



# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

## BOOTS LOUNGE - A HUNTSVILLE LANDMARK

"The first day I opened the place it was packed with my friends. The day was a scorcher and everyone wanted a cold beer. Finally the beer truck showed up but the driver refused to unload the hot beer until he was paid.

'Cash on delivery.' he said."

"I didn't have enough money in the cash register to buy two beers, much less a truckload. Fortunately, some of my friends saw the situation I was in and took up a collection at the bar to pay the driver. They must have thought the whole thing was funny because there were even complete strangers who chipped in!"



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## Boots Lounge - A Huntsville Landmark

by Tom Carney

Alvie "Boots" Ellett was born in the small rural community of Owens Crossroads in 1934. It was a time when America was recovering from the worst depression in history, but for the residents of the small town it was as if time had stood still. Men walked behind a mule trying to scratch a living out of a sun-scorched cotton field while praying for rain. Families went to church every time the doors were opened and men gathered at the general store to swap yarns and pocket knives.

"My father and grandfather ran a small general store," recalled Boots. "They sold everything from horseshoes to medicine. People didn't have much cash money back then so they would buy on credit until the cotton came in. Unfortunately, if the crop failed my grandfather didn't get paid and even if the crop was good, people would sometimes move away or there would be sickness in

the family and all the money would go to paying doctor bills."

Boots remembers his grandfather as a kind man. "He was one of the founders of the Owens Crossroads Church of Christ. Many times people who owed large amounts of money at the store, and had no way of paying, would come in and he would let them have more supplies on credit. He just couldn't bring himself to put more hardship on people who were already down and out."

"My grandfather gave me my nickname," said Boots. "One year when I was a small child they gave me a pair of Roy Rogers cowboy boots. I wore them everywhere I went. I think I probably even wore them to bed. It got to every time my grandfather saw me coming he would say, 'Here comes Boots.' Somehow the name just stuck."

With the store slowly losing money, Boots was expected to help out any way he could.

"I was in the tenth grade when my father announced that I was going to grow a cotton crop. He had the field plowed and the rest was up to me. It was only about five or six acres but after a few hours chopping cotton it seemed more like five hundred acres. The longest thing in the world is a cotton row when the temperature is about a hundred

**"Standing in the middle of the road is dangerous. You can get hit by traffic coming from both directions."**

**Fred Weaver, Athens**



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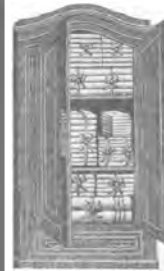
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humid degrees."

"I wasn't any better than anyone else but after a few summers chopping and picking cotton, I knew I had to find something else to do. I just couldn't see myself making a career out of pulling a cotton sack."

At that time there was an intense rivalry among the high schools in trying to win football and basketball championships. Recruiting players from other schools was common. Boots had been playing basketball for Owens Crossroads and was already known for his aggressive style on the court when he came to the attention of Coach Hughes of Huntsville High School.

"I was in the 10th grade," remembered Boots, "when Coach Hughes and Deputy Sheriff Carrol pulled up in front of the house one afternoon in a big green car. The coach didn't waste many words; he started off by saying he wanted me to play ball for Huntsville High. I lived in the county but they assured

me there would be no problem with me changing schools."

"I was thrilled! Huntsville High had the best basketball team in the county and I was honored to be asked to be a part of it. When I told the Coach I would love to play basketball for him, he gave me a funny look."

"Oh no, son," he said, "you're not going to play basketball. You're going to play football!"

"I've never played football," I protested. "I don't even know how to play!"

"Oh, don't worry," said the coach. "We just want you for your size. We need some big players!"

"Coach Hughes was a good man," said Boots. "He would push us until we were about to drop, and then he would push us more. Playing ball under him was some of the best years of my life."

Despite the fact that Boots didn't know how to play football, Huntsville High went on to win the county championship. He also garnered the at-

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tention of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa who offered him a scholarship.

"No one in my family had ever gone to college before. A fifth or sixth grade education and knowing how to read and write was about all most people knew. Whatever happened, I knew it had to be better than picking cotton and running a general store."

"I was lucky in that I already knew some of the players. There was Buster Hill, who became a good friend of mine and Bobby Luna who was one of the biggest football stars of that time. And of course there was Ty Samples. He was everyone's friend and people everywhere knew him."

Boots quickly made a name for himself on the football field and gained national recognition. In 1955 he signed a contract with the Philadelphia Eagles football team. Unfortunately, at the same time he received another contract in the mail. This one was from Uncle Sam and was called a draft notice. Needless to say, the Eagles contract was canceled.

"I am kind of embarrassed," laughs Boots, "when people talk about their time in the Army. I went to Fort Jackson for basic and when they found out I had played football for Alabama, they gave me a different kind of uniform - I spent the rest of my military career playing Army football!"

"When I got out of the Army I signed a contract with the VC Lions, a pro team in

Vancouver, Canada. They gave me \$5,000 plus a \$ 1,000 signing bonus. The first thing I did was buy myself a car and two sport coats. I was really big time!"

"The VC Lions were about the worst team in the division and they didn't improve much after I signed on. That was the longest season of my life. The food was strange, everyone talked with an accent and to be honest about it - I was homesick. I really missed Huntsville."

"I knew that coming back to Huntsville spelled the end of my football career but I didn't care. I was just happy to be back home among my friends."

"Like lots of other folks at that time, I went to work at Thiokol, but after a while I started thinking about opening my own business. I first thought about a clothing store

but that required more money than I had (or could borrow.) My next choice was a restaurant with a bar. I had spent a lot of time in both and I was just naive enough to think that cooking a cheeseburger or opening a beer would be easy!"

"I rented a building on Governors Drive and started

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remodeling it. I was so broke that I had to do most of the work myself. Mr. Halsey, of Halsey Grocery Company, was kind enough to sell me supplies on credit and a lot of other people agreed to hold my checks. Even with all my friends helping, I was almost out of business before I ever opened!"

"The first day I opened the place it was packed with my friends. The day was a scorcher and everyone wanted a cold beer. Finally the beer truck showed up but the driver refused to unload the hot beer until he was paid."

"Cash on delivery," he said.

"I didn't have enough money in the cash register to buy two beers, much less a truckload. Fortunately, some of my friends saw the situation I was in and took up a collection at the bar to pay the driver. They must have thought the whole thing was funny because there were even complete strangers who chipped in!"

"There weren't many good restaurants in town back then," said Ron Eyestone, "but Boot's Lounge was great. I remember there were pictures of football players on the walls and a huge cheeseburger and fries cost about 75 cents. The best item on his menu, however, was his steak. He never would tell us where he got them but they were some of

the best steaks I ever tasted! People used to come from all over the county just to get one of his steaks."

"I remember those steaks well," laughs Boots. "When I first opened I was so broke I couldn't stock much food so every time someone ordered a steak I would run across the street to Piggly Wiggly and buy one. For a while I was one of their biggest customers - a dollar or two at a time!"

Boot's Lounge soon developed a regular following but the business refused to grow. Huntsville's businesses were moving along the newly opened Parkway and traffic along Governors Drive was decreasing. Many of Boots' regular customers now found it easier to stop at a restaurant near where they shopped.

"I was sitting in the restaurant worrying about paying the bills," said Boots, "when Tom Taylor came in. We got to talking about traffic and business when he told me he had a place on the Parkway for sale. I asked how much and when he told me \$80,000 I almost choked on my beer. I knew

it was a good deal but it was also \$80,000 more than what I had."

"That weekend I was talking with my father and I happened to mention Tom Taylor's offer. Dad asked me what I was going to do."

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"I'm not going to do anything. Buying that place would break me."

"Son," my father said, "What are you worrying about? You're already broke."

"My father helped me borrow the money," Boots recalled, "but I was so scared that I insisted on financing the loan for twenty years so in case something happened I would still be able to afford the payments."

Boots's new location on the Parkway, the old Holiday House Restaurant, was already a Huntsville legend. The second floor had a glass enclosed room where Grady Reeves would sit and watch the traffic while hosting his radio show. His commentary about broadcasting "From the beautiful shores of Pinhook Creek" had made it one of the best known places in town.

"That room had a special kind of glass about two inches thick," Boots said, "to keep the noise out. I figured it had to be worth a lot and I needed the money. I spent about two weeks taking it out piece by piece, being careful not to scratch or break it. Finally, I got finished, had the glass

stacked up in neat stacks and called K&M Glass to see what they would pay for it."

"Nothing," they said, "but if you want to pay us we'll haul it off."

Boots finally got the restaurant opened and it became an immediate success. With no Piggly Wiggly across the street, he started having Omaha steaks shipped in and began serving items that were considered exotic for Huntsville at the time, such as lobster and shrimp.

A real estate broker still tells the story about when he was trying to put together a land deal. The owner of the land was an elderly man who wore overalls all the time and rarely came to town.. The broker, hoping to impress the old farmer, carried him to Boots and ordered him a lobster. When the waitress brought it out the old farmer sat there for a long time staring at it with an incredulous look on his face. Finally he turned to the broker and said, "That's just about the biggest craw-dad I've ever seen!"

In 1964 Boots met Joyce Willis, who would become his wife, business partner, and

construction helper.

Joyce still laughs when she remembers the early years of their marriage. "We didn't have much money so we tried to do everything ourselves. One time Boots and I were up on the roof trying to patch a

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leak. I was trying to hold on, keep my dress from blowing in the wind and trying to hand Boots a hammer at the same time. At about the same time a man in a Volkswagon pulled up. When he saw me on the roof he started laughing like it was the funniest thing he had ever seen. I was so embarrassed but I have to admit that I felt better a few seconds later when I heard a big crash. He had run into another car while laughing and looking over his shoulder at me."

"Often it seemed like as soon as one thing was fixed something else would go wrong. One time, after working late the night before, we got a phone call from a friend telling us that we had water damage at the restaurant. When I asked how bad it was he paused for a long time before answering, 'Well, I'm in a boat at your front door.' Pin-

hook Creek had overflowed its banks and flooded many of the businesses along the Parkway."

As the restaurant continued to grow in popularity it began to attract a lot of avid sports fans. It was one of the first places in town to have TVs and every time a football game was on the place would be packed. Apparently some of the customers did more than simply watch.

"One day two men walked in," Boots said, "and identified themselves as FBI. They said they had information that my phone was being used to place bets in Las Vegas. We got it

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straightened out but after that I was careful about who I let use my phone."

As the years began to pass many people developed special memories for Boot's Restaurant & Lounge. People got engaged while sitting in the booths, celebrated their anniversaries there and later brought in their children. Customers became close friends and the restaurant became a part of their lives.

Joe Reid remembers going there every week with his wife & friends. "We were having dinner and drinks with another couple one night when someone started talking about going to Hawaii. I wasn't really listening so I just mumbled something like "That would be nice." Apparently my wife misunderstood me because the next day she bought the tickets for all of us, kids & all. That was the most expen-

sive steak dinner I ever had at Boots."

Will Halsey, of Halsey Grocery, remembers, "Lots of friends would meet up at Boots - I met there with Dr. John Evans, Pete Lanier, John Lary, John Scott, Joe Fleming and others. Then on weekends we'd get sitters for the kids and take the wives out - it was a great time. And the best food in town."

"We did a lot of proms and private parties," said Boots. "The Madison County Medical Association met upstairs in the banquet room for years and lots of businesses had their Christmas parties with us. Jerry Damson always rented the place on our off day for his company Christmas party as well as Bill Propst. One of our all-time favorites



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was Leroy Cunningham's annual Christmas party. Most of the people there were good friends of ours and everyone always had a great time. Leroy always hired a band and when the party really got going he would do his famous rendition of 'Elvira'."

"Sometimes I don't know what we would have done without our friends," said Joyce. "Boots was out of town one time and he called one night to see how everything was going. It was one of those days when everything had gone wrong."

"I've got a restaurant full of customers," Joyce told him, "and I'm out of lobster and shrimp and there's no money in the cash register to make change." "I don't think I even mentioned the toilet that kept stopping up."

"Boots finally calmed me down and told me to call Gary Clemons, at the Twickenham Station, and Jess Sanford at Gibsons BarBQ. I made the calls and in a few minutes Gary was unloading boxes of lobster and shrimp at the restaurant's back door. At about the same time Jess showed up with a bag of money for the cash register."

"We had a great time and made some of the best friends in the world," remembered Boots, "but it was wearing us down. We had to be there every morning at about nine to get ready to open up and sometimes we just didn't get done before three or four in the morning. All we did was work and get ready to go back to work. We had gotten to the point in our lives where we

just wanted to slow down."

"One day, in 1992, we were both dead tired and had sat down to take a break when I turned to Joyce and asked what she thought about us doing something else. She was so tired she didn't even reply. She just reached over and squeezed my hand."

That same day Boots and his wife hung a small cardboard sign on the front door announcing the restaurant would close the following day. The next day Boots Lounge was packed with old friends and customers sharing memories and telling tales. Couples stopped by one last time to show their children where they had gotten engaged. Others asked for a menu as a special souvenir.

When the last customer left late that night Boots locked the door for the final time. As they got in the car to drive home the radio was playing, "Thanks for the Memories."

Somehow, that seemed to be an appropriate ending for an unforgettable Huntsville landmark.

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**"I've been in more laps than a napkin."**

**Mae West**

# SOME HUNTSVILLE CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

by Joe D. Brewer

## School Bus Trio

When we (Momma and me) came back to Alabama to stay with my sister, I still had to attend school, so I enrolled in Farley School. I had to ride a school bus there and back. The bus picked up some kids on Green Mountain, also.

Now the thing I remember most was there were three girls about my age or slightly older than me that lived up on that mountain. I don't remember their names, but one girl had real dark hair and she was very pretty. Now these three girls would sing all the way to school and all the way home in the evening, mostly gospel songs. They did sing beautifully and I've often wondered if either of them ever sang professionally. I regret not being able to remember their names.

## Dave Milner and The Double Cola

One of the places we lived was Cedar Point. On the east side of the road there was a church, and in 100 yards or so was a store and a man named Dave Milner owned it. On the west side of the road was a school and further down the road the house where we lived.

One day my brother, Jr., had earned a nickel one way or another and was headed for that store with me right on his heels, hoping for some of whatever he bought. I hoped he would get some "kisses" - little square pieces of candy that came 4 to a pack and cost a penny - but Jr. had other plans. He told Mr. Milner he wanted a big ol' Double Cola, so I had to re-set my mouth and hope he would leave me a sip in the bottom of the bottle.

Well, when Mr. Milner took out the drink and opened it, a small chip broke off of the bottle top and, of course, Jr. was watching all this real close. He told Dave that he didn't want that one, because he was afraid he would swallow the

glass chip.

Now, Dave didn't want to open another drink and he didn't have any intention of giving Jr. his nickel back, so he brought out a pair of ladies "step-ins" (back then I don't think anybody ever heard of anything about "panties".)

Anyway, Mr. Milner was going to strain the cola through the step-ins and my brother was not gonna stand for it. Mr. Milner told him they were clean and would not hurt anything, but Jr. wasn't about to budge, so Dave got him another one and Jr. drank it all, without so much as leaving me even a wet bottom in the bottom of the soda bottle.

You can't make this stuff up!

## Rocket Wheel

I remember one time when this guy that just wasn't the sharpest knife in the drawer, by any means, decided to take the chain off of his wheel (they called bicycles "wheels" in those days.) Anyway, he got to the top of Huntsville Mountain and was going to ride it to the bottom.

Now, I'm here to tell you that the highway across that mountain was steep and narrow and crooked as a dog's hind leg. I didn't see all this, but I was told he got around the first curve and about halfway around the second, he went right out into space and ended up on top of a very tall tree; scratched, bruised and banged up all over but still alive and well except for a bone or two broken.

Now, I cannot vouch for this

story as my older brother told it to me, but knowing the guy who it happened to, I would not doubt it at all.

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# THE NEXT TO LAST OLD RYLAND BOY

By Austin Miller

Malcolm Taylor died a few weeks ago at the age of 92. He was the next to last male that grew up in Ryland during the thirties and one of the dwindling members of the so-called Greatest Generation. There is only one other Old Ryland Boy of that era left and he is my Uncle Malcolm Wayne Miller. The difference is that Malcolm Taylor lived all his life in Ryland except for about four years in the Army during World War II.

He was raised on the banks of Flint River and when he married 66 years ago, he and his wife Cleo built a home about two or three hundred yards away from his parents house where they lived the rest of his life. It is a modest block house almost at the end of Wess Taylor Road. Although it is relatively small without adornments there is something about the house that gives it character. I believe it comes from the people that call the house home. Malcolm's wife Cleo is my 2nd cousin on Daddy's side. They had two daughters, Joyce and Carole who are my third cousins.

Malcolm was one of my heroes as were all the men from Ryland who served in the Army in World War II. There was something extra special about the ones that served in combat. My heroes were never ball players, actors or people that I did not know personally.

This has not changed at the age of 72.

I don't ever remember seeing or know anyone alive now who saw Malcolm at church unless it was at a funeral. But Malcolm Taylor was an honorable, moral man who was as truthful and honest as the day was long.

Calvin Coolidge said "there is no dignity quite as impressive as living within your means." There is no one who did that better than Malcolm and Cleo Taylor. But they could be generous, too. One morning after my parents home was de-

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stroyed by the tornado of 1974, Daddy and I were sitting in my car with rubble all around when Malcolm and Cleo drove up. Malcolm got out of the truck walked over and handed Daddy a hundred dollars. Without tarrying or saying one word he got back in the truck with Cleo and they drove away.

An interesting side note about Malcolm is that when he graduated from Madison County High School in the late thirties, he wouldn't send out graduation invitations; in his words, "It was nothing but begging." Another Malcolm Taylor quote was, "You can't pay me enough money to haul hay but I will do it for a friend for free!"

I have been told that he was a faithful member and attended Shiloh Church in his youth. In any event I thought it was fitting that his service was at Shiloh. Shiloh is a Ryland church and Malcolm lived in the Ryland community for 92 years.

Charles McCay, the minister at Shiloh for 29 years, preached

the funeral. Rev. McCay was not a minister just to the people of Shiloh; he was the minister to all the community, especially the unchurched. He is a gifted speaker with a special talent for officiating funerals. I doubt if he has any idea how many he has preached in his long ministry but it has to be in the hundreds. I believe the reason he is so good is because he is a true man of God and knows his people.

At the funeral he talked about the draw the community had on people who grew up in Ryland. As he said there is nothing here and nothing going on, but it has a pull on your heart.

Over the years there has been a depot, Post Office, store, gin, restaurant and nursery but that was about it. There is still a Post Office that the community had to fight to keep open, and a new pizza place. He also talked about Malcolm's military service and the contribution Ryland made to the country in World War II. He said he

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knew of no other place so small that sent so many to war. The Mose Miller family sent five, The Wess Taylor family sent two, the John Miller family sent three, the Dolphie Tipton family sent three, one did not come back. The Lee Miller family sent three, the Albert Miller family sent two and the Hugh Mefford family one. There were many others but these are just the ones that were all kin to each other. In my growing up years nearly everybody in the community was related by blood or marriage and the few that were not, still seemed like family. You could not distinguish the difference between kin and friends; they were all like family.

I don't know of anything extraordinary or important that ever happened in Ryland. The biggest thing was the tornado of 1974 that hit it dead center. But ordinary things are what make up our lives and most of our history. Ryland is an identifiable place but more than that it is a state of mind, a community of people with a common

sense of heart, kin, heritage, past and home.

Those of us born there are bonded by connection to the place of our youth and to family and friends, many that are now gone. It is a beacon of home and belonging for those who moved away. It is our Mayberry! Almost everybody I have ever known who grew up in Ryland and left, came back.

Sometimes it was after many years away toward the end of their life, but most come back.

Nearly all my heroes are gone now; Malcolm Irl Taylor was next to the last one!!!

The old Ryland is gone too but the way we once were still lives in the hearts of the few of us that were fortunate to grow up there in the forties and fifties.



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# A CAT TAIL

by *Carnell Thorne*

Lo and Behold, it's snowing again. And we've got to walk a mile to school. We were so numb with cold, if we had had an itch we wouldn't have known if we were even scratching it.

We went to a one-teacher school, and the only heat we had was a pot belly stove sitting in the middle of the room. We would stand around that stove with one side burning up and the other freezing.

Mrs. Vashti Adkins was our teacher and she did everything she could to keep us warm. One day we were outside playing and one of the girls was about to freeze. She had on a thin sweater and I had on a thick sweater and a long coat. I pulled off my coat and gave it to her. There were about 18 kids in her family. I knew she wouldn't get anything but the thin sweater.

When I got home, the first thing my mother noticed was that I didn't have my coat. She said, "I guess you know you won't get another one." I didn't care because I was warm enough in a long sleeved dress and a thick sweater. At least I knew Emily was warm. As the weather got warmer, we had fun walking to school.

There was a rail fence along side the road. It was nothing to see several lizards running along the top of the fence. It was nothing for me to be the first one to knock a lizard for a loop. I killed a rabbit with a rock in our front yard after my Dad shot at it and missed. He said he didn't know why he wasted a bullet.

I had 2 brothers younger than me and they knew better than to get into a fuss with me if we were in the yard and there was a rock handy.

One day we were walking home and I found a tobacco sack with fifteen cents in it. Mrs. Lizzie Roberts and her two girls were with us and she said for me to let her have it and she would find out who had lost it.

Well, I wasn't that dumb, I knew she would head straight to the store to get a box of Bruton Snuff. She could spit further than any of the men or women that I ever saw.

They lived so far down in a dark hollow they had to climb a tree every morning just to see if the sun had come up yet. One day we were walking home and we saw a cat running across a field. I thought it was the prettiest cat I had ever seen. My brother J.C. and I took off after that beautiful cat. The closer we got to it the prettier I thought it was. It was a solid black with a pure white stripe running up its tail and back.

All of a sudden it stopped and stuck that beautiful bushy tail straight up and shared its perfume with us.

Well, that was one odor we could have done without.

We got home and my mother was coming out the door. Well, needless to say, we did not get in the house. Mom filled two tubs with water and lye soap. We scrubbed until we were wrinkled like a prune from head to foot. By the time we got through scrubbing we didn't think that cat was pretty at all. And that's the end of my cat tail.

**"Start off every day with a smile and get it over with." - W. C. Fields**



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# Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Congratulations to our winner for the Photo of the Month for September - the sweet picture was that of **Mitch Howie** who is an Attorney on North Side Square. We got lots of calls for this one but only the correct one wins! **Jerry Butler** of Woodville said that he spends alot of time in Huntsville and the weekend Entertainment Districts and doesn't know Mitch but saw his name on the building on the square. So at least he was honest! Congratulations to Jerry who works as a government contractor when he's not downtown!

It was great talking with **Annie Owen** who with her husband **Andrew** lives on a farm in Meridianville. She said she remembers downtown well and lived on the 700 block of East Clinton for 10 years from 1975 to 1985. They also have some super kids - **Owen** who's 11 and **Ally** who's 10.

We were so sorry to hear of the passing of **Donald Brooks Towery** of Birmingham in early September. He was only 70 years old. Don was born in Huntsville and his brother **Tommy Towery** has written stories of his younger days. Don was a banker, business owner and entrepreneur and a proud U.S. Navy Vet. He loved boating on the Tennessee River and spending time with his beloved grandchildren.

We send our deepest condolences to his wife **Linda Towery**, son **Donald Tyler Towery**, daughter **Brooke Towery**, brother **Tommy Towery**, sister **Kim Marie Sharp** and grandchildren, **Samantha, Reese and Trey**. He will be remembered each and every day.

Last month in Tom's column we ran the story about the Russel Erskine Hotel. That story was actually written by **Mike Kenny**, who has written several stories for us over the years, and it was my error not to give him credit for the story, so I want to set the record straight. Mike is a really nice guy and a good writer and I apologize for the error.

**Lowe Mill Arts Center** off Seminole Drive just west of Parkway on Governors Drive has got to be one of the best places to visit. The Mill is a massive brick building that in the early 1900s was a textile mill and then a shoe factory. It was in serious disrepair when a group of benefactors decided to refurbish it and make it available for arts groups. There are 3 floors of artists studios, with artists of every type including cigar box guitars, printing press, photographers, clothing, old books and stained glass. There

is a performance studio there called **The Flying Monkey** that is very popular.

One of the stained glass studios I visited at Lowe Mill is owned by **Julie Gill** who just moved into a new, enlarged space this year. Her company is **Big Art Glass LLC** and she does everything from original artwork to church window repair. She also teaches classes in stained glass. Some of her work is just breathtaking. Her friend **Mark Mohon** was visiting in the studio while I was there and he was fun to talk with as well.

Lowe Mill also hosts **Friday night Concerts on the Dock**, where you bring your chairs, pets & kids and just enjoy the outdoors and the good music. The **Happy Tummy** has some great food and **Fred Bread** sandwiches! \$2 for parking but the concert is free and goes from 6-9 through Nov. 1st.

That smiling face you see when you go into **Ayers Farmers Market** on **Governors & Parkway** is **Jean Ayers**. She's not been feeling well lately but according to daughter **Susan** she's on the mend and feeling so much better. We love you Jean!

The **Alabama Civil Justice Foundation** is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. This foun-

## 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 girl grew up to become a beautiful model and started a business that is still going strong.



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dation provides grant money to organizations that help children & families who are the most vulnerable. \$500,000 has been raised to date for such agencies as Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Huntsville, HEALS, Inc., Girls Inc. of Huntsville, Habitat for Humanity of Madison County, etc. The Foundation was started by Alabama Trial Lawyers Asso. as a charitable philanthropy committed to helping those most in need, including those who cannot afford legal assistance.

One of the strongest supporters of ACF since its beginning is **Buck Watson**. **Attorney Herman A. "Buck" Watson** was honored at a Roast & Toast Gala with over 450 attendees at the Westin in Bridge Street recently. Buck is a charter member of the Pioneers of Justice Society and believes strongly in the rights of everyone to be fairly represented, no matter what your situation in life is. He is a humble, funny, caustic, honest family man who never forgets his friends and really tells it like it is.

I felt very privileged to be invited to this event and to listen to some of Buck's accomplishments and adventures by the many speakers and friends who stood to talk about him. Congratulations, Buck, on a well-deserved honor.

At the annual **Trade Day around the Square** this past month there were many folks who came out to enjoy the great weather and pick up a few crafts. One man I met there was **Bob Wheeler** of Decatur who is a Vet and a part of Veterans' Outreach. This group, located all over the southern states, works hard to get contributions and help for vets whether they're just return-

ing from duty or served long ago. They are looking for members to be part of this group, they can be reached at [www.veteransoutreach.com](http://www.veteransoutreach.com).

In my ongoing battle with mosquitos I found that by taking a capsule of garlic oil daily they seem to be biting me less. I love Patchouli lotion and that seems to help too. And a friend told me that by dabbing a little Orajel on the bite that the itching goes away much quicker. I'm just ready for the first freeze so that they all DIE.

The ladies (and guys) at BBT bank where I do my banking are the best people to work with. Happy October birthdays to **Bethany Frasier, Allison Carter, Amy Goen and Lucas Satterfield**. Also, **Mischelle Ross and Yvonne Ross** want to thank everyone at Valley View Rehab for Yvonne's amazing recovery.

We want to wish **Berns Miller** a good recovery from a recent accident. You never know from day to day what's going to happen to you and can be doing something so routine that ends up with you in the hospital! We love you Berns.

The **Huntsville Ballet Company** is celebrating its 50th anniversary and have always put on fabulous performances. Who has not seen The Nutcracker at Christmas time? It's happening again this year on Dec. 6. **Phillip Otto** is the Artistic Director and I had the opportunity to meet him recently - he is so passionate about what he does and we're so fortunate to have HBC in Huntsville. You can read more about their other performances (one is coming Oct. 25-27, "Unplugged") on their website

[www.huntsvilleballet.org](http://www.huntsvilleballet.org).

It seems that crime is on the increase in Huntsville and all you can do is watch out for yourself and your neighbors. So be sure and lock your car no matter how short you're going to be away, always lock doors & cars at night, get an alarm for your home and just be aware of your surroundings no matter where you are. If you see anything that looks suspicious call the police number at 256.722.7100 and they'll come right out to investigate. Call 911 for emergencies.

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## Hot Comfort Foods for Fall

### Linda's Chipped Beef Dip

- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 3 t. melted butter
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 c. milk
- 2-1/2 oz. dried beef, minced
- 1/2 t. garlic powder
- 1 8-oz. carton sour cream
- 4 t. minced onion

Saute pecans in butter til lightly browned, drain on paper towels and set aside. Combine the remaining ingredients, mix well. Spoon into greased 1-1/2 quart baking dish.

Top with the pecans and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Serve hot with assorted crackers or Bugles. Keep warm in a chafing dish.

This also is really good with a sprinkle of ground cayenne pepper for bite!

### Stuffed Mushrooms

- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1 lb. bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled
- 1 lb. fresh whole mushrooms

Remove stems from the mushrooms. Combine cream cheese and bacon and stuff the mushroom caps with the mixture with caps down. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes and mushrooms until tender.

### Cabbage with Sausage

Boil cabbage in salted water, fry a pound of sausage, put it in a deep dish and cover with the cabbage. Top with 4 teaspoons of butter, sprinkle with black pepper. Set in a warm oven (200 degrees) for 4 hours and season to taste.

### Cheddar Baked Potato Slices

- 4 medium potatoes
- 1 can Cream of Mushroom soup
- 1 t. paprika
- 1 t. onion powder
- 1 t. garlic powder
- 1/2 t. black powder
- 1/4 t. cayenne powder
- 1 c. shredded Cheddar

Cut the potatoes into 1/4 inch slices. In a small bowl combine the soup, onion powder, garlic powder, paprika and pepper. Arrange the potato slices in a greased 2-quart baking dish in overlapping rows.

Sprinkle with the cheese, spoon the soup mixture over the cheese. Cover with foil and bake at 400 degrees for about 45 minutes - uncover and bake for 10 additional minutes til the potatoes are tender.

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### Potatoes in Cream Wine

4 red potatoes, sliced and cooked

2 T. melted butter

1 lrg. sliced onion

2/3 c. milk

1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese

1 T. flour

1/2 t. sugar

Salt to taste

1/4 c. dry white wine

Saute the potatoes in butter for 10 minutes. Mix & add remaining ingredients except for the wine. Cook for 5 more minutes, then add the wine.

### Worcestershire Chicken Crunch

1 carton sour cream

2 t. lemon juice

2 T. Worcestershire sauce

1 T. celery salt

1 T. paprika

8 chicken breasts

1-1/2 c. herb stuffing mix

1/4 c. butter, melted

Combine sour cream, lemon, Worcestershire sauce, celery salt and paprika. Dredge the chicken in the sour cream mix, then in the dry stuffing mixed with butter. Drizzle with remaining butter and bake at 350 degrees for an hour.

### Fried Catfish

4 T. olive oil

1 c. corn meal

1/2 c. plain flour

2 t. salt

1 t. pepper

1/2 t. garlic powder

1/2 t. onion powder

1 lb. boneless catfish filets

lemon wedges

Combine corn meal, flour, salt, pepper, garlic and onion powders in a paper bag. Put 3 or 4 pieces of fish in the bag and shake well to coat. Heat olive oil in deep sauce pan til a piece of the fish sizzles when you put it in. Fry fish til coating is brown and fish is tender and flaky. Garnish with lemon wedges and parsley.

For a true Southern treat, try this with homemade hot hush-puppies and slices of fresh mild onion.

### Granny's Fresh Apple Cake

2 eggs

2 c. sugar

2 sticks butter, softened

1/2 t. salt

1 t. baking soda

1 T. ground cinnamon

3 c. plain flour

3 c. apples, chopped fine

1-1/2 c. chopped pecans

Mix the first 6 ingredients thoroughly, then mix in flour. Mix in apples and nuts. Spray a Bundt pan with butter spray. Spoon mixture evenly in pan and bake at 325 degrees for 1 hour.

Cake is very dense and moist. A broom straw should come out clean when pushed into center of cake.



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# They Called Him "Coach"

by Hartwell Lutz

The front page of the September 1, 1934 issue of The Huntsville Times reported that Milton Frank had been hired as "coach, mathematics and science instructor" for Huntsville High. At that time, there was not a single game scheduled for the season that should have been about to start. Not much was running according to schedule in North Alabama in the Fall of 1934, between the Great Depression and the fact that the nation was in the midst of a general textile strike.

Coach Frank soon called a meeting to organize the team and begin practice. The first practice session was held on the East Clinton Elementary School playground. At that first practice, attended by less than twenty would-be players, there were seven lettermen from the 1933 team. Coach Frank told them that "hard work and plenty of it" was his prescription for the team and its members. The final 1934 roster consisted of about 25 dedicated boys who were about to become young men.

A few days after drills started, a headline in The Huntsville Times announced: "Night Football To Be Played Here This Fall." The cost of the lighting system, consisting of 8 poles with two lights each, to be erected at "the new athletic field," would be slightly more than \$1000. To pay for the project, the Acme Club, of which Coach Frank was to become a member, sold 500 season tickets, good for all home

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games for \$2.50, which worked out to less than fifty cents per game after the season schedule was put together.

Somehow, money was found to buy new uniforms and equipment for the team. There was excitement in the air as the time for the first game approached, which was with Elkmont, a team that had scored over 50 points, in winning its season opener the previous week. Huntsville was considered to be the heavy underdog, but in spite of that a big turnout was expected for the first game under the lights at Goldsmith-Schiffman Field. The game was marred by a downpour of rain, but those who attended, at least those who favored Huntsville, were pleased with the outcome, which was a 45-0 win.

The first Frank-coached team went on to complete a 7-2 season against tough Tennessee Valley high school football teams. It was capped off by a come-from-behind Thanksgiving Day win over Scottsboro. The sports page headline was "Huntsville Victor, 26-20, with Spectacular Finish." The article following described the outcome as "brehtakinging."

*Of the Huntsville fullback, "Red" Giles, it was said that he "threw away his headgear and, time after time, tore through the line for a gain." Some of the other players on the team were "Fatty" McAnnally, "Slick" Douglas, Carl Walker, "Sonny" McCaleb,*

**"Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night."**

**Child's answer on Bible quiz**



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After that final game of the 1934 season, Coach Frank offered to coach an All-Tennessee Valley team against an All-State team, but that was not to happen. As soon as the season was over he began to look for matches for the next season, and the Acme Club announced that it would sponsor the erection of additional bleacher seats.

The 1934 team was the first of many excellent-to-great HHS teams coached by Coach Milton Frank, who was always addressed as "Coach," as if it were his first name. It has been said that even his wife called him Coach, although I doubt if that's true. The word carried a capital C. Intense rivalries were developed between Huntsville and other Valley foes, but it was especially so with Decatur, which was coached by Coach Frank's personal rival, "Shorty" Ogle, who was, by the way, at least 6'5".


Coach was a strict disciplinarian and insisted on his players following his training rules. During what was to become his final season he called the entire squad together after practice one day and said something like, "One of you has been seen smoking. He has two choices. He can turn in his uniform and equipment, or he can come down here this weekend and run 300 laps around the fence outside

the playing field (about 75 miles), and I'll have a manager here to count the laps." The offender self-identified and started running immediately.

Coach was not one to bring in a lot of innovation. His teams always ran the Tennessee single wing offense, the scheme he had played in for three years as a starter at UT, and his defense almost always featured a six man line, with two line backers. His creed and his style consisted of: Fundamentals, Conditioning and Toughness.

Although some might disagree with this, it is my opinion that Coach's best team, and maybe HHS's best ever even yet, was 1946.

Without doubt, the strength, skill and toughness of that team were fortified by the return of four men who had left high school for military service and were returning for their senior year. They were Erskine



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Cantrell, wingback; Ernest Brooks, a true triple-threat back who played at quarterback and tailback; Frank Ford, the biggest man on the team and a tackle; and Creston Porter, end.

That is not to say there weren't some other excellent players on that team. There definitely were. One was Gordon Warden, Jr. (now known as "Brick"), who had a very similar skill set to returning Navy veteran, Ernest Brooks. Those two, with the guidance of new Assistant Coach Bob Warden, gave HHS's single wing a new look. "Coach Bob" was Coach Frank's first paid assistant coach.

Jack Peake, Raymond "Scraps" Taylor, Jesse Wilson, John Hall, "Dub" Smith and Doug "Snag" Weatherly, along with ex-Marine Ford, made up the line. Jimmy Reeder was the fullback. The only guy in the starting line-up of any size was Ford. Neither Wilson, Hall nor Smith, the middle of the line, weighed over 130 pounds, if that, at the end of the season, but they were all tough as iron and in perfect condition.

The 1946 team was Coach Frank's last, and he went out with a crescendo in the form of a perfect 9-0 season. In the process, his team defeated Sheffield, which at that time had a string of 25 consecutive wins and was the clear favorite. Huntsville came from behind to beat arch rival Decatur, and ended the season with a resounding 27-7 win over Athens on Thanksgiving Day in Athens.

There was no state play-off system in the 1940s, but Huntsville was the consensus State Champion. Coach offered to play any team in Alabama for the championship, but State High School Athletic Association rules wouldn't allow it. After it became apparent that there would be no championship game, Coach, speaking of

his team said, "Take a good look at this one because it will be a long time before you will see another one like it around here."

As he was inclined to say after a hard lick had passed or a tough scrimmage, "It's a rough ole game. You've gotta love it to play it."

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# Arthritis Remedies

*Arthritis, bursitis, gout, rheumatism - this translates to pain, pain and more pain and they have been around for thousands of years. As our age group moves into their 50's and 60's this will become much too familiar to them. There are some very suitable natural remedies that have worked for years - try a few at a time, or one at a time - you will soon find the one that makes you feel better.*

\* Cherries are very effective because they prevent crystallization of uric acid (seems to help cause arthritis) and to reduce the uric acid levels in the blood. Eat them any way you want - frozen, fresh, canned - any kind, sweet or sour. Drink the juice and eat the cherries. Drink several cups of the juice a day for 4 days, then see how you feel.

\* Garlic has been used to quiet arthritic pain quickly if you rub a freshly cut clove of garlic on the painful joint. Garlic tablets are very good for your general health as well.

\* Alfalfa tabs or tea work very well - but you have to take at least 6 tablets a day - drink the tea all throughout the day.

\* Eat a portion of fresh green beans every day, or juice the beans and drink a glassful daily.

\* For some reason we don't

understand, arthritis in women disappears when they become pregnant.

\* Sometimes the nightshade foods can make the arthritis worse - foods like white potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant and green peppers. Try to maintain a very low-acid diet.

\* Celery contains many nourishing salts and organic sulphur. It also can neutralize the uric acid and other excess acids in your body. Eat fresh celery daily, cut it up into salads, juice it if you're into that.

\* Cod liver oil in milk helps to reduce cholesterol levels, improve blood chemistry and increase energy. It also corrects

stomach problems. It doesn't have the best taste in the world, however. Mix 1 tablespoon of the emulsified Norwegian cod liver oil in 6 ounces of milk, drink it on an empty stomach half an hour before breakfast and half an hour before dinner.

\* Also, applying cod liver oil externally is said to relieve the popping noises of the joints.

\* Try eating strawberries, with a bland, light diet for a few days. This is supposed to be good for gout, especially. Strawberries are a powerful alkalizer and contain calcium, iron and an ingredient known as salacin which soothes inflammatory conditions.

*Woody Anderson*



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Since the club's founding, its members have volunteered more than 500,000 man-hours to various community projects.

Golden K members have raised more than \$500,000 over the years by distributing **Old Huntsville** magazine in racks throughout Huntsville and Madison County.

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We meet Thursdays at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast and interesting programs at the Downtown Rescue Mission, 900 Evangel Drive, a block north of University Drive.

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# The Ott Talking Machine Company is Growing

(Taken from The Huntsville Mercury, 1916)

The Roy F. Ott Talking Machine Company, Roy F. Ott, sole proprietor, is one of Huntsville's most successful business firms established in recent years.

Mr. Ott has been a resident of Huntsville four years and established his business in Huntsville about eighteen months ago. On account of the rapid growth of his business and a desire for a more convenient location, Mr. Ott was forced to move his business into its present quarters at Number 5, Post Office Row.

Mr. Ott has extended his sales on talking machines over the entire North Alabama section, making selling trips by rail and spending considerable time on the road in his automobile, selling to families throughout the section. He has just recently placed machines in the public schools of Huntsville and Madison and in the Huntsville Y.M.C.A.

Mr. Ott sells machines for cash, of course, but also makes a specialty of long time payments. He carries a complete stock of the latest Victor Victrolas. Victor records and talking machine accessories and the completeness of his store would do credit to a business of this kind in a much larger city.

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# A Yankee Moves South

by Chuck Owens,  
written in 2006

It was about 50 years ago (48 to be exact) when we left Germany aboard the USS United States, destined for our next military assignment at Redstone Arsenal, AL. The 5 day voyage was most memorable and we were met by my family when the ship docked in New York City.

I was on a 30-day military leave so we spent our time in my old neighborhood of Ridgewood, Brooklyn, NY, with my mother and brother. The quarters were rather tight since there were four of us, plus our year-old Wire Hair Terrier, Chicky, whom we brought from Germany.

This was a predominantly German neighborhood so we had no problem finding a German Beer Garden to enjoy an evening of song and dance with our friends. After about three weeks we loaded up our new Chevy, said our good-byes and headed south. The weather was cold and wet and the

three day trip was uneventful.

We all gave a cheer on November 26, 1959, at about 4:30 PM, when we noticed a sign up ahead, as we drove south on U.S. 72, that read "Entering Alabama".

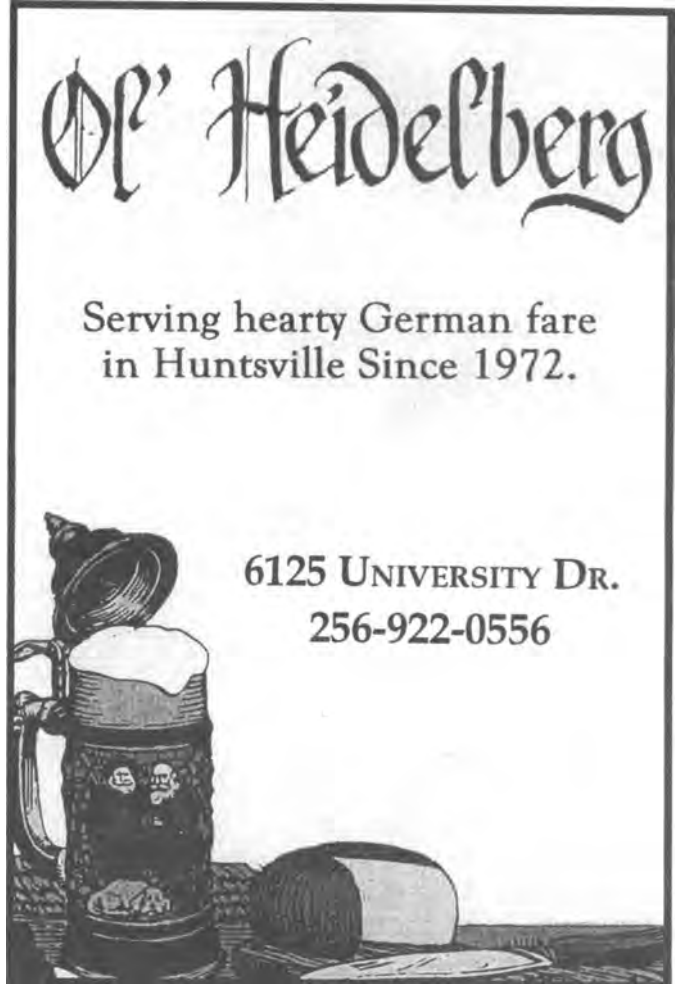
Never having been here before we weren't sure what to expect but we were eager to find out. I remember

driving along a street called "University Drive" and I had to stop and ask for directions to the Russel Erskine Hotel. I had made reservations there before leaving New York.

When we checked into the hotel we were very satisfied with the accommodations, which was a large room with several beds. We had to take turns taking Chicky

out for a stroll. We spent about two nights at the hotel and used a couple of days driving around and getting acquainted with things and places, including Redstone Arsenal.

Huntsville was a small town with a population of about 15,000 people. It seemed like the Russel Erskine Hotel was the tallest



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building in town. The town square surrounded a modest courthouse with several small businesses, including Harrison Brothers Hardware, and several law offices located around it.

In front of the courthouse was an impressive looking statue of a Confederate War soldier. My son, Ken, enjoyed this statue and we took several pictures, each taking turns standing in front of the statue.

Another business I recall was Hilding Homberg clothing store. While there, I met this guy sitting in the back of the store, reading the Huntsville News. He called me "Sonny" and wanted to know where I was from. I told him that I was in the Army and my home was New York City. I was told later by the proprietor that I was talking to Spec Searcy, the Mayor of Huntsville.

When I reported in to the Arsenal, I learned that we had quarters available but it would be another day or two before we could move in. During this short waiting period, we resided in the Goddard House, an old restored southern mansion on post which had a history of its own. This in itself was a pleasant experience.

A friend (a Huntsvillian) and I were riding in

one of the more rural parts of Huntsville and passed a vast field of white. Actually, it was a field of cotton ready to be picked but at the time I did not know that. I asked my friend what was growing out there and he responded with gusto, "What you are looking at out there is grits, one of the best foods you can find in the south!" I was a little skeptical but made no reply.

Initially I was assigned to the Control Office, ARGMA, headed up by LTC Hank Brotherton. As it turned out, he and I were to become close friends for many years. After some months working in the Control Office, I was assigned to the Industrial Directorate where Col. Hank Wishart was Director. I became Chief, Quality Assurance Division, Bldg. 3505. I had 107 civilians in

my Division and Bob Hooker, GS 15, was Deputy Chief. I was the only military person in the Division.

This building was shared with Chief, Engineering Division under Major Belavance. General John Zierdt was the Commanding General of ARGMA (Army Rocket and Guided Missile Agency) at this time. Our Co-Agency was ABMA (Army Ballistic and Missile Agency).

During this period, in

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about 1960 - 1961, there was somewhat of an upheaval at Redstone Arsenal when the Pentagon ordered that the two agencies combine.

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Joining our division were Ken Joy, the former Chief of the Quality Assurance, ABMA, and his assistant Miles Hardinberg.

In the meantime, our family had settled down at Redstone Arsenal. The children attended school at St. Ann's in Decatur, going and returning by bus each day.

Our visit to Woolworth's and Montgomery Ward, as well as to the Court House, was our first experience with the "Colored" and "White" signs shown at the drinking fountains, rest rooms

and sections of the counter where people stopped for a drink or a snack. I remember thinking how strange it was.

The Officer's Club had many social functions and it was a good place to go and relax with your friends. It all came to an end when I retired from the service in September 1962.

We had a retirement ceremony in August 1962 on the Arsenal parade field. Col. Cook was the reviewing officer. Three other military personnel being retired and honored at this time included: Major William Moody, CWO Joseph L. Watson and SFC James C. Quate.

I was fortunate to receive an offer from the Thiokol Corporation, located on the Arsenal, not far from the location of Rohm and Haas Chemical Company. I retired from there in 1978, hav-

ing spent some of the best years of my life on Redstone Arsenal.

And, yes, I suppose you could say we have all become Southerners. But I still don't eat grits.



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# A Cherished and Expensive Cow



There is a man in Huntsville who pays \$18,000 a year for the privilege of keeping a cow. He is a sane man, a business man, a man of family and generally respected in the community. His poor relatives declare him a freak and his neighbors shrug their shoulders and murmur things about rich men's whims.

The way of it is that he possesses a valuable building lot in a choice residence portion of the city, and having nothing else to do with it he put a nice little fence around it and quartered therein his pet Jersey cow. The cow was an artistic cow and harmonized well with the green turf and little bushes, so people rather admired the arrangement.

One day a man came along from Paint Rock who thought he would like to build a home on that particular lot, so he hunted up the owner and made him a spot cash offer of \$430,000 for the land. His offer was refused, politely and decisively.

"But," remonstrated a relative, aghast, "that would pay you \$18,000 a year! Why did you refuse it?"

The rich man lit a cigar and turned a protesting face on his accuser. "Yes," he assented in a puzzled way, "but what would I do with my little cow?"

*Taken from 1934 newspaper*

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**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19th @ 3:00 P.M.** = We will auction the remainder of the estate of Dottie Koch, Huntsville collector and owner of *Antiques a'la Carte* and *A Shade Better Shop*. Eddie from PA will also be hauling a load for this sale. Lots include Furniture, Collectibles, Glassware, Advertisements, Large Collection of Vintage Wicker, and **MUCH MORE!!**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2nd @ 4:00 P.M.** = Long-time Limestone County Collector's Estate, including lots of Advertisements, Vintage Toys, Posters & Prints, Tools, Furniture, Collectibles, Glassware, and many unusual and rare items. Log on to the website below for pictures, listings, & updates!

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# Lera Patterson Harwell - A True Southern Lady



by Carolyn Thomas

On October 17, 1887 Lera Patterson Harwell was born to John Malcolm and Mary Francis Phillips Patterson. Lera lived in Meridianville, Alabama for most of her 103 years on this earth. She was one of thirteen children, of which two brothers died as infants. Pappy, as her father was called, made up the children's names. They were, Learner, Narl, Charron, Newman, Vorrell, Lera, Burla, Brona, Ozela, Othel, Eldon, Wilder, and Arva. With the exception of Narl, all of the siblings lived and raised their families in Meridianville. We always had and enjoyed many family gatherings, without cell phones, iPads or any other electronic device, just spending good family time together.

In 1903, Lera met her future husband, Claude M. Harwell at Union Chapel Church, then located on Grimwood Road. Union Chapel Church is now on the campus of the Univer-

sity of Alabama in Huntsville, serving as an art museum. After dating off and on for five years, Claude and Lera were married on November 24, 1908.

While attending school at Meridianville, she drove a horse and buggy carrying her younger siblings to school each day. She finished the eleventh grade there, that being the highest grade at that time.

She told me that when she was a child, the dentist would travel through the country and would work on people's teeth with no sedation. She said that one time, she ran into a fence and cut a large gash in her leg. Pappy sewed it up with a needle and thread like sewing up a seam in a garment.

Lera and her siblings lived on a self-supporting farm, raising all of their own meat, fruit, and vegetables. Her father was a large land holder, farming several hundred acres. Their homestead was located on what is still called Patterson Road in Meridianville.

She worked in the home in the mornings and went to the

Memory is what tells a man his wedding anniversary was yesterday.

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fields to work after lunch. She always said, "Busy hands were happy hands" and that "Hard work was good for you."

After marrying Claude, they together raised four children; a son named Thomas Berry but called T.B.; three daughters, Johnnie Mae, my mother, Edna and the baby, Frances. Frances, who lives in Huntsville, is the only surviving child.

At her death, Lera had seven grandchildren. They are, John and Bettye, living in Florida; Roger, living in Huntsville; her namesake, Lera, living in Oregon; Carolyn, living in Meridianville; Susan, living in Birmingham and Jimmy, living in Ohio. Lera also had twenty great grandchildren and several great-great grandchildren.

Lera's father was one of the first Commissioners of Madison County. Her husband, Claude served as Sheriff of Madison County during the late 1940s and early 1950s.

She was a genteel southern lady who was much loved and respected by her family and friends. She was well read, very interested in current events, politics and was an avid Auburn sports fan. She was active in the Meridianville Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Ladies Missionary Society, the Homemakers Club, and she loved playing Bridge until her eyesight began to fail.

During her lifetime, Lera saw many changes. She saw Madison County change from farms and dirt roads to the large urban, metropolitan area that it is today.

On her 98th birthday her family celebrated with her. She got a letter from Pat Dye, the Auburn football coach at that time. He also sent her a gift of crystal, called her to

wish her well and talked of her on his radio show. Most of Lera's family, myself not included, are Bama fans but they could not change Lera. WAR EAGLE, that one's for you, Granny!

On her 100th birthday, she was honored with a celebration by her family and friends at her beloved church. Bill Easterling wrote an article about her for the Huntsville Times and she made her television debut.

That same year, the Belk's store at Haysland Square celebrated Belk's 100th year in business. The manager invited Lera as a special guest as she sat in a special rocking chair where she spent time enjoying the celebration.

On her last trip to the hospital at age 103, she walked to my car. Being the independent lady that she was, she would have walked into the hospital but they insisted she use a wheel chair. She passed away in December of 1990 with complications from pneumonia.

I was honored to call her Granny. She taught me many lessons, she was my confidante, my best friend and walked many miles holding my hand.

I'm very thankful that God put her in my life and I

am very thankful for the many lessons that she taught me. All of her seven grandchildren loved her dearly and loved their time spent with her.

She loved the Lord, her church, her community and her family. Our lives are richer having had her as mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, and friend.

She was my Granny and my Hero.



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# EFFECTIVE TREATMENT FOR VARICOSE VEINS

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.

Most patients feel an immediate relief of symptoms and can return to normal activity. There is no general anesthesia, hospitalization or scarring.

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Heaviness, Bulging Veins,  
Pressure, Burning, Tingling,  
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# The 1941 Riverton Girls Basketball Team

At the 2013 Annual Trade Day around the Square in early September a lady walked by and noticed the Old Huntsville post card of the Riverton Girls Basketball Team in 1941. She told me she was Mildred Tipton Stephenson, age 90, and that she was one of the girls in the picture!

Here are the others - many thanks to Doris (Green) Peoples for calling in to identify the other players.

**Back row, left to right:**

- Eva Styles
- Ruby Doris Sisco
- Alda Ruth Morris
- Coach Carter Smith
- Annie Bea Mitchell
- Nora Tidwell
- Cora Tidwell (twins with Nora)

**Front row, left to right:**

- Alice C. Nance
- Mildred Tate
- Ruth Wilburn
- Mildred Tipton Stephenson
- Ruth Tipton
- Evelyn Ray

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# Tragedy on the Flint River

by Waymon E. Burke

Before there was Hampton Cove and McMullin Cove, there was Big Cove and Little Cove, known to Native Americans as Ko-La-Nu-Yi. The Cove is nestled between the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains where they gradually fade into the flat landscape of North Alabama. By the early 20th century, the Cove was inhabited largely by hardworking small farmers. By the late 20th century, the countryside had become a part of the thriving Huntsville metropolis.

The murky and often muddy Flint River has been a popular recreation area from ancient times when Native Americans navigated the waters until today where canoes, picnics and sports enthusiasts can be seen all along the riverbanks. The 66-mile waterway begins in the hills of Tennessee before winding its way through Madison County on its journey to the mighty Tennessee River.

At first glance, the Flint River is a romantic and pleasant place, but beneath it is also treacherous, deceiving and dangerous; full of holes and a riverbed that is littered with a web of fallen trees and brush waiting to capture whoever falls into its grip.

Eighty-five years ago, on a beautiful sunny day, July 4, 1928, the Meeler family - Joe, Annie and their children; my future grandmother, Lucille, Lucy, Joe Jr., Helen and Herman - joined friends to celebrate the 4th of July on the banks of the Flint between Little Cove and Big Cove, just upriver from where the Flint flows into the Tennessee. This was the era of child labor, and both Lucille and Lucy worked in the Lincoln Mill and were happy to have the day off with their family. The happy occasion would

sadly end in tragedy.

Grandmother Lucille never felt comfortable talking to me about what happened that day. Before her death, my great aunt Helen, who witnessed the tragedy at age 9, painfully described the chaos, fear, praying and panic that consumed those watching from the riverbank. The story was recounted in The Huntsville Daily Times front page headlines the following day.



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Fifteen-year-old Lucy and a friend, Pearl Guffy, were wading in the river a short distance from the picnic area. Both girls apparently slipped and disappeared beneath the water. Aunt Helen said several men immediately dove into the river trying to find them; but the river, as today, was murky and they could not see beneath the water. They had to search by feel.

Joe found one of the girls and pulled her to safety, it was Pearl. When Lucy was found, she had drowned, her ankle tangled in the underbrush on the riverbed.

As with any family, the tragedy had a lasting impact on those who were there and even future generations who were not yet born. My memories of my great-grandmother Annie are of a distant and rigid woman. Many of my cousins who are old enough to remember her before her death in 1957 remember her as I do.

One of my aunts says Annie apologized to her for her distant behavior before her death and confessed she was very careful not to be too close to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren to minimize the pain that the loss of loved ones causes.

Lucy's father, my great-grandfather, Joe, was never a very religious man. Many viewed, his jovial nature and often reckless behavior as over-compensating for his loss. My most vivid remembrance of him was during a visit to the family burial plot when I was about 10 years old. Just the two of

us walked to Lucy's grave and stood there. He did not speak a word, and I am sure I was too young to understand all the complexities.

Over the decades since, I have often wondered if he was seeking comfort from God or if he was cursing God. I have discussed this with family members who also knew him well, and they universally agree it could have been either or perhaps even both. After all, he was the hero who saved a young girl that day, but he could not save his daughter.

Like the loss of any young person, the toll is far greater than losing the individual, it is also the loss of the countless generations of children and grandchildren she would likely have produced, the countless cousins who would never be. Such tragedies reverberate through generations.

All who lived and experienced the pain firsthand - parents, siblings and friends - are all gone. No doubt, each of those who witnessed the tragedy took the pain with them to the afterlife. Had she lived, our great-aunt Lucy would have been 100 years old. She is buried near her sister, Lucille, in

the Camp Ground Cemetery in Big Cove.

*Waymon E. Burke, Ph.D., is a history and political science instructor at Calhoun Community College's Research Park Campus. His family has deep roots in Huntsville and Madison County.*

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# Tweetie's Pet Tips

*Some good ideas for your dogs & cats!*

## Tweetie

\* If your cat wants to use the bathtub as her litter box, stop that quickly by leaving an inch of water in the tub for a day or two.

\* You're seeing hairballs in your home, this is not pleasant for the kitty either. A simple remedy is to give your cat 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of butter a day, which will move the hair right through. Be careful with this though cause your kitty could end up a butter ball!

## Lumps & Bumps in Older Pets

While the vast majority of lumps and bumps are harmless, it takes expert eyes—and hands—to be sure. "Every big tumor started out as a little one, so you shouldn't overlook them," says Richard Anderson, D.V.M., a veterinary dermatologist in private practice in Boston.

Lumps are particularly worrisome in cats, since they're sometimes a sign of cancer, adds William Crane, V.M.D., a veterinarian in private practice in Colmar, Pennsylvania. So if you feel something unusual, call your vet right away.

## What to Look For

Only your vet can say for sure if a lump or bump is harmless, but here are a few things you can look for:

- **Uniformity.** The benign lumps or bumps typically have a smooth shape, without irregular or jagged edges, says William Crane, V.M.D., a veterinarian in private practice in Colmar, Pennsylvania.

- **Malleability.** Lumps that are under the skin should move freely when you push against them. "Lipomas, for example, feel like



a glob of fat under the skin," says Dr. Crane.

- **Localization.** The lump should feel like a solid object and be confined to one spot. If it's branched out and seems to be covering a larger area, you should see your vet.

- **Growth.** Lumps that are dangerous tend to grow rapidly and sometimes bleed. This type of lump should be seen by a vet right away.

- **Mouth.** Look at the tongue, around the lips and inside the mouth. You'll have to look carefully, because the lumps can be quite small—sometimes not much bigger than a pencil point, he says.

If you find a lump you're not sure about, ask your vet to take a look. Chances are it's OK, but only your vet can tell you for sure.

## Separation Anxiety:

Most pets don't like to see their owners leave. There are a few things you can do to make it easier for her.

- Give her a treat - something she never gets - as you're leaving.

- Before you leave take her out for a walk, get her a little tired so she'll possibly take a nap while you're gone.

- Practice first with smaller amounts of time - give her the treat, say "Bye", then leave for just a few minutes. Make it longer and longer over the next few days.

- Don't coddle her - don't make a big deal of leaving with numerous goodbyes - just say "Bye" and leave.

- Get her a pal - pets do well when they have other animal companions and don't have to rely on your company only.

- Leave on the light - when you're gone in the evening, it's calming for most pets to have a light or two left on.

- Turn on the radio so your pet can't hear unfamiliar or strange noises that might scare her - this acts as white noise while you're gone.

- Many pets get anxious when they see the suitcases come out. Make it a habit to occasionally get out the suitcase for your pet to just examine and get used to, then put it back up.



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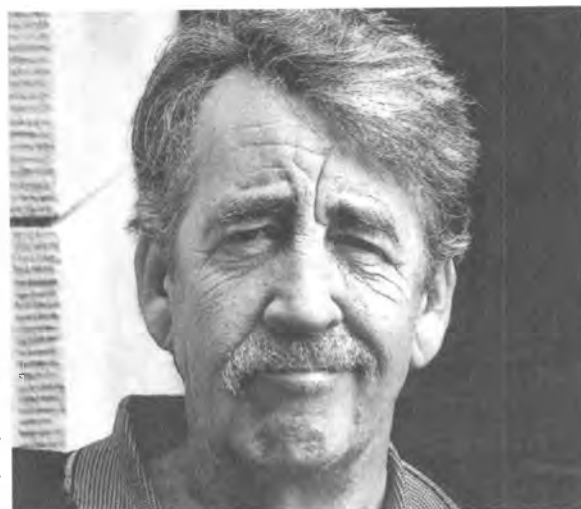
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# From the Desk of Tom Carney

## The French Settlers

by Tom Carney



Huntsville woke up one morning in the late fall of 1818 to see one of the strangest processions in its short history pass through town. Hundreds of French citizens dressed in ceremonial uniforms with sabers and colored sashes, heavily jeweled ladies clothed in the latest fashions, all headed toward southern Alabama to try and recreate the glory of France in the Alabama wilderness.

It was an odd fate that brought these people to Alabama. When Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo, the elite of French society was forced into exile. The European countries refused their request of asylum, for fear of antagonizing the new French government. America was their last remaining hope.

Supporters of the defeated general had already been welcomed in Philadelphia, but the city was not large enough to absorb the many hundreds of exiles now making their way across the ocean. After meetings called by the leaders, it was agreed that they should send out emissaries in search of a new home.

Many months later, the

scouts reported back. They had found a land where all the immigrants could settle. It was a fertile land where vines and olives would flourish.

The group split into two parts. The first group followed the coastline down to Mobile and the second group went overland, passing through Huntsville on the way. Months later, after a hard and dangerous journey, the two groups met again at the Tombigbee River. Here the French aristocrats found only a few huts built of logs and clay. They named the settlement Eaglesville in honor of Napoleon, but soon, envisioning a new world of friendliness among the peoples, they rechristened it Demopolis. The small towns around it began to take names such Arcola, Linden, and Moscow, all symbols of the past glory of the French empire under Napoleon.

Representatives obtained a land grant from the United States government signed by

President Monroe. The grant was for four townships, each six miles square, at a price of two dollars an acre, made payable 14 years after the signing of the contract. The grant stated that this land was set aside for the cultivation of the vine and olive.

Then came the period of hope and enthusiastic labor. Veterans of many victorious campaigns began a new battle— against nature and the elements. Dressed in their rich uniforms, they cleared the land, ditched it, and plowed it under. Their wives, delicate ladies still clothed in Parisian gowns, milked the cows, carried water to the men in the fields, and cooked the meals over an open fire in the fireplace.

**“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.”**

**Abraham Lincoln**

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From old letters and stories of elderly people who knew the settlers emerges a picture of their existence in this harsh wilderness. The whole community began to take on the appearance of a French hamlet. Life was easy in some ways, there being plenty of wild game and vegetables from the gardens.

Often, at the end of a hard day, the settlers would gather in a clearing with their musical instruments and sing the songs of their faraway homeland, while Indians and traders looked on with bewilderment. Aristocrats and their ladies, who had last danced at the Imperial Court in Versailles, now performed the same delicate steps by the light of a bonfire in a forest clearing.

General Desnouettes, richest of the exiles and the acknowledged leader, spent his entire fortune in clearing and cultivating the land. In the middle of his estate, and near his home, he built a log cabin. In this cabin he placed a bronze statue of Napoleon. Heaped at the statue's feet were swords and guns that he had captured in battle. On the walls were the captured banners and colors of the regiments that he had commanded.

This cabin soon became a shrine to the settlers. Men would sit outside its door and smoke their pipes while talking of their former service under Napoleon. The ladies would bring the children to the cabin and tell stories of the homeland as the children gazed wide-eyed at the guns and swords.

Colonel Raoul, another exile, who was not so fortunate in material wealth and who found agriculture to be

entirely distasteful, soon lost his land and became a ferry man, transporting passengers across the waters of French Creek. His wife, the former Marchioness of Sinibaldi and once lady-in-waiting to Queen Caroline of Italy, cooked flapjacks for the hungry passengers.

No people would have been more unfitted for the job of bringing the forest under cultivation. Not only were they inexperienced in farming, but the weather was against them. Each winter the frost would destroy what they had so painstakingly labored over all summer. The colony might have survived, however, had it not been for a stunning misfortune.

They had settled on the wrong land!

It was discovered that the land they held title to was located miles away, in the midst of swamp and canebrake.

Almost immediately, aggressive American squatters began filing land claims to

the land that the French had cleared. Sadly, the French people moved deeper into the forest. The hope that had once fueled their ambitions was gone. Slowly the colony gave up its existence, until the only reminder of them were the French names they had given to surrounding landmarks.

As the colony died, the French settlers became scattered across the southern part of the United States. A large number of them moved to New Orleans, while General Desnouettes settled in Belgium. He drowned off the coast of Ireland when the ship he was traveling on struck a reef.

Colonel Raoul went to Mexico, where he became a soldier of fortune.

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# Donny Gets a New Motorcycle

by Steve Burcham

Wanting to be sure that the Bicentennial edition of the Huntsville News is delivered on time to my customers, I'm up once again just before daybreak to tend to my morning paper route duties. Navigating my way once more through the columns of parked cars in our driveway to pick up the bundles of newspapers waiting for me at the curb, I hear a loud noise piercing the normally silent morning hour. The noise seems to be coming from the direction of Donny's house. VROOM da da da! VROOM da da da! Moments later, I see Donny barreling down the street on a motorcycle. He quickly covered the distance from his house to mine and pulled up alongside me stopping abruptly with a huge grin on his helmetless head. With excitement and surprise, I stood there admiring his new machine with the pile of unrolled papers at my feet. He was sitting on a brand-new orange 1976 Kawasaki 250 Enduro. With the clutch lever squeezed in, he twisted the throttle another couple of times and the eager engine let out another set of loud reports through its exhaust pipes - VROOM da da da! VROOM da da da!

"Hop on the back, let's go for a quick spin around the neighborhood," he yelled above the idling engine. Not wasting anytime, I ignored my newspaper route duties and survival instincts to join him for a quick ride. Enamored by the new motorcycle Donny has underneath him and not thinking about his experience and abilities to control such power, with the trust a newborn baby affords his momma, I flipped down rear foot pegs and climbed aboard.

Without warning, Donny gunned the throttle, popped the clutch and off we went westward down Coronado Drive. We covered quite some distance before the front tire actually settled back down onto the pave-

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**Sherry Taylor, Hampton Cove**

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ment. Fortunately, at the outset of this ill-fated trip, I managed to grab two fistfuls of his t-shirt on both sides and decided to lean forward with him towards the handlebars.

He quickly covered the 3 houses worth of distance and turned right onto Ramada Street. Now heading north on Ramada, he twisted the throttle down with purpose and leaned in further with his chin maybe only 6 inches off the top of the handlebars. From my passenger vantage point, I was able to watch the two sporty looking backlit gauges centered ahead of the handlebars and behind the headlight. The speedometer needle quickly climbed through 30 mph... now 40 mph... and then, past the halfway point... 50 mph!

We were blasting past houses so fast they began to appear as blurred filmstrip scenes in the dimly lit early morning day. Passing through the intersections of Riviera Drive and then San Ramon, the speedometer needle kept climbing! This ride was better than any rollercoaster at Six Flags or Opryland! The thrust of the machine underneath us caused my insides to tickle.

I was having the time of my life paying more attention to how fast we were going rather than where we were going. With the speedometer was now approaching 60 mph, suddenly Donny looked up, breaking my trance, and began to release the throttle. I looked up too and noticed his concern. We were quickly running out of road! Ramada Street dead-ends to an undeveloped wooded area and we were rapidly approaching the last intersection before the pavement ends.

Speeding headlong into trouble, time seemed to slow to a crawl... with fractions of seconds seemingly now taking much longer than reality. Donny and

I slowly glanced at one another. Then, he looked back at the lack of road ahead and assessed our predicament. As if I could read his mind, we had a couple of options: a) stand on the brakes hard and try to stop short of the woods, or b) we could tap the brakes and attempt to navigate the intersection by turning left or right onto Tascosa Drive. His movements indicated that he had settled on turning west onto Tascosa Drive.

As he braked hard, the speedometer reversed its present direction but, with so much

forward momentum, we were still moving way too fast to make the turn. The hopeless situation began to unfold in front of our eyes as we realized that a wipe-out was imminent.

With time clicking by again at a normal pace, I leaned left to help him navigate the turn. Knowing that we weren't going to make it, Donny bailed out of the turn and squared up the Kawasaki on the house and yard situated on the NW corner of Tascosa and Ramada now directly in front of us.

Within a fraction of a second

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later, a strong thump came through the front forks of the Enduro as we sped over the curb and into the nicely manicured lawn and crash-landed into the large bed of bark, shrubs and flowers adorning the corner of the yard. Donny flew off the bike left, I went to the right and the Kawasaki went straight ahead. I landed on my side, halfway in the bushes and halfway in the grassy lawn. Donny was splayed out in the wet grass about 10 feet away from me. And the motorcycle was tangled up on its side in the shrubbery with its rear wheel spinning and whining while the engine idled along with a da da da.

Neither one of us was injured in the crash, I look over at Donny who is lying in the grass grinning and laughing. I got up, brushed the bark chips off, spit out some grass that had found its way into my mouth and yelled at him, "What in the world are you doing? Trying to kill us?" Ignoring my angry outburst, Donny let out a few more hearty laughs as he brushed himself off, picked up and jumped back on his motorcycle. I had already made my way about 300 feet from the crash scene heading back towards my house when he pulled alongside me, gunning the engine again. "Hop on!" he said for the second time today. "I'll take you back to your house," he yelled over the engine noise.

"No way! I am not getting back on that thing until you learn to drive it! I'll walk from here," I replied as he popped the clutch with a grin and pulled away rapidly.

And that's exactly what I did, walked home.



**"Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines."**

*Child's answer to Biblical quiz*



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## Heard on the Street in 1907

- Stephen Peters, arrested for disorderly conduct this morning for throwing rocks at Mayor Smith, was fined \$5 and costs.

- John Williams, an old man who was arrested a few days ago for drunkenness, was ordered released and directed to leave Huntsville at once. Williams is quite an old man, being 72 years of age, and Mayor Smith took pity on him.

- By reason of an open switch on the Southern Railway, freight train No. 306, it collided on the side track on Meridian Street late yesterday afternoon, wrecking and derailing two cars of the regular train. No one was hurt.

- W. T. Franks wants the public to know that he will be in town for seven days and will purchase all types of gold and silver items. Cash will be paid.

- Mrs. Thelma Wesley died of gunshot complications. A long time resident of Merrimack Village, she was accidentally shot by a neighbor three months ago and never recovered. She left three daughters.

- T.M. Craft was arrested yesterday for placing dynamite under his neighbor's home. The incident is but one more chapter of an on-going feud that began nine years ago when Craft's hogs strayed into a neighbor's garden.

- J.M. Lowell is once again back in the lockup. Witnesses say that Lowell refused to pay for a hair cut and an altercation ensued, ending with Lowell attempting to shave the barber's head with a razor.

- Elbert Hood displayed a monstrous catfish at the city market yesterday. It is said to weigh 137 pounds and is supposed to be the largest fish ever caught locally. It was caught on a snag line above Ditto's Landing.

- Two convicts walked off yesterday while working on the paving of California Street. They were last seen in the area of the Depot.

A \$5 reward is offered.

- Mary Davidson was fined \$100 for running a disorderly house. She was given the option of working out the fine at the rate of 50 cents the day.

- An older man, whose wife said he had been drinking for two weeks, 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.

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# On the Home Front

By Lillian W. Dale



*The following memoirs were originally published in 1899, describing home life during the Civil War.*

Shall I tell you of some of the "makeshifts" to which we were driven during the war? Well, one of the hardest things to come by was sugar, and by the second year of the war it was impossible to buy even the commonest brown sugar in the South. My grandmother possessed a loaf of white sugar that she treasured very carefully, and only used on extra occasions, and when the war was over she still had a small piece of it.

The best substitute we had for sugar was molasses, or sorghum, made from Chinese sugar cane. It was used in coffee and all kinds of desserts, and when one got used to it, did not taste so badly. Preserves were made by cooking berries and fruits in sorghum molasses, and as all the essentials were plentiful, we made them in large quantities.

Cake was also made with sorghum. In the South we do not think it is Christmas unless we have boiled custard for dinner. One Christmas we had no sugar for even this favorite delicacy; so we decided to make it with sorghum. It was of a rich, golden color, and certainly the prettiest, if not the best, I ever saw.

Real coffee was almost as scarce as "hens' teeth," and many things were tried as substitutes. Grandma had a sack of coffee when the war began, and she divided it into small quantities, and hid it in various places, so that if some of it was found and taken she would not lose it, so by this means we usually had our coffee, part Rio and part Rye, without the "O." Some of our neighbors used parched corn, okra, sweet potatoes, etc.

Another thing very hard to procure was salt, and that was indispensable. Part of the time during the war it was impossible to buy it for love or money. Then it was that those who owned old smoke-houses with dirt floors were considered very fortunate. The dirt floors were dug up for a depth of several feet, and the dirt put up in hoppers. Water was then poured over it, and, as it soaked through, it was put in kettles and boiled down till it made a dark-looking salt that answered very well to preserve meat. None of the animal stock liked it.

Many times was our house searched, on various pretenses, by the Yanks. Sometimes they were looking for Rebels supposed to be

in hiding there - sometimes for arms, etc.; but whatever reason they gave for doing so, everything that attracted the fancy or the stupidity of the searchers always disappeared with them.

At the beginning of the war my father wore a handsome overcoat of the style known as a "Lord Raglan," with wide sleeves and big pockets. As the Yanks always appropriated such articles of wearing apparel, it was kept in the darkest corner of the darkest wardrobe.

New Year's day, 1863, was one of the coldest days ever known in the South. One of the Federal Generals, Hatch I think it was, was quartered in our town with his command, and they roamed over the country for miles. As we lived only a short distance from town, they almost crowded us out of the house, in order to get to the fire that very cold day. Their invariable salutation on coming in was, "It is rather coolish today." In order to keep warm I put on my father's "Raglan," and filled the pockets with silver spoons and other valuables; they threatened to take it from me.

We all wore homespun dresses in those days, the work of our own hands, and sang with great enjoyment:

"Three cheers for the homespun dress the Southern ladies wear."

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**Steve Burcham**

# Prayer and Grace

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[www.prayerandgracethebook.com](http://www.prayerandgracethebook.com)

Prayer and Grace" is available on Amazon, Barnes & Nobel and at The Dwelling Place bookstore on the campus of Asbury Methodist Church in Madison. Contact Steve via email at [stephenburcham@bellsouth.net](mailto:stephenburcham@bellsouth.net)

# Them Dadburned Longhandles

*by Malcolm W. Miller*

When I was a little ole yellow haired boy  
 Fact is as far back as I can remember,  
 Papa would load the whole family in a two horse wagon  
 Along about the last of October or the first of November.

We usually had out a few bales of cotton by then,  
 Got the money for the seed on the spot right there  
 At the gin.

Then, of course, after the land lord got his share  
 And somehow or other that didn't seem fair.

We would head out for our yearly trip into town  
 Man just thinking about it made my insides pound.

We would get a barrel of flour and a stand of lard  
 And some store bought canned goods if times were not  
 too hard.

We would get two pair of overalls and some shoes or  
 boots,

And buddy you better believe a pair of union suits.  
 We would have to put them things on that very day  
 And wear them come hell or high water until the  
 First day of May.

Now you can call them union suits, BVD's, or red  
 flannels. But if there is anything I hate it is them  
 dadburned longhandles. They start showing at the neck  
 and I would button up my collar And they would choke  
 me so bad I couldn't hardly swallow.

The legs would stretch and I would pull them up to my  
 knees. And they would fall right back down just as  
 pretty as you please.

And buddy you haven't lived until you have to go out like  
 I did one night

To a cold country outhouse without a sign of a light.

My mind was a little fuzzy, I had been taking a nap  
 I guess that is why I forgot to unbutton that flap.

You know I wouldn't mind going back to the old days so  
 bad,

Eating possum and tators or whatever we had.

I think I could even learn to read again by candles.

But buddy deliver me from ever again wearing them  
 dadburned longhandles.

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## Old Football Trivia -1992

Portsmouth, England has a pub named "Roll Tide," complete with memorabilia of Alabama football teams. Behind the bar, in a place of honor next to a picture of the Queen Mother, hangs a picture of Paul Bryant.

Last year, an estimated \$576,000,000.00 was bet on the Alabama-Auburn football game.

Mrs. Robert Harris, in 1923, became the first woman to give birth while attending an Auburn football game. Since then the number has risen to 23.

On the face of Mt. Blanc, the second highest mountain in Switzerland, is a small inscription. Located about three hundred feet up a sheer cliff, and hand chiseled into the native stone, it reads, "War Eagle."

# Railroad Station Antiques

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## **Shaver's**

**Top 10 Books of Local & Regional Interest**

1. *Incidents of the War: Civil War Journal of Mary Jane Chadick* - by Nancy Rohr \$19.95
2. *Huntsville* by John Kvach, Charity Ethridge, Michelle Hopkins and Susanna Leberman \$19.99
3. *Historic Huntsville:* by Elise Hopkins Stephens \$18 (new price)
4. *Growing up in the Rocket City: A Baby Boomer's Guide* (over 200 Photos/illustrations) by Tommy Towery \$15
5. *1861 Civil War Map of Huntsville* (with historic points of interest) \$4.95
6. *Historic Photos of Huntsville* by Jacque Reeves \$35
7. *Dear Sister - Civil War Letters to a Sister in Alabama* by Frank Anderson Chappell \$14.95
8. *A Million Tomorrows: Memories of Lee High Class of '64* by Tommy Towery \$9.95
9. *True Tales of Old Madison County - back in stock* - by Pat Jones \$7.95
10. *Huntsville Entertains* - by Historic Huntsville Foundation \$12