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July 2013



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



“A Letter to BJ”

My mother was born Maurice Strange on July 24, 1917, to Elmer and Rasha Lenor Carroll Strange. She has said many times that she had asked her father why she was given a boy's name.

Mother is a twelfth generation descendant of Pocohantas and John Rolfe. If there is a modern day pioneer woman, my mother would be one. She went to her mother's funeral in a horse-drawn buggy. Her mother was taken to the cemetery in a horse-drawn hearse.

Also in this issue: Toll Gate Road Memories

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Letter to BJ

by Billy Henderson

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Later, my grandfather married Mrs. Estell Smith. She brought to the family a four year old boy, William Alfred Smith. The girls loved him and kept very close to him until he died recently. We kept in touch with his wife, Aunt Florence and her family, until Aunt Florence died.

Then my grandfather married Miss Ruby McGrew, who we all called Mama Strange. They had three children; Edwin, Katherine

and Shirley. Mother helped Mama Strange with Edwin, but was married when Katherine was young and before Shirley was born.

Mother only went through the tenth grade at Monrovia High School. I found out recently that she played tennis at school. Her tennis partner was a teacher, Miss Lila Mae Carter, who was later my high school English teacher.

Mother met my dad, Earl Amery Henderson, when they were giving vaccinations. They were married, Dec 21, 1935, in the preacher's home across from Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

Their first year of marriage was rough. They lived on a lot of rabbit. Mother said when they visited my grandparents, (her inlaws), that they would wake up with snow on the covers.

My brother David was born May 6, 1937. I was born June 21, 1939. My sister Mary Adeline was born Dec 15, 1942 and died the next January. My next sister, Martha Jane was born May 11, 1944. The baby of the bunch, Jeanne Ann, was born Nov 29, 1952.

Mother has never held a regular job. As times dictated it, she would baby-sit or clean house for her sister. She was definitely a stay-at-home mom. Mother did not let us get bored. We did not know what that meant. All of our cousins liked to come to our house. Mother would play games with us, like kick-the-

"The trouble with owning a home is that no matter where you sit, you're looking at something you should be doing."

Sam Keith



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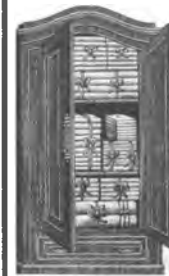
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can, hide & seek and others. On Saturday nights, we would have hamburgers or hot dogs, play games and listen to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio. Tom Locke (Aunt Frances' oldest son) liked mother's chocolate gravy and biscuits for breakfast. We all liked that.

This letter is exactly as she wrote it to BJ. He needed it for some sort of school work. He went on to graduate from the University of Alabama with a degree in Accounting and is now working as an Accountant in Columbia, SC.

Mother will be 96 in July 2013 and still attends church. Nelson, another great grand son, reminds her each Sunday to cut her cell phone off.

"Dear BJ, Hope this letter helps you. (written in 1995)

I was born July 24, 1917, in Toney, northwest Madison County, Alabama, to Elmer (NMI) and Rusha Lenore Carroll Strange. I am the oldest of six children. My Daddy and mother had three daughters. I was five-and-half, Lowris was

three, and Frances was fifteen months old when our mother died, which was one of my most saddest times. That was February 11, 1923.

I started to school that fall, but cried so much they took me out and kept me home that year. I really had my first year in school in 1924. I went to Sardis Springs School which has been demolished years ago.

We lived with our grandparents, my mother's parents, for three years; George and Lossie Carroll. They were Grannie and Papa to us.

We had lots of cousins and had many good times with them. We gathered at Grannie's and Papa's several times a year and there wasn't a dull moment. Only thing we had to do was dishes after meals. My cousin and I hid one time so they couldn't find us to help.

After living with our grand-

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parents three years, Daddy married again to Estel Morehead Smith who had one son, Alfred. So we had a stepmother, Miss Estel we called her. She only lived three years. Her brother had power-of-attorney over Alfred and his mother. She was so good to us. She had worked and had some pretty clothes. Alfred didn't live with us but we have kept in touch with him and his family. They come to our family reunion and our Christmas Brother/Sister dinner. They also would always come at our sad times.

Daddy married the third time to Ruby McGrew. They had three children. Edwin the oldest, then Kathryn, then Shirley, and I love the whole bunch. We do have a loving family. The Lord has been good to us.

Now back to school. I went to school in Limestone County until the middle of the fourth grade. Then moved to Monrovia to the tenth grade and quit. Which wasn't unusual at that time.

Daddy was a farmer, so we had to help him. I even plowed some when we planted cotton. Then I chopped and picked until I married. It was in the fields where Super WalMart is on University Drive, U.S. Highway 72.

About the Depression. We were very poor like so many people, but like most children we didn't realize it until we got older. I know we didn't have a big variety of food except what we raised in our gardens and on the farm. We never went hungry. I think the worse thing before Daddy married Ruby, was that he worked so hard in

the field and only an eleven year old able to do the cooking which was more boiled potatoes than anything else.

When we went to town or store weekends, we'd have hot dogs or pineapple sandwiches or something similar. Sometimes when we went to town (Huntsville), we would stop at a store owned by a black man named Franklin and get an ice cream cone for a nickel.

We went barefooted in summer most of the time. We would get a pair of summer slippers then a pair for winter. I got a pair of brown suede ones. One summer Daddy gave us a dollar a piece to get our dresses with. So much for my summer style.

We got very little for Christmas which we weren't used to anyway.

We always had a car since I was about nine. Daddy bought a car from our Uncle Willie Strange. It was what they called a coupe. Just one seat. Daddy

drove of course, Frances sat on his left side by the door, Miss Estel on his right holding Alfred, then Lowris and I. None of us were very heavy, even Daddy. During that time were some of our real happy times. We soon got a two-seated car.

The only other place I lived was in Lauderdale County in northwest Alabama. I was

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never out of Alabama until I was twenty-one, after I was married and had two little boys.

Back to school, I went one year to Sardis Springs, most of three to Claxton when we lived in a small community called Carey. A cotton gin, grocery store and a place trains stopped when the light was on red for someone to be picked up. Then to Monrovia.

The first thing I remember about church was my mother helping decorate the church for a children's program, perhaps Mothers Day. I remember practicing being the smallest and first in line. When the big day came on Sunday, I refused to march in. I don't remember being scared or anything, just decided not to. I remember crying and Daddy picking me up. I'm sure my mother, and probably my grandparents, were disappointed, and I bet Daddy could have spanked me, but he didn't.

My next memory of church was when I was four. I went to a church wedding. The couple getting married had a couple standing up with them. I thought they all got married.

I'm sure my mother took me to church. I just don't remember anything specific. I remember a bunch of their young friends (their age) coming home with us from church. After mother died we still went to Sardis Springs Baptist Church, until Daddy

married again and we moved to Carey.

When we moved to Madison County, we went to Mount Zion Baptist Church. After I married we went to West Huntsville Baptist where Earl and I joined. We went there for about forty something years then to Hillsboro Heights in 1977, where I still go. I joined the church at Mt. Zion when I was twelve, but I was saved when I was 35 in West Huntsville.

There weren't many white people in the neighborhood where we lived on Old Monrovia Road. No children at all, later they began to move in. Then came the Hendersons. The first time we met them, we all met at what was the Birds Place, where the county nurse came out and gave us typhoid shots. The first one was on my sixteenth birthday. Lowris fell for one of the sons, Willie.

Later I married Earl Henderson, December 21st, 1935. It snowed a big snow that winter and snowed until we didn't get to move out until Feb 8th. That ended most of my field work. I hoed a little cotton and picked a little. In 1937, on May 6th, our oldest child, David, was born. Then in 1939, June 21st, our second son, Billy, was born. In 1942, December 15th, our first daughter, Mary Adeline, was born. She died January 19th, 1943. That was another real sad time. Then on May 11, 1944,

Martha Jane was born. November 29th, 1952, Jeanne Ann was born.

My first trip out of Alabama, Earl took David, Billy and me up in the edge of Tennessee in Mr. Walker's truck to get a load of corn meal for C.J. Walkers gro-

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cery store where Earl worked.

Then we made our first trip to Florida. Earl, David, Billy, Jane, Jeanette, Gale, and I all went. We visited cousins and some friends down there. After Jeanne was born we went to Chicago once.

David married Jan Hudson, they have one daughter, Donna, who has three girls and a boy. Billy married Toni Curies, they had two boys and five grandchildren. Billy is married to Barbara Allen Garner. She has three children and two grandchildren. Martha Jane married Frank Sharp. They have three daughters and five grandchildren.

One of whom is Brian Jason McComas - BJ - who is getting this letter. Jeanne married Horace Smith Jr. They have two daughters.

We were living in Huntsville when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. The Huntsville Times put out an extra paper. I still hear the boy going through the streets telling about it. It was terrible. Earl was still working in the grocery store. We moved back to the farm so Earl wouldn't have to join the Army, that was in 1943. His brothers, Willie and James both fought in

that war. Willie went to Africa. I'm not sure where James was.

My cousin Horace Browning was killed by a sniper near Pier 1 in Manilla, Luzon Island Philipines. He was buried in U.S. Cemetery No 1, five miles north of Manilla. His brother Benton went to Germany. After Germany surrendered, he was sent to Luzon Island. He visited Horace's grave while he was there.

I remember when the war ended. There were people shouting, whistles blowing, bells ringing. Some people had parties. It was great. The war worried me a lot about the safety of our soldiers.


Huntsville was a boom town. People worked at the Arsenal and other places, made more money and spent more than ever. A lot of my people worked at the Arsenal. Earl worked with the Huntsville Utilities climbing poles working all those electric wires.

David and Martha Jane still work on and around the Arsenal. David with Boeing and Martha with a contractor company. We still have one in the Army, BJ's dad. We are very proud of him.

I never did any public work,

some babysitting. I was lucky enough to get to stay home with my children when they were growing up.

I like good country music and good old fashion gospel music. I'm a big fan of the Gaither group.



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God Bless You!

Since Earl died January 30th, 1988, I've lived by myself most of the time. Have done some crafts such as stuffed toys. Crocheted some, also pieced some quilt tops. Sewed a few clothes.

Have enjoyed our family. There are thirty-four of my immediate family. They're a great bunch and I love them and am very proud of all of them.

Am living with Frank and Martha since Nov 1st, 1998, have enjoyed it. I will go to Jeanne's to stay with Anna when school is out. Looking forward to my time with her this summer.

Hope to move out on my own in late 99 or early 2000. Will just wait and see.

Right now I can't think of anyone really special that I look up to. There have been a lot of people that have had a bearing on my life. If I could make any difference in anyone's life I hope they could all love the Lord and let him take care of them.

Am now looking forward to seeing my first great grandson graduate the last of May. (BJ's brother). Looking forward to spending some time with them.

When my family was growing up we liked to camp, cook out and picnic on the mountain.

Oh Yes, inventions. I think I have always been fascinated with airplanes. When I was a young child we maybe saw five or six a year. One day, two flew over my PaPa Carroll's. He said they must have stirred up a nest of them. I've never ridden in one, but would really like to, at least I think I would. I've enjoyed the different kinds of planes. I guess the space ships etc. have been the biggest invention in recent years. Although there have been a lot in my time.

I have been lucky enough to get to take a cruise on a big ship, which boats are one of my favorite things to ride in. The cruise was great. I've had a good life.



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Superstitions in the Home

* **COUPLES:** If a man wipes his hands on a woman's apron he will soon fall in love with her. This stems from the fact that a woman's perspiration is to be found on her apron.

By contrast, members of the opposite sex should never dry themselves on the same towel as this will invariably lead to a quarrel between them.

* **WASHING UP:** If you break a plate or cup you can expect another breakage before the end of the day unless you deliberately smash some other small item to avoid the bad luck.

* **WATER:** An English country superstition says that it is bad luck to throw any water out of the house after nightfall because it has long been regarded as a deterrent to the denizens of the night. By throwing it out you are weakening your protection during the hours of darkness.

* **DINING TABLE:** When rising from the table, take care not to upset your chair, for this is a sign that you have lied at some time during your conversation.

Anyone who lies down on a table will die within a year; any engaged girl who sits on a table while talking to her fiance risks losing him; it is unlucky to change your position at the table after a place



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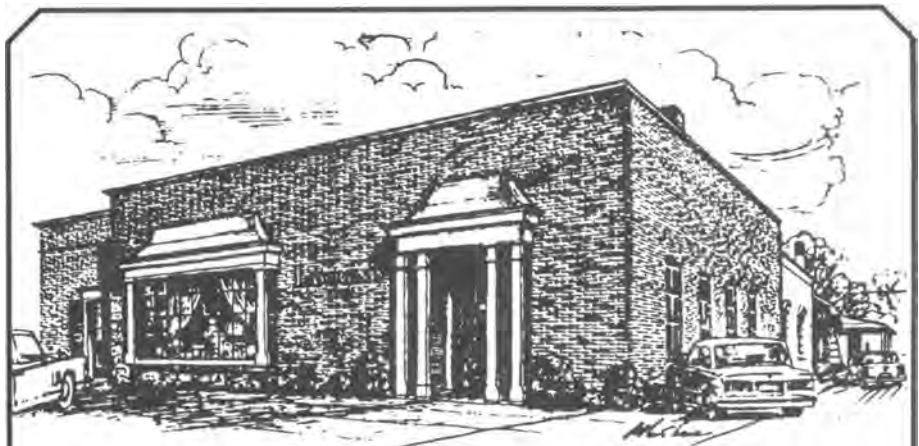
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* **MIRRORS and LOOKING GLASSES:** To break one will result in seven years bad luck. Early man, on seeing his image reflected in water, believed it represented his soul and should anything disturb this image, his own life was in danger. Mirrors have always been closely associated with magic. Mirrors are covered over with cloth in the room where someone has died for fear that anyone who sees himself in the glass will similarly die.

* **STAIRCASE:** It is unlucky to pass anyone on the stairs (cross your fingers if you do so). Stairways symbolized the means of ascending to the abode of the gods and it was dangerous to trespass; also, early stairways were very narrow and two people passing each other left themselves open to attack from behind.

Stumbling on the staircase is said to be a good omen and may indicate a wedding in the household before long.

* **UPSTAIRS:** Do not sing in the bath as this will lead to sorrow before evening; any young girl who persistently splashes herself or her clothes when washing will end up with a husband who is a drunk.

Get out of bed on the right

A class reunion is a gathering where you come to the conclusion that most of the people your age are really a lot older than you are.

side. The left-hand side is associated with the Devil; but, if you can't avoid it, put your right sock and shoe on first.

You will always get the best night's sleep if your bed is positioned in a north-south direction with your head to the south - this will ensure a long life.

To be rich, point your head to the east; to travel widely, the west.

It is unlucky to put a hat on the bed.

* **HOUSEWORK:** China ornaments of animals should never be placed so that they face a door for they will allow the luck to run out of the house.

It is unlucky to sweep any dust or waste material directly out of the

house, as this will carry the good luck with it. Sweep such waste into the centre of the room, collect it up in a pan and then carry the lot out of doors to avoid any repercussions.

A new broom should always be used the first time to sweep something into the house, to symbolize luck.

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SLAVE REBELLION: THE STORY OF NAT TURNER

by *Durwood White*

The American Civil War rivals any drama, any fictional novel, or any historical event in modern history. Yet atrocities are often the result of political and religious disagreements—national or local. The story of Nat Turner is one of those atrocities. No other slave uprising has ever claimed as many deaths.

Early in the morning of August 1831, a band of eight black slaves, led by a lay preacher named Nat Turner, entered the Travis house in Southampton County, Virginia and killed the members of the Travis family. This was the beginning of a slave uprising that was to become known as Nat Turner's Rebellion, or the Southampton Insurrection.

Over a thirty-hour period this band of slaves grew to sixty or seventy in number and slew fifty-eight white persons in and around Jerusalem, Virginia, about seventy miles from Richmond. The rebellion was put down within a few days, but Turner survived in hiding for over two months afterward.

Turner was born a slave in Virginia in 1800 and grew to become a slave preacher. Gradually he built a religious following justifying revolution against their white masters. He believed that God had chosen him to lead the blacks to freedom.

Nat lived his entire life in Southampton County, Virginia, an area with predominantly

more blacks than whites. But he inspired other blacks in the Deep South. After the rebellion, a reward notice described Turner as: "5 feet 6 or 8 inches high, weighs between 150 and 160 pounds, rather "bright" [light colored] complexion, but not a mulatto, broad shoulders, large flat nose, large eyes, broad flat feet, rather knock-kneed, walks brisk and active, hair on the top of the head very thin, no beard, except on the upper lip and the top of the chin, a scar on one of his temples, also one on the back of his neck, a large knot on one of the bones of his right arm, near the wrist, produced by a blow."

Turner was highly intelligent, and learned how to read and write at a young age, much like Abraham Lincoln who read the Bible under candlelight. He was highly religious, and began to have visions.

The visions increased and he ran away from his owner, Samuel Turner, but returned a month later after becoming delirious from hunger. But he was no prodigal son, his mind was deranged and the visions had escalated to nightmares. He became convinced that it was a sign from God to slay "mine enemies with their own weapons (Jeremiah 22:7)."

In 1830, Joseph Travis purchased Turner and became his

master. Despite the decent treatment granted by Travis, Turner eagerly anticipated escape. His torment grew to fever pitch, and on August 13, 1831, he saw a halo around the sun, and believed this was a sign from God to begin the revolt.

Within a few hours Turner

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gathered a few very trusted fellow slaves, but the insurgency ultimately numbered more than seventy enslaved and free blacks, some who were mounted on horseback. And he started the rebellion a week later on August 21st.

The rebels traveled from house to house, freeing slaves and killing all the white people they encountered, even children and animals. No one believed what was happening until it was too late. A small child who hid in a fireplace was among the few survivors—60 white men, women, and children lay dead.

Because the rebels did not want to alert resistance, they got rid of their few muskets and used knives, hatchets, axes, and blunt instruments instead of firearms. It was a horrible sight; reminiscent of WWI trench fighting, yet the victims had absolutely no protection: a massacre of extreme proportions.

Many slaves followed Nat's example and went from Alabama to Mississippi on a rampage of killing. No one knows how many more owners and families would have been killed if they were not stopped.

Finally a white militia with twice the manpower of the rebels and reinforced by three companies of artillery eventually defeated the insurrection. Within a day of the suppression of the rebellion, the local militia was joined by a detachment of men from the USS Natchez and USS Warren, which were anchored in Norfolk, and militias from counties in Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, and North Carolina were surrounding Southampton.

A massacre of blacks in Southampton began. Much of the torture and killing of black

was done by vigilante groups bent on revenge.

The state executed fifty-six blacks. Militias killed at least one hundred blacks and probably many more. Another estimate is that up to two hundred blacks were killed; this number eventually exceeded the number of whites.

The rebellion was suppressed within forty-eight hours, but Turner eluded capture for two months even with hundreds of men on a manhunt. On October 31, a white farmer, Benjamin Phipps, discovered him in a hole covered with fence rails, and Turner was finally arrested.

Nat Turner was hanged on November 11, 1831, in Jerusalem, Virginia, the place of his first organized rebellion.

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"If there are no dogs in heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went."

Will Rogers

Toll Gate Road Memories

by Catherine George (Kimbrough)

I was born at the foot of the old Toll Gate Road that forks off to the right off Wells Avenue, the first house on the right past Gormalley's grocery store. A very small, one-room neighborhood grocery that operated several years.

My grandmother, Lucy Currier, lived on up Wells Avenue, so I spent much of my time there playing with friends Alice, Susie and Bobby Schrimsher, who later became one of my first boyfriends. I think they are all gone now except Susie, who still lives in Huntsville.

Hardly anyone had a car then so we usually walked. Often on Sundays, Mom and Daddy, John M. and Nettie George, (my sister) and I would hike up the Toll Gate Road to where there was a spring and we would build a

fire and cook breakfast. I remember being young enough that Daddy would carry me on his back with my feet in the hip pockets of his overalls.

We had a special connection with the toll gate since my great-grandfather, Archie McCay, operated the toll gate as well as keeping the road passable with pick and shovel. Archie and his wife Kate had five children who lived to adulthood. Their oldest daughter married Mose Miller and bore him several sons; the youngest, Malcolm, being a frequent contributor to this magazine. Byron, a grandson, also contributes.

My grandmother, Lucy Catherine, was second eldest having only one daughter, my mother Nettie. More about them later.

My grandfather, Alfred

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Higgins, and grandmother, Lucy McKay, stayed married only two or three years due to his drinking and not working to support his young family. Like flies to honey, the young men came. One, an especially handsome young soldier, I believe sent Lucy \$10.00 to pay for her divorce. Of course with his being in the military, money was the least of his worries! Evidently while he was away at war (WWI) she met and married another man. His name was Lon Currier, a carpenter.

Lon was often working out of town, Birmingham for one place. Lucy, being newly married, followed him, sometimes taking little Nettie, my mother, along. Of course, since they were temporary workers they stayed in a hotel or rooming house. Mom said she remembered eating in the dining room, and all she wanted to eat was soda crackers with catsup! That was the first of these delicious foods she had ever tasted.

Since they were living prob-

ably in one room, Mom like so many kids today, was sent to live with her grands, Archie and Kate McKay. At the time they were living in and running the toll gate house. Their job was to collect money from anyone coming up the road, usually 5-10-15 cents according to their mode of transport: horse, wagon, stage, etc.

The toll gate was nothing more than a long pole fastened to a post across the road with a large rock fastened to the end and a rope tied to the other end and fastened to the porch rail. When a wagon, etc. came through, usually Kate or one of the boys would collect the money, untie the rope and let the pole raise up like a see-saw. When the wagon was through, the pole was pulled down and tied to the porch until the next wagon.

One day they heard a wagon coming up the road and Mom wanted to be helpful, so she ran and untied the rope and was immediately jerked off the porch, up in the air, the rock on the other end being

heavier than Mom. She was more scared than hurt, knowing she was in trouble with Kate. So she scooted up under the house on her hands and knees and stayed there until Archie came in from work.

He kept the rocky road passable, working with pick and shovel and strong back. He also cut their firewood down in the woods.

One day a wagon came through, paid and continued on up the mountain. Mom hitched a ride on that pole that sticks out the back of the wagon and was having a lot of fun until she looked back and here comes Kate with her fingers pinched together with those dreaded wood ashes! That's how she punished them, putting ashes in their mouth.

Mom dropped off the wag-

"I wasn't going to do anything today. So far, I'm right on schedule."

Ken Owens, Retired

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on and ran down through the woods to where "Papa K" was cutting wood. She was more afraid of Kate than any snakes she might have encountered along the way. She stayed with him until he finished for the day and went home with him because she knew he wouldn't let Kate punish her, as with the gate episode. I guess he was a little partial since she was the only girl, his own two daughters married and having only sons.

Archie's youngest son, Billy, was still at home and a little older than Mom. They were playmates, so they got into some adventures together. One day while Kate was outside somewhere, the kids had to find something to do outside of Kate's watchful eye. So they looked around, and Billy "spying" Kate's can of snuff sitting on the mantle, challenged Mom to take a "dip." For people today that might not know what a dip is, (I think they now use the term "chew"), it's when you put a small amount of snuff in your lower lip or jaw. So Mom said, "I will if you will."

Bill took the challenge. He had a small pocket knife, so he used the blade to dip into the can for the snuff, Mom held her lip out and Bill dumped it in, taking one for himself. They did not know you are supposed to spit the juice out, so they swallowed it. Of course it didn't take long before they were deathly ill. "Green around the gills", I think is a good description.

Of course when Kate came in, it didn't take long to know something was wrong. She kept asking what's going on? "Nothing Mama," Bill would say, dreading those awful ashes. Kate knew they were guilty of something, and she looked around and spotted her snuff can with the tell-tale spillage on the mantle. "Bill McKay, you little devil! You've been into my snuff haven't you?" He said, "Yessum", sheepishly. She said, "Well, I'm not going to whip you this time because you've been whipped enough."

They may have preferred the ashes if they had known the effects the snuff had on them. Too bad tobacco doesn't affect people today like it did then. I don't think Bill ever used tobacco in later years, and I know Mom didn't, so some good came of it.

Bill later married and moved to Birmingham where he and brother Joe were in the plumbing business and did OK. I lost touch with them all years ago, so don't know anything about any distant cousins. I have been away from Huntsville almost entirely since 1952 when I married a G.I.



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John F. Kerry**



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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to **Jim & Ola Ann Lee** who called to identify the Photo of the Month for May. It was a young **Walker McGinnis** who was in the school system for years and knew alot of people, because we got many calls on him! Jim worked at Thiokol Chemical Corp. for many years (he worked with my Dad, **Chuck Owens**). Jim and Ola Ann wanted to say Happy Birthday to their son **James Lee** of Huntsville, who had a June 19 birthday. And Jim told me his son **David** was really involved in wrestling for years, and that Jim was a coach in wrestling.

Michael Sylvester wants to wish his baby boy the happiest of birthdays - his son's name is **Max Caden Sylvester** and he turns 4 on July 2. Michael, who owns M.S. Masonry and wife **Lindsay** are SO proud of their other son - 6 year old **Chance Sylvester**. Also, Michael's niece **Jacqueline Stender**, who lives in Madison, will be 17 on July 5 and will be a senior this year at Westminister Academy.

Happy Anniversary to **Clyde and Pat Riley**, who just celebrated their 52nd anniversary! Pretty amazing because Pat looks like she's only 50 and can't have been married that long! Congratulations to a really special couple.

Mr. A. J. Casey of Satellite Beach, FL just celebrated a milestone birth-

day at his home with family. Mr. Casey's daughter was **Liz Waggett**, who passed away of pancreatic cancer and whom many people still miss. Mr. Casey turned 90 years old and still loves life! We love you!

Many people have heard **Mack Vann** tell great stories of the past. He is a published author. Mack works for New York Life and his 50 year anniversary as a Financial Services Professional with the company comes up in July. Congratulations.

That very happily-retired **Ken Owens** thinks his birthday is pretty much the most important one so **HAPPY JULY BIRTHDAY** to Ken!

Layla Marie is one of the prettiest baby names I've heard in a while, and proud parents are **Terrance & Laquanda Holman** of Hazel Green. Little Layla is healthy and happy and grandma **Liz Ford** is ready to cuddle the little baby.

Clyde Nolan Barclay was 95 when he passed away at his home recently. He was a sweet, Southern gentleman who loved to travel with his beloved wife **Doris** (of 62 years). Clyde witnessed the "Scottsboro Boys" taken into custody at the rail-

road depot in Paint Rock in 1931, and was interviewed by PBS. He helped his family at age 15 when his dad died, leaving him to help his Mom out during the Depression. Clyde was a proud member of the Golden K Kiwanis Club. He leaves son **Jerry Barclay** of Huntsville, son **John Barclay** (and wife **Deborah**) of Huntsville and his grandchildren and one great-grandchild. We send our deepest condolences to all.

Happy, Happy 97th birthday to sweet **Gladys Pack**, of Madison. Her birthday is July 18th. Your family is SO proud of you!!

I want to send a special hello to our friend **R. H. Vanderburg** who lives in Albemarle, NC and loves keeping up with the old stories and news from Huntsville.

We want to send our deepest sympathy to **Police Officer Billy Clardy**, in the loss of his grandmother **Lois Maxine Montana**, who was 81. She lived in Topeka, KS and is survived by her husband, **John Montana**, sons **John (wife Moselle)** and **David Montana**; daughter **Carol** and half brother **Ron Pease**, in addition to a very loving extended family.

It was so good to see **Lee & Floyd Frazier** at the Frazier Family reunion in Guntersville hosted by **Ann Hill, Linda Drace and Sandy Hines**. There were lots of family there having a super time and good food, and

Photo of The Month

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

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Hint: This little boy opened up an eating establishment that had something to do with an old mill.



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the weather was perfect.

I asked some gardening advice of **Bob Ludwig** recently, who is retired from the Huntsville Times. I was wanting to put newspaper down around my tomatoes in a large garden, because I had heard that was good for keeping the weeds down. But then I wondered about the composition of the ink that is used for the print and didn't want to just add more chemicals to my tomatoes if I didn't have to. But according to Bob, the Times has always used soy-based ink so it is perfectly safe!

Happy Birthday to my sweet friend **Joyce Russell** who is barely past 60 but STILL is as beautiful as ever! Joyce is VP at New York Life.

Congratulations to that sweet couple **Charlie and Aneita Scott**. Charlie is the handsome guy in colorful clothes that you'll see walking around with a camera taking pictures of such events as Concerts in the Park, Concerts on the Dock (Lowe Mill), etc. Charlie & Aneita have been married 35 years - and it's still going strong!

Holy Family Catholic School recently held a "Huntsville Wax Museum" project in their school. It is part of a project for the 3rd graders to learn more about their community, and the kids portrayed notables such as **Jan Davis, John Stallworth, Howard Weeden, John Hunt, Dr. Julian Davidson, Wernher Von Braun, Tallulah Bankhead, Eli Whitney, William Councill, Leroy Pope, Annie Bradshaw Clopton, and Tom Carney** among many others. I was especially proud to see **Hunter Bragdon** portray Tom, and he did an amazing job. Thanks to **Amanda Limberg** who brought this idea from another city, helping the children & visitors learn something new about Huntsville's history.

We were so sorry to hear that **Emma Flournoy Jenkins** had passed away in late May. She was a loving, nurturing Mom, wife and friend and worked at Parisians in Huntsville for 15 years. She just loved gardening and planting and taking care of her family. She leaves her daughter, **Linda Shayman and husband Bob**, her son **Alan Jenkins and wife Debra** and grand-kids **Emma, Austin, Valerie and Carla**. Her family will miss her so much.

A large family luncheon was held in June for **Margaret Watson's** birthday hosted by **John Bzdell**. Hope it was a great celebration, Margaret!

Rosemary Leatherwood wants to send out a very special Happy Birthday to her grandson **Chase Woods** who turns 13 on July 10. The family is celebrating with a trip to Gulf Shores!

Gwyn Williams is one of the most talented Voice and Piano teachers in the area, and her students recently presented a recital in May. Students participating were: **Hannah Troup, Rebecca Ellis, Ben Yarbrough, Jack Lambrecht, Caitlin Ireland, Emma Lindley, Willow Brown and Katie Yarbrough**. It was beautiful and well-attended.

This tip sounded crazy when I first read it but I might try it. In any area where you have flies, do this. Take a Ziploc quart bag, put in about 8 pennies. Fill the bag halfway with water, seal it shut, and hang/nail it in the doorway where the flies tend to enter. (Like at the entrance to an outside porch, etc.). You will have no more flies! I haven't done it yet but it's worth a try. Supposedly the flies don't like the shiny reflection in water. If you try this, let me know if it works and I'll let our readers know!

Amanda Mosinski is the Dining

Manager for Redstone Village Retirement Community, and does an outstanding job. I met her recently at a lunch in the Assisted Living side of Redstone Village. She is delightful to talk with and has a heart of gold when it comes to interacting with the older folks. She just makes people feel better by being around her.

David Adam Stolz has joined the U.S. Army and is off to Boot Camp. David Adam's super proud Mom is **Peggy Rhoden** with Step-dad **Jeff Rhoden**. We think the world of you, David Adam and your Grandpa **Tom Carney** is watching over you from above.

Have a great month and try to stay cool in these hot muggy days.

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Savory Chicken Casserole

- 3 lbs. chicken breast, cooked and cubed
- 1 c. chicken broth
- 1 10-oz. can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 4-oz. jar sliced mushrooms
- 1 16-oz. carton sour cream
- 8 oz. seasoned bread stuffing cubes
- 1/2 stick butter, melted
- Garlic powder

In a bowl mix the first 5 ingredients and pour it into a greased casserole dish.

Pour the stuffing cubes on top and drizzle with the butter.

Top all with a sprinkle of garlic powder. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. If you like it spicy, add a sprinkle of cayenne to go with the garlic.

Southern Cracklin' Bread

- 1-1/2 c. cornmeal
- 1/2 t. salt
- 2 T. plain flour
- 1 egg, beaten
- 3 t. baking powder
- 1-1/4 c. milk
- 1-1/2 c. cracklings
- Vegetable oil

Combine the cornmeal, flour, salt, baking powder, egg and milk. Add cracklings and mix well. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto a hot, well-oiled griddle or frying pan and fry til golden brown.

Garlic & Herb Cheese

- 2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- 2 c. butter, softened
- 4 garlic cloves, minced

- 3 T. chopped fresh herbs (basil, thyme, marjoram, chives)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Use a food processor or large fork to blend the cheese, butter and garlic til smooth. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Store in an airtight container in your fridge.

Creamy Peanut Pie

- 1 c. corn syrup
- 1 c. sugar
- 1/2 t. vanilla extract
- 3 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1/3 c. creamy peanut butter
- Unbaked pie shell

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees. Blend all filling ingredients and pour into pie shell. Bake for 15 minutes at 400 degrees, then reduce oven heat to 350 and bake for another 30 minutes. The filling should



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appear slightly less set in the center than around the edges.

Chocolate Popcorn

- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 1 T. butter
- 1 square unsweetened chocolate
- 3 qts. freshly popped popcorn
- 3 T. water

Boil sugar, butter, chocolate and water til it spins a long thread. Pour the mixture over your freshly popped corn and stir til all kernels are covered.

Apple Crisp

- 1 qt. sliced apples (peeled and sweetened to taste)
- 2/3 c. brown sugar
- 1/2 c. plain flour
- 1/2 c. regular oats
- 3/4 t. cinnamon
- 3/4 t. nutmeg
- 1/3 stick butter

Pour sweetened apples into a greased pan, 8" square. Mix all the other ingredients and pour over the apples. Bake for 35 minutes at 375 degrees.

Vanilla Icebox Pie

- 4 egg whites
 - 1 c. sugar
 - 1 t. vanilla
 - 1 c. toasted pecans, chopped
 - 13 graham crackers, crumbled into small pieces
 - 1 can shredded coconut
- Beat the whites til stiff, add

the sugar and vanilla slowly. Add the coconut, pecans, graham cracker crumbs. Pour into a buttered pan and bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees. Chill prior to serving.

Chocolate Gravy

- 1 c. sugar
- 3 T. cocoa
- 1 c. milk
- 1/2 to 1 stick butter

Mix sugar and cocoa, then add milk and mix well. Put in a deep pan and bring to slow boil over medium heat, being careful not to burn. Add butter and boil til it gets as thick as you want. Slather this over fresh biscuits. You'll get hooked on this, a really old Southern favorite.

Brandy Ice Cream

- 1 qt. ice cream, vanilla
- 4 oz. Brandy

Using your blender, blend together the ice cream and brandy and freeze. Blend it again right before you serve, and serve by layering it into elegant glasses.

Honey-Butter Spread

- 1 stick softened butter
- 6 oz. local honey

Combine the ingredients in a small mixing bowl. Whip with hand mixer for about 2 minutes. Serve on hot biscuits.



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History of the Old Railroad Bed Road

*Researched & Written by
Doris Finley Weiland*

In 1887 things began to change for the people who lived in Lincoln County of Southern Tennessee and Madison County of Northern Alabama when a passage of a bond in the amount of \$150,000.00 was issued on September 10, 1887 by the voters of the above counties to construct a new railroad from Decherd, Tennessee to Fayetteville, Tennessee to continue on into Alabama. This venture struggled through two (2) bankruptcies, collapsed bridges, mismanagement and the Depression of 1893.

In 1896 and 1897 when the Middle Tennessee, Alabama, N.C. and St. Louis Railroads acquired the line, the construction began. Construction began from Decherd, Tennessee and continued on it's way towards Tanner, Alabama, a distance of 36.91 miles. In 1902 there was a steam locomotive that was pulling freight cars as well as passenger cars from Decherd, Tennessee and on down to Alabama and into the town of Tanner, Alabama.

Harmes, Tennessee

Harmes was a community southwest of Fayetteville, Tennessee. Harmes was one of several small communities and/or towns that were along the side of the railroad tracks. Along beside the tracks there were several houses where people lived and most of them worked for the railroad company. There was also a store there and parts of the store were still standing until a few years back.



Passengers were now allowed to ride the train to and from any of its stops, and Harmes, TN. was one of the communities where it stopped. Harmes had a dam with a grain mill there and that was where most of the farmers in the surrounding towns would take some of their corn to get it milled into feed for their farm animals and into cornmeal for the family. The mother of the family would mix the cornmeal



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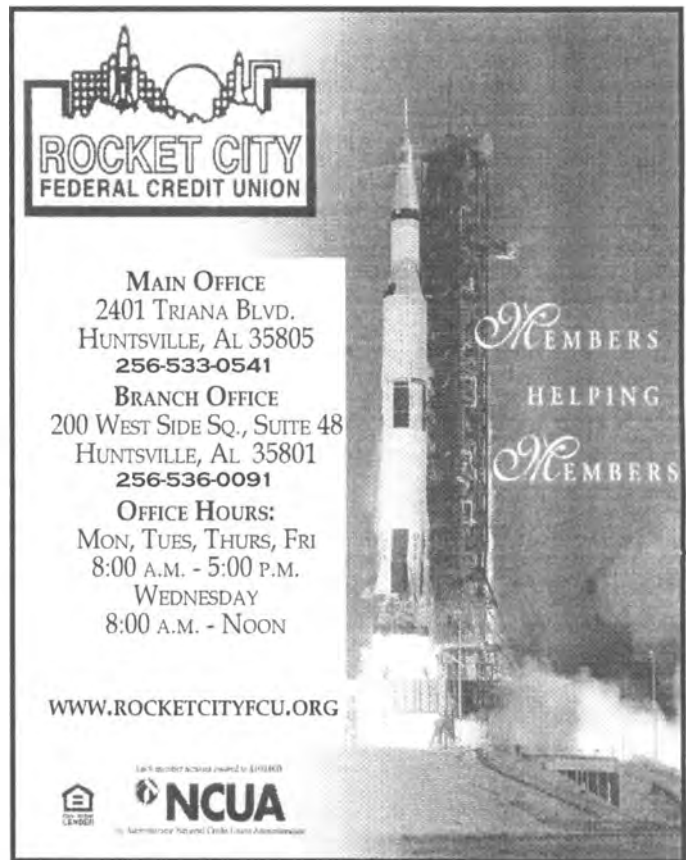
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and some seasoning into a batter and bake it inside a wood cook stove's oven and that was called "corn bread". When times were hard and there wasn't much food to eat, the mother would put some of the corn meal into boiling water with salt in it and would cook it into a mush, that was called "corn-meal mush." Then it would be served to the family to eat. When people had worked hard all day it wasn't too bad after they would put a little sugar, some butter and a little milk in it.

Coldwater, Tennessee

Coldwater, TN. was another growing little community and the railroad brought modern progress into that area. The Depot was finally finished in 1904. Now Coldwater has a train depot where you could go and catch the train and ride as far northeast as Decherd, Tennessee or southwest as far as Tanner, Alabama. Coldwater was now a thriving community and it was growing. It soon had a hotel, a two-story brick bank with a skating rink on the 2nd floor of it, two general stores, one sawmill, a log yard, two gristmills, a cotton gin, two blacksmith shops and a railroad depot. Public services included a U. S. Post Office, a public school, a Methodist Church and a poor folks home, called "The Old Poorfolks Home of Coldwater, TN". It also, had a practicing physician, Dr. Garland Hayes.

On Saturday afternoons the surrounding farmers came to town for a few hours of pleasure after a long, hard week of work. Tall tales and whittling took precedence over milking the cows or plowing the corn. Dice games, fist-fights, shoot-outs and

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Floyd Frazier, Senior Citizen



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moonshine were not unheard of by nightfall. One old-timer said he knew of three shoot-outs but nobody ever mentioned any names back then. He also described a party he attended on February 29, 1912; a leap-year dance on the second floor of the Hobbs House. He said he would ride the late afternoon train from his home, 5 miles north of Coldwater and then dance all night and return by train the next morning. The best part of it all was that it was a leap year party and the tradition had it that the girls chased the boys rather than the boys chasing the girls.

Several years later a delightful lady, the oldest remaining member of the Hayes family, described a Sunday night date, probably in 1903. At the conclusion of the church meeting her boyfriend asked her to go to a party at Taft, Tennessee, which was about 7 or 8 miles south of Coldwater. Her parents reluctantly agreed, so she boarded her boyfriend's horse and buggy. A few moments later she looked back and saw her father following them in his buggy. He followed them all the way to Taft and then later followed them all the way back home.

With the demise of the railroad in 1928 the town began to collapse. Nearly all of the old structures were torn down and now the only remains of Coldwater are a few houses, two churches and a store. SAD BUT TRUE!!!

There was a bridge just as you would begin to enter Coldwater. Of course it was called the Coldwater Bridge. This bridge covered some of the coldest water in the area unless there was someone who had some ice from the ice trucks. Just up the creek/river to the east a ways there was a ice cold spring where most of the town/community people got their water for all their water needs. Most of the time that was the children's

job, that is if there were any children in the family. If there weren't, it was the woman of the house's job. This creek served as a family bathing place, too, in the summertime. Although it was summertime it did not make the water any less cold.

Coldwater was known for many years as being the meanest and the roughest community any where near Northern Alabama or Southern Tennessee.... I can still remember as a child that they claimed that you had to have the password before you could cross over the bridge and enter into Coldwater, we kids believed that... It was indeed a very interesting town/community and there was always plenty of talk about it...

Taft, Tennessee

Back before the 1900s Taft, Tennessee was a very busy little community. It consisted of three general stores, a Post Office, a cotton gin, a school, a horse and carriage stables, a blacksmith shop, two churches and a doctor. I guess you could say it was somewhat busier than Coldwater because it was located on two main roads. One was the road that ran along the side of the train tracks from Decherd, Tennessee to crossing

the Alabama and Tennessee State Line Road and on down to Tanner, Alabama. This road is now known as "The Old Railroad Bed Road" and is Highway 110, the road that goes from Ardmore, Alabama - Tennessee to Fayetteville, Tennessee.

Taft supplied many of the locals with their small farming tools and feed for their farm animals and of course they would use the doctor for minor injuries, colds, flu, and delivering babies. Yes, Taft was a pretty busy little town and in the summertime there was always a revival going on at one of the churches or a new preacher would arrive in town and would build a bush-yarbor and would set up for a bush-yarbor revival.

The revival would be held at night after all of the farmers were finished up with their night work and had their baths from the nearest creek. Some might say, "Those were the good ole days." However, others might would say, "Those were the days from hell."



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Alabama and Tennessee Stateline

There were several families from other countries that homesteaded along this road back before the turn of the nineteenth century. Some of them homesteaded many acres and really knew nothing about clearing land or farming it. And in order for them to keep the land that they staked off they would have to clear a certain amount of the trees, build some kind of house and grow something on the land that they had cleared, basically cotton and corn. And if they didn't do all of this and continue to improve the land they would lose it all.

So, needless to say, they had to have had it rough with no experience in any of that kind of work. However, they all seemed to have been very successful in their commitment. There were many nice two-story homes that were built on and near the Stateline. A few of the homes still exist but unfortunately only a very few. Matter of fact my Great Uncle Julius Kull was the owner of one of those houses. It was located on the corner of the Alabama-Tennessee Stateline Road and Wall Triana. It still existed and was in excellent condition up until about 8 to 10 years ago.

It was said that one of the Kull's younger generation had a meth lab in one of the upstairs bedrooms that blew up and for that reason they had to take it down and also a couple of feet of the soil. That was a sad day for many in the community.

Elkwood, Alabama

Elkwood, Alabama was one mile into Alabama after crossing the Alabama and Tennessee state line. It consisted of one store that was also the U. S. Post Office, a school, a church and a few

houses. The railroad had a grab bag hanger where the mail from the Post Office would be bagged and put into the hanger so when the train came by it could grab the day's mail. Elkwood did not have a train depot where the train would stop and pick up people.

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Washington Street, taken in 1955 or '56

About a half of mile south below the store was a creek where all the young people would swim and hang out. The creek had a walk crossing where people could cross the creek so they could visit with their neighbors on the other side. It also had a swimming hole where people could swim and take their baths in the summertime. It was a nice little community and everyone knew everyone.

One day in early 1951 or 1952 there was quite an exciting event that happened on the Old Railroad Bed Road near Bobo, AL... I was sitting with my family when we all heard a jet airplane go over our house, it sounded like it was going to take the top of our house off as it went over. Then we all started to talk about it and how fast it was going, of course back then jet planes had not been in the air all that long. So everyone had an opinion about where it was going and how far down the way it might be.

One would say that they bet it was way past Huntsville by now and another spoke about how far they thought it might be, then another said it may not be any further than Toney. Well low and behold the postman came by a few minutes later and told us that a plane had landed between Elkwood and Bobo, he said it ran him off the road. The Postman said that he was putting mail into the Whitt's mailbox when he looked up in his mirror and seen this huge plane coming in behind him and he decided real quick to hit the ditch.

That was really quite an event in those days. It wasn't long before the officials were out there and had guards guarding it day and night. A day or so later they brought in a dare devil pilot to fly it out of there and of course everyone in the county was there to see the event. The dare devil did a few air acts for everyone and then off he went... That truly was

a big deal back in those days and is still talked about.

Bobo, Alabama

Now, just down the train tracks about a mile was another small community called Bobo and the train would stop there because it had a small train depot. It also had two general stores and a church. It was a pretty busy intersection for those days and it was because the road leading to the right would take you to Pindale, Alabama. There was an intersection that to the left would lead you to Athens, Alabama and to the right it would lead you to Ardmore, Alabama.

In the 1890s and before the 19th century the government

started the Alabama and Tennessee Valley Homesteading Act and there were people moving into the area from everywhere, they all wanted some of that free land. So, just before the turn of the nineteenth century the area around Elkwood and Bobo, Alabama was beginning to get populated with people from other countries. People that were moving into the area were from Germany, Switzerland and Italy, to name just a few of the countries.

Most of the people who were coming into the area knew nothing about farming but had the will and the determination to do what ever it took to be a successful farmer. So with lots of hard work and many mistakes along the way



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they all seemed to have managed pretty good. At least they all seemed to have ended up with nice big farms and very large homes.

Ready, Alabama

Now known as Ready Section Road where it and Old Railroad Bed Road crosses each other.

Ready was a small community where the train tracks went right through the middle of it. Like many other communities in the area, it depended on farming and mostly cotton. It consisted of a couple of stores and a blacksmith shop and like Elkwood it had no train depot. The road's name that goes from east to west is Ready Section Road. Back at the turn of the century it was a growing community and many of the surrounding farmers depended upon the stores and blacksmith shops. Now there is no sign of it ever being a growing community or town.

Toney, Alabama

Toney, Alabama in it's time was a busy little town/community and like the other little communities it, too, was located near the railroad tracks. It also had a U.S. Post Office, a train depot and a cotton gin. There were several homes and farms in the area and the farmers did their trading at one of the three stores that were located there. It also had a school that went through the 9th grade. After the 9th grade, if there were any that were still going they'd transfer to Hazel Green High School. Hazel Green was about 8 miles east of Toney.

Like many of the other communities that were located along the railroad tracks, Toney also had an area where the young people hung out. There was a creek not very far north of Toney near the railroad. It was a nice place to swim and it was called the Blue Hole. The reason it was called the Blue Hole was because the water in it was so clear it looked blue.

Not very far from the Blue Hole there was a spring, also near the railroad. The tale was that it was a bottomless pit and if you fell into it you would never be seen again. Also, it was said that a man in a buggy ran off into it and that he, the buggy and horse all sank and were never seen again.

Harvest, Alabama

Harvest, Alabama was a very nice little upcoming town and, like the other little towns along the N.C. and St. L. Railroad Company crashed when the Depression began to show it's ugly beginnings in 1925.

Although Harvest got crushed when the railroad shut down it was able to hang on and today is still a very nice little community with it's churches, U.S. Post Office, a couple of stores, a school, a large feed store and a garden shop.

Also, like the others there are probably very few of its residents who can remember any of those old days.

Tanner, Alabama

Tanner, Alabama was a booming little town but in a brief 25 years the bubble burst and on March 25, 1925 N.C. & St. L. Railroad petitioned the Interstate Commerce to shut down the M.T. and the A. Railroad Company.

On April 20, 1929 the line was abandoned and the "tin lizzies" took it over. By the fall of 1929 the tracks had been taken up and moved. This is when it was graded, graveled and then became the Old Railroad Bed Road.

The end of the N.C. and St. Louis Railroads, well known today as the base for the Old Railroad Bed Road, intersects with Alabama Highway 53 which goes from Ardmore to Huntsville, Alabama.

Alabama Highway 53 was once known as The Herman Nelson Highway. That was of course because Herman Nelson was the one that started the Alabama Highway 53 program back in 1958/1959.



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1. Drink plenty of water.
2. Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a beggar.
3. Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants and eat less food that is manufactured.
4. Live with the 3 E's -- Energy, Enthusiasm and Empathy.
5. Make time to pray.
6. Play more games.
7. Read more books than you did last year.
8. Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day.
9. Sleep for 7 hours a night.
10. Take a 10-30 minute walk daily. And while you walk, smile.

Personality:

11. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
12. Don't have negative thoughts of things you cannot control. Instead invest your energy in the positive present moment.
13. Don't overdo. Keep your limits.
14. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
15. Don't waste your precious energy on gossip.
16. Dream more while you are awake.
17. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need.
18. Forget issues of the past. Don't remind your partner with mistakes of the past. That will ruin your present happiness.
19. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone. Don't hate others.
20. Make peace with your past so it won't spoil the present.
21. No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
22. Realize that life is a school and you are here to learn. Problems are simply part of the

curriculum that appear and fade away like algebra class but the lessons you learn will last a lifetime.

23. Smile and laugh more.
24. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree....

Society:

25. Call your family often.
26. Each day give something good to others.
27. Forgive everyone for everything.
28. Spend time with people over the age of 70 & under the age of 6.

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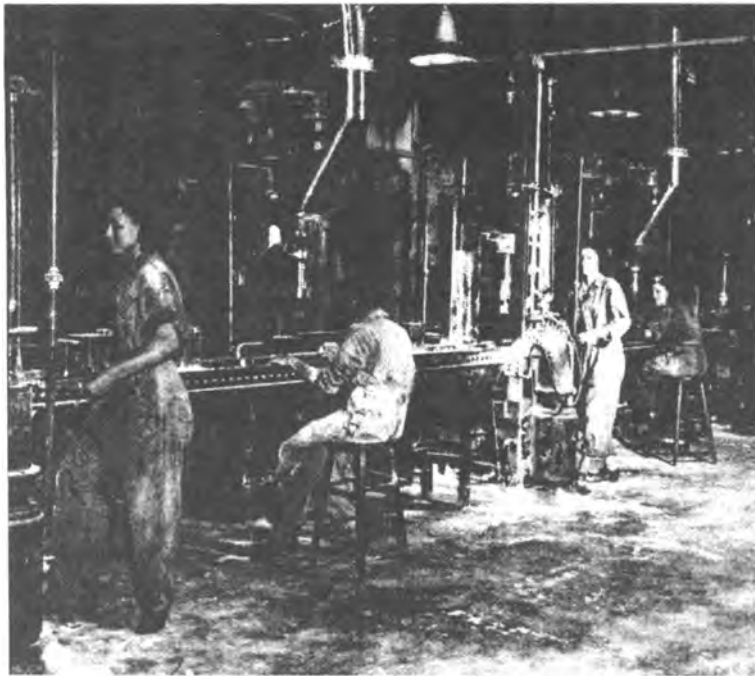
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We Need Your Help to Uncover Some Age-Old Huntsville Mysteries!

In our continued efforts to bring you great stories of the past, we would like to introduce you to a new section of Old Huntsville magazine.

We know from talking to folks that there are many good stories out there just needing a little research to make it into print. Researching our stories has been what has always set us apart as a periodical. We want to continue to bring you great stories, and this is our outreach effort to invite you to help us find needed information on a specific event to bring to our readers.

Each month we will present a different Huntsville "mystery" that has never been solved.

If you have knowledge of the

issue we are researching, or of someone who can fill us in on some of the background of the story from personal experience or a perhaps a passed down secret they may be willing to share, please contact Cathey at Old Huntsville, 256-534-0502. You can also use E-mail and write to oldhuntsville@knology.net.

As an extra added incentive, we will send the reader a full year's subscription (\$25 value) for information sufficient to write a good story.

This is an example of what could be our very first story with mystery solved!

Secret Confederate Arsenals

"It was the mid-eighties and many things were happening in Huntsville. The biggest was probably the I-565 construction project bringing an interstate spur to Huntsville, the largest city in the country not served

by the Interstate System until this road project began.

At the time it was the largest public construction project going on in the U.S. It was valued cumulatively at over half a billion dollars, which was big money back then.

Everything was going fine till one morning in the warm season there was a radio report about traffic congestion expected for anyone going over the Chapman Gap on Andrew Jackson Way. A construction crew working on the connection of Sparkman Drive with the new Interstate had uncovered what appeared to be a cache of explosives along the natural drainage above and in front of what would have been the Max Luther house. Delays were to be expected for traffic into and out of Huntsville via U.S. 72 going over the mountain. What was going on?....."

HELP WANTED

Does anyone have any information on the explosive cache found near the base of Chapman Gap near Lee High School in the mid 1980s? A large, explosive cache of guns was uncovered during the construction of I-565. In order to fill in the blanks and present a good story to you we need help from our readers!

It was reputed to be quite old. If there are any road workers from the Interstate project, State DOT officials, or old ATF folks or others who know about this, we would love to have a talk with you about this for a story we would like to do. Contact the Help Wanted Editor at Old Huntsville 256-534-0502 or oldhuntsville@knology.net and put "Mystery Stories" in the Subject heading.

Please leave your contact information such as a name, phone number and a best time to call you. With thanks, your "Huntsville Mysteries" editor.

"For Sale, the most romantic love songs of the '50s, including '16 Tons' by Tennessee Ernie Ford."

Seen in recent newspaper ad

My Little Brother

by Lois S. Miller

"My Little Brother" passed away June 3, 2013. He had cancer of the esophagus.

I call him "My Little Brother" because I was twenty years old and had already left home when he was born, June 23, 1956. My mother was up in years and she was in the hospital in Council Grove, Kansas and needed blood so my Uncle Ralph and I both had our blood tested to give to her. The doctors chose Uncle Ralph's and I always felt bad that they didn't choose mine; however, since they didn't, I was able to watch the birth of a beautiful baby boy, Brent Clark Shearer. The Clark is after my Dad's father.

Several family members from Kansas, Missouri, and Alabama visited Brent a week before his passing. We all visited him at his bedside as he was very weak. He was a real family man and he was happy to see all of us which included his son, his son's wife, his grandson, his daughter, his two sisters, nieces and their spouses, cousins, etc., really way too many to mention them all.

Brent, Lavon, my sister, and I were all raised on a farm in Kansas. Lavon out grew the farming, but Brent and I never did. After high school Brent came to Alabama to live with my family and he worked for a time with County Shed Number 5.

Brent did not like the forty hour work week and moved to Seymour, Missouri and began work as a crop farmer on the surrounding hillside. In addition to being raised on a large farm Brent had a natural talent in farming and won several awards for his corn and other crops. After a few years he owned and operated Sod Buster Farms, a carrier truck company in Seymour, Missouri in addition to running his farm. He was a man of many hats; a truck company, a hog farmer and he baled hay for many people in the Seymour area. He sold hogs to the local people and

businesses.

As time went on he trucked and put up hay for many Amish families in the Seymour area. He became great friends with many of their families and when they had to move to other farms he used his truck to move them. Moving an Amish family was an interesting undertaking. When I went to visit he would take me to their homes to visit with them. We would see many horses and buggies in the area and well as their farms and businesses.

Many Amish families came to his bedside to pray during the final days. The night of the visitation the streets in front of the funeral home were lined with Amish horses and buggies. One Amish man was in charge of watching the horses and buggies while the others visited inside the funeral home.

Brent was buried with a John Deere cap. The funeral procession was headed up by two giant John Deere tractors, driven by his two hired hands, and the huge truck was the final vehicle in the procession. The casket had John Deere on the side.

When the tornado went through Harvest in April 2011, Brent came with a church group to help us and the group worked for many other families in the area. We were so happy for him to be here with

us during that time.

I will definitely miss our occasional phone conversations as he was always so upbeat and seemed happy and always laughed just like Dad. He was very happy with the path he chose in life.

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Varicose veins are a very common problem, affecting an estimated 40% of women and 25% of men. New minimally invasive techniques in vein management, along with insurance companies recognizing the need for treatment of varicose veins and their complications, allow patients who have not previously considered treatment a simple and relatively pain-free option.

Abnormal veins can appear as a bulging rope-like cord on the legs. Other symptoms of varicose veins include pain, aching, heaviness or tiredness, a burning or tingling sensation, swelling, pressure or throbbing, and spider veins. If you experience these symptoms and don't seek treatment varicose veins could lead to more serious complications, including phlebitis, blood clots, skin ulcers and bleeding.

Varicose veins occur when the valves in superficial leg veins malfunction. The superficial veins have one-way valves which allow the venous blood in the legs to return to the heart. When these valves become dysfunctional, typically caused by trauma, increasing age, pregnancy, and a family history of venous dysfunction, the valves may be unable to properly close. This allows blood that should be moving towards the heart to

flow backwards. This is called venous reflux and it allows the blood to collect in your lower veins causing them to enlarge and put the venous system under high pressure. Once a vein develops venous insufficiency it will always be abnormal and will only lead to the development of more abnormal veins and worsen.

In the past, venous insufficiency was typically treated with surgery using a procedure called vein stripping. This involved either multiple small incisions or a large incision leaving scars. Stripping can involve general anesthesia, treatment in a hospital, and multiple weeks of recovery. We now have minimally invasive treatments that are proven to be 98% effective in treating varicose veins.



JAMES C. NIX III, M.D.

A new procedure called EVLT (Endo-venous Laser Treatment) is now available and covered by most insurance companies. EVLT is a non-surgical, more effective treatment for varicose veins. The treatment is performed in the doctor's office under local anesthesia. The doctor uses ultrasound to map out the vein. He then applies a local anesthetic; patients feel very little pain. After administering anesthesia, a thin laser fiber is inserted through a tiny entry point, usually near the knee. The laser is activated as the vein is destroyed. The body will absorb the vein over the next 3 to 6 months.

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Princess Agnes Salm-Salm

by Hartwell Lutz

Agnes Elizabeth Winona Leclerq Joy came to town in a cloud of dust, riding a half-wild horse at break-neck speed down the wide streets of the City of Washington. She gave Washingtonians, at least the men, something pleasant to talk about after the Union's humiliating defeat in the First Battle of Bull Run a few weeks earlier.

Agnes had recently come from Cuba, where she had performed as a bare back rider in a circus. Prior to her Cuban adventure, she had performed in a high wire act in an American circus, and, some say, as a stage actress.

It is unclear what Agnes's age was when she came to town, but it was between sixteen and twenty. At first, people in Washington probably thought she was just what we would now call a wild "teenager." There were, in fact, many details about her life that will be forever unknown.

It would be safe to say that men admired what they saw in Agnes, but that women were "scandalized." One writer says of her, "There is no disagreement from any source about her beauty and vivacity. She was a

whirlwind of energy, impulsive and daring." When she made her rides through the city, with her long, wavy, auburn hair flowing behind her, she received lots of attention, which suited her.

Agnes has been described by one who knew her as "... decidedly Bohemian in taste, a very beautiful person, and as charming as she was beautiful, perfectly bewitching." Though the word "sexy" was not in common use in 1861, by all accounts she was that. Recent writers have compared her sex appeal to that of Princess Diana, and Princess Grace, neither of whom, like Agnes, began life as princesses.

Agnes found her prince in the form of Felix Salm-Salm, a bona fide prince of a small state in Germany. Felix was a born soldier of fortune who had served in the Prussian Army in the war between Prussia and Denmark in 1846, after which he joined the Austrian Army to fight the French in 1859. He served valiantly in both wars, but when the American Civil War began in 1861 Felix had wasted his family inheritance, was broke and out of a job. Knowing that some German officers had come to America to pursue their chosen profession, Felix came also, hoping for a commission as at least a colonel in the U.S. Army.

It would have been hard for Felix not to notice Agnes during

some of her wild rides. Some have speculated that she had previously noticed Felix also,

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and that she deliberately sought his attention. Coincidentally or otherwise, they were both invited to a gala affair, where they quickly made eye contact. Felix was dressed in the finery of a European soldier-prince, complete with his numerous decorations, a sabre, and a monocle in his right eye. They were both immediately smitten, the only problem being that neither of them spoke a language familiar to the other.

They were married by a Roman Catholic priest less than a year later. Due in part to Felix's still limited English, it would not be easy for him to get command of a regiment. It was at this point that Agnes first used what seems to have been her innate talent of knowing who held power, usually a man, and how to induce them to use it. During her stay in Washington, she had come to know several powerful men, including Senator Ira Harris of New York, to whom she went for help in getting a command for Felix. Harris took her to meet the Governor of New York. By Agnes's account, the Governor was not initially receptive, but, according to Agnes in her memoir, she pleaded with him, praising Felix's military skills and courage, and that after a while, she "became warmer and warmer." The Governor thereupon commissioned Felix as a colonel and assigned him to lead the 8th New York Volunteer Division.

At this point it must be mentioned that there were people of her day who believed that Agnes was little more than a slut who used her sex appeal to further her husband's career and, thereby, to feather her own nest. Given her physical beauty and seemingly unlimited nerve, such a reaction was predictable. Modern writers of her story disagree about her virtue or lack of it, but the slut version probably sells more books than the one portraying her as a highly intelligent, charming woman who was able to use her God-given qualities as a

heroine and a humanitarian, and who was completely devoted to her husband.

Those arguing the slut side of the question point out that a Union Captain Enking openly boasted that he had "Been intimate" with Agnes. Upon learning of this, Agnes said that she "Didn't remember his face." Even if that is totally true, it is possible that Agnes's response was simply that of a highly confident woman, with a good sense of humor.

In 1863, most of the men in Felix's division were mustered out, having served their period of enlistment. He and Agnes immediately began to seek another New York regiment for him to command. One German colonel who resented Felix protested that assignment. But, in the words of the colonel, by the time he had made his objection

known, "His beautiful wife had done the talking—and a good deal of smiling and coaxing," and Felix had been given command of the 68th

New York Volunteers.

In late 1863 and early 1864 Felix and Agnes spent several months in the area of Bridgeport, Alabama. Agnes spoke kindly of the Alabama people with whom she came in contact there. During that period she became

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heavily involved in attempting to provide medical care to sick and wounded soldiers, traveling widely over all North Alabama, North Georgia and Eastern Tennessee, often by train, in order to procure needed medical supplies. It is undisputed that, at times during these train excursions she rode on locomotive cow catchers, saying that she preferred that to riding in the cars where smoke and cinders made riding there unpleasant.

In her memoir, Agnes says that during Felix's assignment to the post at Bridgeport, she was commissioned as a captain in the Union Army, with a captain's pay. Assuming there was a factual basis for her claim, it is likely that the commission was unofficial and that the purpose of it was to help defray the expenses Agnes was incurring in helping sick and wounded soldiers. Agnes expressed great sympathy for the Southern people that she came in contact with in Alabama.

When the American Civil War ended in 1865, Felix again

faced unemployment, but the Mexican Civil War was raging, thereby affording him another employment opportunity. That war was, in effect, between an empire established by several European monarchs represented by Austrian Prince Maximilian on one side, and the common people of Mexico, with President Benito Juarez as their leader, on the other.

Felix, predictably, came down on the side of European royalty, which proved to be the wrong side. When that war ended, Felix was arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to death by a Mexican court. But Agnes came to his rescue again, and, by means of shuttle diplomacy between Emperor Maximilian and President Juarez, she was able to secure his release as well as that of some of his comrades.

In a period of ten years, this remarkable woman with an obscure background became well acquainted with Presidents Lincoln (whom she kissed, to his delight and Mary's scorn),

and Andrew Johnson, Emperor Maximilian, President Juarez, most future President U.S. Grant, most American officials of any importance, German Emperor Wilhelm I, and Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria, along with dozens, if not hundreds, of other European royals. In 1872, she had a private audience with Pope Pius IX, to whom she offered her services as a nun, to which offer the Pope responded by telling her to come back in a year.

It was Agnes Princess Salm-Salm's basic philosophy that "the only way to success is not to believe in impossibilities." Two years after she went with Felix to live in Prussia, he was killed in the slaughter that was to be known as the Franco-Prussian War. Except for one brief visit to the United States in 1899, noted on page one of the New York Times, she remained in Europe as a princess until her death in 1912.

An amazing, unique woman who had admirers all over the world.



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REMEMBERING THE KRISTAL

by Ted Roberts

The sad thing was that she passed away on the 15th - and nobody seemed to notice but me. Not a soul mentioned it but me. "She's gone, I tell you - lights out - no cars in the lot. Big 'For Rent' sign in front."

"Oh, you're just having a bad day. There's plenty of them left. C'mon man."

I stared in disbelief. Nobody cared but me. Naturally, nobody had my kind of relation with her but me. In the late 40s, for 25 cents you could get four of 'em for a quarter; "with extra onion and pickle, please". This encounter was usually on the way home from swimming lessons at the Y.

Who could forget the steamy, soggy bun enclosing a thin sliver of meat, those chopped, not sliced, onions? There was nothing like it. You dare not call it a hamburger. This is not one of those tire-sized, sloppy burgers that wouldn't fit into a horse's mouth and soaked your shirt with a mix of mayo and tomato juice. This was a neat, little thing that fit in your shirt pocket. It was not a hamburger any more than a crayfish was a lobster. It was sui generis, which means - if

"Lawyers believe a man is innocent until proven broke."

Robin Hall

you're a student of Latin - one of a kind. (Every chef should learn the term.) Then there's that old classic: "There's nothing like a dame" - uh I mean "Krystal".

Yes, that's what I'm talking about - the Krystal - the heart of my culinary life since I could fish a nickel and pennies out of my pocket with a hole in it. When we were kids, Krystals were so universal that they substituted for currency. Like: "two Krystals say that Notre Dame will win by 14 this Saturday." In those poverty stricken years a hamburger, due to a post recession economy, was a skinny slab of beef on a bun baked without enough yeast. So a Krystal was the ultimate. But somehow with a flavor concocted in Hamburger Heaven. "Let's go get a sandwich" in my boyhood meant, "Let's go get a Krystal."

But then came the war and suddenly, due to plenty of jobs, pockets jingled with change. Besides the old mom and pop sandwich shops, the

chains with their gigantic, hard to eat, drippy, mouth-challenging burgers hit the street. But they weren't the

same to me. They were meals artificially mounted on bread. And there was no way you could eat one and read the paper at the same time without flavoring your clothes in mayo, pickle, and onion, which caused you to lose valuable friends and incur cleaning bills more expensive than your weekly hamburger bill.

None of this helped the big K, but they're still marching on with their miniature, inexpensive fare. Consider also their contribution to the culture. Today's new culinary term is "slider", only recently established in the language. Well, guess who was selling "sliders" in 1940? And they were only a nickel!

The humor of Ted, the "Scribbler on the Roof", appears in newspapers around the U.S., on WLRH, our local National Public Radio and numerous web sites.

Ted welcomes all comments & questions - he can be reached by emailing him at telld@hiwaay.net



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HUNTSVILLE GROWTH IN THE 1950s

One of the stories of Old Huntsville that has almost been forgotten is the one about Faith Presbyterian and Cambron's nightclub.

As Huntsville began to grow in the late 1950s, so did the need for more church space. A recently formed congregation of the Presbyterian church had been meeting in members' homes and anywhere else they could find space to worship. As the membership grew, so did the need for a permanent meeting place.

The answer to their dilemma came one Sunday evening when Charley Motley, a member of the congregation, was driving down Whitesburg Drive. Noticing a nightclub by the name of Cambron's, Charley paused and took a long look at it.

Due to the Sunday Blue Laws of that time, nightclubs were not permitted to open on Sunday. "What a waste," Charley thought. "All that space not being used on the one day of the week when we could really use it."

Due to the nature of their business, it's hard to shock most nightclub operators but when Mr. and Mrs. Motley walked into the darkened club and asked permission to use it for a church gathering, Cambron was flabbergasted. "Ruby, come here," he said to his wife. "You gotta hear this."

As Mr. Motley explained their needs, Cambron shook his head and decided, "Why not? If you are willing to help clean the place up on Sunday mornings, it will help me out, too."

Over the next several months, a routine was established by the Faith Presbyterian Church that had to be unique in the annals of church history.

Church members would arrive early on Sunday morning and begin sweeping the floors. One person was assigned to empty ash trays, while others would clean tabletops and carry out trash. One member was even assigned the task of unplugging the juke box and turning off the neon sign that proclaimed Budweiser as the "King of Beers."

The membership continued to grow with Cambron's being the only nightclub in Huntsville with Bibles and textbooks stored in the back room. One old-timer tells a story about a man who was in the habit of drinking too much on Saturday nights. After much

persuasion, his neighbor finally talked him into going to church.

One Sunday morning, as he got out of the car in front of Cambron's, the man paused, as if in reflection and said, "I've heard that guilty people always return to the scene of the crime, but isn't this just a little ridiculous?"

When Mr. Cambron offered to sell the property, (for one million dollars with no money down) the church quickly accepted the offer, becoming the only Presbyterian church to ever purchase a nightclub.

The nightclub has long since been replaced by modern facilities and the church continues to flourish, only now without the neon Budweiser sign.



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Huntsville Happenings in 1907

- An older man, too drunk to walk, was arrested this afternoon by Officer Bullard on a charge of drunkenness. The old man was too intoxicated to walk alone and he was hauled to the city lockup in a delivery wagon.

- A man by the name of Sharpe appeared in the recorder's court and complained that while driving his mule along East Holmes Street last night his mule ran into a pile of brick, the presence of which was not disclosed by any sign of warning. His mule broke its leg but was not shot.

- The city street force and Superintendent Murphy are making improvements in various portions of the city. California Street is being graded and

"The girl said she recognized me from the Vegetarian Club, but I'd never met herbivore."

Stan Hedden, Arab

put in good condition. Granitoid pavements are being laid with the promise made by the realty firm that developed the property further out this street.

- Good use is being made of the street force, and the convicts who are sentenced to hard labor are required to do the good work.

- The raid made by the police last night on the disorderly house produced good results. Mary White, Remy Wales and Jenny Humphrey were fined \$100 each with the option of working out the fines at the rate of .50 cents the day. Charlie Mason, a young man who was caught in the house was fined \$10. Mary Davison, an inmate of the house, was given 24 hours in which to get out of the city and unless she is gone by that time she must pay a fine of \$10 or begin a term of 209 days labor. Four young men who were caught in the same raid were discharged.

- Dave Pointer was fined \$5 for using profane language in the presence of females.

- John Sutherfield for drunk and disorderly and for carrying

a pistol was given a term of 60 days.

- Mary Macon was fined \$10 for assaulting her husband when she caught him stealing.

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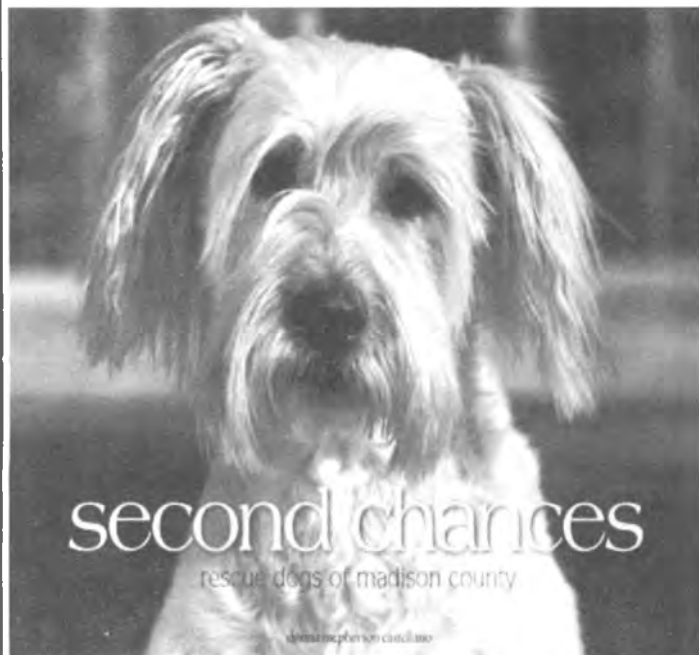


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Photographer Doug Brewster and author Donna Castellano introduce the reader to 36 rescue dogs and their adopted families through the pages of a full-color, coffee table style book designed by Leslie Franklin and Diane Strickland. While the dogs' individual rescue stories are as varied as their barks, all share the common thread that when a dog is placed with the right family, kindness overcomes cruelty, patience overcomes distrust, and love overcomes fear.

Greater Huntsville Humane Society Board Chairman Karen Corp states: "The generous donations of sponsors and supporters covered all expenses associated with the book's publication, and we are thrilled that all proceeds from the sale of *Second Chances* will directly benefit the Greater Huntsville Humane Society and our mission to provide for the humane care and treatment of animals. The generosity of our community is always humbling but never surprising."

The party will begin at 6:30 and a book signing is scheduled. Party guests will enjoy wonderful food, great music and a delightful setting while they help the Greater Huntsville Humane Society offer second chances to animals throughout our community.

Tweetie's Pet Tips

I love hummingbirds, of course, cause they're a little like me! And they love drinking the nectar you put out!

Tweetie



Attract Hummingbirds to your Garden

A good way to attract the hummingbirds is to plant a hummingbird garden. A hummingbird garden can be rather large, rolling across several acres, to very small such as a window-box planter or a couple of plants and feeder on a porch. Hummingbirds have no sense of smell, so what the flower smells like doesn't really matter. Choose trumpet flowers like those on a Honeysuckle plant, or a Trumpet Vine. If you don't know the name of a particular flower, don't worry.

Hummingbirds love to drink nectar from flowers and feeders. Hummingbird feeders can be purchased and come in all shapes and sizes. You can make your own hummingbird feeder using old bottles and other things around your home.

As much as hummingbirds need nectar as part of their daily diet, you will also need water to attract them. Hummingbirds need water to drink and bathe.

It is easy to incorporate water into your hummingbird garden by adding a water mister that will not only water the plants, but allow the hummingbirds to take a quick shower. Humming-

birds are also attracted to bird-baths with fountains.

Hummingbirds are attracted to an area that has lots of little bugs to eat. They need protein to survive and eating tiny bugs like gnats and spiders give them that needed protein. Don't use pesticides around hummingbirds. They will take care of those annoying little bugs for you.

Hummingbirds love to play around in the sunshine and even take a little sun bath, however, they also need shade and wind protection. They are attracted to areas that have both. They need the sunshine just like we do. However they need the shade to rest, perch, and nest.

It is also important to protect your hummingbirds from predators such as cats and blue jays. They can feel more fearless than other birds simply because of their speed. They can even become accustomed to certain people they know. They can, in time, zip all around someone's head and ankles without a care.

To a hummingbird, you are a 90 foot tall monster that can eat them. They don't know that you would never hurt them until you can prove it. When you move, make sure your movements are slow and deliberate. Try sitting

out with the hummingbirds on a daily basis.

Change the feeders during daylight hours so they can see who is providing such good nectar. After a while, sit with a feeder right next to you and watch them drop by for a drink. Eventually, they may start to think of you as a perch.

Troubleshooting

If you are having problems attracting hummingbirds, be patient. Hummingbirds will be in virtually every part of the Americas at one time or another.

Here are some other tips you might want to try to help you attract the most hummingbirds:

- Try placing your hummingbird feeders near flowers that hummingbirds like.
- Run strings or line to create a place for the them to perch.
- Spread feeders out, or place a lot of feeders bunched together so that a territorial hummingbird cannot monopolize all of them.
- Place the feeders at a variety of heights. Some hummingbirds feel more comfortable feeding at higher levels of fourteen feet or so, while others like to feed at ground level.

As you can see, with a little thought and patience, attracting hummingbirds is not all that difficult and will be rewarding to you!

"Without my pets, my wallet would be full and my house would be clean, but my heart would be empty."

Cheryl Tribble, Woodstock, GA

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

The Underground Dance Hall

by Tom Carney



Just a few miles up Pulas-ki Pike, well within the city limits, is a cave that was once heralded as the most popular nightclub in this area.

The early history of Shelta Cave is lost in the shroud of history, but some of the earliest stories tell of Confederate soldiers hiding in the cave to escape searching Union soldiers. One rumor that persists to this day concerns a bloody hand-to-hand battle supposedly fought in the depths of the cavern on the shores of a vast underground lake.

Like any other large cave, it has legends woven around it concerning buried treasure, ghosts, and eerie noises. These remained just legends with no basis in fact until 1888 when Mr. Bolen James sold the land to a Mr. Henry Fuller.

Not much is known about the early life of Mr. Fuller, but judging from his actions he must have been a born entrepreneur.

Immediately after taking possession of the cave he hired a team of carpenters to install steps down into the main chamber. Next he assembled a crew of craftsmen to install a dance floor in one of the great rooms

with large stand-up bars at each end. He made no secret of the fact that he intended to open the grandest, fanciest, and most unusual dance hall in Alabama.

Huntsville had seen its share of weird, wacky ideas, but a dance hall in a cave? Even for Huntsville's standards that was too much. Townspeople began to call the yet uncompleted dance hall "Fuller's Folly."

As is true in many a new business, Fuller soon found himself facing a slight problem—too many ideas and not enough money. Reluctantly he let himself be talked into forming a corporation called, appropriately enough, Shelta Cave Corporation. With a new influx of money from investors came new opportunities and it wasn't long before Fuller heard of a new attraction in Nashville

that he thought would be perfect for the business.

There had been much talk in Huntsville about a new invention called "electric lights." But while most people dismissed it as just another crazy idea, Fuller was determined to light his dance floor with the "marvel of modern technology." Within days of Fuller's visit to Nashville, workmen arrived to begin stringing wire throughout the cave.

Although few people realize it today, when Fuller pulled the switch on his new lighting system, he earned himself (and the dance hall) a place in Huntsville's history as having the first electric light bulbs in Madison County.

"Hollywood must be the only place on earth where you can be fired by a man wearing a Hawaiian shirt and baseball cap."

Steve Martin

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Even this was not enough for Fuller, for as he cast his eyes upon the vast underground lake he began to see another possibility for potential profits. Within the week neighbors watched in amazement as workmen unloaded three large boats from a wagon and awkwardly maneuvered them down the steps.

The citizens of Huntsville must have had a good chuckle when he announced his intentions of providing "Underground Boat Rides." And, as if that was not enough, he purchased hundreds of Japanese lanterns to hang overhead!

Finally the day of the "Grand Opening" arrived, and true to Fuller's predictions, crowds thronged the cave to see the marvel of electric lighting, ride the boats and dance to the sound of a newly hired band. With the admission price of one dollar, Fuller should have been able to make a profit, but unfortunately, he was too deeply in debt. Also, the townspeople, after making one or two visits to the entertainment mecca, quickly lost interest.

Desperate for money, Fuller began to travel throughout the South promoting Huntsville and Shelta Cave as a convention center. Evidently he had some success, as the Huntsville Mercury in 1889 ran an article about a gathering of the Press Association:

"The entertainment of the Press Association by the citizens of Huntsville closed today with a grand barbecue in Shelta Cave and nearly one hundred delegates and their ladies were

in attendance. The affair was gotten up in a delightful manner and the beauties of the place were fully investigated by the astonished guests."

According to rumor, Fuller, or one of his cohorts, in another effort to stimulate business, (and keep down overhead) actually operated a moonshine still in one of the dark corners of the cave. Years later when it was discovered that Shelta Cave was the home of a rare species of blind shrimp, one local wag laughed and said, "Hell, that lickker made a lot of people almost blind, I reckon some of it could have spilled into the lake!"

Another story of the day concerns a duel fought over a lady's honor at the edge of the dance floor. The gentlemen, each slightly intoxicated, were pursuing the same girl at the same time when they happened to accidentally meet at the dance. Harsh words were exchanged and to everyone's horror, they pulled pistols from underneath their coats. Both fired, and both missed. Fortunately they let themselves be led away before

real harm could be done.

The only casualty of the duel was a member of the band who was slightly injured by a falling stalactite.

As almost any nightclub owner can tell you, crowds are fickle, and within a few years the dance hall was again facing financial ruin. This time, even Fuller's salesmanship could not save it. On June 28, 1897, the cave was sold at a Sheriff's sale on the steps of the courthouse to settle a judgement.

Although there is no documentation to support it, natives of Huntsville, who remember the 1920s and 1930s, swear that there was once a speakeasy located in the cave. Other sources claim that moonshine was produced in the cave at intervals all the way up to World War II. Another persistent rumor claims the cave was used as a liquor and beer warehouse during prohibition.

In 1968, after being neglected for years, the cave was purchased by the National Speleological Society. An iron gate has been placed over the entrance to prevent accidents.

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"I have kleptomania, but when it gets really bad, I take something for it."

Robert Benchley

Remembering East Clinton School

by *Bettye Landers Loosier*

I grew up in Huntsville, Alabama and lived on North White Street. My family moved to Huntsville a hundred years ago and settled in homes on White Street (110 was one of them).

Having an avid interest in school I watched with love the "new" East Clinton School being built. I was five years old at this time. It was completed in 1938 after the old red brick school was razed. By the way, my Papa had gotten me a big slate and chalk out of the school. I played school with this slate until dry erase boards, computers, etc. were used. The slate did the trick and I played school for years.

The thrill of attending this beautiful new school became a reality when I turned six years old. First grade called us to stay at East Clinton School for seven years - grades 1-7.

Now, as we spend our years in Carrollton, GA we visit Huntsville sometimes. When we do we will ride by East Clinton School because it holds such great memories and gives me much joy. I am 79 years "young" and personally do not want to see the old school torn down.

We have an old school in Carrollton that was preserved as a building to host

"Please excuse Jimmy for being. It was his father's fault."

Parent's note to teacher for child's absence from school

parties, receptions, showers, etc. It is a great place for meetings. Old buildings come down, new buildings go up. Once they come down, however, there's no replacing them.

Update - I was so happy to hear that the city decided not to tear down East Clinton but rather to sell it to a private school.

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Reverend Arnie Elliff

by Malcolm W. Miller

He rode a mule back and forth from his home on Opp Reynolds Road to Bob Wade Lane between Pulaski Pike and what was then Meridian Pike to court pretty little dark haired Agnes Pigg. That was a very long distance to ride a flop eared mule, however I believe Arnie Elliff would have ridden twice that distance if need be because he was a young man and very much in love. There was not near as much traffic as there is today but can you imagine riding that mule back home in the dark of night? You know mules don't have either head lights or tail lights, but Arnie knew what he wanted and he would do whatever it took to get it.

I met the Pigg family when we moved to Bob Wade Lane in nineteen forty-two when I was fifteen years old and I visited their home quite often and this is how I eventually met Arnie Elliff and we just naturally became good friends. I wrote in a previous issue of "Old Huntsville" about the infamous coon hunt we went on in Banyon Bottom and I was totally unprepared. Everyone else had on boots but me and Arnie had to carry me over all the streams and mud holes even though he was a lot shorter than me.

"The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act."

Law of Probability

It must have looked like an ant carrying a giant grass hopper but Arnie never once complained about having to carry me.

Another episode I recall with Arnie after he and Agnes married and they were still living on Opp Reynolds Road. Arnie had gone to First Monday Trade Day in Scottsboro and bought what he thought was a fine coon dog. We started out across a corn field and the dog immediately struck the trail of something, Arnie said the dog had picked up the trail of a coon. Well it just happened that the moon was shining brightly that night and low and behold here comes a rabbit with Arnie's coon dog chasing it. We gave Arnie a hard time over this but in his good natured way he just laughed about it.

Arnie Elliff was not a religious man in those early years when I knew him and our lives seemed to go separate ways for several years. I would see him occasionally when I went by Bill Clemons Auto Parts store. I understand his job was boring out cylinders in motors.

Somewhere along the way Arnie was converted to Chris-

tianity and like all his other endeavors when he got into something he put his heart and soul into it so the next thing I knew Arnie was preaching. He preached in his own humble matter of fact manner and soon became a successful and well known minister. He preached at Third Baptist and Maple Hill Baptist churches for over thirty years.

My brother Frank was married to Inez Pigg, Arnie's sister-in-law, and when Frank passed away Arnie preached at his funeral and did a wonderful job. I was very much impressed with the great sermon he gave and remember it to this day.

The love of Arnie's life, his wife Agnes, passed away January 30, 1993. Arnie left this world May 19th of this year leaving behind his daughter Rhonda Meadows and husband Roger, son Tim Elliff and wife Kristen, five grandchildren and four great grandchildren. He also left behind an unknown number of lives that he touched with his ministry and certainly a host of good friends.

I am proud to say that I was one of those good friends as he was a fine gentleman and reverend.



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Remembering Loving Teachers at East Clinton School



Many residents of Huntsville have wondered about the little stones that are in front of East Clinton School, right under the front windows of the school. They're heart-shaped stones that have plaques on them with names & dates, and have little marbles, jewelry, etc. embedded in the stone. We recently asked if anyone had information on these stones, and Nancy Little called us. She said she knew exactly whom to call to find out, and it was Kristie McShane.

Kristie (Messina) McShane of Huntsville taught school at East Clinton Elementary School for 10 years. She watched the cherry trees grow outside the school over the years, watched the shadows created inside the school from the leaves. She saw kids get older and leave, she saw teachers she knew get sick and die. She decided she wanted to do something in their memory, and involve the children who had been taught by

these ladies..

In 2002 she went to Hobby Lobby with money from the Student Council and help from her room mother, and got starter kits to use for the project. There were four heart-shaped stones, and Kristie told the children in the classes of those teachers to bring little treasures from home that could be inserted into the soft stone.

The students did a great job - searching through their treasures for pieces of jewelry, marbles, rings, earrings, butterflies, heart shaped pieces - all to put in a "forever" memorial that would always be there.

At the same time, Kristie contacted George Bennett at Bennett's Nursery who donated 4 dogwood trees to go alongside each of the stones.

Kristie told me that Miss Blevins

was a classroom teacher, Mrs. Moss was Special Ed, Mrs. Kamback was the S.P.A.C.E. teacher for gifted kids.

When the time came for the ceremony, Mrs. Foster was the current Principal and she and all the school took part in the event.

Mrs. Moss, the Special Ed teacher, had gone to a faculty meeting on a Wednesday, developed a really bad headache and passed away the following Monday. It was so sudden and very upsetting to all the staff & children. Mrs. Moss' adult children were at the ceremony when the stones were dedicated with love to the teachers who spent most of their lives in teaching their classes.

The teachers honored were:

- Renee Katz
- Carol Kamback
- Susan Blevins
- Jueline Moss

A sweet memorial that meant so much to East Clinton School, the staff and the children who were lucky enough to know these very special ladies.

Thank you, Kristie, for telling us about this, and now our readers know, too!

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Two Korean Veterans from Madison County

by Rudolph V. Strickland

Master Sergeant Paul Miller from Ryland and Sergeant First Class Delbert E. Heard (aka Pete) from Huntsville both served in 2nd Division 9th Infantry Regiment. Paul was a medic and Pete a mess sergeant. On November 30, 1950 the 2nd Division was located in extreme North Korea when the Chinese Army crossed the border into North Korea and surrounded 2nd Division along with the 3rd Division, 10th Corp and 1st Marine Division.

Orders were given to destroy all equipment including ammo and all vehicles. Paul and Pete were a few yards from the mess truck when Pete noticed that the charge did not ignite on the truck, so they both went back to reset the charge which they completed, while trying to get away from Chinese military. Pete was hit in the back. Paul carried Pete several miles during which time Pete told Paul to take the M-1 shells out of his fatigue pocket as they were making a loud noise and they might get caught, Paul agreed.

Finally Pete told Paul to leave him, that he was slowing him down and he would get caught but might make it by himself, Paul reluctantly agreed. Paul told me that Pete said, "Tell Mama I love her." Paul as he left said that Pete was saying a prayer.

Paul was captured by the Chinese Army and was POW for 3 years. When he was released and returned to the States he looked me up and told me the story.

Pete was declared missing in action and remained in that category for 5 years at which time he was declared "Killed in Action". On November 30 I was transported to USS Constellation Hospital ship and was sent back to Japan and admitted to Tokyo Army General Hospital where I stayed for 2 weeks, then I was released to wait for non-combat duty.

My orders were to report to Camp Drake just outside of Tokyo where I remained for a couple months, then was sent to Camp Zama for a month, then sent to Yokohama depot.

My mail had not caught up with me for six months and that is when I learned that Pete was missing in action. When I left Huntsville, Pete was stationed at Redstone Arsenal and I did not know that he was in Korea. The reason Paul looked me up is that Pete and I thought of ourselves as brothers as I was raised in my grandparents home from the day I was born until I enlisted in the Army.

Pete always called me his little brother. Paul Miller's brother Malcolm is and was a longtime friend of mine and he recently told me that the story should be told. Paul told me the story when he was released from POW status and returned home. Pete's remains were found in 1958 and shipped back home where a military funeral was conducted at Maple Hill Cemetery in the veterans section.

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Aunt Essie Goes to Town - the Summer of 1895

by Cathy Burns

We were sitting on the front porch of the house on Eustis Street, trying to escape the afternoon heat by drinking water with ice in it. I had never had water with ice in it before coming to Huntsville, but I quickly learned that during the hot Alabama summer just about anything is improved by the addition of ice cubes.

"When I was a girl," she reminisced, "we lived over in what everyone now calls Big Cove. Every so often we

would travel into Huntsville to go shopping. Daddy would put all us children into the wagon, hook up the ox ..."

"Did you say an OX, Aunt Essie? Not a real ox! You really traveled by ox cart!" I hushed immediately when I was impaled by those pale, grade school teacherish eyes.

"Yes, an ox, a real live OX!" She

sniffed. "Daddy had an ox to work the farm and to pull the wagon when we needed to go into town."

"We always stopped at the top of the gap and went to look out over the valley. Daddy would stand, looking in the direction of Huntsville, and always say, 'Some day there is going to be a fine road' all the way from our place - all the way into Huntsville!"

"How we laughed at that," she smiled. "We thought he was crazy." She settled back in her chair and gazed absently across the street at the crepe myrtles which had just flamed into bloom. A little bit later she turned, fixed me with a piercing look from those pale orbs which marched its way down her rather long, elegant nose her mouth set in a ruler straight line.

"Now today, you young folks are telling me that there is going to be a way, all the way to the moon." Her eyes twinkled, and the corners of her mouth turned up ever so slightly. But she didn't laugh or say it was crazy.

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