



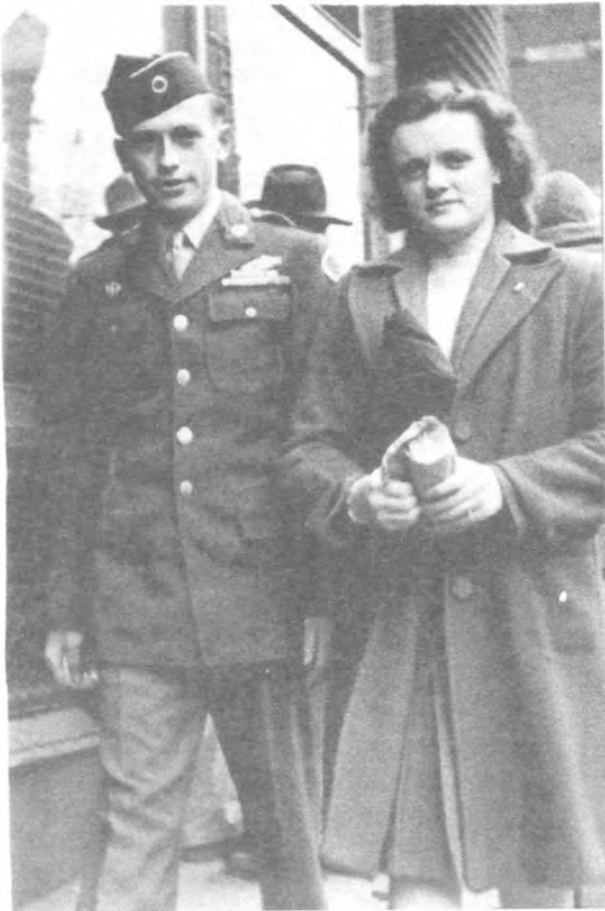
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January 2014



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



A Real World War II Hero

Louis Jennings was drafted into the Army early in 1943 at the age of 19. He married his love Lillian Slayton right after basic training and before he went to the Pacific. He shipped to the Pacific right after they were married. He served in the Army Third Battalion Headquarters Company 37th Infantry Division. Louis and Lillian have been married 70 years.

There were thousands of heroes in World War II but Louis is one I knew personally and I'm proud to call him my friend..

Also in this issue:

The Good Old Days

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The Way You Remember Them

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A REAL WORLD WAR II HERO

by Malcolm W. Miller

I have been trying to write this story, about Louis Jennings, for quite sometime, however it is hard to get a World War II hero that has been on the front line and in several battles to talk. Mainly because they do not like to remember those days and also because they don't want their friends and family (whom they went to protect in the first place) to visualize the struggles and horrors they experienced.

World War II, also known as the Second World War, was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. It involved the vast majority of the world's nations. It was the most widespread war in history, with more than 100 million people, from more than 30 different countries serving in military units. World War II was the deadliest conflict in human

history.

There were 16,112,566 U. S. Armed Forces involved in World War II. There were 291,557 battle deaths and 670,846 wounded, but not fatal. Approximately 1,462,809 American veterans from this war are still living. I am one and Louis Jennings, a very old and dear friend of mine, is also one.

I have known Louis Jennings most of my life, but only during this last year I found out that he was a war hero and received many medals currently displayed in a frame in his living room. He lives approximately a mile from where I live so I stop on occasion and we talk about old times.

Louis was drafted into the Army early in 1943 at the age of 19. He married Lillian Slayton right after basic training. He shipped to the Pacific right after they were married. He served in the Army Third Battalion Headquarters Company, 37th Infantry Division. He and Lillian have been married 70 years.

His job in the Army was to fire a 57 millimeter antitank gun while in battle. This was a semi-automatic gun with vertical block breech. When firing the block opens and closes automatically, the loader only has to put a round into the receiver. Due to this feature the

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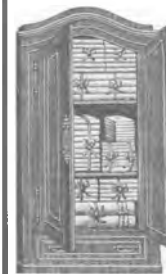
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rate of fire can reach 25 rounds per minute. This means when it is shot most everything in its path will be destroyed. The carriage has coil spring suspension, which allows towing with a speed of up to 31 mph on highways and 19 mph on unpaved roads. This gun can also be attached to a limber and towed by a team of six horses. This gun was used on the front lines. It took several soldiers to operate this gun. Louis was trained in the operation of this gun at Camp Wheeler, Georgia.

Louis went with his outfit to Guadalcanal. When he landed at Guadalcanal there was a bombing raid, so they went back out to sea for another day. Their plane was black and was called a Black Widow. They would shoot the Japanese planes from there and watch them fall into the ocean. After they landed he was at the end of the street where the Japanese had men firing at everyone who crossed the street. He had to cross that street.

The machine guns opened up, but he missed all the fire.

Louis and the remainder of his battalion were in Bougainville, which was an island where the Americans wanted to build an airport. Another battalion built the airport. After their battalion arrived they guarded it until they went to the Philippines. Their crew took the Philippines and secured the place before General Douglas MacArthur arrived. General MacArthur declared Manila an open city to prevent further death and destruction; despite this, the Japanese warplanes continued to bomb the city. Louis remembers well the big black hawk bombers flying above his unit. Manila was the site of the bloodiest battle in the Pacific during World War II.

Louis was in Manila when a Japanese soldier came to the door where his squad was staying. He thought he heard a dog and then he heard another noise and when he checked there was a Japanese

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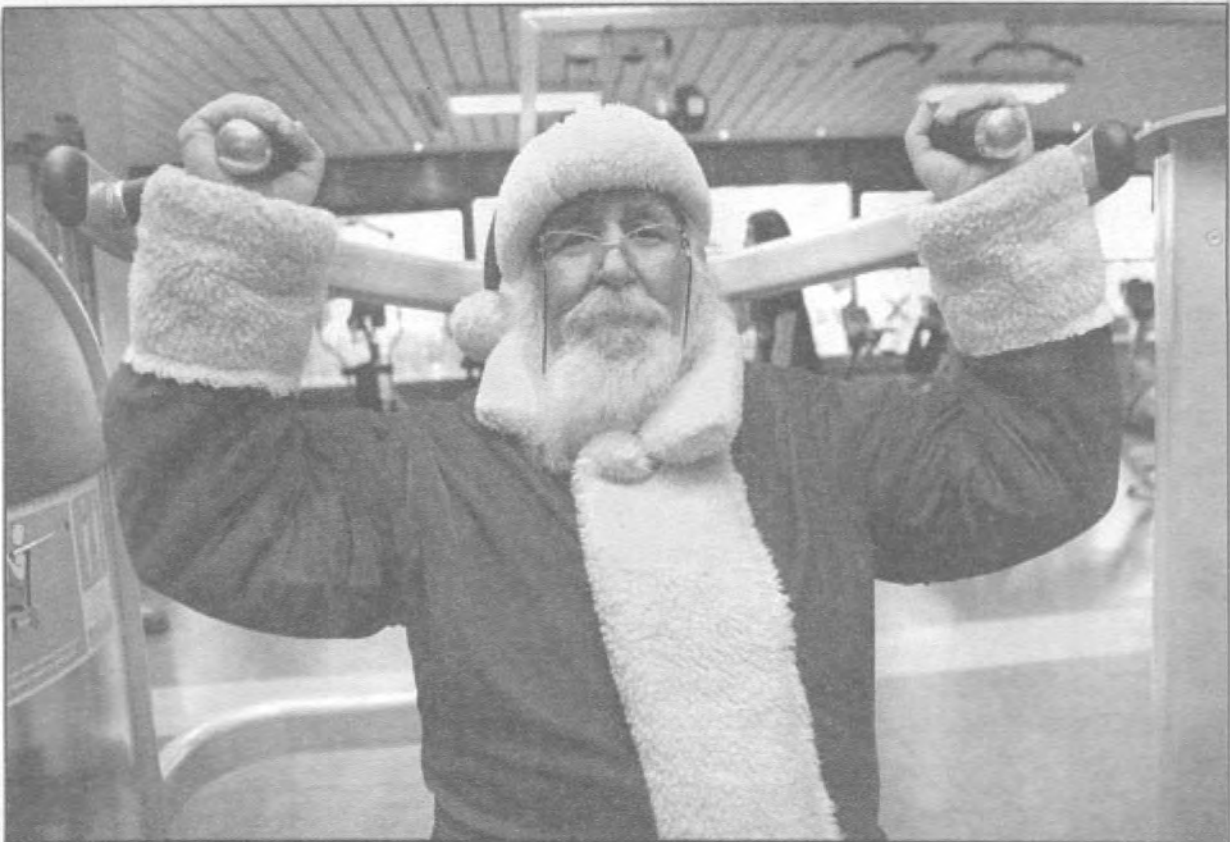
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man standing in the door with a gun and a hand grenade in each hand. The Japanese had hand grenades that all they had to do was rub together and throw them and they would go off. Louis shot the door facing first, then the Japanese soldier. The squad was scared and they watched the body until daylight to make certain he was dead and to make certain there were no more enemy soldiers. Some young American soldiers were scared. Remember many of them were 19 to 23 year olds and had never experienced anything so gruesome. Some of the soldiers were running off into the woods to avoid having to fight. No one knows what really happened to many of them.

While his battalion was in Manila they liberated several American prisoners of war. The ones they liberated had been in the infamous death march.

They crossed the river, Pasig, they would leap frog across the river. The Pasig River in the Philippines connects Laguna de Bay to Manila Bay. It stretches 15.5 miles and is lined by Metro Manila on each side. All the Japanese tanks went down the river and they were a scary looking crew. Others could not cross the river. His crew forded the river and another company got across. They went up a little way where there was a curve in the road and he placed the

gun down in the road and they crawled across the creek. They did get the gun across too. The squad leader said "Can you hit the tree from here?" He did and they put explosive shells in the gun. Later that night they heard the old hob-nail shoes of the Japanese coming down the road. When they gave the password and did not receive an answer they let the gun go and there were legs and arms of the Japanese everywhere. Not a good sight to remember. Later they sent the second battalion to relieve Louis' battalion and as they came around the curve the Japanese shot them all to pieces.

His battalion would have a day or two day relief and then they would have to go to the front lines again. The Japanese battalions looked very big because there were so many of them. They also fought

battles in Victoria which was southeast of Laguna de Bay and Baguio. For his time in the service Louis received many medals; two battle stars, 37th Division Patch, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge, Good Conduct Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign, World War II Victory Medal,

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Louis was there when the Japanese surrendered in the Cagayan Valley. Cagayan Valley is a region of the Philippines composed of five provinces and four cities.

Louis received a Purple Heart after the Japanese soldiers came off a ship and came upon their battalion one night and threw a hand grenade at them, it knocked him out and when he woke up his head was bleeding and burning. When daylight arrived his fellow soldiers took him to the medics. He was wounded in the shoulder, the head and the chest. He was put in an Army hospital in the Philippines. He is not certain about the length of time he stayed there.

After the war was over Louis went to look for his older brother, Buddy. He found him guarding the Prison Camp in the Philippines where the Americans were housing the soldiers that had gone AWOL. Buddy was nine years older than Louis. Louis was wearing his uniform with medals on the front and Buddy did not recognize him at first. When he did recognize him they hugged for a long time.

It was terrible how the siblings in this war had no idea where each was as communications were very poor. There were no cameras and no phones, only a radio operator. One of the soldiers in Louis' battalion was an artist and he sketched pictures of the gun and some of the battlefields and Louis has them to this day. They are very realistic pictures.

After Louis returned from the war he went to work for General Shoe in Huntsville in 1946. He stayed there about eight years, then he and Lillian and their family moved to Chicago and he worked in a steel mill with his two brothers, Bill and Buddy. He returned to Alabama and went back to work at General Shoe again. After General Shoe he went to work for Standard Oil Company. He and James Campbell, who lived next door to where he lives now until his passing, were in business together forty years repairing and replacing gas pumps. Mrs. James Campbell still lives in the house next door to the

Jennings. James Campbell, who was in the Navy, was also in the Philippines at the same time and same place as Louis. However, they did not know this until later years when they were discussing an aircraft car-

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rier that was hit and they both remembered the same things, the same day. Louis helped the soldiers get off the aircraft carrier and James and his battalion were working getting the water off the carrier.

After the war, Louis and Lillian had three boys. Their oldest son, Randy, had scarlet fever and chicken pox right after they returned from Chicago. Randy, their oldest son also served in the Army. Randy passed away several years ago. The other boys Keith and Bo live here. Keith lives with his parents and takes care of them, as Lillian has been bedridden for a couple of years and Louis recently broke a hip. Louis has trouble walking now. They have four grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren.

Louis was fortunate to go on the Honor Flight to Washington D.C. several years ago to see the World War II Memorial. He really enjoyed the trip with his fellow veterans. There are 900 World War II veterans that have flown on the Honor Flights from Huntsville. They have 80 more that have signed up and are waiting to go. There is no way of knowing

how many World War II veterans are still living in Alabama and Madison County as the number changes daily.

Occasionally, in the past when Lillian and Louis were eating out and he would wear his World War II hat covered with medals, someone would buy their meal and tell him "Thank you for your service". The same thing has happened to me and my wife when I wear my World War II cap. It is good to know that many people appreciate and recognize what these young men and their families did for this nation years ago.

NOTE:

On December 6, 2013 Lillian Slayton Jennings passed away peacefully with Louis, her husband of seventy years, and her two sons by her bedside. Their marriage began when he was a young soldier in World War II.

When he was on leave, before shipping out to the Pacific, he took fifteen year-old Lillian Slayton off the school bus to get married.

They are now separated for

the first time but I feel sure they will be reunited beyond the grave and she will once again be pain free and beautiful, and he will be as handsome as he once was those many years ago.

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Patent Medicine

From 1902 Newspaper

"Dr." Charles Donaldson, a patent medicine doctor by profession, and who claims to be a painter by trade, is in jail here charged with the murder of the wife of J. D. Key. Last Thursday, he gave Mrs. Key a dose of medicine and in less than two hours the lady was dead. Color is given to this case by the fact that previously he gave it to a child, who at once sank into a stupor and it took the combination of physicians and a nurse to revive it.

Donaldson claims the medicine administered is made from herbs and he has been making it and selling it for twenty years, having disposed of much of it in East Alabama. A quantity of his medicine has been sent to the state chemist and

the "herb doctor" will remain in jail awaiting developments.

Donaldson is about 50 years of age, and is accompanied by a lady of about 18 years of age, whom he claims is his wife. He says he married the former Miss Miller, about eight months ago in Goodwater, Ala., and that she has a father who is a carpenter and a brother, who is a painter living there. "Dr." Donaldson had visited Goodwater in March, 1897. He was engaged in painting and peddling a liniment and smelling bottle of his own manufacture. No one knew from where he came, and, while possessing of mystery, he was, while in Goodwater, quiet and law abiding.

When the pair first arrived here, they had spent a night in a thicket on the edge of town and said they were en route to Florence. The universal verdict is that something strange is connected with the couple.



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A Subject of Record

by M.D. Smith, IV

Vinyl, wax, platters, recordings or just plain records were all names given to music of yesteryear. I grew up with a family in the radio business and we had records for as long as I can remember. My first recollection is 1945 when I was five years old listening to "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" by Bing Crosby on a 78 record. It made me want to be good for a whole month.

The original records were 78 RPM and made of a kind of hardened shellac material that broke quite easily. I broke my share handling them as a kid and my parents were

not happy, but kids will be kids. My father even had some Edison Wax Cylinders used on phonographs as early as the 1880s, but nothing to play them on. As a kid I was given a wind up, spring-motor record player with an acoustic pickup. It had no power or amplifier, but a needle coupled to a small metal diaphragm produced the sound. That was not very good audio, but it satisfied a kid at Christmas. It didn't plug in the wall and didn't use batteries. It worked when the power went out.

Nearly 80% of previously arrested burglars surveyed said information from social media helps them plan robberies.



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Columbia Records introduced the LP or Long Playing vinyl record in 1948. It only turned at 33 1/3 RPM and lasted much longer than the single song 78 record. It didn't break easily and my family got one of the first consoles that had AM-FM and short wave bands on the amplifier side and the record player-changer on the other. By stacking several LP records on the changer it would play music for hours instead of minutes. Of course adults learned that this new vinyl would scratch easily, and if you let them sit on the changer or turntable for a long time, dust would collect and make unwanted sounds when the record played. I still remember the crackle and snaps dust would make on the LPs and occasionally when you dragged the needle across the record, the scratch on the vinyl made a horrible "POP" sound when it came to that place for all future plays of that record. That may have been where Rice Krispies came up with the slogan "Snap, Crackle and Pop."

Because 78 RPM records had been sold together in a bound collection of 12 songs on 6 records called the Record Album, when the 12" LP came out with the same number of songs on it, but much better fidelity, it was still called an "album" even though it was a single record.

Only a year after the LP introduction, RCA introduced the 7" 45 RPM record in 1949 with the big hole in the center for selling single songs. No one thought they would sell, but RCA also made a gazillion small 45 RPM record changers

that were a fraction of the cost of the large LP players and changers. They caught on like wildfire. All records at this time were mono. In 1952 at 12 years old and "almost a teenager", I had built my first "Knight-Kit" Hi-Fi Amplifier and was playing music into large speakers and really making music in my bedroom. By the mid 50s they had figured out how to make 2 track stereo sound from the single groove in a record and Stereo LPs and 45s were offered, sometimes at extra cost over mono records of the same thing, but soon everything was stereo.

You may have guessed that I have a collection of thousands of LPs and 45s

and you would be right. I have also recorded some of my records to digital tape and then onto a CD. I have repurchased the bulk of my music on CDs because of the quality of the sound never obtainable on records and never a "snap, crackle or a pop." But my records sure do bring back memories, especially at Christmas Time.

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Doors - Do not allow closed doors in any room. To get a door opened, stand on hind legs and hammer with forepaws. Once a door is open, it is not necessary to use it, you just want it to stay open in case you need to use it. After you have ordered an outside door opened, stand halfway in and half out and think about several things. This is particularly important during cold weather, rain, snow and mosquito season.

Chairs and rugs - if you have a hairball that you feel coming up, get into a chair quickly. An upholstered one is the best. If you can't make it to a chair and there is no oriental rug, shag is best.

Guests - Quickly determine which guest hates cats the most. Sit on that human's lap for as long as you possibly can. If you can arrange to have tuna or liver breath, so much the better.

For sitting on laps or rubbing against trousers, select a fabric color that contrasts well with your fur. For example, if you're a white cat always be on the lookout for dark wool clothing - that's the best.

For guests who gush, "Oh, what a sweet cat, I just love kitties," be ready with aloof disdain, apply claws to stockings or use a quick nip on the ankle.

When walking among dishes on the dinner table, be prepared to look surprised and hurt when scolded. The idea to convey is, "But you always allow me on the table when company isn't here."

Work - If one of your humans is sewing or writing and another is idle, stay with the busy one. This is called helping, or otherwise known as hampering.

Rules for hampering

1. When supervising cooking, sit behind the left heel of the cook. You cannot be seen and thereby stand a better chance of being stepped on, picked up and consoled.

2. Tax season is a great time to hamper. Wait til your human has all her paperwork laid out on a large table, take a running start and jump into the middle of it. You have succeeded when all bits of paper go flying in all directions. This is great fun.

3. For book readers, get in close under the chin, between the human's eyes and the book. If you can fully stretch across the book or magazine, so much the better.

4. For knitting projects, curl up quietly onto the lap of the knitter and pretend to nap, with lots of purring. Occasionally reach out and slap the knitting needles sharply. This can cause dropped stitches or split yarn. The knitter may try to distract you with a scrap ball of yarn, but ignore it. Remember, your goal is to hamper all work.

Play - this is very important. Be sure to get enough sleep during the day so that you are fresh for

playing Catch Mouse, or King of the Hill on the bed between 2 and 4 am.

Training - Begin training your humans early and you will have a smooth-running household. Humans are happy when they know basic rules. They can be taught if you start early and are consistent.

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RYLAND BOONE GAULT

by Nolan Myrick



I've lived a lot of places in my life, but Ryland was the best. It was a small place as far as towns go, but there was something going on there all the time.

I rode to Athens College with Austin Miller. He worked at the A&P up by the YMCA. I guess Berns and Gregory were still in high school. Joe Miller, their father, was one of my favorite people. He would call me Nolan A. when he saw me. I always felt welcome at his house. When I first moved there you could see their house from the road. I think Berns planted all the pines after the tornado. It sure was a comfortable place to go.

Ryland was the best place in Madison Country to get a good, cold Double Cola. Mr. Parton ran the store when I moved there. It made me sad

to hear Malcolm Taylor had died. He and Mr. Bill Mitchell worked at Ashburn and Gray. Mr. Wess Taylor, his father, used to bale hay for people. They had an International tractor and baler.

In 1959 we moved there and bought a tractor and hay baler. I always asked Malcolm and Mr. Mitchell things about hay baling. I was 13 when I started, and if Mr. Mitchell hadn't of helped me I guess no one would have ever let a 13-year-old bale their hay.

Ryland was the kind of place you would want to raise your family. In thinking back, I can't remember anyone I wasn't friends with. It was hard to tell where Ryland

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Kris Denny, age 13

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started and where it ended. We had Maysville, and it was as pleasant as Ryland, and when you left Maysville you were up in Hurricane Creek. It was all good country and good people. Nearly everyone was related. My people were on the other side of Highway 72 at Cedar Gap. I was lucky to have my Uncle Albert and cousins Bobby Floyd and Sue Frazier and Larry Myrick. The McBrayers were over there too. All good people.

Before we left Ryland, I had a family and we lived in an old house trailer across the road from Bill and Katherine Mitchell. I worked at Bellefonte Nuclear Plant as a pipefitter.

That's actually another thing that I remember about Ryland. Nearly everyone I knew worked a public job during the day and farmed at night. Baling hay was what I did. I've been baling hay now

for 56 years. The last big hay deal I had before I moved was for Mr. Dudley Powell at Big M Farms. He had sold his cows and I baled the pastures off and sold his share of hay. He said before he got it all developed he was going to name a road after me. He did, too - Nolan Drive.

Now I live in Molino, outside of Fayetteville, TN. Been here about 37 years. My wife, Joyce, and I have raised two good children and have five grandchildren. My oldest grandchild is a 19 year-old now. My daughter must have liked Ryland, too. She was about 3 or 4 when we left. She named her first child Ryland Boone Gault. We call him Boone. I can say again it was the best place I ever lived.

**"The older I get,
the better I realize I was."**

George Carlin

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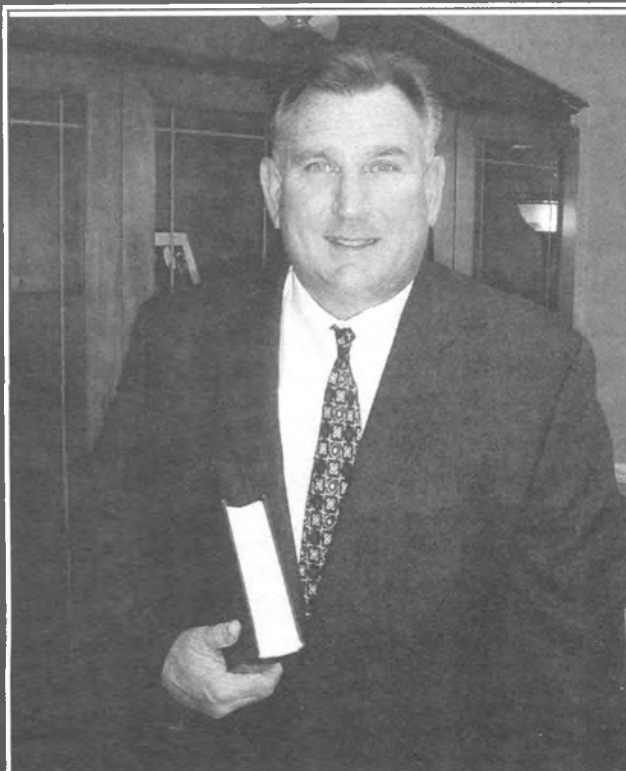
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Becoming a Huntsville Native

by Jack Harwell

If you spend any time at all in Huntsville, you're bound to come to the realization that this is not your typical Southern town. That's not necessarily a bad thing. Every city needs something to set it apart from the rest. And while our town has an unmistakable Southern soul, right down to the Confederate statue on the courthouse lawn, no one will ever mistake it for Jackson, Mississippi or Charlotte, North Carolina.

What makes Huntsville so unique is the people who live here. A large number of them have chosen to live here, though born and raised in other places. From across the country and around the world they have come, for better or worse, to seek their fortunes in our city.

And everyone has a different story to tell.

My dad was born in Pulaski, Tennessee, and graduated from high school there in 1949. All his family was in Tennessee, but like many peo-

ple at that age, he was willing to travel over the horizon and explore unfamiliar territory. His cousin, a World War II veteran, was working at the old Huntsville Arsenal. So, in 1951, Dad made his first trip to Huntsville.

The town my dad came to all those years ago bears almost no resemblance to the city it would later become. Huntsville, in 1951, had a population of 38,153. The city directory that year boasted of the city's two hospitals with 175 beds. "Huntsville is not a boom town," the directory said, "but a community of prosperous and happy people with a background of culture and education, an ideal environment for pleasant family life."

Driving around town back then, you would have seen many of the same types of businesses that other towns had. Hill Chevrolet and Carlton Motors were located in the same block of Green Street. If nothing there interested you, you could go up Meridian



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Street to Huntsville Motor Company and check out the new Studebakers. The Huntsville K-F Company and the Kaiser-Fraser-Henry J dealer were on Holmes Avenue, near where the WHNT studio now stands.

At night you could take in a movie at the Lyric Theater ("air conditioned for your comfort"), or go just south of town to the local "Passion Pit," at the Whitesburg Drive-In, which advertised two shows nightly. And at Woody's Drive-In on Meridian Pike, you could see Ronald Reagan in "Bedtime For Bonzo" that summer.

The Huntsville Times on July 1, 1951 carried front page stories on the truce talks in Korea and the \$15,584,000 that the recently reactivated Arsenal was getting from the Army. The Scottsboro Cleaners, with five convenient locations, promised in an advertisement, to clean and press mens' suits for 50 cents. Southern Furniture was selling Frigidaire 6 cubic foot refrigerators for \$199.95 (\$5 down). But with all the modern big-city conveniences, Huntsville in 1951 was still home to thirteen coal companies.

This, then, was the town that my dad saw as a boy barely out of high school. As he passed through town en route to the Arsenal, he drove by the Madison County Courthouse (built in 1914), City Hall (where the Annex is today), and the Public Library (in the same block). He saw the modest brick building that was Huntsville Hospital, and he drove right out of town, since the city limit was at Drake Avenue.

He drove down Whitesburg, finally reaching the gate on Redstone Road. And that was as far as he got; the guard refused to allow him onto the base. Remember, this was 1951. We were involved in a cold war with the Soviets and in a hot war in Korea. And World War II had been over for only six years. Things were still tense enough for the military to be very security-conscious. The only part of Redstone that Dad was able to see was a sign that read, "What you see/What you hear/When you leave/Leave it here."

Dad's failure to get on at Redstone was disappointing, but not entirely unexpected.

"They hired only veterans back then," he told me. "You couldn't get a job at the Arsenal if you weren't a veteran." So he returned to Pulaski, then later moved to Nashville where he got a job.

It was nine years before Dad returned to Huntsville. During that time much had changed in the world. The war in Korea finally ended with an armed truce.

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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Of course that handsome boy in last month's Photo of the Month was **Doc Overholt**, who oversees the Downtown Rescue Mission. The first correct caller to identify the photo was **Gayle (Rigsby) Lilly** of Ardmore, al. She remembers when the **LeCroys** operated the Rescue Mission. Gayle spent her life in Toney and Huntsville, working at KMart for years and Parker Hannifin. Congratulations on our most recent winner!

It was great talking with **Joe Brewer** recently - he sent in some childhood memories of the Huntsville area and they are included in this issue. He lives now in Brady, Tx but misses Huntsville every day!

Speaking of writers, many of you love reading the stories of **Malcolm Miller**. He writes about the Ryland community and his memories of growing up as a musician. Well it must run in the family because his youngest son **Doug Miller** is

musically inclined, too and has just re-opened a recording studio in New Market, called Harmony Studio. Doug's business partner is **Ron McCain** and they are booking musicians for recording sessions. The North Alabama area has so much musical talent and we should be very proud. I know Malcolm is so proud of his youngest son!

Lola Stutts-Blaxton of Muscle Shoals made you feel good just by being around her. She was a breast cancer survivor of more than 20 years, who was active in the local Bosom Buddies organization, in the Pilot Club and a member of the First Baptists Church of Sheffield, Al.

Her many friends included some of Alabama top politicians as well as **Pres. Jimmy Carter's election staff**. She was the first female bailiff in the Colbert County Court System. Lola was a feisty, beautiful, loving Mama

and Grandma with a great sense of humor. She never complained about any setbacks she had and loved her family fiercely. Lola passed away December 12. We send our deepest condolences to her family: daughter **Diane Owens (Ken)** of Huntsville; son **Will Stutts** of Muscle Shoals; grandson **Brandon Owens (Susan)** of Tucson, AZ; nieces **Earline Moore (Jack)** of Muscle Shoals and **Linda Myrick (Bill)** of Sheffield as well as other relatives and friends who will never forget the impact Lola made on their lives.

The **Hazel Green & Madison Academy** high school students who wrote memories of their older relatives in the December issue worked really hard to get those memories. There have been so many comments from our readers on those stories. Thank you to the students and to the teachers who encouraged them!

Marilyn Wright of Huntsville wants to send out love and a

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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special Hello to her brother **Jim Phillips** and his wife **Marilyn** of Cary, NC. Jim and Marilyn were both born and raised in Huntsville, both from families of 10 children, so they have lots of friends & family still left in this area.

There are two streets off of California St. in Huntsville that are real words spelled backwards. One that we know of is Tunlaw. Backwards it's Walnut. Does anyone know the other one?

The annual Dog Ball is sold out every year. This year the date is Feb. 7 and is called "Puttin' on the Ritz." It is a black-tie affair, presented by the Greater Huntsville Humane Society, and is a fund raiser for the homeless pets there. There will be 50 of the areas Very Important Dogs featured in a dog walk and they will be available for adoption as well. Reservations can be made by calling GHHS at 256.881.8081.

Lee and Barbara Hockenberry are SO proud of their daughter **Sharon Hockenberry Bonney**. She is a 7th grade Language Arts teacher in Marietta, GA at the McCleskey Middle School. This year on Veterans Day the middle school there held a special assembly at which an Army Command Sergeant Major was guest speaker. Sharon later spoke with her students about the sac-

rifices that military personnel endure and asked those students if they would just write a letter of thanks to a Vet. This resulted in nearly 60 letters handwritten to a vet, all going to vets deployed overseas. Here are excerpts from a couple of the letters I saw copies of:

"I am writing to thank you for your dedicated, hard work you do for us. I am so, so, so thankful for your kind, strong heart! I respect you with all of my heart. To go out there and fight for others like me, and our freedom, makes me speechless. I pray for the best for you and your family." **Lydia, 7th grade**

And another.."Dear Vet, if it wasn't for you and what you do for us it would probably be way different in our country. You have fought and helped the soldiers who didn't make it. You are a very important person to everyone and I Thank YOU."

Cydnee C., 7th Grade

All of the letters were folded so that there was a hand-drawn picture on the front and the message inside. It really gets to your heart, and I know it meant so much to the Vets who received them.

It makes me sad to go down South Parkway and see **Pride Entertainment** empty. It burned about a year ago and was such a vibrant business before that.

And I miss going into **The Coffee Tree** for a good cup of coffee, it closed a month or so ago. It's so important to help support our local businesses because without us they wouldn't make it. They don't have the deep funding supply that the huge chain companies have. It's your choice where you spend your money so please think about our local businesses and show them your support.

Check on your older neighbors in these cold & blustery days and take care of YOU too!

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1 lb. black-eyed peas, dry
 1/2 lb. slab bacon, diced
 2 med. onions, coarsely chopped

Garlic powder to taste
 3 stalks celery, chopped
 2 c. water
 2 t. salt

1/2 t. Tabasco
 2 c. rice, uncooked

Cook black-eyed peas and season as directed. In large skillet, fry bacon over low heat until most of the fat is cooked out. Drain off most of the fat.

To the grease add onions, garlic and celery, cook over moderate heat until soft but not brown. Add cooked peas, water, salt and Tabasco. Bring mixture to a boil, cover and reduce heat. Simmer for 30 minutes. Stir in

rice and cook until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed. (Add more water if needed.) Check for seasoning and add more if needed.

Potatoes in Cream Wine

4 red potatoes, cooked & sliced

2 T. melted butter
 1 large 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
 Sauté the potatoes in butter for 10 minutes. Add the remaining ingredients except for the wine. Cook 5 more minutes, add wine, heat and serve.

Barb's Stuffed Chicken

5 c. cooked chicken, white meat (4 breasts)

1 can cream of chicken soup
 1 c. sour cream
 1 sml. jar pimentos, drained
 1 c. diced onion and celery

Large bag Pepperidge Farm stuffing mix, or Stove Top stuffing mix (follow instructions on box)

Make the stuffing and set aside. Mix soup, sour cream, and pimento. Add the chicken into the cream mixture. Sauté the vegetables in two tablespoons melted butter and add the stuffing to the sautéed vegetables. In a greased casserole dish spoon the chicken mixture, and put the stuffing on top. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Serve with rice or potatoes.

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Cabbage with Sausage

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

Garlic Noodles Romanoff

2-1/2 c. Rotini (corkscrew) noodles

- 1 c. cottage cheese
- 1 c. sour cream
- 1-1/2 t. seasoned salt
- 1 t. instant minced onion
- 1 t. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 t. minced garlic
- Dash cayenne pepper
- 1 c. Cheddar cheese, grated

Cook noodles for 8 minutes and drain. Set aside. Combine the remaining ingredients except the Cheddar cheese. Add noodles and mix. Grease a 1-1/2 quart casserole and pour in the noodle mixture. Sprinkle with grated Cheddar cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes and cheese is melted.

Colonial Chess Pie

- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. butter
- 1 c. light brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 t. vanilla extract
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/2 c. milk

1/4 c. sifted flour
Heat one cup of the white sugar, all the brown sugar, milk, flour and butter over medium heat to dissolve. Cool. Beat 3 egg yolks (save the whites) and 1 whole egg. Add 1 teaspoonful vanilla, salt and mix well with the cooled mixture.

Pour in an unbaked pie shell. Bake 35 to 40 minutes in 350 degree oven first, then lower temperature to 250 to finish baking, about 10 minutes. Pie will puff across the top when done. Beat the 3 saved egg whites for topping, add 1/2 cup leftover granulated sugar and 1 teaspoonful vanilla. Beat until the topping stands up in peaks. Cover pie with mixture. Return to oven til topping is brown.

Allie's Date & Nut Candy

- 3 c. sugar
- 1 c. milk
- 1 box pitted dates, chopped
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1 c. chopped pecans

Boil sugar and milk together til soft ball forms when a drop of the liquid is put into cold water. Add the date pieces and stir til they are softened.

Remove from fire, add vanilla extract and beat til nearly thick enough to pour out. Add the broken nuts and beat til thick enough to pour so it will spread out well. Pour into a buttered dish and cut into squares when cool.



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Memories of the Good Old Days

by Shelby Greenlee

I was born in 1943 in Tracy City, Tennessee. My aunt Wilma gave me the name Shelby. Somewhere between 1943 and 1945 we moved to Huntsville.

My earliest childhood memory was the death of my Daddy in 1945. I was only two years old, but I remember the day in flashes because everybody was sad and crying. My oldest sister, Frances, lifted me up to see him lying in the casket. I would hold on to her neck tightly because I was scared and knew something wasn't right. I remember he had a sailor suit on and, in later years, I asked my sister if Daddy was buried in a sailor suit. She said he was and I couldn't believe that I remembered something as far back as two years old.

I remember when they buried him at Charity Lane Cemetery in Hazel Green. I recall soldiers shooting a lot of times over his grave and then folding an American flag and giving it to Mama. My Daddy was in the Navy during WWII, and Frances, my sister, told me he was in Pearl Harbor at the time it was bombed. He survived the bombing but later got pneumonia on the Navy ship. They took him to the hospital in San Diego, California and because they did not have medicine like they do now, that is where he died. Mama said that they packed his body in ice and sent him to Huntsville by train. She and her sister met the train at the Old Huntsville Depot on Church Street and brought his body to our house. Usually the person was kept at home back then for three days and nights. Neighbors




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would come and sit with the family day and night to pay their respects. After his death, my mother was left with four girls and two boys. She was only 34 years old, the same age as my Daddy.

A few years later my mother had another beautiful girl with a lot of black hair and eyes as dark as coal. Mama named her Anita but we lovingly called her "Tootsie." She was born at home as well as the rest of Mama's kids. We lived at 307 O'Shaughnessy Street and in those days we never knew what a doctor was! Our mother always doctored us with her own homemade recipes she learned from childhood. My grandmother, Minnie Mae Birdsong, lived with us for many years, which was just a natural thing in those days.

I also remember when the cotton trucks would come from the country into town to get all the people who wanted to pick cotton. If women had little children they just took their kids to the fields with them. At that time I was the youngest of Mama's children, so I went to the fields with her while the older kids went off to school. They attended Rison School which was located on Oakwood Avenue at that time. Later, I would go to the same school.

It would be dark in the early mornings when the big trucks would come to town to pick us up and take us to the fields. Mama would fix us bacon and egg biscuits, fried potatoes and tea cakes for

"Our Father, who does art in heaven, Harold is his name."

Tessa, age 6, in Athens church



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our dinner. When we got to the cotton fields everybody would pick the size of the cotton sack they wanted to use. There were three sizes to choose from: six foot, seven foot or eight foot. Mama would always get the big one. A lot of times I would be asleep that early in the morning, so she would put me on the end of her sack and drag me down the row while she picked cotton. When I would wake up she had me a little pillow case with a strap to fit my shoulder so I could pick with her.

I would pick until I got bored and then I would run up and down the row playing. I'd be glad when dinner time came. Everybody would try to cool off by taking off their hats and bonnets and sit under the big shade tree where they would eat their dinner and have fellowship.

At the end of the day when all the cotton was picked and put in the wagon, the grown-ups would put us kids on top of the cotton pile and let us ride in the wagon behind the tractor that pulled it to the house. That was a real fun time for us kids.

My Mama was a good cotton picker. She would take two rows and sometimes in certain fields the rows would be real long. She always picked 300-350 pounds every day. When the pickers got their sacks full, they would take them to the wagon, that's where the scales were. Sometimes the sacks were so heavy that the men would have a hard time putting them on the scale. One week, Mama made \$28.00 and that was considered good money

in the forties, especially when it came to picking cotton because it was hard work.

I remember one particular time after everybody had weighed their cotton and went back out in the field to pick again, I stayed at the wagon playing around. I found a box of big kitchen matches and started striking them. One of the matches burnt my finger and I threw it in the cotton wagon. I never thought it would set the cotton on fire, but it did. A pretty big fire was burning. I got scared and crawled under the wagon. All the field hands

stopped picking and started running to the wagon with their cotton sacks. They beat the fire until it was out. I'm glad they put it out before it burned down the wagon and all the cotton everyone worked so hard to pick. No one ever figured out how that cotton caught fire and I sure didn't tell them. Mama thought I was with her all the time because the rows were long and she couldn't always spot me right away, especially if I was sitting in the dirt. I made sure I went back to the field with her that time and I made sure I stayed with her!

Many years later when I was a grown woman, I told my mother I

Woody Anderson



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“I’m not really conceited, but I’m absolutely sure that if I hadn’t been born, people would want to know why.”

Robert Garrison

was the one that started that fire in the cotton wagon. We got a good laugh over that but it wouldn't have been a laugh for me if she would have known it then. I would have had one more sore bottom.

It was hard times back then and almost everyone I knew was poor, but I really don't think people even thought too much about being poor. They just all worked and did what they needed to do to survive. The pace of life was a lot slower and people were just happy living.

Later when I was a teenager I found out for myself just how hard it was to pick cotton. I was about fourteen and really never could pick a lot of cotton, maybe 150 pounds. I didn't like bending over all day because my back would hurt something serious when I would finally stand up. On the other hand, I had no trouble at all chopping cotton. I could stay up with anybody. I believe standing up had a lot to do with that. The pay was \$2.00 a day in the fifties, not bad compared to \$.50 a day in 1935. I loved the cotton fields then and I love them now, so many precious memories.

Some of the memories include our days on O'Shaughnessy Street in Five Points. When I was a child, O'Shaughnessy Street was located off 5th Avenue which later became Andrew Jackson Street. Mullins Restaurant was positioned further north on 5th Avenue but later moved to its present location.

The brick building sitting on the opposite side of O'Shaughnessy and the same side as Mullins had been many things over the years, including the "Red Cross". When I was a little girl in the forties, it was a nice Methodist church and I remember one Christmas Eve the church had a Christmas play. After the play was over, the members threw the church Christmas tree in the alley for the garbage to pick up. We couldn't afford a tree so my older sisters, Katherine and Mary, went to get the tree and brought it home. Despite all the pulling and tugging they did,

there were still some silver icicles hanging on it when they got it to the house. I don't know where they got a string of bubbling lights, but somehow they came up with one and put it on the tree. I thought that was the prettiest Christmas tree I ever saw. I don't know how long I sat by the fireplace and watched those lights, but it seemed like hours.

That Christmas with the bubbling lights was the best I ever had because the roads iced over and my sisters Mary and Katherine made us the best homemade sled ever. They got one of Mama's cane bottom wood straight chairs and laid it down so



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still have something on the
ball, but you're just too tired to
bounce it."**

Bill Davis, Arab

the back of the chair was now the bottom of the sled. They put a pillow on top of the wood and sat me down on it with my back against the seat of the chair. One of them rode across the legs of the chair with their feet resting on the spindles. The other gave a big push and we would slide all the way to the Methodist Church. There was a big full moon so it lit the whole street up. Back then there were no street lights and we didn't even need them with the big moon shining so bright. The cold wind blew in our faces as we glided to a stop at the end of the street. We never worried about traffic too much because very few people could afford to own a car.

After riding on our homemade sled, we would hurry home to get ready for Santa the next morning. We couldn't afford store-bought stockings, so we would hang our clean school socks across the fireplace for Santa to fill. I could hardly wait until the next morning. We each had an orange, an apple, some chocolate drop candy and one big peppermint stick. I even had a big present Santa brought. It was the prettiest doll a five-year-old could ever want. She would open and close her eyes, and I was so happy to have her. Even until this day my daughters Rhonda and Debbie and my 21 year-old grandson, Austin, enjoy the Christmas season with a tree full of bubbling lights. They have never known a Christmas without them.

Growing up we had two fireplaces in our home, one in the front room and one in one of our two bedrooms where my grandmother slept. She had a small heater to keep warm by. We heated with wood and coal and Little Mama (my grandmother) would get the heater so hot the stove pipe would be fire

red until it cooled down during the night.

We had a big wood stove in the kitchen where Mama would cook our meals. It had a warmer at the top so she could keep the food warm, especially if she cooked two meals at one time. She did that a lot in the summer so the house would not be so hot all day. On one end of the kitchen stove was a reservoir where water would stay, and when there was a fire in the stove it would heat the water so you could do dishes. We didn't have a hot water heater back then.

I never forgot Mama getting a big fat hen on Sunday and wringing its neck. It would flop around the yard and when it would finally quit moving she would put it in a big black kettle full of boiling water. This would loosen the feathers so she could pluck it easier. Then she would get a rag and set it on fire, moving the flame all over the chicken making sure all the feathers were gone. She would wash it a few times, cut it up into pieces and we would have a big skillet of pretty, brown, fresh chicken. We learned so much in those days, like how to kill a hog, cut it up and preserve the meat all winter by putting it in a salt box. We were thankful to have country ham for breakfast and dinner.

When we lived in Five Points, everyone I knew including us had outside toilets, better known then as outhouses. My girlfriend Dorothy Lambert lived three houses down from us on O'Shaughnessy Street and her daddy was a carpenter. They were the first family on the street to have an inside toilet. Mr. Lambert put it in himself. I used to go down to their house all the time just to flush the toilet. I don't know how many times I flushed that toilet when I would catch ev-

eryone out on the porch, but I know it was a lot!

The Lamberts were also the first folks on the street to get a telephone. Back then everyone had party lines and you could hear everyone's conversations. When Dorothy and I knew that everyone would be outside under the shade tree, we would go in the house and listen to everybody talking on the phone. That was so much fun to us, we would laugh so hard at some of the things we would hear. We would stay on the phone as long as possible until someone would yell in the house for us to come outside and play.

My sweet mother Ruth, grandmother Minnie, brothers George and Buddy, and sister Katherine have all passed on now. I know that they are all at home with Jesus, so I am not sad. I look forward to seeing them all again. I have been so blessed to have such a precious mother who loved all of her children and a grandmother who taught me so much. I have a lot of family living; my children, grandson, sisters, nieces, nephews and cousins.

I only wish for them to know the joy of walking down a dirt road barefooted, going fishing and swimming in a country creek, family get-togethers, singing and playing music (guitars and fiddles) under the big oak trees and all the women making homemade ice cream, cakes made from scratch and home-canned food from your own garden.

Oh what memories - yes, those were the Good Ole Days.

"If God had wanted me to touch my toes, He would have put them on my knees."

Linda Drake, Huntsville

The Greater Huntsville Humane Society
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Join us in the Von Braun Center South Hall 2 for an evening of cocktails, dinner and a silent auction to support North Alabama's largest "dog event" and GHHS's most important fund raising event of the year.

Feb. 7, 2014 at 5:45 pm

DOG BALL TO BENEFIT GREATER HUNTSVILLE HUMANE SOCIETY

The Greater Huntsville Humane Society (GHHS) 25th annual Dog Ball will be held on February 7, 2014 at 5:45 pm.

During the evening, 50 of the areas "Very Important Dogs" and several shelter dogs take the floor to entertain guests and walk to a "Puttin' on the Ritz" themed event. Closing the evening, a grand prize drawing will be held and the winner announced for two tickets to the 2015 Westminster Dog Show and a \$2,000 Visa card. Paradise Pet Resort and Spa is the Signature Sponsor for the drawing. Terry Bradford, the 2014 event chair, stated, "If you have compassion for homeless animals, attending and supporting this event is one way you can help the GHHS continue doing what they do best - taking care of beloved shelter animals that desperately need care, food and shelter until they find their place as part of a loving family."

Ticket sales, donations, sponsorships and the live and silent auction will benefit the GHHS.

Reservations can be made online at www.thedogball.org. Additionally, reservations can also be made by calling GHHS at **256-881-8081** or by visiting the GHHS office at 2812 Johnson Road. Deadline for reservations is February 3.

Short Stories about Football

by *Charlie Lyle*

I was asked to write something about football. At first, I thought I couldn't do it but I did. So far I have had some information from Bobby Wilson, Huntsville 1947/48. Most of my help came from my very good friend, Larry Buck Hughes who played fullback for Alabama. Bear Bryant was playing on one end and All American Don Hudson on the other. This was around 1927.

Bryant, after he became coach at Texas A&M, was extremely tough. They said that many players fled and jumped over a chain link fence because of fear. Two buses of players went in the enclosed football field area and one came out.

There were many stories I have been told and all I can do is to name a few. As a friend said, they can write many volumes and books about what I don't know about football.

Huntsville High had a player named Billy Joe Rowan. He was thought of as a triple threat. He could excel in running, passing and kicking. This goes back to the late 1930s.

Another football player from Huntsville High, Bobby Luna was an exceptional player. As well as Billy Nabors, who had a real close football family. This family could be compared to the Manning Family.

One of the great players, (and there are many), was Harry Gilmer. Harry was diminutive in size, which explains that as a quarterback he had to jump up in the air before he could throw a pass.

One thing that I could never

understand was the way Bill Curry was treated. I was there at the acceptance speech that he gave and how dedicated he promised to be even though he was not from Alabama. That explains why he was not accepted.

Just a little footnote I experienced by the Alumni was when one of them looked at me and said "you are a little small to be a quarterback" and this surely made my day. I explained that I was Buck's chauffeur. Another thing that made my day was when Buck introduced me to Mai Moore.

I was elated when Alabama was asked to play in the Rose Bowl game. Well the people there in California were saying that we were a bunch of hicks and didn't know a thing about football. Teams really didn't travel that much in those days especially that far away. They did play some of the Eastern teams like Fordham, Sewanee, Princeton, Yale, etc. The old traditional teams like Georgia Tech, Tennessee, Arkansas, Ole Miss, Auburn and of course Alabama and many more.

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"Please excuse Buddy for being absent from school yesterday - he had diarrhea and his boots leak."

Parent's note to teacher

The rules of football have really changed. For instance, there was no such thing necessarily as offense and defense. Alabama went to California to play in 1927. As one might guess we beat them. It was either UCLA or Southern Cal.

You may wonder why I don't have more information about Auburn. The reason was because I was a close friend of Coach Hughes and got so much information from him. There were a few people like myself who rooted for both teams. When Alabama and Auburn played each other, I had a problem.

These were exciting times for the Alabama team going to Hollywood probably seeing movie stars, etc. By the wildest of dreams a movie scout spotted Johnny Mack Brown. Johnny was then put into many episodes of cowboy western movies.

No one is infallible no matter who you are, not even Bear Bryant. This is a story that came from Buck Hughes who was a close friend of Bryant. Bear came from a small town in Arkansas, Fordyce. His family evidently was working in produce.

When Bear said it was hard work, it had to be. Bear would work day and into the night. It seems as though

Bear had a chance to go to Tuscaloosa and play football. He started with the team when they were working out for early fall practice. He worked out for a couple of days and took off back to Fordyce his home. His family was really put out with him and worked him harder than ever.

He decided to go back to Tuscaloosa if they would have him. He exclaimed "hell if I worked this hard I may as well have the glory that goes with it."

Alabama can be proud of their football tradition. Alabama is a well-kept secret to the United States and Huntsville is a well-kept secret. To the South you have the most beautiful beaches and to the North Cloudmont Ski Resort.

I am very proud of our football teams - both Alabama and Auburn.

"Some fish are really dangerous. Jellyfish can sting. Electric eels can give you a shock. They have to live in caves under the sea where I think they plug themselves into chargers."

Jen, age 6, on school test

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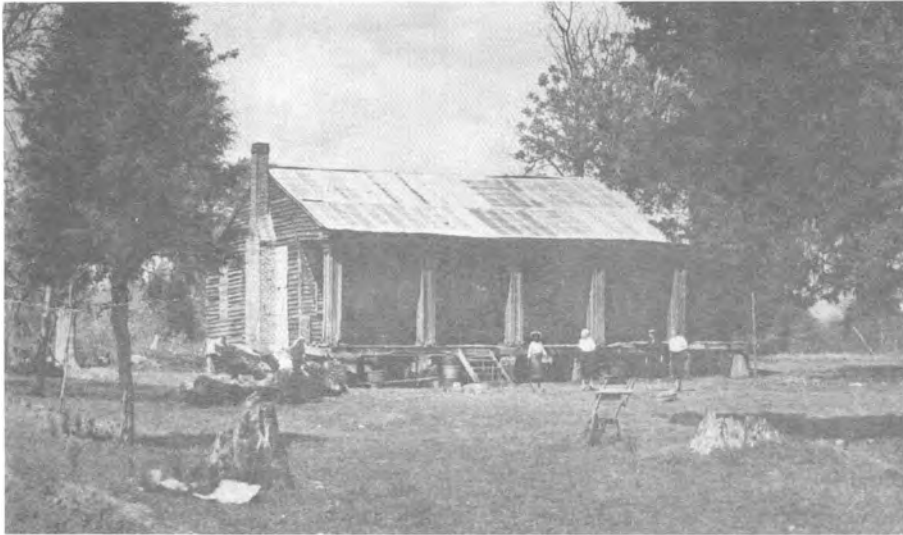
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Childhood Memories



by Joe D. Brewer

There were five of us kids at home when we lived at Piney Woods, close to Owens Cross Roads, a few miles out from Huntsville. There was the oldest, Edith, the next oldest was called John, then Willene (who just hated that name) then Jr. and me, Joe, being the baby of the family, born in 1935.

The first memories I have are when I was about four or five years old. We lived in Cave Springs at the fork of a road that went left toward Cherry Tree and east to Cedar Point. The road that went south went to Cave Spring School and to Owens Cross Roads.

Living out in the sticks without any close neighbors, we had to make our own recreation when there was no work to be done right away. We lived on Drew Smith's place in a big 2-room house. The front was the living room, bedrooms and whatever, and the back room was the kitchen and dining area (when we had something to dine on.) I seem to recall the front being made of logs and the back was added on later, using lumber "planks." There was

a well in front that had a long bucket on a rope, the bucket being about 3 feet long and about as big around as a quart jar. We had a wood burning cook stove in the kitchen and a fireplace in the front. I think that was typical around the country back then.

My brother, Jr. and my sister Willene would climb trees, because there were trees, I guess. We all liked to climb small hickory trees, (no more than about 15-20 feet tall), and swing back-and-forth and then throw our legs out, and ride the tree to the ground and let go. One day, Jr. climbed up a small tree and when he started to the ground, the tree broke and Jr. fell to the ground on his back. (I don't think it was a hickory tree). Well, it knocked the wind out of him and Willene grabbed him up and was pounding on his back, trying to help him catch his breath. Then she would stop to see if he was breathing. About the time he started to breathe, she would start pounding and knock the breath out of him once again. After a little while, he finally got his wind back enough to get up and run away from Willene, being afraid she would eventually kill him, I suppose.

Back then there were a lot of places to pick wild blackberries and "muskedimes" - wild grapes. They were regular size grapes and had lots of seeds. They made really good preserves. There were wild plums and possum grapes and "hickernuts" and black walnuts. All these things were what helped us get through the seasons. I remember times that if we didn't have them, we would have gone to bed hungry, or hungrier.

My older siblings went to school at Cave Springs School, and I started there in '40 or '41. It had two rooms and two teachers. Mr. Conley had the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades in one room. Mrs. Willett had the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in the other room. We had outdoor toilets. We didn't have any such things as lunch rooms and very little lunch, period. More often than not, we took crackers and commodity peanut butter. In those days we got crackers in fours. I haven't seen those in many years, but two of those slabs was eight crackers and, with peanut butter, helped get you through the day.

When we were really lucky we had hard bologna and biscuits. On rare occasions we had with us a jug of Penny drink. That was an early day Kool-Aid. It was in a small package like Kool-Aid but smaller and it cost a penny. If we were lucky enough to have sugar at home we could have some, without ice of course. One package made one quart.

We lived all over that neck of the woods, picking and chopping cotton. I noticed the name Mack Vann in a past issue, and I remember my mother working for Mrs. Vann from time to time, cleaning and such. I think she was Mack's mom, though I don't know for sure. He was called "Mackie" and had little

Cont. on p. 32



WANT ADS FROM 1902

Lost - On the square a stick pin with nugget of gold on one end. Finder will please return to this office or the Democrat office and receive reward.

Lost - Buffalo lap robe, last Saturday, On Walker or Holmes Streets. Finder return to the City Baker for reward.

For Rent - The corner store, McGee Hotel Block. This is one of the best stands in the city for any business. See Jones & Rison.

After January 1, 1902 - I will begin to close out my entire stock of old whiskies and brandies for cash only. Persons wishing to purchase a gallon or more of these fine goods should avail themselves of this oppor-

tunity. I have some goods that have been in stock over 5 years. Will positively allow credit to no one in the future. W. E. Everett, Propr. Huntsville Hotel Bar.

Great Bargains - See J. M. Askin's Store on the east side of the public square, at Grayson Mercantile Co.'s old stand for your dry goods and groceries. At this store you can get goods ten per cent cheaper than at any store in Huntsville. All stock complete and everything is fresh.

For Sale - The Petty property on East Randolph Street. This is a good bargain for somebody and it is

going to be sold on easy payments. - Boyd & Wellman.

For Sale - The Bone home- stead. The beautiful two acre lot, lying west of White Street, between Randolph and Eustis Streets, lo- cation high, healthy and ideal, is now in my hands for sale. W. F. Esslinger, Attorney.

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sisters. And I recall a Vann that had a brother named Charles and Charles had some sort of speech problem. That being about 73 or so years ago, it's not all that clear. It's possible that Mackie's little sisters were twins. Back then nearly everybody knew everybody.

I remember what a treat it was back then when we got to go to town (Huntsville). I don't think the population was more than 18,000-20,000 in Huntsville. We would go to the Elk's (it was called "The Bug" back then) and we would stand around in front of T. T. Terry's across from the courthouse gawking at everybody and everything. A little later on when Mr. Roosevelt got us out of the Depression, we moved into Huntsville.

When we moved to Huntsville in 1942, we moved into a house at 901 5th Avenue. There was a family across the street named Slaton, and they had a boy about three or four years older than me named Glen. He became a radio announcer later on and had a program called Sterchies Jamboree. I never knew what became of him. I believe he had two cousins or brothers who were twins, named Homer and Gomer.

There was a railroad track about 300 yards or so across the field in front of our house. I remember a passenger train that came into Huntsville every day. It was a diesel engine with two cars behind it. They called it the Joe Wheeler and all the other trains had the big black steam engines.

I started into 2nd or 3rd grade at school there, but I don't remember the name of the school. I know I walked there, and on the way to-and-from school I would cross a creek about a half mile or so from home. There was some kind of foundry that I passed. It was very noisy. I seem to remember a street from town, crossing 5th Avenue at an angle and I continued on east for a short distance to school.

That is all I remember about that period of time, except that we had air raid drills and blackouts now and then. Older folks knew what they were, but I didn't and I was scared. I thought we were gonna get bombed.

My sister Willene later married a man named L. D. Free who lived on Horace Esslinger's place. I believe there were five kids still at home with Mr. John Free and his wife. There was L.D., D.L., D. J. and two girls, Johnny May and Carrie. Across the field lived some folks named King. There was Irv and Burt and the kids were named Radford, Nila, Faye and Curtis. They were kin to the Free's. I believe some of these folks are still around, and I hope to be able to make the trip soon and visit with them.

J.D. Free was one of my partners in crime, so to speak, and Radford King was the other. I could tell some good ones on the three of us, but I'll wait 20 years on that. At least till I'm 100. Later on Mr. and Mrs. Free moved over to the foot of (or about a mile from) Green Mountain onto the old Hobbs place. I don't know where Isom Hobbs was or where little Isom was, but I believe they had passed away or left Alabama. I never met either one personally, so I don't know anything about them.

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Schedule for Spring 2014

January 27, 2014	6:30 p.m.	Mayor Battle	The State of the City
January 27, 2014	7:40 p.m.	Judge Karen Hall	The Court System
February 3, 2014	6:30 p.m.	Josh Hayes	Tort Law
February 3, 2014	7:40 p.m.	Ed Gentle	Ingenious Remedies
February 10, 2014	6:30 p.m.	Matt Glover	Industrial Accidents
February 10, 2014	7:40 p.m.	Ron Sykstus	Bankruptcy
February 17, 2014	6:30 p.m.	George Flowers	D.U.I.
February 17, 2014	7:40 p.m.	Judge Alison Austin	Our System of Justice
February 24, 2014	6:30 p.m.	Lee Leggett	National Security Law
February 24, 2014	7:40 p.m.	Carolyn Johnson	Divorce Law
March 3, 2014	6:30 p.m.	Perry Shuttlesworth	Nursing Home Law
March 3, 2014	7:40 p.m.	John Brinkley/Jason Johnson	Criminal Law
March 10, 2014	6:30 p.m.	Connie Glass	Elder Law
March 10, 2014	7:40 p.m.	George Moore	Justice in America
March 17, 2014	6:30 p.m.	Jim Richardson	Insurance Law
March 17, 2014	7:40 p.m.	Jacob Maples	Workplace Injuries/Workman's Comp
March 31, 2014	6:30 p.m.	Allen Brinkley	Question & Answer
March 31, 2014	7:40 p.m.	Mike Wisner	Fighting the IRS
April 7, 2014	6:30 p.m.	Bob Prince	18-wheeler
April 7, 2014	7:40 p.m.	Kerri Riley	Sexual Harassment

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Doing Battle with the Devil

Claude Berry was a preacher man.

An old fashioned, hell-fire, brimstone, "You're going to Hell" preacher.

Claude worked as an automobile mechanic during the week, but Sundays were set aside to do battle with the devil. His battleground was an old dilapidated frame building, with its paint peeling and with an old faded picture of Jesus hanging behind the pulpit, held in place by two rusty thumb tacks.

The religion he preached was as old as the red clay foothills surrounding the church. Accept the Savior, go to church every Sunday and reap your rewards in the afterlife. Unfortunately, his preaching alone was not enough to attract members to his dwindling flock.

Every week he counted fewer heads in the congregation. Especially disappointing were the young neighborhood lads, who refused to attend services.

Claude pondered this problem for a long time and then one day while sitting in front of the wood burning stove, whittling on a piece of cedar, he suddenly announced to his wife:

"We're going to build a brush arbor, and we'll have an old fashioned revival meeting."

A brush arbor was a tradi-

tion unique to the southern Appalachian foothills. An open air structure, with pine boughs providing the roof, it allowed the breezes to take the edge off the summer heat.

Willing hands were soon dragooned to help build the arbor and word was spread throughout the community of the upcoming revival.

The day of the revival dawned with the promise of another sweltering day. Mr. Berry had barely started his preaching when several of the neighborhood boys wandered in. As they were about to leave, having satisfied their curiosity, their attention was drawn to three young ladies sitting on the back row.

The ladies, all strangers to the young blades, were young and very attractive. Needless to say, instead of leaving, the

young men quickly took a seat, hoping to catch one of the lasses' eyes.

The next day, the same scene was repeated. Only this time the ladies were sitting in the middle row and so were the young men.

By the end of the revival, the lasses were sitting on the front row, surrounded by a bevy of young men. Preacher Berry, now in his element and with a captive audience, fought the devil with an oratorical style that sent chill bumps running up the spines of the young men. So impressive was his sermon that many of the boys, who had never before been inside a church, made commitments to a religious life.

The revival was a great success and as Preacher Berry later said, "I only had to pay those girls five dollars apiece."

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

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

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

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

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



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REX

by Austin Miller



In 1947, Mrs. Cora Shepard was our neighbor; her son E.W. loved dogs and always had about a dozen. He had moved from home but left a dog he had recently acquired with his mother. This upset Mama and Daddy because they knew he would run unattended on our property and be a pest; but more than that, they considered him dangerous.

He was an army trained dog that had been used to guard German prisoners held at Redstone Arsenal during the war. When Daddy talked to E.W. he said don't worry, he won't bother anybody. Daddy was not convinced and

made up his mind to shoot the dog if he caused any trouble.

His name was Rex. I can't remember what Rex looked like except he was bigger than I was. Rex showed no affection to people, never barked, wagged his tail, chased cars or ran with other dogs. You knew that the only way to stop this dog if he attacked was by extreme force. Many people affectionately add the adjective "Old" to their dog's name but somehow this didn't fit Rex. He was not a warm, friendly, fuzzy feeling dog.

One morning when I was in the first grade, I walked out the front door and there stood Rex. He was standing a few feet from the porch between me and the way to the school bus. I didn't know what to do because I had been warned

that he was dangerous and to never get close to him. He was standing there perfectly still without making a sound.

I had always heard that a dog wagging his tail was a friendly dog and not a threat. Rex was not wagging his tail. I called to Mama but she didn't hear me. Finally I took a step backward toward the porch, he didn't move. I backed up slowly to the porch steps. When I turned to go up the steps, he bounded past me and was standing on the porch at the top of the steps behind me. Since my path was blocked, all I could do was walk away from the porch back into the yard. At that point, he jumped down from the porch and fell in beside me. I didn't panic and I don't remember being scared.

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I think maybe at six years old I could sense that he was not a danger. He walked with me to the road and waited until the bus came, he was never more than a few inches away. When I got on I saw him trotting back home. That afternoon he was waiting at the road and walked me home. He took every detour that I took and stayed with me until I got home. When I got to the front porch, he trotted back to Mrs. Shepard's house.

After that, he followed the same routine every-day. Until this day, I don't know how he knew what time to meet the bus and not to come on Saturday and Sunday. Soon the other kids on the bus took notice and would yell and call to him when I got off the bus. The only time he came to our house was when he walked me to and from the bus. But any time I was in the yard playing or working, he was always in sight. If I got out of his line of vision, he would move to where he could see me. Soon he became an unobtrusive part of my life and I seldom noticed that he was around even when he walked with me to and from the bus.

One Sunday we went to visit my grandparents. When we returned the Shepards were all gathered on the front porch with a sad look on their faces; they said that Rex had been run over and killed by a car. They said the car came up the road, way up into the churchyard and purposely ran over him. E.W. said he thought he knew who did it but he never gave a name.

Rex was not a pet or a dog that could be owned by anyone. E.W. claimed him but he didn't belong to anybody, he lived off sparse table scraps but didn't bother the chickens, roam the community, bark at night, fight other dogs, chase the cows or bother people coming to our house. But as docile and unthreatening as he appeared, Rex was trained to kill and would have attacked anybody who messed with me.

We had come to love Rex and were all very sad when he died, even Mama and Daddy.

Law of Close Encounters: The probability of meeting someone you know **INCREASES** dramatically when you are with someone you don't want to be seen with.

Eggnog

2 eggs
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1 qt. milk
1/2 pt. heavy cream, whipped
Nutmeg to taste
Cinnamon to taste

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Why is it Named That?

by Dex Nilsson

Here are three main area roads, pointing from Huntsville northwest, northeast, and south.

Pulaski Pike

This was one of the first roads in the county, and the only road between Huntsville and Pulaski, Tennessee, from which it takes its name.

Casimir Pulaski was a Lithuanian who had served in the Polish army, met Benjamin Franklin, and volunteered his services to the American cause

in the Revolutionary War. He was made a Brigadier General and commanded what became known as Pulaski's Legion. Pulaski was wounded and died at Savannah, Georgia.

Winchester Road

Another one of the earliest roads, it was used by the early settlers who arrived in Madison County from Tennessee. It then connected Winchester with Madison County and Huntsville - and still does. Winchester was named in 1809 for its resident James Winchester, a former captain in the Revolutionary Army.

Whitesburg Drive

James White owned iron works and salt factories in East Tennessee. He traded salt for land and thus owned a lot of land on both sides of the Tennessee River. Salt was in demand for a variety of uses, including

preservation of meats, and White eventually established a monopoly for salt - so much so that he became known as "Salt" White. By 1825, the settlement just north of Ditto's Landing had become known as Whitesburg. But the Whitesburg community was burned and destroyed by Union forces during the Civil War and never revived.

Whitesburg Drive, between Huntsville and the Tennessee River, opened in 1834 as a toll road. It operated that way until 1895 when a state commission outlawed the charges.

Taken from Dex's book "Why Is It Named That?" which contains stories behind 250 places in Huntsville and Madison County. Copies are available at Shaver's Books in the Railroad Station Antique Mall.



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Tweetie's Pet Tips

"Hello, this is a bird column, right? Here are some good budgie (parakeet) care tips."

Tweetie

Beginning Training Sessions

To start taming your pet budgie, the first and most important thing is that he/she trusts you. Always move slowly and talk softly when you are around your budgie, even when you are not having a training session. Never do anything to scare or harm your budgie. This includes abrupt movements, (especially over your budgie's head), and banging on the cage. When you start your taming sessions, your budgie will probably not trust you at first, especially if he/she hasn't been handled very much by people. So your first steps are to build a trusting relationship.

Phase 1: Trust Building

Step 1 - You may have noticed that your budgie is afraid of your hands. The first thing you should try is to put your hand near the cage in your budgie's view. Stay relatively still and speak in a gentle soothing voice to your budgie. Let him know that it's okay and he doesn't have to be afraid. You should notice him calming down and becoming more comfortable as time passes and he realizes that your hand will not hurt him. After about 4-7 days of these sessions you should be able to move on to the next step. Be sure that he is now comfortable with your hand near the cage.

Step 2 - Slowly open the cage door and put your hand into the cage. Leave your hand in the cage in a non-threatening position. Your budgie may be wary at first, but should start calming down as time progresses. I recommend doing about 4-7 days of these sessions, until he is com-



fortable when your hand is in the cage.

Step 3 - Now when you put your hand in your budgie's cage, start holding a treat for him. Spray millet is a favorite. Dark leafy greens that are wet are also good to try. It is best to use a treat that your budgie is already familiar with and that you know he likes.

Hold the treat in your hand in a non-threatening manner. Place your hand near a perch or other area where your budgie will have access to the treat in your hand. It may take a while for your budgie to come over to get the treat, so be patient.

At first it may help to hold the treat so that its farthest end reaches far away from your hand. Gradually with each session hold it closer and closer in your hand. It may take 3-5 sessions until he

will eat a treat from your hand, but don't move on to the next phase until you are successful with this step.

Phase 2: Basic Hand Taming

The goal of this session is to get your budgie to get onto your finger.

Now that your budgie trusts your hand, you want to work on getting him to get onto your hand. Hold your hand so that your index finger is like a perch. Gently press against the lower abdomen just above the feet and attempt to get him to step up onto your hand.

Once your budgie gets onto your hand, just hold it still. He will probably jump right off. If so, try again. Each time he gets on your hand, if you are not already holding one, reward him with a small treat. This can be a spray millet berry or a small piece of fruit or veggie.

Once he is getting onto your hand without much of a problem, it's time to move onto the next step.

More on training in future issues! Remember that parakeets require your attention and love and the rewards can be huge. They're quite smart little creatures.

They need attention though so if you are going to be away from your home most of the time try to spend at least 30 minutes a day 2 times a day if possible. They can get lonely too!

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

Hillbilly Heaven

by Tom Carney

It was a fairly small neighborhood, bordered on one side by working class Polish emigrants and outlined by the tall, coal blackened smokestacks that made up the heart of Chicago's industrial might.

The first thing you noticed as you entered the neighborhood was the music. The music seemed to come from everywhere. Every one of the cold water flats lining the streets appeared to have a radio in the window turned to a country music station and the cars clogging the streets seemed to compete with one another in who could play the music the loudest. Adding to the noise were the honky-tonks and bars lining the streets.

Packed in tightly among the bars and dilapidated apartment buildings were small neighborhood restaurants serving such delicacies as grits, crackling bread and black eyed peas. Occasionally, one might see a handwritten notice, stuck haphazardly on a restaurant window: "Going to Huntsville on Friday. Will share gas."

A stranger didn't have to ask where he was. All he had to do was look at the car tags. Hundreds, if not thousands of the tags bore the slogan "Heart of Dixie," telling the world that their owners were from Alabama.

The place was "Hillbilly Heaven," a place of dreams, hopes, and sometimes broken hearts.

The end of World War II saw a very large exodus from the homeland of the Southern working class since the end of the Civil War. Young men, newly discharged from the armed forces and having experienced the thrills and excitement of London, New York and Paris, were no longer content to return home to a life of cotton farming.

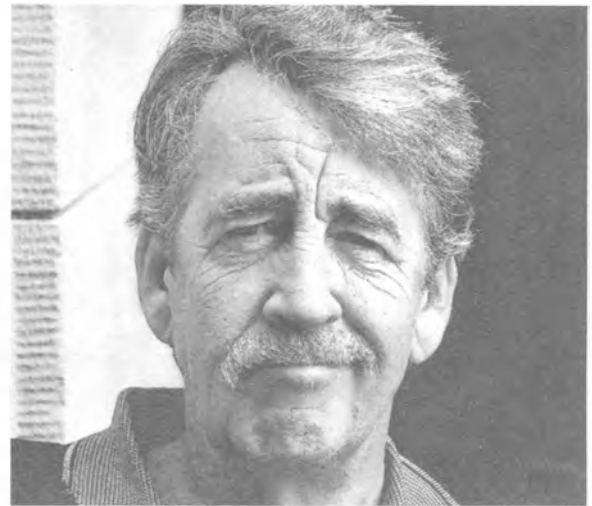
Realizing there were few jobs to be had in North Alabama, many of the men turned their sights northward to Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Detroit.


It was Chicago however that attracted the most people from Madison County. With the end of the war, and the growing, almost unquenchable demand for consumer

goods, Chicago's manufacturing plants were experiencing an unprecedented boom.

As word of the good jobs began filtering into North Alabama, many men decided to make the move. With only a twelve hour drive separating Huntsville and Chicago, the choice between a well paying job and staying in Huntsville doing nothing became easier.


The part of Chicago drawing most of the Southern immigrants would soon become known as Hillbilly Heaven.





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It was a poor, working class neighborhood but the rents were cheap. Most of the brownstone buildings in this area had been built in the last century and were often in bad repair.

For many of the people who had never been out of Alabama, the cultural differences were shocking.

"I remember all the people," recalled Kenneth Gentry. "Everywhere you looked were people and they were always in a hurry. We moved into a three room flat on the sixth floor of an apartment building. One of our neighbors was a family from Hazel Green and on the floor below us were a bunch of men from Decatur. Almost everyone worked at the same place. I remember really missing the trees, though. Chicago just didn't have any."

It was fairly easy for the newcomers to gain employment at one of the nearby plants. The Southerners had already acquired a reputation for being hard workers and were in demand. Most of the time it merely took a word from a cousin or brother-in-law who was already working there.

One of the plants was S.K. Wayne, a company manufacturing automotive tools. By 1950, over half of its work force was made up by people from Alabama, many of whom were related. One company actually had to post a notice on the bulletin board prohibiting more than 5 members of a family from taking off at the same time.

By 1951, the Southern influence had spread throughout the neighborhood. Honky-tonks with such names as the "Alabama Rose" and

"The Decatur Bucket" began replacing the older neighborhood bars. Polish ethnic music was replaced by country ballads and restaurants that had once specialized in Polish and Italian food now began serving Southern cuisine.

Many of the men, unable to regard Chicago as "home," chose to leave their wives and children in Alabama, making the long commute every weekend. Friday afternoons would see an exodus of men from the neighborhood as they piled into cars for the trip home. Often with six or seven men in the cars, sharing the driving and gas expenses, they would drive all night, arriving in Huntsville before daylight, where each one would be dropped off at his home.

Saturday would be a day for catching up and shopping with the families. Without the wages earned in Chicago, many families in Madison County would have been destitute. One survey taken in 1956 declared that 17% of rural families had members working "up north."

Sunday was a day of church, fried chicken and potato salad. Always in the back of their minds, however, was the fact they had to leave for the long trip back to Chicago in a few hours.

Normally about 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening, a car would pull to a stop in front of the houses and blow its horn. It was time to go. With a last kiss for

his wife and a pat on the children's heads, it was time to leave.

The trip back would be made in silence most of the time, with the men lost in thoughts of their families and the problems they were forced to leave behind thinking ahead of the next trip home, next week.

Many of the men who immigrated to Chicago in search of work were young and single and it was these that made Hillbilly Heaven notorious. With more money than they had ever dreamed of before, and nothing but good times to spend it on, the neighborhood took on a raucous, and slightly seedy look at night.

High wages and an abundance of nightspots helped to make it a mecca for country music fans. Top Southern recording artists such as Hank Williams, Patsy Cline and the Delmore brothers all made Hillbilly Heaven part of their tours.

Chicago natives who ventured into the area at night soon discovered that the violent reputation of the "Hillbillies" was not exaggerated. If a "Northerner" made a pass at one of the ladies, or insulted one of the Southerners it was considered a deadly mistake. Sometimes the Southerners

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themselves would become involved in fights with one another.

Lew Daniels was forced to leave Decatur suddenly when he was caught with another man's wife. Traveling to Chicago, the first place he went to was the "Rebel Star," a bar in Hillbilly Heaven notorious for its many fights. Before Daniels even had time to order a beer, he was recognized by the man's brother, who promptly shot him dead.

The constant traveling back and forth between Alabama and Chicago gave birth to many entrepreneurial enterprises. Workers from North Alabama soon discovered that cars rusted out from the salt spread on Chicago's streets, or rust bombs as they were more commonly known, could be purchased cheaply.

Thousands of these cars ended up in North Alabama, where it seemed as if everyone had a brother-in-law, or cousin who was skilled in applying bondo.

There were so many body shops on Sand Mountain that it became known as the "bondo capital" of the world. Many a Huntsville native can still tell stories of having purchased a sharp looking car, only to have part of it fall off when the car hit a rut in the road.

By the mid 1960s Hillbilly Heaven was but a ghost of its former self. Most of the Southerners had returned home where they were now able to find jobs. Other immigrants, this time from eastern Europe, began moving into the neighborhood bringing with them their own cultural identity.

Occasionally, one might still find a dusty Rebel flag hanging behind the bar in an old honky-tonk, or even an Alabama car tag nailed to a wall, but the people who made Hillbilly Heaven the home away from home it was, have been gone for a long time.



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Tips from Liz



From The Kindness Of His Heart

by Melba M. Hunt

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

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

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

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

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

- Emptied fruit, such as oranges or cantaloupes, refilled with vanilla ice cream with raspberries or strawberries make dainty little bowls. Cover with pink whipped cream, garnish with red cherries and serve at your afternoon tea.

- When you rub lotion on your face, be sure and get your neck area too, as it needs moisturizing as much as your face.

- Having trouble sleeping? Often times, just an extra pillow will help.

- Dip asparagus into egg batter, roll in fresh bread crumbs or cracker meal and fry to a golden brown in butter. A very select vegetable with a juicy steak.

- Two cups of flour, two teaspoons of baking powder, a pinch of salt, cold water to make a stiff batter. Drop by teaspoonfuls in meat broth for drop dumplings that never fail.

- Give your colicky infant mild ginger tea. It's wonderful for digestion and gas.

- For fever, eat grapes throughout the day. Also dilute pure grape juice and sip.

- For sinus headaches, sniff a little horseradish juice - the stronger the better. Remember to do it slowly.

- To ease the discomfort of a bad hangover, rub half a lemon under each armpit. This may ease the feeling somewhat.

- For asthma, eat 3-6 apricots a day. They help heal lung/bronchial conditions.

- For regularity, drink the juice of one lemon mixed in one cup of warm water, when you wake up every morning. A bit of honey may be added to sweeten. You'll be amazed at the results.

- A lady who had ringing in her ears tried dropping 2 drops of onion juice into her ears 3 times a week and it stopped, much to her relief.

- Garlic is wonderful for your heart - take 2 capsules a day to protect and strengthen the heart and help thin your blood. Also, use garlic in cooking and raw in salads - the cloves get really mild and sweet when baked or roasted.

- For indigestion, scrub an orange and eat some of the peel 5 minutes after a meal. Also, cayenne pepper sprinkled on food or soup will help with indigestion.

- One quart of celery juice a day is said to provide a noticeable improvement in those suffering from shingles.

City News 1943

- Police Chief Herman Giles recently announced the purchase of two-way radios for the city's police cars. It is expected the radios will help to put a stop to the county's whiskey runners who have been operating with impunity so far. The radios have been tried successfully so far in Birmingham and Mobile. Giles is quoted as saying, "The benefits will justify the cost."

- A piece of history has faded into the background as Confederate Veterans unfurled their flags for the last time. The last official reunion of the comrades in gray was marked by John Steger placing a wreath of flowers at the base of the Confederate statue. A volunteer honor guard was provided by soldiers stationed at the Arsenal. With few people attending, it was unanimously decided to make this the last official reunion.

- Residents of Madison County have set a state record in purchasing war bonds. The \$446,000 raised will be used to purchase a Liberator B-24 bomber that will be named "The Madison County, Alabama."

- In other city news, a new housing project located on Seminole Drive had its grand opening last week. The project is named Binford Court in honor of the late Henry C. Binford. The project is one of the most modern facilities in the state.

- In a joint statement issued by Mayor McAllister and Huntsville Police Chief Herman Giles, assurances were given that adequate measures have been put in place to protect Huntsville's water supply from possible enemy sabotage. Mayor McAllister says at this time there are no plans to erect a fence around the headwaters of the Big Spring.

- Madison County Deputies and Huntsville City Police are jointly patrolling the spring and have issued orders to arrest any strangers loitering without cause.

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My Sentimental Journey

by Evelyn Smith Rochelle

I was born May 25, 1923 at 108 Seventh Avenue West, Decatur, Morgan County, Alabama, the daughter of Kitty Victoria Smith and Thomas Oscar Smith (my mother's maiden name was Smith but she and my father were not related - her Smith lines came out of Carroll County, Georgia.)

I was delivered at home by Dr. W. C. Bailey who continued to be our family doctor until we moved to Jackson County in 1937.

My first memory was of being in Wills Point, Texas on a visit to my mother's aunt, Julia Rousseau Rowden, who had married Will Rowden. Their older children were born in Jackson County before the Rowden's moved to Texas. I remember being given a bath at someone's home and a woman put dusting powder on me. I'm sure we went out on the train but I have no memory of that.

I also remember being at my mother's father's funeral in November, 1925. I was 2 years old. He is buried near Garth in the Jones (Beal) cemetery, close to the old Frank Jones place. I remember thinking that we were just out in a field of hay. I can stand in that cemetery now on the upper side of the road, look down on the fields and remember the feelings I had the day my grandfather was buried.

I have happy childhood memories. When I was about a year old we moved to 118 Eighth Avenue West (only a block away from the house where I was born.) I do not remember the first house, but have a picture of my mother and me on the front porch.

My only brother J. N. and I played and fought like all the other neighborhood kids. There must have been about two or more children in every house on Eighth Avenue. I remember climbing trees (I was a tomboy.) There was a large tree in our front yard that I sat in and read, and I remember

Mama coming out on the front porch and calling me home, not realizing I was in my own yard. In the summertime, the ice wagon would come by every day and we kids would run behind the wagon grabbing for pieces of ice that fell when the iceman chipped off blocks of ice. My mother had a square of cardboard with 25, 50, 75 and 100 on the four corners. She put this on the front porch wall on summer days and the iceman could see how much ice she wanted that day for our wooden icebox.

When J. N. started to school he would sit in Mama's lap at night and get his lessons. I probably learned to read hanging over the back of the chair. I cannot remember when I could not read.

I loved Thelma Barnes who lived next door to us. She must

have been about three years older than I was. Joe Wheeler Elementary school was on 9th Avenue, a couple of blocks away. I visited school with Thelma occasionally. I especially remember being in her third grade class one day when the teacher put a new word on the blackboard. No one in the class knew it, so I held my hand up and told the teacher I knew the word. It was "hundred."

The principal of Joe Wheeler, Mrs. W. J. Coyle, lived about a block away from us. By 1929 when it was time for me to start to school, Mrs. Coyle knew I could read and write, so sometime during the summer she gave me a test and decided to start me in the second grade. My first teacher was Miss Evelyn Lee and she sometimes held me in her lap. I wonder why? I loved her.

The only birthday party I ever had was on my fifth birthday, May 25, 1928. Some of the older girls in the neighborhood helped my

Each day is a gift.



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mother with this party. We had a May pole in the front yard. The birthday cake must have been in the house but in 1928 we couldn't make interior shots with Mama's Kodak box camera. In other years Mama always made strawberry shortcake for my birthday. It was usually the last of the local strawberry season and the only time of the year we had fresh strawberries.

I remember only one other birthday, I must have been 8 to 10 years old. School was out and I evidently slept late. When I got up, I found my dad had left money under my breakfast plate to buy a pair of skates. J. N. was taking me to get the skates, I guess at Sandlin Hardware on Moulton Street. When we were going in that direction we always took a short cut through Malone Park. It had rained the night before and there was water in the park and J. N. carried me through the water on his back. I'm sure I wore those skates out. I skated everywhere I went.

I got married the first time when I was about 10 or 11 years old! I had a newspaper clipping of the wedding but unluckily it is not dated. It was a "Tom Thumb Wedding" on the 4th of July given by Virginia Willis and Annie Miller Gamble on the Willis' lawn. I was the bride and Billy Gene Jolly was the groom. Other neighborhood kids, including J. N. were attendants. Proceeds were donated to missions of the First Baptist Church, Decatur, AL.

Daddy was always a "railroad man." He was working in Sheffield when he and Mama married and J. N. was born there, but they moved to Decatur before I was born. Our family had an unlimited pass on the Southern Railway - anywhere from Memphis to Chattanooga. However Daddy was only allowed two passes per year on a "foreign line."

Every summer, Mama, J. N. and I usually used one pass to visit Mama's sister, Aunt Idella and her husband, Uncle Ray Stanley, in Mississippi. The railroad stations looked like palaces to me

with marble floors and walls and lots of chandeliers. We took one lunch from home to eat on the train (fried chicken) but always ate at a restaurant in Memphis at Union Station. We didn't have a lot of money, so Mama tried to guide us when we got the menus.

The summer I was 10 years old, Daddy took me to Chattanooga on the train to spend a week with his brother and sister-in-law, Uncle Jim and Aunt Nellie Smith. When it was time for me to go home, Uncle Jim and Aunt Nellie put me on the train and I rode from Chattanooga to Decatur alone! We were around the depot in Decatur so much and on the train, too, that we knew the conductors on a first name basis. Now I only remember one named Jerry. I really felt big riding the train alone.

We spent a lot of Sundays in Paint Rock with Uncle Joe and Aunt Bessie, going up in the morning on #35 and coming back to Decatur in the afternoon on #36. Everybody in Paint Rock would be at the train station. There was a fish pond with goldfish in it and Aunt Bessie always gave me a bouquet of flowers to take home.

The summer I was 12, August, 1935, Daddy took us to Washington, D.C. on our first and only sight-seeing vacation. We stayed at the Senate Hotel real close to Union Station. It was close enough that J. N. and I walked over to Union Station by ourselves and went through all the gift shops.

The first day we caught a tour bus (\$9 for the family.) We went to the Smithsonian Institute, the White House, Capitol, heard the Senators in session, saw Wash-

ington Monument, Mt. Vernon, Arlington Cemetery and Robert E. Lee's home.

We did not have time to go to the zoo, so Daddy promised to take us to the Birmingham zoo after we got home - and so he did. We took Clara and Mary Bert Armor with us, catching the fast train out of Decatur around 1:00 a.m. We got into Memphis by breakfast time, spent the day at the zoo and caught the fast train back to Decatur that night. These fast trains were later called the Tennessean but at that time they were called by numbers.

My great grandmother, Nancy Ann Tipton Rousseau (Little Grandma) died April 12, 1931. Mama and J. N. went to her funeral; I did not want to go. I don't know if I didn't want to miss school (I liked school) or just

"I've learned that being kind is more important than being right."

Andy Rooney

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wanted to stay with my Daddy. I stayed across the street with the Willis' from the time school was out until Daddy came home from work.

The day Mama and J. N. came home on the train, Daddy and I walked to the depot to meet them. We ate supper at Louis Argend's cafe (close to the underpass) before the train came in. I don't remember Nancy Ann, but I know my mother loved her grandmother. All her grandchildren called her "Little Grandma" because she was very short. Aunt Bessie told me years later that one of "Little Grandma's" favorite expressions was "Let God's leather take God's weather." I've never heard that before or since.

On March 21, 1932, a deadly tornado came through Paint Rock killing Daddy's brother, Uncle Joe Smith. I think it must have been about 7:00 in the morning. Uncle Joe was night watchman at the hosiery mill and was at work. Pauline was already away from home having just married Wallace Manning. Aunt Bessie, who also worked at the hosiery mill, was home with Vivian, Marie and Laura Nell. Their house was totally destroyed. When the tornado was over they found themselves in the garden. In the twinkling of an eye, Aunt Bessie had lost her husband, home and job but she was a survivor, living until 1989, at 97 years of age.

Daddy spent many days in Paint Rock helping build her a house. Just about the time they moved in the new house, the new Highway 72 went through the middle of it. The state of Alabama moved this house to a lot next door to Archie Millsaps. She soon took the girls and moved to Scottsboro where she worked in underwear and rug mills for years. She grew beautiful flowers and vegetables and kept preschool children in her home until she was about 88. This was before the days of Social Security and I have always admired her courage and fortitude in making a living for herself and the three girls. She and Mama were first cousins and

married brothers, so we've always loved and felt very close to her children.

We enjoyed cousins visiting - Glen and Virginia and Aunt Bessie's kids. Vivian was something else. She was older than Marie, Laura Nell, J.N. and I and "knew" so much more than we did. We would sit on the curb under the street light at night and she would tell us hair-raising ghost stories until we would be too afraid to leave the protection of the street light to go home, although our house was only the second house from the corner.

We only went to Joe Wheeler Elementary School through the fourth grade. We then went to Lafayette Street School (next door to First Baptist Church) in the fifth and sixth grades, then to Central Junior High for seventh through ninth grade.

By the time I was in the ninth grade, Daddy was in the Veterans Hospital in Tuscaloosa with bronchitis and emphysema. He was gassed in France during World War I and tried unsuccessfully for years to prove this disability was service-connected. He drew a small VA pension which we managed to live on for a year or so before his death. Aunt Leora and Uncle Ollie lived a few blocks away on 4th Avenue and rented out a couple of rooms. When they became vacant, Mama, J.N. and I moved in. During the last months before Daddy died, Mama would go to Tuscaloosa on the bus, stay with Daddy a week or so then come back to Decatur for a couple of weeks. During that time, J. N. and I were more or less under Aunt Leora's care and supervision.

We all spent Christmas, 1936 in Tuscaloosa with Daddy. J. N. left the day after Christ-

mas, I believe to spend the rest of school vacation in Trenton with Uncle Virgil, and I stayed with Daddy and Mama. Daddy didn't live long after that, dying January 25, 1937 (Mama's birthday. Aunt Idella had a new baby that day and grandma was in Mississippi with her.) Mama was with Daddy when he died. She rode back to Decatur that night on the bus by herself with a layover in Birmingham. She later told me about an older lady she talked to in the bus station who poured out all her troubles to her. Mama never told her that her husband had just

"To me drink responsibly means 'Don't spill it.'"

Eric Shane, Gurley

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died.

Daddy's funeral was held in our home on 4th Avenue. Jessie Ray, pastor of First Baptist, held the services. We then took him back to Paint Rock for burial, about 45 miles away. "Aunt Hattie" Flanagan invited everyone from Decatur to her home for food after the funeral.

I had never missed a day of school in nearly nine years until Daddy's death. I had just been lucky. J. N. had all the childhood diseases when he was in first grade and brought them home to me, so by the time I started to school I'd already had measles, mumps and chicken pox.

The Willis and Armor houses were just my second homes. At the Willis' there were Virginia, Edward, George (I always had a crush on him but he never knew), Bill (my playmate) and Glen (Snookie) the baby of the family. Mr. Willis was an engineer on the Southern Railway. I'm sure he made more money than the other neighborhood fathers. They had a car and were always doing things. Edward was very high-tempered.

One Saturday afternoon, I was tagging along to the Saturday movie with the Willis boys and J. N. I must have been six and had a dime for my ticket. On the way to town, Edward decided that I should tell the girl at the ticket office that I was only five so I could get in free and he would buy popcorn with my dime. I agreed to do this, but when the girl looked at me and asked me how old I was I said "six" and there went my dime. Edward was furious with me - I think they all were. I was really in the doghouse with the boys - no popcorn.

The Armors who lived next door to the Willis' and directly across the street from us had three daughters: Clara, Mary Bert and Betty Sue. Mr. Armor was a carpenter or cabinet maker and they owned or were buying their house. Most people only rented. This was during the Depression and before the days of FHA loans and small down payments. I remember Mr. Armor coming home to lunch every day during the summer. Mrs.

Armor was a great cook and I must have eaten with them a lot. She always had cornbread muffins made in heavy iron muffin pans. Mr. Armor taught me to butter hot muffins and crumble them up in a glass of sweet milk.

There was a low hedge around the Armor's front yard. Mama said I never walked across the street when going to their house but went in a long run then jumped the hedge. They had a wind-up Victrola. I remember one of the records was "Ramona." We also played Flinch, a card game I loved. Mary Bert and I played paper dolls and made doll houses from wallpaper catalogs for hours on end.

We always went to First Baptist Church. I was enrolled in Sunbeam class at a very early age. Mrs. Cartwright was one of my early Sunday School teachers. Ann Jones Kimbrough was my best Sunday School buddy. Then we ran into each other at Lafayette School and were in the 5th and 6th grades together, also together at Central Jr. High. I was also in the G.A.s and I still have a bible given to me October 12, 1932 by the Men's Bible Class of First Baptist. I do not remember the exact date I was baptized into the Baptist Church, but I think I was 13 years old.

Eighth Avenue was a good place to grow up. All the people were respectable, middle-class, church-going people. The Chief of Police, Mr. Rigsby, and his wife lived directly across the street from us. Over the years some families left and new ones came in. The Willis' moved to Sheffield and the Montgomery's moved into their house. Billie Roberts was up the street; his father was employed by Southern Railway. Maybe he was ticket agent. The

Berryhills and Gaines were neighbors. There were several Berryhill children, among them Jimmy.

I think he and I had a little feud going at one time. I bragged that I could whip him with my little finger. We met, had a little fight and I ended up with a bloody nose - my only fight. I was ragged a lot by my family about Jimmy.

The Gaines had three children: Capitola - my age and a good buddy - Marie and Junior. Then the Honey's moved in with their children, Curtis and Catherine. Catherine came to my 80th birthday party. She was, and is, very active in First Baptist, Huntsville where several of my DAR friends attend church. They did not know Catherine and I were old friends and were amazed to see her at my party.

Life was different after Daddy died. Aunt Leora and her family, especially Sonny, (who was 3 or 4 years old), helped us get through a lot of bad days. One day when I came home from school, Aunt Leora cautioned me to be very kind to Mama, because she had been crying all day and you could

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Bill Clinton, former U.S. president

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tell that by looking at her face. She tried very hard to find a job in Decatur, but it was the Depression in 1937 and there were few jobs for anyone, especially not for a 38 year-old. I thought she was an old woman who had never worked outside her home and had less than a high school education.

When school was out we decided to go to Garth and spend the summer with my grandmother who was living alone at the time. Her other children were very happy for us to be with her. Sonny went with us, we all adored him. After about a month, Uncle Ollie came by from one of his fishing trips and took Sonny back to Decatur. We went swimming in the Blue Hole (Clear Creek) with Margie and Purvel Hodges' children, Mary Evelyn, Betty Jean, Glen Earl and probably other neighborhood kids. Sonny, wearing a brace on one leg due to having polio when he was a year old, could not walk through the fields to the creek, so I carried him on my back.

In 1937, Woodville High School still observed "cotton-picking vacation." School opened in July for six weeks then closed for six weeks during the height of cotton-picking time, probably October. Most of the school children were from farm families and they were needed desperately in the fall to pick cotton on the family farms. We were having thoughts of moving to Garth permanently, so we decided J. N. and I had better start to school in July, so if we did move we would not be behind in school.

I liked Woodville School and evidently J. N. did, too. We rode a school bus from Garth to Paint Rock School where we transferred to a Woodville bus. I liked the smaller school and made a lot of new friends. Mama made the decision to move in with her mother. I can remember being very lonely in Decatur without our Dad and we had found cousins in Paint Rock Valley that we didn't know we had, so there was a certain amount of family and security in our new home. Of course Uncle Virgil, Mama's brother, and Aunt Oma and their children, Virginia

and Glen, were only about 3 to 4 miles away at Trenton and they came down and spent many Sundays with us.

I suppose Mama's sister back in Decatur, Aunt Leora, was missing Mama very much. They had always been very close. Aunt Leora's daughter, Edna Ruth, being with us in Garth, had also started to school in Woodville in July so probably about October 1937 the family moved to Paint Rock to live with Uncle Ollie's father. Also, that fall, Uncle Dave (Grandma's brother) and Aunt Evie Rousseau, who had lived down on the Jacobs' place for years, bought the Jim Toney house in the middle of Garth and moved into it with their children still at home - Glaston, Mildred and Saramae. Mildred and I were both in the tenth grade and we became great friends, a friendship that lasted three wars and to me is still a great relationship. We were inseparable our last three years in high school, both at school and at home.

Uncle Dave farmed Grandma's land. One year he gave the cotton field behind our house to Mildred and Saramae. I lacked seventy-five cents having enough money to buy a pair of shoes I wanted very much, but my mother did not think I needed them. I agreed to help Mil and Sara chop their cotton for the seventy five cents. Money was very scarce but they pooled their resources, paid me, and I ordered the shoes. Then it took the three of us most of three days to work the cotton field. My working for 25 cents a day became a community joke. One fall I picked cotton enough to buy a red cable stitch sleeveless sweater that cost about \$1.00. I just never made a very good field hand.

Life in Garth was simple but

good. There were long, lazy summer days when I sat in the swing on the front porch. One of the highlights of the day was going out to the store about a city block from our house and sitting under the trees and waiting for the mail car. We always subscribed to the Huntsville Times by mail. We did not have home delivery in Paint

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Rock Valley so we always got mail. I was an avid reader. I read anything I could get my hands on and I missed having access to a library.

Margie and Purvel Hodges, a young couple who lived just down the lane by the side of our house with their three small children, Mary Evelyn, Glen and Betty, made all the young people welcome in their home at any time. We spent many nights playing Rook with them. Ray and Ralph (twins) Flanagan were around a lot. We played cards, had marshmallow roasts at Daniel Spring and made candy. In the fall, the boys would climb the huge hickory nut trees and shake the hickory nuts off. We picked them up, cracked and ate them or put them in candy.

We had an orchard below the barn — apple, peach and pear trees, grapevines and one cherry tree — and we had to fight the birds to get enough cherries for a pie. We always had a large garden and Mama and Grandma worked very hard in the summer canning fruits and vegetables and making preserves and jelly. I helped gather the produce and peeled many a peach and pear. It was also my job to gather up the canning jars and wash them. We usually killed a couple of hogs in early winter. I did not like hog-killing time. It was hard work and everything was so greasy. Sometimes we canned sausage; sometimes we put it in small cloth sacks. It was always good. One year we even put it in cornhusks.

I never learned to milk the cow. Mama, J.N. and Grandma all could milk, so I saw no reason why I should learn how, didn't like cows anyway. One of my chores in the summer was to take the cows to the pasture every morning down the lane by the side of the house and across the main road. I was deathly afraid of all cows so that was one task I did not look forward to.

J.N. and I entered Woodville High School July in 1937, riding a school bus for the first time. We loved Woodville, a smaller school than we were accustomed to. Ray and Ralph, (the Flanagan twins),

Mildred Rousseau and Virginia Kirkpatrick were also entering Woodville at the same time, after completing ninth grade at Paint Rock. In addition to them, our classmates were: Bill Jones, C.C. Woodall, Ovid Kennamer, Ted Hodges, Eula Clay Evans, Pluma Skelton, Wilma Lee Phillips, Lavonne Skilton, Leavy Fairbanks and Zora Butler. By our senior year we had been joined by Melvin Ray Phillips, Norma Smith and the Vandiver twins, (James and Jane).

Mr. H. F. Sherrod was Principal at Woodville and our homeroom teacher (and algebra teacher) was Miss Kathryn Miller. Mr. Harold Phillips was Principal during our junior and senior years and Miss Cora Nichols was our homeroom teacher. Milner H. Jones taught biology and physics and his wife Fannie Sue Maples Jones taught Home Economics to girls.

Mildred and I were in both the junior and senior plays, as were J. N., Ray and Ralph. In fact, our classes were so small almost everyone was in the plays. Transportation was quite a problem, so when we had play practice after school or at night, our classmates who were living in Woodville welcomed us into their homes with open arms. I think Mildred and I must have spent at least one night in every home in Woodville.

The spring of our senior year, Mildred and I met some senior boys from DAR School at Grant, probably about 6 to 8 miles from Woodville. I had quite a crush on Granvel Swearingin and Mildred and James Brewer fell head over heels in love with each other. After graduation the boys got summer jobs at Fort Walton Beach Resort

in Florida. In the fall, James Brewer went to Birmingham Business College and Granvel and James Kennamer went to Berea College in Berea, Kentucky.

Granvel and I never saw each other again until he came through Huntsville in 1990, called me, and took me to lunch. When he picked me up, he asked if we (I) had any boy friends to worry about, and I told him we had no one to worry about but his wife. That was a joke, but I really don't think she knew where he was. He and his wife were visiting her sisters in Jackson County and he said they had all

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gone to Boaz shopping. But it was all very innocent. We went to Mr. Steak and spent a couple of hours reminiscing and talking about our families and catching up on the last fifty years.

WWII was bad for relationships. We corresponded briefly during that time, but when the war ended he went to Auburn to get his degree and met his wife there. A few months later I met Rochelle and for the first time, really fell in love!

I loved my clerical job, liked all the people at work - Bill Kirby, Mary Ellen Caulfield, Virginia Hoyle, Iva McCord, Wallace Hancock and Wryness Trice from Paint Rock. I loved Scottsboro. We walked to Mrs. Robertson's boarding house for lunch lots of days. I didn't miss many days going to the Children's Shoppe, a dress shop where I spent most of my salary.

The government took all controls off farming and my job became obsolete, breaking my heart. I went home to Garth, cried for a day or so, and then enrolled in North Alabama Business College in Huntsville, riding to school each day with Edward Kirkpatrick who worked at Redstone Arsenal. Business school was for me. I liked all aspects of it. Loved shorthand, although I never had a job where I needed it.

In the spring of 1944, Ed told me of a vacancy in the office where he worked at Redstone. I applied for the job, took a civil service examination and was given the job, abandoning my business course after about seven months.

I was a clerk-typist in an assembly line office. One of the ladies who worked as a matron on the line, Johnnie Hughes, had a vacancy in her boarding house in Huntsville. My roommate was Lydia McLemore from Rogersville and we worked in the same office. We became great friends and remained so to the day she died in 2004. We had really fun times at Johnnie's boarding house with Lou Page, Fay McLemore, Edith Hightower, Susie Williamson and Dorothy McGehee. This was the height of WWII. We met

paratroopers from Camp Forrest in Tullahoma, TN, went to picnics and rode horses on Monte Sano.

Rochelle came to the boarding house in 1945 to room with a friend of his, Bill Johnson and I fell for him immediately. After nine months of living in the same boarding house, with girls on the first floor, males upstairs, we got married on the ninth of February, 1946. Our first year of married life we rented a basement apartment in the home of Louis Esslinger on Randolph Street, just 3 or 4 blocks from downtown Huntsville where we were both working. Here we met Fred and Pat Wilson, also newly married. Fred was from Belton, Texas and Pat was from the Birmingham area and had a small son by a previous marriage, Waide Self and we become great friends.

After their son Robert was born in Huntsville, probably about 1947/48, Fred and Pat moved back to Birmingham. Then Fred went back into service staying until he retired. They had a daughter, Mary Ann, whom I have never seen.

One of Ann Foster's favorite

family stories is about the night she said her dad proposed to me. At least she told this to everyone who was at my 80th birthday party! I had completely forgotten this. I suppose I told her this when she was a teenager and she must have thought it was quite romantic to remember it all these years.

Rochelle had gone to Oak Ridge to visit his parents. I don't think I knew exactly when he was due back in Huntsville. At any rate I had gone downtown to a movie at the Lyric Theatre with a friend.

While I was very engrossed in the movie, you can imagine how surprised I was to see a message at the bottom of the screen requesting that Evelyn Smith please come to the lobby. You must remember that this was 1946, no cell phones, no beepers. I think this service was usually limited to local doctors who had emergency calls.

Of course when I got to the lobby there was Rochelle! He had probably convinced the manager that he was a doctor!

Ann Foster says he asked me to marry him that night, and he probably did.

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