventually this garter-snatching custom evolved into a race between all the male guests of the Wedding Party, and the winner wore the garter on his hat. To make the removal easier and less embarrassing for the bride, ribbon streamers were often attached to the garters.

"I've found that prayers work best when you have big players."

Knute Rockne/Notre Dame

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Street News from 1911

- Pick Roden, the king of moonshiners of Marshall county, was yesterday sentenced to five years in the penitentiary and fined \$700.

- **For sale** - my residence on Walker street, or will exchange for farm property. Price reasonable. Apply to Robt. L. Adair, care of Henderson National bank.

- **Lost** - Pair of kid gloves at the Elks building during dance Tuesday evening. Finder phone 418 or return to Miss Donnie Dillard.

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- **For sale** - the brick residence now occupied by Mrs. George White on Adams Ave. Anyone interested are at liberty to call and examine the place. Apply to Mrs. Chas. P. Lane Phone 152-3



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Mark Twain, "A Presidential Candidate"

by Mark Twain

I have pretty much made up my mind to run for President. What the country wants is a candidate who cannot be injured by investigation of his past history, so that the enemies of the party will be unable to rake up anything against him that nobody ever heard of before. If you know the worst about a candidate, to begin with, every attempt to spring things on him will be checkmated. Now I am going to enter the field with an open record. I am going to own up in advance to all the wickedness I have done, and if any Congressional committee is disposed to prowl around my biography in the hope of discovering any dark and deadly deed that I have secreted, why—let it prowl.

In the first place, I admit that I treed a rheumatic grandfather of mine in the winter of 1850. He was old and inexperienced in climbing trees, but with the heartless brutality that is characteristic of me I ran him out of the front door in his nightshirt at the point of a shotgun, and caused him to bowl up a maple tree, where he remained all night, while I emptied shot into his legs. I did this because he snored. I will do it again if I ever have another grandfather. I am as inhuman now as I was in 1850. I candidly acknowledge that I ran away at the battle of Gettysburg. My friends have tried to smooth over this fact by asserting that I did so for the purpose of imitating Washington, who went into the woods



at Valley Forge for the purpose of saying his prayers. It was a miserable subterfuge. I struck out in a straight line for the Tropic of Cancer because I was scared. I wanted my country saved, but I preferred to have somebody else save it. I entertain that preference yet. If the bubble reputation can be obtained only at the cannon's mouth, I am willing to go there for it, provided the cannon is empty. If it is loaded my immortal and inflexible purpose is to get over the fence and go home. My invariable practice in war has been to bring out of every fight two-thirds more men than when I went in. This seems to me to be Napoleonic in its grandeur.

My financial views are of the most decided character, but they are not likely, perhaps, to increase my popularity with the advocates of

inflation. I do not insist upon the special supremacy of rag money or hard money. The great fundamental principle of my life is to take any kind I can get.

The rumor that I buried a dead aunt under my grapevine was correct. The vine needed fertilizing, my aunt had to be buried, and I dedicated her to this high purpose. Does that unfit me for the Presidency? The Constitution of our country does not say so. No other citizen was ever considered unworthy of this office because he enriched his grapevines with his dead relatives. Why should I be selected as the first victim of an absurd prejudice?

I admit also that I am not a friend of the poor man. I regard the poor man, in his present condition, as so much wasted raw material. Cut up and properly canned, he might be made useful to fatten the natives of the cannibal islands and to improve our export trade with that region. I shall recommend legislation upon the subject in my first message. My campaign cry will be: "Desiccate the poor workingman; stuff him into sausages."

These are about the worst parts of my record. On them I come before the country. If my country don't want me, I will go back again. But I recommend myself as a safe man—a man who starts from the basis of total depravity and proposes to be fiendish to the last. [1879]

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The Way I Remember Big Spring Park and the Little Lion Statue

by Tommy Rutledge
Fayetteville, TN

This is the way I remembered Big Spring Park & the Little Lion statue in the park and my "growing-up" years in Huntsville. It inspired me to write a poem in 1995 (I've included the poem) about the Little Lion in the park that is still there today. What a great time and wonderful memories!

In August of 1995, the Huntsville Times published an article about the Little Lion statue that had been in Big Spring Park for many years. Children who played in the park many years before will remember this.

The main theme of the Times article was to let people know that the Little Lion was being refurbished, and was being placed back in the park, after an absence of 4 years.

So many children in previous generations grew up seeing the Little Lion in Big Spring Park, and relatives of the man who gifted the statue to the park told the Times that they know it was in the park as early as 1905. Mr. J. F. Hummel was the man who gave the Little Lion to the park, and his only request was that it stay there as long as children were allowed to play in the park.

I played in Big Spring Park growing up, and sat on the Little Lion many times for family members to get a picture of me "riding" the lion. What great memories I have of Big Spring Park and the Huntsville Times, in it's August 1995 article, quoted some of us who remember just how lucky we were back then to visit Big Spring Park in its' unaltered, original, and natural landscape, and to sit on the Little Lion.


My quote from the Huntsville Times article follows: "Tommy Rutledge of Fayette-

ville, Tenn., who was born in 1938, wrote: 'As a boy growing up in Huntsville, my mom and I would go to town practically every Sunday for a movie. One of the special treats was to walk through the park to watch the goldfish, see the small dam and relive the fable of Jesse James robbing the First National Bank and jumping into the spring to escape.'

I remember vividly the cast iron lion that sat next to the old Water Department. I would always take a seat on the lion and pretend to ride him. I really miss how the park looked then and remember with great memories all the fun I had. I guess that Little Lion sitting there in the park beckoning all young children to come and play inspired me to write a poem about it.

To those of you who read this article and this poem, I hope it takes you back to a special time in your childhood, when simple was really simple, clean fun was real, but we did not have internet, cable TV, computers, or smart phones.

I guess the main thing I had in mind while writing this article was this: I think growing up in those times, was the best of times ever. That's my story and I'm sticking with it! I guess we



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all feel that way about our "growing-up" years.

I have managed to share a little about yesterday and how much fun it was to grow up then with my grandson. He has become a huge Elvis fan. He is only nine years old, and even my five year old granddaughter knows who Elvis is. The fourteen year-old granddaughter is not quite as sold on Elvis, but she does know who the Beach Boys are.

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The Little Lion Never Roared

*Poem by: Tommy Rutledge
September 11, 1995*

I remember well the Little Lion of Big Spring
And all the joy to my heart it would bring.
The excitement and my spirits would soar
The Little Lion would never roar.

I sat upon his back and pretended to ride
While loved ones were at my side.
I was always happy and never bored
The Little Lion never roared.

He is such a memory of my past
For the rest of my life it will last.
He has reopened the door
The Little Lion will never roar.

As I cast an eye to sky above
I remember the true meaning of love.
I listen to tales and folklore
The Little Lion will never roar.

I shall always remember the Little Lion of
Big Spring
The future happiness to children it will bring.
I hope it will be there for ever more
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The Span Of A Century

by Annetta Martinson

In 1890 in the aftermath of the Civil War, the Yankees returned to Madison County, not with bullets and bayonets, but with dollars. They built cotton mills, the first was Dallas Mill incorporated February 26, 1891. That same year my father, Claude E. Barnes, was born in Smithville, Tennessee.

The red brick building stood 5 stories high and floor space estimated at 300,000 sq. ft. employing 500 people. By 1900, the capacity had already doubled, using about 20,000 bales of cotton annually.

By 1916, there were 120 houses. Eventually the village consisted of 380 houses, with the Rison School being built in 1921.

The Barnes family moved to Huntsville in 1900 and lived on the Harrison Farm on Blue Springs Road. My grandfather, Larkin Hartwell Barnes, worked for Harrison Brothers Hardware that is still operating on the square.

Later my grandfather was recruited to bring families from Tennessee to come work at Dallas Mill. My grandfather was paid for each person that was able to work. The larger the family, the more money he received. Some people started working as early as 12 years old. After working at this for a while, my grandfather bought

some land on Halsey Avenue and built a two story house. He raised a huge garden, had cows, pigs, and chickens. My grandparents lived there until November of 1941 when grandfather died and my grandmother, Harriett Luna Barnes, died in January of 1942. My cousin's son, Larry Pridmore, lives in the house now, but he has changed it so it does not look the same. How many memories are connected to that house!

In 1914, my parents had built a house on Stevens Avenue. There was one house between the house on Stevens



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and the house on Halsey. A family named McKenzie lived there. Before the due date of my arrival, my grandfather drove a horse and buggy to Stevens Avenue and said "Mama says you will have your baby at our house as all our daughters do." My mother, Myrtle Fears Barnes, had wanted to stay at home. But this was a command. So I was born at the house on Halsey Avenue.

In 1918, at the end of World War I, my father worked as a barber. He had a shop on the Fifth Street which is now Andrew Jackson Way. As a youth he had hurt his leg in an accident and was forced to use crutches until he was 20 or 21.

The doctor wanted to take his leg off but my grandfather said "the Lord gave me one son and he may take him, but he will have both legs." My grandfather began to use old remedies and slowly my father's leg healed.

During the flu epidemic during the first war entire households were sick with many dying. Some groups got together and prepared huge cauldrons of soup for the stricken families who could not take care of themselves.

Then men with cars would visit the homes where there was sickness, knock on the doors and leave the soup. Everyone was afraid of getting the flu. My mother said Daddy would come home, after work and from delivering soup, saying he was coming down with the flu. He would eat something and drink hot tea or coffee with honey or something. He would get up next morning feeling better and do the same routine over again.

Many people in Huntsville died from the flu epidemic. The families then would burn the mattress and bed linens. It was a scary time.

March 1918, my sister was born and a little later my father bought a small store at the corner of Fifth Street and Halsey Avenue. It had living quarters connected to it facing

Fifth Street. It was a fun time for us because Grandpa and Grandma lived at the end of the block.

As I said before, my grandfather raised hogs. Every November 14th, he killed hogs. It

might be warm, but he looked to old signs and as soon as the meat, sausage and hams were ready to store, there would be a freeze and he said he never lost any meat. The day of the "hog killing" big pots of boiling water were used and many local people would

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come to help. My grandfather made sure the helper and neighbor got their share and the rest was put in a smoke house.

In his house he had a pump to a well that supplied their water. We had outhouses as toilets. At one time none of the mill houses had water or sewers. I don't know when lines were run but private homes did not get water or sewers for a long time.

There was a black man with some kind of tank on a wagon pulled by a mule who went down the alleys and took the buckets from the outhouses and emptied into that tank. His wagon was known as the "Ice Cream Wagon". Maybe that's why I don't like ice cream.

Sometime in the early 30s a man from Lincoln Mill Village was driving a car along Fifth Street in front of Mullins Cafe. The man had a little too much to drink and hit the "Ice Cream Wagon", spilling contents everywhere and killing the mules. It took days to clean up the stinking mess.

In 1922, we moved from near the store to McCullough Avenue. Our new home had indoor plumbing with septic tanks. We felt very well off.

Churches, YMCA's and schools were the center of entertainment. The YMCA had basketball courts, bowling alleys and billiard tables. A section was set aside for the ladies groups and community clubs. They had demonstrations of crafts, sewing and

cooking. There were Bible classes, music groups, and basketball for the boys and girls.

Each Saturday the YMCA had movies. Admission was 10 cents. They had serials and regular shows. We could not wait on the next Saturday for another installment.

I remember when I was about six years old, a lady lived near us, at the last block near the Mill, whose husband was director of the YMCA. They were not regular customers of my father's but one day she called my father's store and asked if he could send her a loaf of bread. It was before days of sliced bread. When Daddy asked me if I could walk down and deliver it I was happy to do so. My weakness was and is yeast

bread and after a few steps I began to smell that bread. I was tempted, but walked on. Before I got to the end of the first block, I had pulled the wrapper just a tiny bit, pulled a bit of bread, and ate it. It was so good. Then I pulled another piece.

I don't know how much I ate, but I left it with the lady and went back to the store. Before I got back to the store, the lady had called and said "rats had been into that bread." I never was asked to take bread anywhere else. Some of her children are still around and we have had a good laugh about it.

The village had a kindergarten, Miss Lillian Wheelis was Principal. There was a building with the first floor for classes and play and the

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second floor for Fraternal Hall meetings. There was a clinic and homes for the nurses. Several of the nurses, I remember, were from Canada.

The work day was long. The mill's whistle sounded early and people had to be at work at 5:45 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. for a total of twelve and a half hours. Most of the workers went home for lunch. The take home pay was \$14.00 per week.

The mill owned the houses and rent was one dollar for each room. Most houses had one or two bedrooms with an outhouse out back next to the alley. Toilet paper sheets were delivered to the outhouses. One side was for coal and the other side was the toilet. There was a hydrant at each block.

In 1910 police protection was extended to the village. Dallas Village had a Constable and a Justice of the Peace. The court was held at a barber shop. Reminds you of Mayberry.

The mill strike, in mid July 1934, was a dangerous time. Brother against brother, neighbor against neighbor. Some people moved off to other places to get away from the trouble. When a compromise was reached in 1934, the Union took over and conditions in the mills were better. But rents went higher, utility bills had to be paid and repairs had to be made. Before, all repairs, painting and garbage pick-up was taken care of by the mill.

In the 1920 and 30s the Postman for the village was Mr. Will Darwin, he lived on Holmes Avenue and drove a buggy pulled by a horse. He delivered the mail twice a day, morning and afternoon. Mr. Will knew all the families and all the children.

When doctors made house calls they would often leave prescriptions. The family would give the prescription to the Postman who would take it to the drug store downtown and bring it back on his next round.

All births were at homes.

"Dear God, We read in school that Thomas Edison invented light. But in Sunday school they said You did it. So, I bet he stole Your idea."

Oliver, age 6

Neighbors and family looked after each other. I remember a lady in labor across from my grandparents giving birth. I think I was about 10 years old. She screamed so loud and for so long I was scared to death. Her mother made lye soap from bacon grease saved by other people. That soap was really strong, but it got clothes clean.

In 1950, the government had started transferring German rocket scientists to Redstone Arsenal. A few companies started opening offices in Huntsville to take advantage of government contracts that were being awarded for research and development. While this created new jobs, the majority

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went to people who had been transferred here.

A few natives were lucky enough to secure "good paying" jobs at the Arsenal.

Huntsville continued its slow growth up until the late 50s, when the Soviet Union launched the first satellite into space. World attention was focused on Huntsville, as the rest of the world held their breath to see what we would do. The sleepy cotton town would never be the same.

On the night of January 31, 1959, a Jupiter 6 rocket was launched at Cape Canaveral carrying an 18 pound satellite. The people of Huntsville and Madison County anxiously stood by their radios as word was relayed from Mission Control. Finally late at night, the word was received. "The satellite is up." Instant bedlam broke out downtown. Folks from all over rushed into town around the courthouse. Car horns blowing and fire crackers set off.

The news went overseas and the next day the London News carried a picture of Mayor Spec Searcy setting off fireworks.

The Huntsville Times staff was called back and the publisher J. M. Langhorne ordered an "Extra". Everyone filled in and helped out. Barely two hours after the news, the first "Extra" rolled off the presses.

Within days, Huntsville became the focal point for the U.S. Space Program. High tech business began pouring into town. Men who had made a living picking cotton the year before suddenly found themselves helping build rocket components. Subdivisions sprung up like weeds. Every available build-

ing was filling up. For good or bad, the explosion was on its way.

On August 6, 1961 at exactly 1:20 p.m. a radio station disc jockey, in Birmingham, interrupted his programming to broadcast news of an earthquake. The amount of damages was not known yet, but there were reports of windows rattling and dishes being knocked off the shelves all across North Alabama. Within minutes other stations took up the news and civil defense sirens began blaring across North Alabama.

A newspaper reporter was on his way to Birmingham when he heard the news. He stopped at the next phone and called the radio station that first broadcast the news. The announcer repeated the information. Playing a hunch the reporter called Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville. "Yes," said the space flight official, "there was a test firing of the Saturn rocket today."

The deafening noise and vibrations were so great it tore some of the moldings at my house away from ceilings.

We have come a long way; covered wagons, air travel, man on the moon. Where do we go from here?

Retirement is when your wife realizes she never gave your secretary enough sympathy.

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CITY SIDEWALK NEWS FROM 1885

- New Colored Church -The colored Cumberland Church laid the corner stone of their new church building on Church Street Saturday evening, with interesting and appropriate ceremonies under the auspices of the Evening Star Lodge No. 6 A. F. & A.M.

- Judge Thomas C. Barclay is rapidly improving on the airy and healthful altitudes of Monte Sano.

- We are glad to see Mr. C. H. Halsey, the popular proprietor of the Huntsville Hotel, out again after several days of illness during the past week.

- Catch the thief! Stolen last Thursday night from Thomas Gore near Huntland, Franklin County, Tenn. a black horse mule. A reward of ten dollars will be paid for the return of said mule and ten dollars for the apprehension of the thief. The lucky man can address the Mercury or Thomas Gore, Huntland, Tenn.

- Dr. J. J. Dement has added another to the list of his building enterprises which have contributed so much to local property, by contracting for the erection at an early date of a handsome brick store, 86 x 100 feet, on the present site of Wright's Boarding House, between the Dement Block and the store of J. R. Kress. The store has already been engaged and will be filled by parties from abroad, with a stock of machinery and agricultural implements.

- Matilda Cox, a colored woman, was arrested Thursday on a warrant from Judge Richardson for larceny. It is charged that she received clothes to wash, and sold them instead of returning them.

- A party of young ladies and gentlemen left the city yesterday morning in vehicles for

the Mountain. Among them were Misses Shelby White, Corinne Goodman, Mary Newman, Nona Winter and Lula Goodman; Messrs. R. J. Lowe, J. I. Darwin, A. F. Murray, Dr. Allen Green and Prof. C. C. Thatch. They spent a most enjoyable time up on the Mountain.

- The new residence of Mrs. Van Valkenburg, which is in rapid process of erection on Franklin Street, is unique in the beauty of its architectural design, and promises, when completed, to be one of the handsomest in the city.

- If any one thinks that Huntsville is not assuming the airs of a metropolitan city, let them look into our market any morning between 4 and 5 o'clock, when he sees the bulk of business transacted in meat

and vegetables and he will alter his opinion.

- Quite a number of country folks were in town yesterday. The pleased expression on each face suggested bountiful crops this fall.

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The Door Closes, and an Old Friend Vanishes into the Night

by Jim Steele

Reprinted from the Huntsville Times

Last Monday night, I opened the front door of our farmhouse and let our black and white cat, Ogre, outside. I watched as he slunk, alone, down the steps to the sidewalk and slipped out of the pool of yellow porch light into the inky night.

It was the last time I'd see him.

Ogre was 18 years old when I opened that door. He'd been sitting next to it, wailing to be let out, a cat who had lived a long life and begun to show it - stiffer and more arthritic than in his younger days, bearing what the vet had diagnosed as a heart murmur. But still feisty as hell, wanting out, by gosh, out!

Now he's nonexistent.

He had lived to that ripe old age - and it is ancient when compared with the average lifespan of cats - without losing a bit of his incredible sense of self-worth. Ogre always left the impression that he knew what he wanted - and that it was best he get it right now.

Having gotten to age 18, in no small part because of the fact that he was a house

cat (most cat's lives are fore-shortened by cars), Ogre suddenly decided a year ago that he would no longer be simply that. With increasingly vocal and odoriferous signals, he let us know that we were either going to

start letting him out when he wanted or else live lives of pure hell.

I resisted. He was old, he'd get hit by a car. He needed to be protected, sheltered



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"The answer to this last question will determine whether you are drunk or not. Was Mickey Mouse a cat or a dog?"

Policeman overheard during DUI arrest

in the house.

Ogre increased the pressure of his campaign, yowling at night, leaving smelly surprises under the bed after we'd retired and were trying to get to sleep. Dashing out the door whenever we cracked it open.

"He's gonna have his way," said my wife, Sue. She had named him Ogre. There was a reason for that.

"If something happens to him out there," Sue said, "at least he'll be happy."

Something happened.

And whatever did happen, it seemed to fit what Ogre would choose when he would leave us.

He was always his own cat. From our first meeting 13 years ago - when he hissed at me, his eyes sprung wide, as I came through the door of Sue's apartment with my motorcycle helmet on my head - to the last time I let him out at his insistence. Ogre was supremely self-assured.

He seemed to have a quality that lacks in us, or maybe he lacked a quality we have. Whatever is truer, there was never self-doubt. I watched him enough to know that, "I want this, and I will get it (or you will provide it)", seemed to be Ogre's way of thinking. Action would follow thought without hesitation. Without doubt.

Now that I'm past that day when my wife missed his usual morning presence at the back door - when she and I again looked that night by combing the road, our barn, our yard with flashlights

without success - I wonder if maybe, like the sepia tone that creeps gradually into an aging black and white photograph, Ogre sensed a foreshadowing that his time was coming close.

Hadn't he slept next to me - an extremely rare event - for two nights in a row the week before? He had, instead of his usual practice of searching out Sue, who had known him longer than I since she

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John F. Kerry

picked him from a mewling bundle of furballs in a mid-state Tennessee barn in 1977.

Hadn't he recently been even more insistent that he have a space on either my lap or Sue's while we relaxed in the living room, even though it seemed almost impossible that he could be more insistent than he usually was?

Hadn't he sought my petting hand more often?

Last Tuesday wasn't the first time Ogre had come up missing. But all those other times - after thinking the worst - we'd hear him meowing from behind the closed laundry room door, or find him obliviously sleeping in some obscure corner, or call out kitty, kitty from the back porch and see him slip from the dark toward the gate to the backyard fence.

Those little miracles make the reality, in the absence of cold evidence, harder to accept. On instinct, because of those times, I went through the motions of denial by searching the house on the fateful night I knew he was indeed gone. The knowledge preceded the acceptance.

And in the days since, I have become aware of habits I didn't know I had. Automatic glances around the yard when I get home. The peek toward the yard gate. The head-fake over my shoulder before I close the barnyard gate on my way to the house, to see if our feline buddy is coming, creeping behind to slip through the opening before the gate bangs against the fence post.

Glimpses that Evaporate

There have been many times I've thought I'd seen him, out of the corner of my eye. There in the side-yard. There near the barn door he always used. There near

the tire of my farm pickup. Glimpses of black that make me look again, but evaporate.

Ah, Ogre. You lived as you wanted and you died as you wanted, making sure your earthly needs were met with a minimum of damage to your dignity or your poise.

And when we each reach that most lonely of passages, what more can any of us ask from life than that?



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Owens Cross Roads' Place in Art History

by John Hembree
Lexington, KY

An internationally famous equine artist who traveled the world with the "rich and famous" of the horse racing community chose Owens Crossroad for his retirement home.

Edward Troye was born Edouard de Troy on July 12, 1808, near Lousanne, Switzerland of French parents. After a long and successful career as a painter of blooded livestock, mostly race horses, he chose to buy a 363 acre farm to be his "retirement" farm. He moved to Owens Crossroad in 1870, but by July of that year he was back in New York following his profession.

Before that attempted retirement, Troye had traveled the world and painted many of the top race horses of the world, especially Arabian stallions and mares.

As a child his father had moved his family to England, Troye's mother had died when he was an infant. He was educated there in the fine arts. He chose to Anglicize his name to Edward Troye and become an animal painter in the manner of the famous English horse artist and painter - Stubbs.

At the age of 20, Troye left England for Jamaica to manage a sugar plantation. In 1831, he sailed for Philadelphia, where he expanded his art connections with the leading horsemen of the East Coast.

By 1837, Kentucky was becoming the national center for

Thoroughbred breeding and racing. The handsome 31 year old artist met and married Cornelia Ann Vandegriff of central Kentucky. For a few years he tried farming, first on his wife's family farm near Midway, Kentucky, then on his wife's sister's place in McCracken County, Kentucky.

From 1849 to 1855 he taught drawing and French at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama.

Mrs. Ann Bevins, historian of Scott County, Kentucky, writing for the Scott County Museum in 2003 said Troye painted all of America's leading Thoroughbreds of this era as well as much of its best blooded livestock.

Taking leave from Spring Hill College in 1854, Troye

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painted one of his greatest portraits of Keene Richards of Georgetown, Kentucky, a noted breeder of Thoroughbreds. In this portrait Richards is dressed as an Arab Sheik holding his Arabian stallion, Mokhladi.

Richards became a patron of the older Troye and chose Troye to accompany him to Africa to paint the stallions he selected for his Kentucky Thoroughbred breeding stables.

In 1855 and 1856 he was again with Richards in Turkey and Syria, where Troye painted many scenes from the Holy Land.

By 1872, Troye was back in Owens Crossroad where he became a farmer by vocation which he seemed to enjoy in spite of his short comings in that field. He died suddenly in 1874 and is buried in Georgetown, Kentucky.

His paintings are displayed in the National Museum of Racing Hall of Fame; the Jockey Club; National Sporting Library; Belle Meade Plantation; Bethany College, West Virginia; Georgetown College; Kentucky Horse Park and numerous private collections.

This article was excerpted from an introduction written by Ann Bevins, historian of Scott County, Kentucky, the booklet was published for an exhibit sponsored by the Georgetown and Scott County Museum and Georgetown College art department 2003.



"You should never say anything to a woman that even remotely suggests that you think she's pregnant unless you can see an actual baby emerging from her at that very moment."

Dave Barry, Columnist

Testing The Law

Nine of Mr. J. R. Stegall's fine lot of hogs were impounded this week under the vagrant hog law. Mr. Stegall states that on Saturday night his hogs were closely put up in his lot, and Sunday morning had escaped through the removal of a plank which had been rooted off by the hogs themselves. He claims that the Ordinance doesn't apply where the owner of the hogs does not intentionally permit them to run at large and has requested the hogs from Justice R. W. Figg for the purpose of testing the question. (from 1885 newspaper)



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From the Kindness of his Heart

by Melba M. Hunt

My story begins in 1935 during the Depression and seven years before my birth. Coy William Michael, my dad, worked at the Margaret Yarn Mill in the shipping department. The mill shut down for a while and with no income and a new baby, William Howard Michael, the family finally ran out of food.

In desperation, Coy went to the A & P grocery store (a chain store that was not supposed to extend credit) and told Mr. James "Tokey" Walker of his dilemma and asked if he could get a few groceries for his wife and new baby. Mr. Walker told him to get a buggy and fill it up.

Two weeks later the Mill reopened and when Coy got his first paycheck, he went back to pay for the groceries he had charged at the A & P store. Mr. Walker accepted only half of the money and told him to use the rest of it for whatever the mother and new baby would need.

As this story was related to me by my mother, she also said Mr. Walker took the money out of his pocket to pay for those groceries in advance.

When Mom read Mr. Walker's obituary, she asked me to write this story about a kind friend for whom we will forever be grateful.

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TOM

by Cathey Carney

WRITTEN IN 1992

When I first saw him walk in, I thought how extraordinarily tall he was. I knew he had to be over six-five, and sitting down looking up at him made him appear to be about 8 to 9 feet tall. He looked a little bit like Tom Selleck, handsome in a rakish sort of way.

My friends and I frequented one of the good blues clubs in town, the Kaffeeklatsch, and from our usual seat by the window looking out onto Jefferson Street we saw many types of people come in and out. We all really looked forward to our early Friday evening to unwind and catch up with each other.

One particular evening it was especially crowded. A well-known band was bringing in their drums and guitars and setting up on the far side of the club. People were milling around, wandering in and out and the noise was at an all-time

high. Then a voice from above said, "Mind if I sit down with you guys?"

We squashed closer together to make room for this newcomer, and my life has never been the same since.

His name was Tom, and he had a rugged, interesting look. He was introduced all around, and as the evening wore on he began to tell stories. Nothing special, just funny little tales that were almost unbelievable but very funny. He had a way of speaking that kept people mesmerized - you never knew where he was going with these stories and they all ended with an incredible twist. Everyone was laughing and the night was full of fun and Tom kept looking at me.

The next week Tom came in again. Again he sat at our table and swapped more tales. He seemed to be very interested in me, and stared at me all night. He seemed more quiet than usual and very intense. I asked him at one point, "Tom, why are you so quiet? What's on your mind?"

When he began to say, "I'm in lov..." then stopped, I knew

it already. His eyes had been saying that all night long. When he followed me to my car later that night, I knew what he was going to say, but I acted surprised. "Cathey, you are going to marry me."

"Oh, really, Tom? And when is this going to happen?" He said "In one year", and that he had been in love with me since before we even met. My heart was pounding, but I acted cool. "We'll see, Tom."

The following weeks were wonderful. When Tom would walk in the club the whole room would light up. This man became my best friend and the love of my life, and the rest is, as they say, history.



TOM AND I MARRIED IN EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND ON OCT. 23, 1989. MY DAUGHTER STEPH GAVE ME AWAY. IT WAS THE MOST ROMANTIC OF WEDDINGS.

IT WAS THE SAME YEAR WE STARTED PUBLISHING "OLD HUNTSVILLE" MAGAZINE.

TOM PASSED AWAY FROM LUNG CANCER JUNE OF 2011. I MISS HIM EVERY SINGLE DAY.

A COURTING AGREEMENT



Mr. Sentell, a local man, was courting a prominent lady. She had refused him frequently and he often repeated his suit. At one interview she

became exceedingly annoyed at his importunity, and told him that she could not marry him; that their tastes, opinions, likes and dislikes were totally different.

"In fact," she said, "Mr. Sentell, I don't think there is one subject on earth upon which we would agree."

He replied, "I assure you, madam, that you are mistaken, and I can prove it."

Said she, "If you can mention one thing about

which we agree, I will marry you."

"Well," said he, "I will do it. Suppose you and I were traveling together. We arrive at a hotel, and there are only 2 beds for us. In one there is a man and in the other there is a woman. Which bed would you sleep in?"

She arose indignantly and replied, "With the woman, of course, Sir!"

"Well, then, there you are!" He replied, grinning from ear to ear.

"So would I!"

From 1880 newspaper

Tweetie's Pet Tips

* Never use rat poison to rid your home of rodents! Even though you may be able to put the poison out of reach of your kids and pets, there are other risks. If a mouse eats poison and your cat catches the mouse, your cat can be poisoned by simply eating or killing the mouse.

* If you have a new puppy and he pees on your carpet, do this. After soaking up most of the mess with paper towel, sprinkle a generous amount of baking soda over the area and leave it to absorb the traces of urine and the odor.

* Is your dog digging in your yard? Just by adding a sprinkle of cayenne pepper, this habit will probably stop!

* Purring is something cats do that is unique to them. It is now believed that purring results from a vibration in the wall of one of the major blood vessels in the chest. These vibrations, transmitted to your cat's upper air passages, result in a purring sound. Cats start purring when they are kittens and most of them purr when they are secure, content, or sleeping. However, some cats may purr when they are ill or frightened.

* When you're picking out a new puppy, look for:

- clear, bright eyes
- clean ears & nose
- thick, glossy coat
- skin free of fleas, scabby lumps, patches
- firm, pink gums
- alertness, playfulness

Ask about:

- inoculations
- parasite checks
- age, sex & breed
- customary diet
- veterinarian's name
- registration papers if he's a pure-bred
- allowing you to have your vet check him out before



making final sale.

* Does your dog spend a lot of time engaged in outdoor activities? Increase his supply of food, particularly protein, to keep him, and his fur, in top-top shape.

* Puppies don't tolerate the cold as well as grown dogs and may be difficult to housebreak during cold months. If your puppy seems to be weather-sensitive, you may opt to paper-train him inside. If your dog is sensitive to the cold due to age, illness or breed type, take him outdoors only to allow him to relieve himself.

* Even if you keep your cats inside, it is a good idea to honk your horn, or slap the hood of your car each and every time

you get ready to leave. The residual heat that car engines radiate will attract cats trying to keep warm during the winter months. It is very common for cats to climb up in car engines and then are injured or killed when the unsuspecting human starts the car.



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From the Desk of Tom Carney

Brahan Spring Park, Monument to a Swindler

by Tom Carney

He was an undisputed swindler who came to a disgraceful end, but Huntsville heaped honors on him by naming one of its largest parks in his name.

We, of course, have numerous monuments to the city's pioneers. The city itself is named after John Hunt, its founder. The Von Braun Civic Center is named after Wernher Von Braun whose visionary foresight helped to make our country first in space exploration. We even have a community named for Lily Flagg, a prize-winning cow.

But one of the best known landmarks is Brahan Spring Park, used weekly by thousands of people who know nothing about the scoundrel for whom it was named.

We have an old-time city council to thank for naming the park after John Brahan. They also knew nothing about the man. If they had, they may have questioned their own wisdom.

John Brahan was born in Fauquier County, Virginia, in 1774. His father, an Englishman who had settled in Virginia, was killed during the Revolutionary War while serving the American cause.

Brahan spent his early youth in the old Virginia plantation environment. Though his family was impoverished when compared to their neighbors, he nevertheless made influential friends who would serve him in good form throughout his life.

Brahan's first brush with the "fine art" of swindling came in 1808 when he convinced his friends to invest in a land company he was organizing. The company would buy land around Nashville, Tenn. and, after a period of time, resell it for a large profit. He promised



them riches, saying he'd do all the work if they would just put up the money.

After collecting what he thought was a sum sufficient for his purposes, Brahan went back to Nashville, leaving his friends in Virginia thinking about the riches that would shortly be coming their way.

When almost a year had gone by without any word from Brahan, his investors began to get nervous. "Please," they wrote, "let us know the state of our affairs." Still there was no word from Brahan or their money.

Finally, in a state of exasperation, they wrote Brahan to demand an accounting. "Our

confidence in our joint venture has greatly waned since the last season. Please be so kind as to provide an immediate accounting of all sums invested."

Brahan wrote back explaining that he had bad news: "I am at a loss to explain the current market."

In other words, there was no money left. There was enough money, however, for Brahan to construct a new home in Nashville and conduct an active social life. With his cultivated manners and fine clothes, he projected an aura of respectability in the new frontier community. Among the new friends he made was General Weakly and Andrew Jackson, who in turn



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introduced him to many other influential people.

With such people endorsing Brahan, it was fairly easy for him to gain an appointment to public office. One of the qualifications of holding an office of trust at that time was to put up a substantial bond to be forfeited in case of malfeasance. In May of 1809, Brahan was appointed Receiver of Public Monies for the Nashville Land Office. The bond was ten thousand dollars, which he did not have. Instead of declining the appointment, Brahan assured them that the bond was in the mail and then promptly forgot about it.

For some odd reason no one checked to see if the "mail" ever arrived.

Instead of settling down to earn a normal living, Brahan was still determined to make his fortune the easy way. His next victim was John Gachet, a friend of General Weakly, whom Brahan persuaded to put up a large sum of money to speculate in land. Again, Brahan was going to do all the work and all Gachet had to do was sit back and count the profits.

Of course there was no profit, no land, and no money remaining. All Brahan could offer was another flimsy excuse about "market conditions."

Gachet was not as easy to put off as had been the Virginia investors. Not only was he persistent in his demands, he was also dangerous. Gachet had been involved in several "affairs of honor" and was widely known as a man not to be trifled with. Unless Brahan could do something quickly he would probably have had reason to be concerned about his life.

Unexpectedly, with all of Nashville waiting for the feathers to start flying, Brahan announced his engagement to Mary Weakly, daughter of General Weakly, who was also the close friend of John Gachet. Needless to say, General Weakly quickly smoothed over the whole unpleasant affair.

Again Brahan should have been satisfied, but instead he began casting about for new

ways to earn money. At about this time he realized what a unique job he had. He was in charge of collecting and transmitting to the United States Treasury all proceeds from federal land sales. This put him in the strange position of collecting from himself for any lands that he purchased at federal land sales. All he had to do was to list the account as paid and delay transmitting his reports into the Treasury Department until he could resell the land and balance his account.

It was like putting a fox in charge of the hen house. Within a year Brahan was on his way to amassing a small fortune. But he had not yet learned the art of juggling books, so he stayed in constant trouble for his method of bookkeeping.

On March 26, 1810, the Secretary of the Treasury wrote Brahan:

"Your mode of conducting the business of your office being different from that of all other land offices, and causing much embarrassment in this department, it becomes necessary to point out the deviations to you."

As his fortunes rose, so did his prestige in the community. He was appointed and elected to many offices, including the state militia. During the War of 1812 he served under Andrew Jackson at the battle of New Orleans.

Many of us who watched the old movie classic, "The Buccaneer," remember Andy Jackson's soldiers firing from

behind bulwarks built of cotton bales. Many historians claim that it was these cotton bales that saved the city from being overrun. What they don't tell you is that as soon as the battle was over, instead of returning the cotton to its rightful owners, General Brahan confiscated the bales and sold them.

After all, he was a family man now and was expected to provide a decent living.

Soon after he returned to Nashville, land sales in Madison County began reaching new heights. Immediately he began speculating heavily again with government money. By now he had his art perfected. He would buy land, list it on his reports as paid, and wait three or four months before sending the money, thereby giving him time to sell and make a profit.

Madison County had become such an important part of the new territory that the decision was made to move the land office from Nashville to Huntsville. Of course, Brahan raised no objection as it put him closer to his "investments."

Brahan selected a large section of land, later occupied by Merrimac Mills, and built a spacious home. By all outward appearances Brahan was a successful businessman. Appearances were deceiving, however, as Brahan's world was about to come crumbling down.

By 1818, land sales in North Alabama had come to a virtual stand-still. As long as sales had been brisk, Brahan could buy

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land with government money. Then, when someone else bought land, he would take that money and replace the federal money he owed. Of course, the scheme depended on taking another purchaser's money to replace the first purchaser's money, and so on.

Brahan was determined to bluff it out somehow. When the Treasury Secretary wrote and demanded an accounting, Brahan put him off with the excuse that he was overworked and needed a clerk to help him balance the books. Brahan was well aware that the Treasury had never authorized the hire of secretarial help before.

Unfortunately for Brahan, the Treasury approved the hire of a clerk.

The rest of the story can best be told by excerpts from the official records.

To John Brahan,

Having on the 8th day of December last, instructed the Commissioner of the General Land Office to inform the receivers and registers that a reasonable allowance would be made for clerk hire, I have felt some surprise at the delay which has occurred in the transmission of your accounts. You are now six months in arrears, and judging of the future, by the past, there is no reason to expect your accounts will be rendered more punctually during the ensuing, than they have been in the past year ... I perceive by your return for September that more than \$53,000 remained in your hands at the end of the month.

Wm. Crawford, Sec. of Treasury

The following response came back from Brahan:

John Brahan to the Secretary of the Treasury:

SIR: I have the mortification to inform you that there is a considerable deficiency in my cash account, the cause I can only account for in part, the business being large & the time to sell & receive being only two weeks at each sale. I was always fearful that in the hurried state of things that I should sustain considerable loss. I am now convinced of the fact & beg leave to inform you

that I am now closely employed in getting the books of the office up & as soon as that can be done, & I can procure & deposit the balance due to government, it will then be my wish to retire from an office of so much risk & responsibility as the one I hold. (It, in this circumstance, has given me more concern than any occurrence of my life & the deficiency shall be made up as quick as possible, at any sacrifice. I think by the last of Sept.) I can make all square at all events, & will do all in my power by that time. I have been in public service upwards of twenty years and this is the first time in my life that my accounts have ever exhibited any loss of public money.

I must therefore beg a little indulgence, to enable me to arrange the business, as it is my determination that the government shall not lose anything by me, even if it takes all I have to make good the loss - property of all sorts is very low at this time, & I am well aware that I must make a great sacrifice to raise the money, but I shall not hesitate to do it.

I have the honor to be, John Brahan

From the Secretary of the Treasury to John Brahan: Treasury Department

SIR: Your letter of the 28th of June last, but postmarked the 8th

has been received.

The information which it contains has created no surprise. The withholding of your account and the retention of nearly \$80,000 in your hands from month to month could leave no room of doubt of the misapplication of the Public money to that amount.

It is now important to secure with as little delay as possible to the government, the repayment of the sum which has been applied to your private use. For this purpose I have requested a gentleman of your acquaintance to call upon you to receive such security as shall be in your power to give. Considering the manner in which this demand has been created it is expected you will seize with avidity the earliest opportunity of repairing the injury which the government has suffered by your Acts.

I am, very Respectfully, Sir,
Your Obedt. servant
(Signed) Wm. H. Crawford
The Secretary of the Treasury

To Obadiah Jones
SIR: The failure of the Receiver of Public Monies at Huntsville to render his accounts with punctuality, and the state of such as were rendered, excited well-founded suspicions that he had applied a large amount of the Public Monies to his private use. Recently his ac-



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All live events take place on Saturdays. In addition to the live events, encore performances will be exhibited on select Wednesdays after the respective live event*. The full schedule of events follows below.

Don't miss the chance to experience the excitement of the Metropolitan Opera, including interviews and behind-the-scenes features exclusive to the Live in HD series, all at your neighborhood movie theater!

Tickets are available at Regal's Hollywood 18 box office or online via FathomEvents.com
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10/27 - Otello LIVE	11/14 - Otello ENCORE
11/10 - The Tempest LIVE	11/28 - The Tempest ENCORE
12/1 - La Clemenza di Tito LIVE	12/19 - La Clemenza di Tito ENCORE
12/8 - Un Ballo in Maschera LIVE	1/9 - Un Ballo in Maschera ENCORE

*Prices vary by location

counts have been rendered as late as the month of April last, and show a balance retained in his hands of nearly \$80,000.

A few days past, a letter was received from Mr. Brahan bearing date the 28th of June last, but postmarked the 8th, in which he acknowledges a considerable deficiency in his cash account, and ascribes it in part to the extensive sales which had been made and the short time allowed for the public sales. He has not stated the amount of the deficiency, but from the amount which he has retained in his hands for the last 6 months as appears by his accounts when rendered, I am persuaded it is not much short of \$80,000.

It is obvious that Mr. Brahan is attempting to conceal the cause of the deficiency. It is perfectly known here and still better understood by him. It is all important to the government that this sum should be immediately secured, if he has property sufficient to do it. I have therefore to request that you will immediately after the receipt of this letter proceed to Huntsville and require of Mr. Brahan to secure to the United States the amount of the deficit.

If deeds of trust which authorize the Trustee to sell the property without any judicial procedure, are recognized by the laws of the territory, they will be preferable to mortgages which require time and involve expense. Enclosed I send you a certified copy of his last return, which will enable you to ascertain the balance due by him. To this balance you will add the amount of monies received since, which can be ascertained by reference to the Books of the Register - from that sum deduct the sums which he has since paid, the difference will be the sum due according to his own statement.

You will however avoid any expression in the writings which

you may have executed that will preclude the government from making such further demands upon him as shall be found to be due upon the settlement of his accounts.

A reasonable compensation will be made for the services which you may render, which shall be remitted in a draft upon the Huntsville Bank as soon as your account shall be received.

I am, very Respectfully, Sir,
Your Obedt. Servant
(Signed) Wm. H. Crawford
General Land Office

Washington D.C.

In answer to your note of this day, that John Brahan's commis-

sion was sent from the Treasury Department, with the form of a bond for \$10,000, which he was requested to execute, with one or more sureties: He acknowledged the receipt of the commission and promised to send the bond. No bond can be found in this office.

Very Respectfully,
Josiah Meighs
Comptroller of the Treasury

It took the government almost twenty years to recover the money that Brahan had embezzled. Through the intervention of his friends, he avoided being charged for any crime.

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Country-fried Steak: In-house made country fried steak served with either brown or white gravy and your choice of two sides

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Smoked Beef Brisket: NO ONE DOES IT BETTER! Smoked slow and cooked until it falls apart. Topped with Brown Gravy. Served with two sides of your choice.

Sauteed Tilapia Fillet: For the healthy minded a nice boneless fillet seasoned with dill and lemon. Served with your choice of two sides.

BBQ Ribs: Mouth watering goodness guaranteed to make your tongue slap your brain crazy! Served with BBQ sauce and two sides of you're choosing.

BBQ Chicken: Hickory Smoked for just the right length of time, served with BBQ sauce or white sauce and two sides.

Cuban Sandwich: Thin sliced ham and smoked pork butt served with cheese, mustard and pickles on a toasted hoagie roll. Messy but worth it! Served with one side item.

Smoked Boston Butt: Slowly smoked, tender and juicy hand pulled, served with BBQ sauce. Served with two side items.

Black Angus Hand Pattied Burger: Black Angus lean ground chuck, cooked to order, and served with lettuce, tomato and onion, on a toasted bun. Add cheese and bacon if you like at an additional cost. And served with one side item.

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George Shire, Athens

Unwanted Visitors

by John Hughes

"The first man who, having fenced in a piece of land, said, 'This is mine,' and found people naive enough to believe him, that man was the true founder of civilized society."

*Jean Jacques Rousseau
A Discourse on the Origin of
Equality (1754)*

Ownership of a parcel of land gives the owner the right to say who can or cannot come on the land. Property enclosed by a fence is further indication that a person needs permission to be on it. Fenced property with "posted" or "no trespassing" signs should make it perfectly clear to one and all that without the owner's permission you are trespassing and in violation of the law.

Back in the 1940s and 1950s, rabbit, squirrel and quail hunting were the favorite outdoor activities for boys in the Madison area. We were taught early

on to obey the posted signs and to get permission before hunting fenced-in fields. Most farmers did not object to our hunting the picked-over cotton fields and would usually let us hunt the fenced pastures if no cattle were there. There was one farmer who would not allow hunting at all and would prosecute any trespasser he caught.

I believe that if it had been possible he would not even allow a person to look across his land. I remember walking across one of his fields on the day he was buried. I wondered if my presence was causing any revolutions in

his grave.

My father was no different from the other farmers in the area. He would allow a person to hunt in certain fields and woods if asked and would not allow it in others. We were driving one day and noticed a gate left open. Since it was supposed to be closed, we drove in to see



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if the cows had gotten out. We met a lady in a Cadillac stuck in the mud. The reason she was stuck was that she had loaded her trunk with bricks from an old chimney we had taken down. She was not happy when my father made her unload the bricks before we pulled her out.

Another farmer, fed up with hunters breaking down his fences and leaving gates open, noticed a car in a field that was fenced and posted. He recognized the car as belonging to a man he had previously told to stay off his land. He set the field on fire and continued on down the road. You could see the smoke from the burning car from miles away. I guess the burned out, rusted hulk is still here.

I watched from the edge of the woods one winter afternoon as this young guy wandered across the field. I could not tell what he was up to. He would go from one cow pile to another and flip it over. Since he didn't have a shotgun I knew he was not hunting. I decided to walk down and see what he was up to. He explained that a certain mushroom grew under the piles and, when brewed like a tea, produced the most marvelous effects. He invited me to tea later that afternoon, but I declined.

I received a call early one morning from a friend on Sam Thomas Road. She wanted to know if I was allowing camping on my field across the road from her. She said a van with California license plates had been there overnight. Since I had been bothered with people dumping everything from roofing shingles to dead cows on the place, I decided to call Sheriff Patterson. The dispatcher said that a Deputy was in the area and would meet me there. When I arrived, the Deputy was talking to the occupants of the van. He walked back to me and said that I might want to talk with

them. It was a German family in a van rented in California. They were seeing America and got lost and were so tired they decided to stop and sleep awhile. They were most apologetic. I apologized for bothering them and invited them for coffee.

My father had a reasonable amount of success with a fantasy disease poster he had printed and posted in several fields. The poster read:

*No Trespassing
Badly infested with
Castanea Mollissima &
Regia Nigra
Dangerous!*

There were few who would venture across a field that was infested with something that sounded like a plague from a terrorist's cookbook. Very few people knew this is the scientific names for black locust and white clover.

If you are

bothered with unwanted visitors it is advisable to get the Sheriff or game warden to have them removed.

They will be glad to assist you.

"You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like that you like sports and she should keep the chips and dip coming."

Alan, age 10, when asked "How do you decide who to marry?"

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A Strange Bird Story

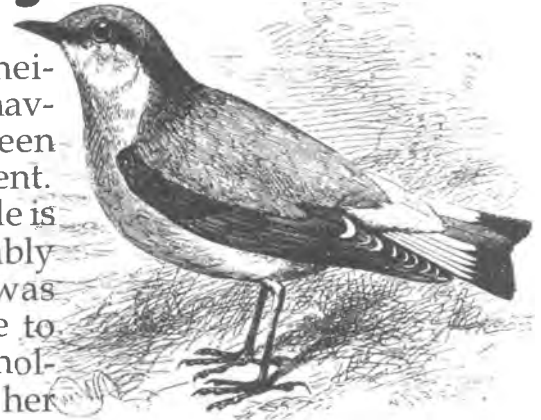
L. Page and son, cutting wood near Decatur, noticed for several days that a number of birds remained constantly upon a tree near them, some going and coming from time to time.

Upon cutting down the tree they discovered a limb with a hollow cavity, two feet in length and three or four inches in diameter, in which were two full grown birds of some goodly sized species. There was a small aperture through which the birds were supplied with food from their mates. The limb was cut and the birds

liberated. They were neither of them able to fly, having evidently never been out of their imprisonment.

How they came inside is the question. It is probably that the mother bird was small and though able to make her nest in the hollow of the tree and rear her young, could not extricate them, and they did not gain strength enough to help themselves until the hollow had so closed that escape was impossible.

Those who examined the birds think they are about two years old. They have been fed from their



birth by their bird fellows through the aperture in the limb of the tree. A nobler instance of devotion the human family never exhibited.

1887 Huntsville Newspaper



October 20, 2012
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Proceeds will be used to provide enhancements for mammography machines at the Huntsville Hospital Breast Center and digital mammography at the new satellite location on the Madison Hospital campus.

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Event Schedule

Packet Pick-Up & Race Expo*

Thursday, October 18, 8:00am - 6:00pm
Friday, October 19, 8:00am - 7:00pm

Luminary Display*

Friday, October 19
5:00 - 7:00pm

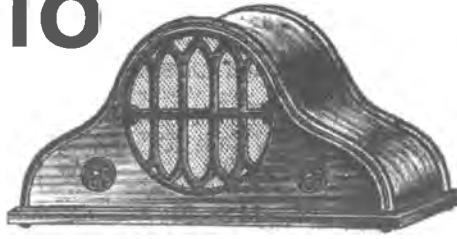
Saturday, October 20

Men's 5K Race 7:30am
Women's 5K Race 9:00am
Survivors' Walk 10:00am
Huntsville Middle School

*located at Valley Bend at Jones Farm Shopping Center
(Carl T. Jones Drive)

The Radio

by Austin Miller



It was in the late forties and I can still see Daddy bringing it up the drive after a visit to town to see my grandparents. I went to meet him and asked, "Whose radio is that? He said, "Aunt Lucy gave it to us." I wanted to make sure I was hearing right and said, "to keep?"

It was a dull brown oval-shaped early thirties model Philco about eighteen inches high and a foot wide at the base. The face had two knobs, a recessed tuning slot about a forth of the way up from the base and a stationary tuning gage set against a recessed lighted dial. The dial moved up and down against the gage when you turned the right knob. The left knob turned it on and off and controlled the volume. The symmetrically designed face was about half wood with an inlaid light brown fabric that permitted the sound to emit from the speaker. The word Philco was printed just under the tuning dial.

It is impossible to measure how much this radio improved the quality of all our lives. I was soon hooked on the old radio programs. Some of my favorites were the Cisco Kid, Sergeant Preston, Sky King, and the B-Bar-B Riders. As time went on, I woke up on an untold number of cold winter mornings to a roaring coal heater fire and the sound of Ernest Tubb on WSM singing his theme song, "I am Walking the Floor over You."

I could always temporarily lose my troubles and get lost in the stories by identifying with the heroes who always won out over the bad guys. I think radio was more entertaining than television. The only boundary to the characters, plots and scenes were the limits of your

imagination. Mama and Daddy liked Lum and Abner, The Shadow, The Great Gildersleeve and Amos and Andy. I enjoyed those too but I liked the adventure stories better. There were soaps in the afternoon; one I still remember was, "Just Plain Bill." Of course on Saturday night there was the Grand Old Opry on WSM. A few of the entertainers I remember were Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Little Jimmy Dickens, Milton Estes, Hank Snow, Kitty Wells, Hank Williams and Eddy Arnold.

My favorite program of all was the Lone Ranger which came on Huntsville radio station WHBS every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6:30 P.M. I was intrigued by the stories and always felt a sense of relief at the end when the Lone Ranger and Tonto caught the bad guy and rode away with a hardy Hi-Ho Silver. In the summer when there was daylight left at the end of the program, I would play outside and pretend that I was the Lone Ranger. I imagined many an Indian attack coming over the hill at the northwest end of our cotton field.

One Sunday afternoon in Vietnam in 1966, while I was on CQ, Gunsmoke was on Armed Forces Radio. A soldier in my Battalion named Gerald Bullard, who I didn't know at the time, came into the tent that served as an orderly room and asked me if I liked those old radio shows. I told him that I did when I was a child but I hadn't heard them before now in a long time. He said, "Man they all come on; the Lone Ranger, Sky King, The B-

Bar-B Riders, the Cisco Kid and I know the schedule; why don't you come and listen to them with me?"

Gerald was in charge of the battalion's ammunition and weapons. Because of this, he was able to live alone in the armory (a big tent surrounded by sand bags). I took him up on his offer and soon learned that he was a newly married rancher from West Texas. He wrote his wife two or three times a day and got at least that many letters from her. He was one of the best men I ever knew. We soon became good friends and spent many hours talking and listening to the same old radio shows that we heard as children. The programs made me wonder what ever happened to our old radio.

When I got home, nobody knew where it was, Mama said it wore out and was thrown away years ago. I looked for it anyway without success. I still wish that I could have found it. The old radio may be long gone but the memories and joy that it brought me during my young years are still fresh in my mind.

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- let the Church help."**

Seen in church bulletin

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John Shaver (Uncle John) of Shaver's Books, told me of the passing of his nephew Charles. John told me of Charles' hearty laugh, firm handshake and warm heart. While giving financial advice was his profession, his true joys were in giving of himself to others, especially the Boys and Girls Clubs of North Alabama, fishing with his long-time friends, and being Uncle Charles to his nieces, his nephew and his many young cousins. Uncle John says that he is certain that Charles is looking down on all of the lives he touched with that same warm heart, encouraging all to live lives that serve others.

Cathey Carney
Old Huntsville Magazine

You may honor Charles by donating to:
The Charles E. Shaver III Memorial
Scholarship
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P.O. Box 73
Huntsville, Al. 35804

Shaver's

Top 10 Books of Local & Regional Interest

1. *1861 Civil War Map of Huntsville* (with historic points of interest) \$4.95
2. *Growing up in the Rocket City: A Baby Boomer's Guide* (over 200 Photos/illustrations) by Tommy Towery \$15
3. *Historic Huntsville: (2002 edition)* by Elise Hopkins Stephens \$18 (new price)
4. *Huntsville Entertains - History & Recipes* by Historic Huntsville Foundation \$12
5. *Yankee Bands in Dixie's Land - Music CD* by Olde Towne Brass \$15
6. *Huntsville Sketchbook - over 100 color paintings* by local artists \$25
7. *True Tales of Old Madison County - back in stock* - by Pat Jones \$7.95
8. *Remembering Margaret Mitchell* by Huntsvillian Lucille Thompson Love \$18
9. *Changing Huntsville 1890-1899* by Elizabeth Humes Chapman \$10.00
10. *Lost Writings of Howard Weeden* by Fisk & Riley \$20.00

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