



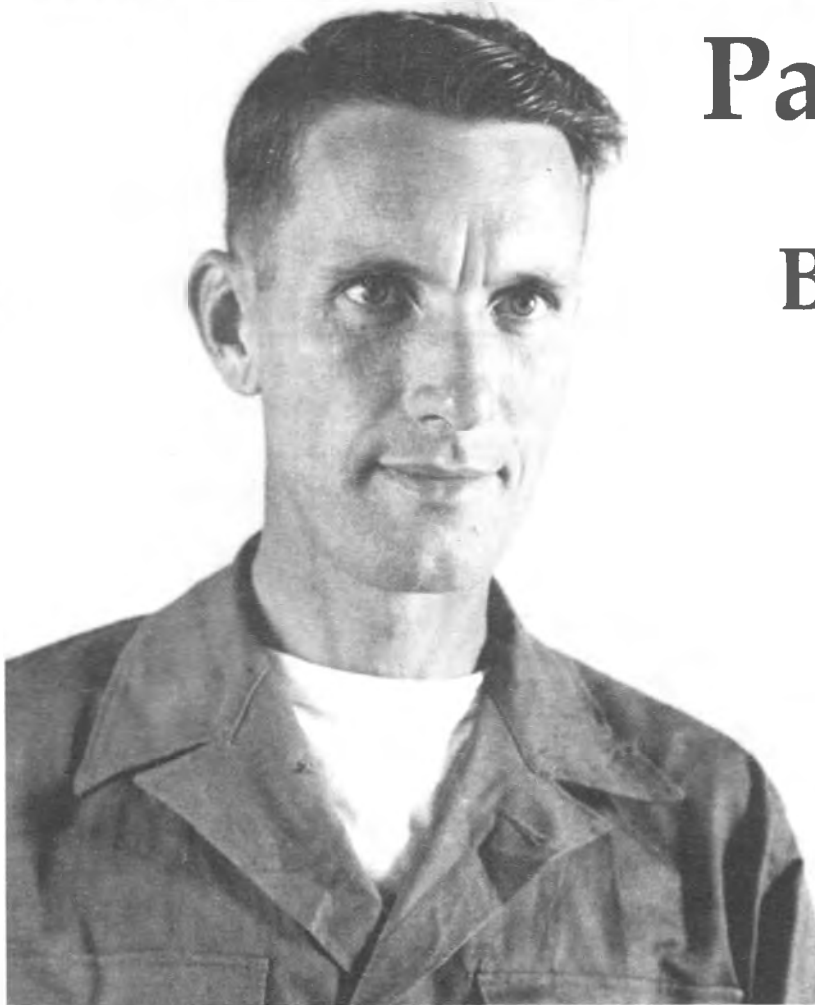
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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



Paul Miller, Beloved Brother and P.O.W.

During World War II, Paul was called for a physical for military service. He was rejected because of asthma and high blood pressure. They also said there was something wrong with his heart.

He came home thinking he was at death's door. This time, however, they called him again and he passed the physical. It was a turning point in his life.

Also in this issue: Local News in 1923

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A Hardware Store....

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Domie Lewter
Mac Lewter

PAUL MILLER

by Malcolm Miller

He was never really what you would call a healthy child when he was growing up. It seems that every germ that was searching for a home landed on him. Born May 23, 1919, the fifth son of Mose and Anna Miller, Paul Beirnes Miller just seemed destined to have it rough all the way. Life was hard for everybody back then but Paul seemed to have more than his share of bad times. Somehow, though, he was always able to bounce back from sickness and adversity. This toughness was no doubt a determining factor in helping him survive the ordeal that he was to endure later in his life.

I know firsthand the subject of this story, because you see, Paul is my brother. I have seen him fight for his breath for hours at a time during an asthma attack, then get up the next day and go to the field and pick

cotton with the best of us. I have seen him lying lifeless in bed surrounded by sacks of hot salt. They were trying to sweat out his pneumonia. That was before the discovery of penicillin and many times pneumonia was fatal. Yet he bounced back from this illness in time to go back to school and help his basketball team at Gurley win the county championship.

During World War II, Paul was called for a physical for military service. He was rejected because of asthma and high blood pressure. They also said there was something wrong with his heart. He came home thinking he was at death's door. This time, however, they called him again and he passed the physical. It was a turning point in his life. He liked the Army and all his health problems disappeared. He begged the Army to send him into combat but they wouldn't because he already had three brothers fighting in Europe. Like all good soldiers he did as he was ordered and became a medic.

In July 1946, when Paul was home on leave, he met and married Miss Lavelle Jacks. In the summer of 1950 on his fourth wedding anniversary, he was assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division

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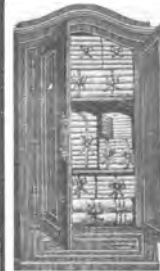
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and shipped out to Korea. During Thanksgiving, when it seemed the North Koreans were whipped and our troops were coming home for Christmas, hordes of Chinese swept down from the North and overran the NATO forces. To allow the majority of the 2nd Infantry Division to escape, Paul's infantry regiment was ordered to stand and hold against overwhelming numbers of Chinese.

Some were able to retreat but most were killed or captured. In an attempt to elude capture from their stranded convoy, Paul and a doctor made a mad dash for freedom. Chinese machine gunfire kicked at their heels. Their breathless run was to no avail. The Chinese were everywhere and they were soon overwhelmed by the enemy.

When death seemed certain, a Marine fighter pilot circling above saw their predicament. The pilot flew low passes over their location

to save their lives. The Chinese knew that if they shot Paul and the doctor, they too would be killed immediately by the plane. Until this day, Paul has only high praise for the Marines. This was the second time they had saved his life. The first time was after the Inchon landings when his unit was being pushed back into the sea. Soon after the Marines arrived, the North Koreans broke ranks and ran.

The date of his capture was December 1, 1950, at a place called Kunuri. This is where, I believe, Paul's rough life on the farm and his grit and determination to survive began to pay off. And survive he did, when so many did not. He was marched across North Korea's frozen terrain for the better part of a month

"It is almost impossible to win at Poker when the other side is playing Chess."

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in subzero weather. The only food was boiled shelled corn. Catching a cold was fatal and the man who as a boy caught every germ didn't have the first sniffle. Finally, he was moved to the Camp 5 prison compound on the Yalu River.

He remained there for the majority of the time with brief stays at two other compounds. Paul's time in captivity was thirty-three months or as he puts it, one thousand and three days. During this time his weight fell to about one hundred and ten pounds. Of those captured from his regiment, only thirty-five out of a total of over a hundred survived. They were constantly harassed, terrorized and beaten by their captors.

Finally on August 30, 1953, Paul, along with the other survivors, were set free after what seemed to be a never ending ordeal. I recall so well the very happy day the plane bringing Paul home landed at the old Huntsville Airport. All of Huntsville and Madison County turned out. The huge crowd included the Mayor and numerous other politicians and dignitaries.

But the thing that remains firmly implanted in my mind about the joyous homecoming was the look on Daddy's face when Paul appeared in the door of the plane. You see he was old and feeble and had said so many times that he didn't believe he would ever live to see his son again. I was holding on to Daddy's arm trying to steady him and when Paul appeared, the look on Daddy's face told a story words could never describe.

He just repeated over and over, "It's him, it's him!" This was the end of an ordeal for Paul and his family. An or-

deal that made Paul appreciate the little things in life that the rest of us take for granted. He paid a terrible price for freedom, his and ours. He had seen war at its worst and everybody thought surely he would get out of the Army. But he was a professional soldier and went on to serve two years at Redstone, four years in France and six years in Texas.

He retired from the Army in 1965 as a master sergeant and returned to Huntsville. He worked for Huntsville Hospital for about twenty years and became Director of Medical Records.

Paul and his wife Lavelle have been married sixty-one years and she lives in their comfortable home in Huntsville. They have six grown children, five of whom also live in Huntsville.

Paul, at 88, is in reasonably good health for his age and resides at the Tut Fann Veterans Home.

Update: Paul Miller passed away on Jan. 28, 2009 in the Tut Fann Veterans Home. He was 89 years of age.



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A lady in Providence relates the following story: Her father once brought home a molasses hogshead to be used as a water tank. On washing day her mother said, "Let's throw the suds in it to soak the molasses from the bottom." The instant she had done so she exclaimed, "Oh no, I've drowned hundreds of our neighbor's bees!" The hogshead was black with bees that were busily appropriating the sweet from what they must have considered an enormous blossom.

The good lady made haste with her skimmer to skim the bees from the top of the water and spread them out on a board in the sunshine, but they seemed drowned and nearly dead, and she was very sorry.

The bees that were around the hogshead had flown away at the dash of the water, but in a few minutes they returned, accompanied by scores of others.

Then began a very curious work. They immediately went to work on the unfortunate drowned bees, turning them over and working on them constantly with their heads, feet and antennae. The result of their busy labor was that one after another gave signs of life; stretching the limbs and wings, crawling about and drying themselves in the sun, then flying away.

The lady said there were many at first, and that there remained only about a dozen helpless cases beyond the humane efforts of their brothers.

From 1898 newspaper

"My grandparents are really funny - when they bend over you can hear gas leaks and they always blame the dog."

Jimmy Stuart, age 8

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Ms. Dorothy (Blair) Sandlin

by Charlie Lyle

The time was around 1945 just as the war was ending. The place was Huntsville Junior High School. Today it would be called Huntsville Middle School (7-8 grades).

Miss Dorothy had just recently graduated from the University of Alabama. She was a very pretty young woman and caught everyone's eye. Her father had the well known Sandlin Hardware Store along with other well known home-owned stores like Hopper Hardware, Hutchins, Yarbrough, Reid, Dilworth, Gueron and definitely Lewter.

At the time Ms. Mitchell was the Principal and she was well known for being of strong discipline and was real handy with a wood paddle.

As life would have it, some male students liked to play tricks on young teachers, who

might be of little experience and maybe an easy target for a prank. Miss Sandlin would be the perfect target. Harry Coons would be the perfect one to do just that. Harry, whom I have written about before, was a clever magician.

It so happened that Harry had props for his magic tricks. He had access to mice, doves, rabbits, etc. He was sort of partial to green snakes. He decided unfortunately to put the snakes in the top drawer of Miss Sandlin's desk. Miss Sandlin opened the top drawer to her desk and much to her surprise, out jumped that long green snake.

Well, of course, as one would guess, she let out a scream. Miss Sandlin looked around the room and said, "Who put that snake in my desk drawer?" At first no one admitted it, until Harry Coons raised his hand. Harry confessed that he was the

culprit that did it and he was very sorry that he did. Miss Sandlin was sort of in shock, because without thinking, she told Harry to take the snake down to the Principal, Ms. Mitchell and explain exactly

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what had happened.

Harry did just that. He took the snake down to Ms. Mitchell's office. When Harry tried to hand it over to her, she let out a scream. Harry told Ms. Mitchell that he was doing just what Miss Sandlin had told him to do. With that, Ms. Mitchell told Harry that he was expelled and to go home.

Of course this put Miss Sandlin into a bad situation until she got with Ms. Mitchell and finally made sense of the situation. Ms. Mitchell and Miss Sandlin put their heads together and figured out what really was going on.

They decided to call Harry's father, Dr. Coons, (dentist) to meet with them at the school the next morning. Of course, this is exactly what happened according to Harry's account, that Dr. Coons, Ms. Mitchell

and Miss Sandlin all were in the principal's office bright and early the next morning.

It was reported that the office was dark, the shades had been drawn and that Dr. Coons emerged an hour or so later, collar unbuttoned and sweating profusely.

The end of this story now, however, is that Miss Sandlin emerged from this situation fully vindicated, but no one really knows what happened to Harry.

“You know you’re getting older when you fall down and wonder what else you can do while you’re down there.”

Fred Jenson, Arab

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MY LITTLE BABY BUZZARD

by *Susie Parton Bryant*

This story comes from my memory of childhood and my child-like understanding of where my baby brother really came from.

Imagine for a moment the physical attributes of the common vulture, or as we know it in the south, the buzzard. The buzzard is a very large carnivore. The buzzards are covered with thick, sleek, long, black feathers. This allows them to float high above the trees where they can scope out the foul, rotting carcasses of some poor helpless soul of an animal. How does this illustration of the common buzzard compare to the soft tenderness of a baby?

The country around New Market, AL was a quiet and simple place to grow up. The grass always seemed greener, the sky bluer, the sun warmer and the birds seemed to sing louder. The bird that sticks out the most in my mind is not that of a song bird, but rather the makings of my baby brother.

One day when I was a little girl, I asked my father, "Where did my baby brother come from?" My father gathered me into his lap and the story began. "I found him at the buzzard tree," he said.

I knew exactly where he was talking about. This tree could be seen in a distant field adjacent to our house. This tree stood out from all the rest. It seemed to be as tall as a skyscraper. It was old and gray, it never had any leaves, even in the spring and summer. The base of the tree was thick and as it got taller it began to become very narrow and it had

only 2 prominent branches that protruded from the very top, they were almost like nubs from where the longer branch had broken off. It had no life at all, except for the family of buzzards that were perched at the top.

As the story continued, the sun began to set on this particular pleasant fall day, my father and mother were taking a walk down the gravel path that went right past the buzzard tree, when my father heard a faint cry. He began to investigate and right there on the ground lay a little baby buzzard. The little buzzard was so tiny and frail. The fall must have been very traumatizing for the little baby. He lay there on the ground gasping for breath and with every little breath he made only a small crying sound.



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My father picked him up and gently wrapped him in his coat. He carried him home and put him in a little box that was lined with soft warm flannel. Then he placed a small lamp above the box for added warmth.

The little baby buzzard was so happy in his new home. He soon began to eat more and began to grow strong. One day as my father was giving the little buzzard a bath he noticed that his skin was very smooth underneath his feathers. My father began to gently pull out the little feathers and discovered that little baby buzzard had soft baby skin. Little baby buzzard would hop everywhere he went, never did he even try to use his wings, so my father clipped off the little wings and little baby arms grew in their place.

My father thought that if he grew arms in the place of wings, then maybe he would grow feet in place of little bird feet and to everyone's surprise he did. The baby buzzard began to look just like a little boy. Well, he still looked kinda funny because my father could not actually clip his head off, but he did trim his tiny beak and little lips grew in their place. My little baby buzzard still looked funny because he still had beady bird eyes. They were as black as coal.

While playing with my little buzzard everyday in the bright sunshine his hair began to change colors, it was now a golden brown. Now it was time to learn to talk. I would talk to my little baby buzzard brother, my father said not to call him a buzzard anymore because it might hurt his feelings, so now

he is my little baby brother. As I talked to him and read him stories he began to learn words and sentences. Before long he started talking as much as me. Now he could go to school. We took him everywhere and nobody ever knew his special story.

My brother and I are now grown and the story from our childhood brings many hours of laughter and joy to our lives. My little baby buzzard, oops, I mean my little baby brother was very happy that our father walked down that path that day. So that's how I got a little baby brother!

We still like to drive by and see where the buzzard tree used to stand. Of course as change goes, it is no longer there but in my mind the huge, gray tree still stands there as tall as a skyscraper. The memories will last forever.

My father was Herman Frank Parton, he was born on April 19, 1940. He lived in the New Market area until 1978 when he moved to Denver, Colorado. He passed away on September 16, 1980.

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William Mitchell, U.S. Veteran

by Joseph Connaughton

It was the year 1943 and World War II. The United States had been at war for over a year against the Axis Powers. The demand for manpower would be extremely great in anticipation of major offenses in 1944 that would include the Invasions of Europe and the Pacific Mariana Islands. That's why William Mitchell of Madison, Alabama got a call to military service from his draft board before he graduated from high school.

Like all responsible teenagers of that day, he had registered for the draft when he turned 18, but he urgently wanted to finish and get his degree. He asked the Madison County Draft Board for a deferral. It was not allowed, but they suggested that he volunteer for the Army Air Corps. The Corps would place him in the inactive reserve until he graduated in

June. Mitchell jumped at the opportunity, because that was his preferred service.

William Mitchell, born and raised in Belle Mina, AL had attended secondary schools there. But, before he would enter high school his father took a job as foreman in Representative Bob Lowe's farm operation in Madison. Mitchell took the move to Madison in stride given that he transferred to Madison High School. After graduation

he was immediately called to active duty in the Army Air Corps at age 19, and sent to Sheppard AFB, TX for his basic military training. There, he was put through the rigorous initial four to six weeks training all soldiers received. It was a "piece of cake" for Mitchell at his 180 pounds weight and 6 feet, 1/2 inches height. After completing basic he was selected for radio operator training.

Mitchell reported to the Army Air Force Eastern Technical Training Center, a major school operating at Truax AAFB, Madison, WI for training radio operators and mechanics. He got his initial radio operation train-

ing there and then advanced to Scott Field, IL (St. Louis) whose primary wartime mission was to train skilled radio operator & maintainers; to produce, as the Radio School's slogan proclaimed, "The best damned radio operators in the world". This

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 Died June 15, 2014

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 wants to thank everyone for
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 messages and concern
 shown to her when her Dad
 passed away. She will be
 forever grateful to you.**



base was the POE (Port of Embarkation) - the last stop for radio operators before assignment into units overseas. After completing the course, Mitchell received the shock of his life. He was denied overseas service because his medical records revealed he had contracted rheumatic fever as a child.

Mitchell could hardly believe that after a jam packed half year (1943) of specialized training for combat, it was all for naught. Being a patriot and a good soldier he looked forward to his next assignment at Eglin AFB. There, he received armaments and mechanics training. He dutifully gave his best effort to that schooling, hoping his contribution would benefit the war effort.

About April he received orders to report to Eglin's 618th AAF Base Unit (Proving Ground Detachment) at Redstone Airfield, Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, AL. Of course he was happy about that because he would be close to home and the support of his family and friends. When he arrived and learned the details of the operation, he was elated.

The airstrip on the Arsenal accommodated both the B-26 and B-25 aircrafts used for proof testing incendiary bombs on a South Bombing Range adjacent to the Arsenal. Also, a simulated village called "Little Tokyo" (now test ranges 1 and 3) had been constructed for drop proofing incendiaries. It contained about 50 wooden shacks and three streets of comparable materials to those in Tokyo, Japan. The planes were used not only to proof drop incen-

diary bombs manufactured at Redstone Arsenal, but also flew to other arsenals and loaded up their incendiaries for drop testing at Redstone. Mitchell felt good about his assignment. He was assigned to the ground crew that did the ground testing, loading of the bombs and maintenance of the aircraft. He also participated in the flights to other arsenals to load bombs and be involved in the proof targeting.


On June 27, 1944 Mitchell took a B-25 plane to Little Rock's Adams Field to pick up and load incendiary bombs trucked in from Pine Bluff arsenal. Before they took off for the Redstone Range, they received an urgent radio message. One of their B-26 bombers loaded with 500 lb. gelled incendiary bombs experienced engine trouble flying at about 4,000 ft.

The pilot, directed by ground control, attempt-

ed to land on the highway (now Highway 72) between Huntsville and Athens. The road was too narrow and he crashed landed the plane at the present location of Memory Gardens. The bombardier had hesitantly dropped one bomb in a clearing to lighten the load and gain altitude. It did no damage but exploded with a huge report. The remaining bombs exploded in the fiery crash killing all aboard.

Mitchell felt badly about the incident, because he

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knew the air crew personally. He also had an aching in the pit of his stomach, because the ground crew had serviced the plane. That was the only accident the Eglin team experienced during the war. It was all over when the A bombs dropped in August of 1945. Notably, though, the recorded history of Redstone Arsenal, included the statement "Among the outstanding achievements of the Huntsville Arsenal Inspection Office during World War II were the testing of bombs used in "...the first all-incendiary raid on Japan [in March 1945]..." Mitchell looked back on his war record at Redstone with pride. Even though it wasn't the combat he anticipated, he felt in the end that his actions also had a direct bearing on the outcome of the war.

Additional Information:
William (Bill) Mitchell
Age: 89 years; Birth Date:

April 29, 1924; Birth Place: Belle Mina, Limestone County, AL; Home: Belle Mina/Madison, AL

Older Brother: James O'Neal Mitchell, Decatur, AL

Nephew: Tom Little, Belle Mina, AL

Mitchell served 2 years 7 months and 10 Days WW II active duty in the Army Air Corps and was discharged in March of 1946.



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THE STORY OF NARSH BENSON

by James Frost

Three of Narsh Benson's brothers fought in WWII. The Greatest War was over. America's soldiers were home and would soon fuel a decade of dramatic economic and cultural growth in the United States. Narsh, barely in his teens while his brothers were away, milked three cows per day on the family farm near Jackson, Tennessee. Like many high schoolers, he joined the Civil Air Patrol. Private pilots volunteered to take the wide-eyed youngsters up and Narsh was quick to get in line. To his dismay during his second flight, when they were at 5,000 feet, the pilot became ill and passed out. This was before the days of easy communication and the small aircraft didn't even have a radio. Young Benson landed the plane at the Jackson airport, without help from anyone.

Narsh was a bright student and left home for college. He studied chemical engineering at the University of Tennessee. Money was tight, so

Narsh would work a term and take classes for a term. It was in chemistry lab that he met a pretty young woman, Katherine Elizabeth Hooper. Strapped for tuition, Narsh didn't have the money to entertain her as he would've preferred, so he joined the National Guard to earn extra cash. He was already in ROTC. It seemed like an easy progression.

Meanwhile, the world was sorting itself out after the war. There were two Koreas, split at the 38th parallel. Kim Il-Sung and the communist north invaded the south, and in June of 1950 the United States was once again at war. Narsh's guard unit was activated. He reported to Nashville and from there to Fort Devens in Massachusetts as a rifleman. When the military learned of Narsh's talent for flying planes, he was transferred to the Air Force.

He polished his flying skills

at Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi. He trained in the T6-D, a propeller driven plane. Eventually in Korea, he flew the RF-80A jet aircraft. The 80 was replaced as a fighter by the Sabre jet. Narsh said he knew he was in trouble when they took away his machine guns and gave him cameras. He flew reconnaissance. He had to balance the demand of his commanding officer that he fly low-

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er and lower for better pictures against staying alive. He flew along the border between Korea and Manchuria, the Yellow River and over strategic harbors. He found targets for the guns of the American battleships cruising below. He spent his scariest moments dodging Mig fighters. The only gun he had was the .45 on his hip.

Again recognized for his skill, Narsh was transferred back to Greenville, MS where he taught pilots from the back seat of the T-33. He had some moments there almost as harrowing as those in Korea. On more than one occasion, his student would forget the landing gear or imagine the runway had suddenly grown 1000 feet longer. He followed that with a stint at Laughlin Air Base in Texas where he trained jet pilots. Some of his students flew the U2. Narsh taught several airman to fly and taught them well.

Remember his dream girl, Katherine Elizabeth Hooper?

“Gone are the days when girls used to cook like their mothers. Now they drink like their fathers.”

Jenn Edwards, age 18

He married her. He now requires the special treatment they give at Tut Fann Veterans Home, but she is a frequent and loving visitor.

The Air Force underwent tremendous change during Mr. Benson’s service. Gone were the gas driven propeller fighters of WWII. Jets ruled the skies over Korea. The information gained during reconnaissance flights by Mr. Benson and others was invaluable in winning the Korean War. Citizens of the United States, the world, and certainly South Korea, owe him a great deal.



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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*

Congratulations to retired **Judge Danny Banks** for being the first correct caller to identify **Bill Kling**, City Councilman, as the youngster in the June issue. Danny was judge for 18 years and now works in mediation & arbitration and loves to travel with his wife Jennifer.

And **Mildred Robinson** found the hidden golf club on page 31 and was the first to call. Mildred worked for the government for many years and is now retired. Congratulations to you Mildred!

There is a very tiny flag hidden in this issue somewhere. If you find a large flag, don't call. It is a tiny tiny flag and I expect NO phone calls. However if you happen to spot it and are the first caller, you win a year's subscription to "Old Huntsville"!

Billy Richardson, 81, was the beloved father of **Rosemary Leatherwood** and passed away on June 15. We send our deepest condolences to **Rosemary** and husband **Bill**; her four sisters **Dorothy Branch**, **Susan Atchley (Bobby)**; **Lynn Green (Jerry)**; and **Angela Simmons (Randy)** as well as 5 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. Also the Ole Dad's family & friends. He was



so loved and will never be forgotten.

Many remember the playground at **East Clinton School** and the thousands of children who enjoyed it over the years. The old equipment was taken down several years ago, but when Providence Classical School moved into the location the city decided to partner with the school and have new equipment installed. The dedication was held recently with **Tommy Battle** and **Joy McKee** of the Green Team with Old Town residents there too and the new playground looks great. A perfect fit for the neighborhood.

Then, at their annual Ice Cream Social held on a hot June afternoon **Mike Self** (board member of Old Town) dedicated the "Little Free Library" box to Providence CS. If you get a chance walk by and see it - on the corner of White & Clinton - the little outdoor library was built to look like a miniature East Clinton school and was constructed

by Mike. There are several of these "Little Free Library" boxes throughout northeast Huntsville and the idea is you get a book out to read, bring it back or just put some of your books in there for others to read. Great idea that's spreading all over Huntsville.

Martha Cockrell wants to wish her Daddy **Fred Kanada Kelly** much love on July 16, the day would have been 100 years old. The family will be celebrating on July 20th at Owens Cross Roads Church of Christ, with Fred's nephew **Harold Kelly** who is a preacher there. Her Daddy never got to have a birthday party. He worked at Huntsville Implement Co. during the day and at night worked on cars and tractors. He passed away in 1978 but the family misses him every day.

We wanted to wish **Mitch Howie**, Attorney on North Side Square, a very happy 60th birthday (in June). His sweet wife **Debra** put together a big party for him with friends and family. Happy Birthday Mitch!

Happy Birthday too in early July to that astute UAH graduate **Butch Adcock!**

The annual **Rock 'N Roll Reunion** was held in late June at

Photo of The Month

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

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Hint: This young man served our country and now he wants to make a difference for children.



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the Elks Club to a large crowd. Some of the bands who were really popular here in the 60s, 70s and 80s hadn't gotten together in years but did for this one night and jammed all evening. Everyone was on their feet dancing to the beat! The featured bands were the **Chasers; the Continentals; the Tiks; Bucky, Byrom and the Couchois Brothers; and the Precious Few. The evening ended with a jam session with Blues man Ivy Joe. Much fun.**

It was good meeting **Ann Caudle** recently in her art studio on North Side Square. She works there with her husband **James Caudle** whom many people know. She had some of her beautiful art displayed.

Alexis Heflin is someone you see nearly every time you go to Star Market in Five Points, the pretty lady with short blonde hair. Did you know she's also an author of a fascinating book? It took her years to write. The name of the book is "Mississippi Whispers" and word is spreading fast about what a good book this is.

Joyce Russell, of New York Life, will be celebrating a July birthday. Happy Birthday to a beautiful lady and a great friend!

Also rocking a birthday is that famous **Ken Owens**, (July 31) who was recently featured on a WHNT special segment informing of cancer treatments for dogs and a special walk to raise money for the cause. Ken was walking with his Shih Tzu "**Angel**" at Jones Park when the Channel 19 rep stopped him and filmed both Ken and Angel. They were natu-

als and the close ups of Angel were so good. Happy Birthday!

Mickey Moore (Huntsville High School class of '59) was a Huntsville native and educated through the Huntsville school system. He earned letters in basketball, football and baseball. **Clem Gryska** was his coach. Mickey's sports career continued at Florence State, U.S. Army and Semi-Pros. After this Mickey and his family stayed in Huntsville, with his hobby of bass fishing keeping him really busy. In 1994 he was inducted into the Huntsville-Madison County Athletic Hall of Fame. A special memorial scholarship has been set up in his name and in May 2014 the award went to **Deonta Moore**. Mickey is dearly missed, as he passed away several years ago, still a young man.

I always like going by BBT Bank on Church Street - the folks who work there make you feel like you're their only customer! **Sean Campos**, a Relationship Banker, will be celebrating a birthday on July 8, and **Margaret Riethmaier**, also a Relationship Banker, recently had a June birthday.

I heard a great tip the other day for you gardeners who love hydrangeas. If you buy one that you want to keep in a pot, make sure there's a good drainage hole in the pot, put it over loose soil and let the roots go thru the hole into the soil. At the end of the year just clip the roots that have grown into the soil and move it where ever you want, do the same next year. This way you can

find the perfect place for it, and it will still bloom each year.

Bill and Rosemary Leatherwood of Ole Dad's want to wish their grandson **Chase Woods** a Happy 14th Birthday on July 10 - lots of surprises coming his way. Congratulations to their grandson **Billy Leatherwood IV** on his baseball team 10U at South Lincoln for their 1st place win. And Happy birthday to **Chris Rousseau, Rosemary's nephew**, who will be 26th on Jul 4.

The local markets such as **Greene Street** on Thursdays are going strong now so come get yourself some organic food!

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“Welcome Back” - Huntsville Hospital Cooks

Italian Cream Cake

- 1/2 c. butter, softened
- 1/2 c. shortening
- 2 c. sugar
- 5 egg yolks
- 2 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 t. baking soda
- 1 c. buttermilk
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1 small can flaked coconut
- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 5 egg whites, stiffly beaten
- Cream Cheese Frosting

Cream butter and shortening in mixer bowl until light and fluffy. Add sugar. Beat until mixture is smooth. Add egg yolks; mix well. Combine flour and baking soda in bowl. Add to creamed mixture alternately with buttermilk, mixing well after each addition.

Add vanilla, coconut and pecans. Fold in stiffly beaten egg whites. Pour into 3 greased and floured 9-inch cake pans. Bake for 25 minutes or until layers test done. Cool on wire racks. Spread Cream Cheese Frosting between layers and on top and side of cake.

Cream Cheese Frosting

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 c. butter, softened
- 1 (1-pound) package confectioners' sugar
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1/2 c. chopped pecans

Beat cream cheese and butter in mixer bowl until smooth. Add confectioners sugar, mix well. Add vanilla. Beat until smooth. Stir in pecans.

Tammy Jackson

Coca-Cola Salad

- 1 (16 oz.) can black cherries
- 1 (20 oz.) can crushed pineapple
- 1 (3 oz.) pkg. strawberry jello
- 1 (3 oz.) pkg. cherry jello
- 24 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 2 (12 oz.) bottles Coke
- 1 c. chopped nuts

Drain juice from cherries and pineapple into saucepan. Bring to boil. Dissolve packages of jello in the juices.

Let stand until cool. Add cream cheese and Coke, mix well. Add cherries, pineapple and nuts.

Pour into serving dish and chill 8 hours before serving.

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Rose's Cheese Soup

- 4 med. potatoes, diced
- 2 T. butter
- 1 c. milk
- 1 (16 oz.) jar Cheez Whiz
- Salt/Pepper to taste
- Chopped onion or garlic
- 1 c. hot water

Place potatoes in water to cover in a soup pot, boil until tender and drain. Combine butter, milk, Cheez Whiz, salt, pepper and onion in soup pot. Add cup hot water and mix well. Add potatoes. Simmer for 10 minutes and cheese melts.

Joanne Caudle

Marinated Roast

- 1 thick chuck roast
- Adolph's Meat Tenderizer
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
- 1 or 2 T. butter
- 1/2 c. strong coffee
- 1/2 c. soy sauce
- 1 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 T. vinegar

Sprinkle roast with meat tenderizer in bowl. Brown onion and sesame seeds in butter in skillet. Add coffee, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce and vinegar; mix well. Pour over roast.

Marinate in refrigerator for 12 to 24 hours. Place roast on gas grill rack. Grill over medium-hot coals for 10 minutes; turn roast. Grill for 5 minutes

longer for rare or 10 minutes longer for well done. May freeze marinade.

Sue Terry

Firecracker Enchilada Casserole

- 2 pounds ground chuck
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 T. chili powder
- 2 to 3 t. cumin
- 1 t. salt
- 1 (15-ounce) can ranch-style beans
- 6 frozen tortillas, thawed, torn
- 8 oz. Cheddar cheese, grated
- 8 oz. Monterey Jack cheese, grated
- 1 (10-oz.) can tomatoes with green chiles
- 1 (14-oz.) can enchilada sauce
- 1 (10-oz.) can cream of mushroom soup

Brown ground chuck with onion in large skillet, stirring frequently; drain. Stir in chili powder, cumin and salt. Cook over low heat for 10 minutes. Spoon into 9x13-inch baking pan. Layer beans, tortillas, Cheddar cheese and Monterey Jack cheese over ground beef. Drain and chop tomatoes, reserving juice. Pour tomato juice over layers. Top with tomatoes. Layer enchilada sauce and soup over tomatoes. Chill, covered, overnight. Bake, uncovered, for 1 hour or until heated through.

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Dennis Ritchey

by Steve Johnson

Around the time our family moved back to Leighton from Florence, there was a house under construction near ours. It had just begun to rise out of the winter red clay mud. A new house was a rarity in Leighton even then. The house was being built by Glover "Fats" Ritchey and his wife Carrine. How Fats ever got that nickname I'll never know. Like almost all good nicknames, it was a huge misnomer. Fats was as skinny as a rail. They had a daughter named Mary Alice, a real beauty, and a son named Dennis. Mary Alice was married and living away; but Dennis still lived at home. He was six or seven years older than my nine years.

Dennis took a shine to me and became in some ways a major influence in my life. In those different times, older guys could still take younger guys under their wings. My brother was a few years older than me and I'm sure felt me to be a bit of a pest. It's not that we weren't close or anything then, just that a few years is a huge difference in childhood. Dennis didn't seem to care and tried his best to be a positive role model. He succeeded in a lot of ways; and this is our story.

Dennis was a budding free spirit; he was always doing something. He was lifting weights in the front yard, mowing the lawn or constantly coming and going. Fats and Carrine doted on Dennis and since Fats worked at the nearby Reynolds Aluminum plant, they were financially able to do a lot for Dennis. He always had a neat car and used to take me for rides with him around Leighton and what not. He washed and worked on his cars constantly and used to beg me to let him teach me the ropes. I was way too smart for that; there were at least three garages around Leighton anyway. Today I pay huge money for oil changes and brake jobs that Dennis wanted to teach me how to do. Kid games were way too important to me then and Dennis was patient enough with me to not get too mad. Or, to ever give up trying.

Dennis played baseball and football for my

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beloved Colbert County Indians. He was pretty fair at both; but to me, he was just plain great. I bet I saw nearly every practice and game that Dennis participated in at school. He was a quarterback on the football team and a shortstop on the baseball team. He wasn't great, but he was pretty good. Dennis was a bit muscle-bound, not real big. But he had the heart of a champion.

He alternated at quarterback with a guy named Brad "Bee" Bradford. Bee's dad was the baseball coach and an assistant football coach. His mother, Connie, was a great teacher at Colbert County and a very nice person. My dad was pals with Coach Howard Bradford and they were our neighbors in Leighton before we moved to Florence. Bee was a great guy and a helluva baseball and basketball player. He was, like Dennis, a pretty fair football player. I liked them both, but they shared the quarterback position. I believe it would be fair to say that one was a six, and the other a half a dozen.

My loyalties by then were solidly with Dennis. One night at a game at Leighton, I learned a very valuable life lesson. The game was not going too well for Leighton. Neither Dennis nor Bee was having a very good game. I went up into the main grandstand at the stadium and started giving Bee "down the road"

after he made a bad play. I was blowing my big mouth with no idea who was sitting in the stands around me. I looked down just as Mrs. Bradford turned around and looked at me with a look of surprise and sadness. I felt less than two feet tall, and skedaddled.

Dennis let me hang out with him all through school. We talked about all kinds of stuff. Dennis was real popular with the girls, too. He always told me my day would come with them and not to rush it. Schooling me on what really mattered in life was his big thing. No politics and religion, just work and fixing things and having fun. He was also interested in music and was a fair guitar player. He was getting ready to graduate high school and our relationship thankfully continued.

Dennis went to work in the construction business after he finished Colbert County. He got into erecting metal buildings and he learned the business pretty good. He traveled about with a company in the Shoals erecting buildings. He was also still playing music, and his girlfriend bought him a beautiful Gibson Les Paul Sunburst. I was about eleven years old at the time.

He called me over to his house to show it off. He had it plugged into an old Magnavox stereo and was tuning it to an album on its turntable. He asked me if I had ever heard of the Allman Brothers and I said I had not. At that innocent time in my life, I was listening to pop stuff like Come Back When You Grow Up Girl, Sherry Baby, Bottle of Wine, Fruit of the Vine. I mean Tommy Roe, The Association, Paul Revere and the Raiders. Mainstream vanilla AM pop music, Muscle Shoals and Memphis R&B. Three minutes and out. Dennis put the

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needle down on the album and started playing along with the Brothers cover of Donovan's "First There Is A Mountain". The Allman Brothers called it "Mountain Jam".

I did not know what hit me. I was all at once scared, excited and just plain knocked out! This stuff may have just as well been coming from outer space. Dennis was grinning at me and playing along with Dickey Betts parts on the intro. The music went on and on, not the three minute stuff I was used to. My music tastes changed on a dime; I still love the Allman brothers to this day. They made it cool to be Southern and Dennis was a good influence in my life as I was coming of age.

Dennis was working hard at learning the metal building trade. He was making good money and always getting neat new cars and motorcycles. All of Dennis's cars and motorcycles had two things in common. That being they were fast and loud. When he got his first big bike, a custom Honda 750, it was louder than a sonic boom.

I would hear Dennis crank it in the evening to go to the Shoals and I could hear him until he got there. Then later as I was in bed, I swear I could hear him crank it in Muscle Shoals. It would start as a faint hum, and get louder and louder as he approached Leighton on Highway 20. It always made me feel good to hear him make it home in one piece.

Around this time, he bought himself a new Maserati, had it for about an hour and wrapped it around a tree. When he was around, he still worked on

them and tried his best to get me involved. We were still good pals, and as I headed into puberty, we had another coming of age event. This one started out rough, but it really cemented our relationship over time.

There were tennis courts behind the gymnasium at Colbert County High. There were also several basketball goals and I fancied myself pretty good at the game. I was pretty good, but also used to being physical with other kids my age and younger. My pals and I were having a pick-up game one

day and Dennis showed up. He was wearing cowboy boots, and to be honest, basketball was not his game. The boots just made it worse.

Dennis was chosen on the other side and he started covering me. He was being a bit physical and I got a little physical back. He made a couple of good plays and really got my dander up. At first he took my pushing and shoving. Then he warned me to stop. I did not. Next thing I knew, he shoved me to the ground hard. I got up jawing and he proceeded to put me right back on my butt. I came at him and he balled up his fist and



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"If God had wanted us to vote, he would have given us candidates."

Jay Leno

said to come on. Thankfully, I did not. I left in a huff and vowed to never speak to Dennis again. He had shown me who was the boss, and at that point in my life, I didn't like it.

When I saw him around, he would just grin and sometimes ball up his fist. This went on a pretty good while. Sometimes he would yell at me from his yard to come over and hang out. I had no intention of doing that. Then one day I heard a loud banging on the door at the house. It was Dennis and he did not look too happy. His latest brand new car was idling like a jet engine in our driveway. He told me to get in to take a test ride with him.

Riding with Dennis was an adventure in itself. He peeled out onto Highway 20 and off we went. I could not hide my delight and Dennis squeezed my arm and we shook hands. He popped in an eight track tape and we were truly rocking and rolling. As far as I was concerned, everything was alright between us again. All was forgotten and the bond between us never wavered again. However, the next time Dennis came to play ball with us, I made sure I was on his team.

Time marched on and Dennis, free from high school and sports, spread his wings and became a full-fledged free spirit. When he was around, he regaled me with stories from his travels. He finally got to see the Allman Brothers and he had grown his hair long. He was canoeing, kayaking, skydiving and scuba diving. I was afraid at that time that Leighton would not be big enough to hold him. Thank goodness he was close to Fats and Carrine and was in Leighton a lot.

He was home for a while in 1973, when I was about sixteen and was pretty excited about a new eight track he had bought. It was the Allman's Brothers and Sisters. Dennis played it for me and I was knocked out. Dicky Betts had cut his hair and grown a mustache, and not quite so coincident-

tally, so had Dennis. He even had a western style shirt like Dicky favored. Dennis had the licks down pretty fair on the tape and told me he was going to teach me to play the guitar. I am ham-handed and tin eared, and just like when my brother tried, it did not work out. Dennis took it all in stride and told me I could work for his band as a roadie if they hit it big. His band, by the way, was pretty darn good.

There is a little area west of Leighton called Spring Valley. All of the guys in his band were from there. Dennis Creasy, a smallish baby faced guy who



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"He's the kind of man a woman would have to marry in order to get rid of."

Mae West

probably still looks twenty to this day, played guitar. Dennis Creasy was an extremely gifted player and could play anything he heard once. He could tune in any key, and figure out any chord. Dennis could finger pick and played the slide very well. He just by God had it, but he did not have a real sense of his gift. If he had Dennis's drive and personality, he could have been a great studio or road picker. If Dennis Ritchey had been blessed with Dennis Creasy's ability, I mean look out world. Instead Dennis Creasy was relegated to mostly playing rhythm for Dennis.

On the bass was Ronnie "Oscar" Creasy. He was Dennis's cousin, and a pretty fair player. Steve Smith played the drums, and he was, like Dennis Creasy, a gifted, natural musician. He was a fine guitarist and the same on the piano. I saw them play a few times and they had a fairly good sound. I did not dare tell Dennis how I thought the band should have been configured. Dennis was an alpha male, it was his band and he set the direction for it.

Around this time, Dennis had started a company erecting metal buildings. He was real serious about his work and real passionate about making it as a musician. His band all worked for his new company, too. They traveled around the South and looked a bit roguish and out of place in some of the places they worked. It did not matter to them; at the end of the day they were just country boys, too. They just did their job and really lived to mostly have fun and play music.

Dennis got a big job in Florence and he offered me a job. He knew I was no ball of fire, but he treated me very good. My first day on the job, however, nearly became my last. Dennis had me on top of the building handling sheet metal. I stepped on a piece lying flat and off I went. I must have slid about twenty-feet and I was scared to death. Out of nowhere, Dennis's cousin Ricky Ritchie roared up to the side of the building on a forklift with a walking platform on the forks. I went onto it just like that and avoided about a fifty foot fall. Everybody on the job laughed like hell except Ricky, who instantly became a long-time friend. He also made Dennis put me on the ground crew. This was fine by me.

Some of the guys resented that Dennis treated me with kid gloves. I also had a history with Oscar Creasy, who played on the ninth grade basketball team at Colbert County with my brother Eddie. I was the manager. The guys on the team tormented me on the bus rides to away games. Oscar was always the ringleader. He came around, and as I never suspected so, he

was a pretty good guy. The other guys were just totally laid back and knew their jobs and did them pretty well.

Like most beginning small businessmen, Dennis had some cash flow issues. I remember a couple of times he would give us our checks and ask us to hold them for a couple of days. We all promised him faithfully that we would. As soon as Dennis was out of sight, we would make a beeline to the bank in Leighton to cash the checks. Fats got Dennis set up with an overdraw by threatening to take his money out of the bank. That was a good shot in the arm for Dennis, and his

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business started to take off.

Around this time, Daddy and I left Leighton and moved to Huntsville. I was working seven days a week, and enjoying being in a relatively large city. I kind of lost touch with Dennis, but I would hear all about his exploits from my cousin Phil, who was working for Dennis. He was doing well and he was living life to the fullest. It seemed that the best was ahead for Dennis, that he was really going to live the American Dream and do it on his own terms.

One day out of the blue, Dennis showed up at our business. He was beaming with pride for me and real impressed when I showed him around. He told me that day that he always knew I would be special. He went on to say that I would succeed in business and life, just to stay after it. Those were words I had rarely, heard in my life. Coming from Dennis, they meant more than I could ever say. He promised that he would start coming by more often. When he left, I was walking on air. He tore out of our parking lot in typical Dennis fashion. It was the last time I would ever see Dennis Ritchey alive.

According to my cousin Phil, Dennis was diving for mussels in the Tennessee River in the Shoals area. He came up too fast, got the bends and never fully recovered. He died at the hospital. I had to work the day of his funeral; this just added to my mind-searing pain. Dennis was gone, taken by something that happened as he lived his life to the fullest.

My Daddy always said that life is for the living. The pain of Dennis Ritchey's death is a footnote in my life now. I believe things happen for a reason, but

"My husband says I never listen to him. At least, that's what I THINK he said."

Farrar Jenkins, Athens

I will never fully understand his death. As I write this, I am just as stunned as I was when I first heard the terrible news. Fats and Carrine were devastated; Fats was never the same.

My own life goes on, and I think of Dennis on a very regular basis. I can still see him and hear his voice as plain as in life.

His words of encouragement and praise help me to this day. I just wish that the most important things he ever told had not been the last.

DENNIS RITCHEY

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- For Rent - Grocery store at 324 Washington Street - lights and telephone \$650 per year. Call John Parks phone 19.

- Notice - A. Elam has moved his leather repair shop to Green Street, opposite the jail.

- Lost - small black milk Jersey cow with left horn broken off, finder please call at Fannings Livery Stable near Big Spring and receive reward.

- Only one defendant faced Mayor Adams this morning in city court. He was a colored drayman and was arraigned for violating the traffic laws by turning his wagon in the middle of the street and endangering pedestrians. He was fined \$5 by the Mayor.

- The Friday Morning Bridge Club will meet Saturday at Mrs. Schuyler Richardson's home at her apartment on Franklin Street at ten thirty o'clock. Note change of day.

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- Attention to our readers: If Mr. Harry Rhett will call at the News office he will be given one ticket to the Lyric Theatre to see "Back Home and Broke" on Friday. We have one waiting for you at the office.

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A Member of the Greatest Generation Remembers

by *Jamie Dodson*

Gabriel Chiri looked at home surrounded by the stacks. The retired teacher loves books and the knowledge that they can impart. We met in the library where he related some of his remarkable life.

In August, 1943, at age 17, Gabriel joined the U.S. Army. Two years into World War II, the struggle was still in the balance and Gabriel wanted to be part of it. "What the Germans were doing to the people of Europe was dreadful. We were the only country on earth that could stop the madness."

Originally, Gabriel tested for a program that offered college courses for service. Making the cut, he started at Michigan State College in September. However, the killing fields of Italy and New Guinea had cut deep into the Army's manpower. "After one quarter, the

program was cancelled. I was transferred to Fort Benning, Georgia to begin infantry training in January, 1944. In March I completed my training and was assigned to the 100th Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina."

Gabriel has fond memories of the small town outside Fort Bragg. "I grew up in Chicago and knew little about the South. But the Fayetteville people were very nice to the soldiers and made us feel welcome."

While at Fort Bragg, Gabriel made a decision that may have saved his life. "I was trained as rifleman but later volunteered to go into the weapons platoon. They had .30 caliber machine guns and 60mm mortars."

"On October 1st the division shipped out of New York bound for Marseilles. We disembarked on October 20th." After a few days we moved north to join

the 7th Army along the Vosges Mountains in southern France."

"We arrived in open trucks. It had started raining on the way up and continued raining until it started snowing a few weeks into November. And it snowed a lot!"

"We had been there a week without seeing a German, then we got hit. The battalion was passing through a small village and I was at the rear of the column hauling the 60 mm mortar base plate. It was slow going."

"As the lead companies started moving through a clearing on the other side of the village, the Germans opened up. They had 20mm anti-aircraft guns zeroed on the area and it was complete carnage. We lost 26 men killed and almost a hundred wounded. The battalion was decimated."

Gabriel paused and looked away for a moment as if lost in the chaos of that far away battlefield. I asked, "What was your reaction when you reached the kill zone?"

"We had trained hard and the Army had really built us up physically for combat. But they never prepared us for the sights, sound and smells or for the sheer terror. If I hadn't been in the weapons platoon and at the end of the column, I would have been killed or wounded like so many others."

"We finally flanked the German position and wiped out the defenders. That was my first taste of combat and it was tragic to lose so many men in such a short time."

"On we trudged though the frozen forest, always sleeping outside and digging a new foxhole every night. We only saw three villages but always slept outside in the snow."

"On January 1st of 1945, our lines were very thin. Patton's Third Army had driven north into the German left flank at the Battle of the Bulge. The Seventh Army had to extend its lines to cover the gap left by the Third. The Germans took advantage and made a night attack through our sector."

"They came at us in waves. I was manning a machine gun and we caught them in enfilade fires. They never made it to our lines. But they came again and again and again about an hour apart and each time we mowed them down. They lay in piles, their wounded moaning and

crying out. Our medics left cover and moved out to treat them. But the Germans fired on our guys who, although wounded, were able to make it back. They were the only casualties."

"In the morning, when I looked at the dead, they were young teenagers, middle aged and old men. Few had complete uniforms. There only a few fighting age men among them. The Germans had run out of

men and material."

"After we had crossed into Germany we fought on and eventually came to the Dachau Concentration Camp. We could smell it miles away as we approached. Yet the local villagers claimed no knowledge. It was disgusting - they must have known."

"We stayed there for almost three weeks. The S.S. Guards had fled and the prisoners had no food or water. Inside the huts the stench was indescribable! About half of the inmates lay dead in their bunks - sometimes three to four to a bed. We had to haul out the dead and clean the place out. It made me so angry that anyone could treat human beings in such a fashion."

After the war, Gabriel was demobilized and finally got to attend college on the GI Bill. He became a teacher specializing in reading. "The single most important thing any parent can do is read to your child. Start early and talk about the books you read. Take outings to the library and develop the love of reading. It will change their lives in so many wonderful ways."

At 88, the love of life and family is strong in Gabriel. He is a remarkable man and proud member of the Greatest Generation. It was a true honor to meet him.



"I find television very educating. Every time somebody in the house turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a good book."

Groucho Marx

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An Interview with Paul Stanger

by Doyle E. Duke

Paul Stanger served twenty years in the U.S. Air Force and spent three tours in Vietnam. He has no combat scars, no Purple Heart, or distinguished service ribbons. He was never shot at. He was no hero — not in the generally accepted sense.

Paul joined the Air Force in 1959 at the age of twenty-two. He'll be seventy-seven in April of this year. Apparently he dedicated much of his life to the Air Force and his chosen career, because he didn't marry until 1993 when he was fifty-six. He and his wife had no children.

When I first saw Paul he was tooling a wheel chair down the corridor of the Tut Fann Veterans Home in Huntsville, Alabama, where he was recovering from a stroke. He was doing it rather well too — with one hand.

He doesn't greet you with a grin, perhaps because one corner of his mouth droops as a result of the stroke. But he looks you in the

When a clock is hungry, it goes back for seconds.

eye and gives you a firm, full handshake.

When we started talking about his military experiences he summed it up in six words, "Air Force, twenty years ... Security Service."

Here, I must admit I was unfamiliar with the Air Force structure and organization and had trouble understanding just what the Security Service did. When I asked, he compared their function to that of the Western Union... sending and receiving classified messages. When I asked if he'd been in Vietnam, he said, "I was in Vietnam three times. ... Started in Turkey, went to Japan, Vietnam, Germany, Greece ... Vietnam again ... back to the States, then back to Vietnam." Thus he summed up a twenty year career.

Greece was his favorite assignment. He told me of finding the roads deserted one morning on his drive to base. There, he found out the Gre-

cian government had collapsed. In Turkey, they were isolated for fifteen months without liberty.

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His most difficult assignment: Vietnam. Why? Extra work -- more messages coming in. What division were you in? 694th Security Service. His most humorist event: the time he slugged a Captain over a girl.

"Did he hit you first?"

"Tried too, but he was in one of these little gate shacks and it cramped him there."

"What did you do; say something to make him angry?"

"Yeah ... told him she gave me more than she gave him."

Paul was honorably discharged from the Air Force in 1979 as an E6, and went to work with Kentron International at Redstone Arsenal. He stayed with Boeing when they won the contract in 1995 and retired shortly afterward.

At that point in our discussion I was wondering what I could write about this guy. I was getting nothing I couldn't find in a tourist agency. Paul Stanger is a very unassuming man who has spent twenty years keeping secrets. At home, I turned to the internet. There, I began to understand more about Paul Stanger.

The U.S. Air Force Security Service was a cryptographic intelligence service created in 1948. During the years it has been re-designated several times. Today it is known as the Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Agency and works with the National Security Agency and other information gathering agencies.

It is composed of the top one-half of 1 percent of the Air Force's enlisted recruits; a secretive and tight-knit branch known as the Cold Warriors. They are tasked with monitoring, collecting and interpreting military voice and electronic signals of countries of interest such as the Soviet Union and their Eastern Bloc countries, Communist Chinese and North Vietnam.

These jobs required top secret code word clearance and members were not even allowed to talk amongst themselves about their jobs unless they were in a secure location. Because of their value as targets, e.g. in Cold War Berlin, the capture of a USAFSS member was worth several thousand dollars, their off-base travel was severely restricted. Many adopted "cover jobs" to more easily conceal their real work. Little wonder then that Paul talked freely about baseball, bowling and poker while saying little about his work.

I've no intention of negating the respect and gratitude owed to the young men and women of our armed forces who not

only have the courage to step forward into the line of fire, but do so day after day. These are our frontline warriors; warriors whose efficiency is oft times measured by the number of lives taken.

Using this criterion, Paul could never be considered a hero. But there are other criteria for heroes. I'm reminded of the old proverb: *For want of a nail the kingdom was lost.* Our young warriors' success depends upon the thousands of men and women behind the lines, perhaps on the other side of the world; men and women who provide training, supplies and transportation, or perform administrative or clerical duties. They never tramped through rice paddies or an agent orange drenched jungle; never carried an M-16, or dodged a bullet. These service members measured their efficiency by a different yard stick; by the number of lives saved, not taken. And I can't help but wonder: how many lives might Paul's messages have saved?

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Jay Leno



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WAFF-TV Over the Years

by John Hampton

There have been relocations of several television stations over the years here in Huntsville. However, there was one situation where a station was forced to relocate after a fire destroyed their studios - WAFF TV 48 had this happen to them in 1982.

Location on the Mountain

The television station that would become WAFF TV moved to Huntsville from Decatur in 1968. The station moved to a facility on Monte Sano Mountain south of Highway 431, where it would stay for many years. The station underwent several call letter changes over the years (among those, WMSL TV and WYUR TV). The station would also alternate between being an ABC and an NBC TV affiliate over those years, as well. In 1978, AFLAC would purchase the station, naming it WAFF (American Family's Finest). In 1981, the station would build a new, stronger tower next to the studio facility.

Fire on the Mountain

March 24, 1982 was a day of disaster for WAFF-TV. There was a fire at the studios on that evening. Low water pressure, coupled with fire hydrants that were not even connected to the water main grid for Huntsville, caused the firefighters fighting the

fire to have problems keeping the fire from spreading, causing the whole studio for the station to disintegrate into a pile of ashes. As a result, the NBC affiliate was off the air in Huntsville, leaving Huntsville without one of the big three networks at a time when there were only three big networks (ABC, NBC, and CBS).

Relocation from Monte Sano

Cable companies were able to restore NBC network programming in days by picking up re-broadcasts from distant regional affiliates. For over-the-air viewers, however, it was over two weeks before programming was restored, once WAFF began to broadcast again, using facilities shared with another television station. A few months later, WAFF TV would permanently locate to a facility on North Memorial Parkway in a building that had been used previously as a jewelry store,

making their decision permanent to relocate away from Monte Sano Mountain. However, their tower, as well as those of all other local stations, remained on the mountain as that is the highest point in the area. During the situation, other local stations showed their support of WAFF TV, even placing advertisements in the local newspapers to show that support (which would be a gesture returned years later when WAAY TV's main tower collapsed during repairs).

WAFF TV's location on Monte Sano Mountain was lost in a fire. However, WAFF TV relocated to a new location, determined to continue its service to the Huntsville area.

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EFFECTIVE TREATMENT FOR VARICOSE VEINS

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

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

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

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

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

Do I have Varicose Veins?

Do I have any of these symptoms?

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Sailing Around the World

by Donna Carter

When Bobby Staton, Jr. moved to Huntsville from Ann Arbor, MI he had no idea that he would one day be on board an aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean. In 1965, at age twelve, he rode his bike to school from his parents' home in the Piedmont subdivision. Carl T. Jones Drive did not yet exist. When he first arrived in Huntsville, Whitesburg Drive was only two lanes, plus a turn lane, and the space now occupied by the Outback Restaurant was a drive-in theater.

At age 17, even before he registered with Selective Service, he enlisted in a Navy Reserve training program to be-

come a dental technician. When the Huntsville airport was actually located on Airport Road, he flew on Southern Airlines for the six-month training period in San Diego, a major step for a new high-school graduate.

"No need to register for Selective Service," they told him. "If they need you, they'll know where to find you."


He eventually went to Charleston, SC and received orders to report to the USS Forrestal, named for a former Secretary of Defense. His ship was home ported in Norfolk, VA, and from there, they sailed to the Mediterranean. When Libya sent Russian MIG fighter jets too close for comfort, aircraft from his carrier shot them down.

Although we don't usually think of U.S. Navy involvement in Vietnam, Bob told about aircraft carriers patrolling the coast. The USN maintained riverboats there as well. He reminded us that Senator McCain

was a Navy pilot who was shot down, quite a famous P.O.W. Navy SEALs were also involved in Vietnam and the Navy Medical Department supported the Marine Corps as well.

Later on, Bob Staton enrolled in a program of health care management at the University of Alabama. He earned a Master's degree at Duke, and then followed a career in Health Care Administration. He was promoted from Ensign to Lt. Junior Grade and eventually to Commander, equal to Lt. Colonel in other services.


During his 3 1/2-year stint in Okinawa, Japan, two of his four children were born. While in Okinawa, he had little need to learn Japanese, because most people spoke very good English. He did learn a few phrases, and a word he heard very often when people met his small daughter. It sounded like "cowah-ee." (It means "cute.") His children went back to the States



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while they were still in car seats.

Staton visited an impressive number of ports, including Tokyo, the Hiroshima Museum, as well as the Philippine Islands and South Korea.

After twenty-five years of active and reserve duty, Bobby retired in the Navy Reserve. His Navy travels have included Barcelona, Majorca, Naples, Istanbul, Athens and Rhodes. In the mid-70's, he was able to tour Bethlehem and Jerusalem, as well as an Israeli kibbutz.

Although he is now at Tut Fann Veteran's Home because of a stroke in 2006, he still does endurance swimming at UAH Fitness Center three days a week, swimming 7,300 yards, the equivalent of 4.14 miles each week.

Bob's children have continued the military tradition, with two sons in the Navy. One son was in Iraq twice as a hospital corpsman, supporting a Marine infantry battalion. He is now a Special Operations Combat Medic and Special Operator with SEAL Team Four. His youngest son, Robert, is enrolled in the Navy Independent Duty Corpsman School. Bob and his oldest daughter, Donna, plan to fly to San Diego for the graduation ceremony next January.



In February of 2014, Bob Staton married off his youngest daughter, Theresa. He was able to leave his wheelchair behind to walk her down the aisle and to dance with her at the wedding reception, a very fitting flourish for his career.



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Tweetie's Pet Tips

Summer Safeguards for your Cat

Provide Access to Water

A cat outdoors can quickly become dehydrated so make sure there is access to fresh, cool water at all times. Place water bowls in shady areas to reduce rapid evaporation and to keep the water temperature more comfortable. Frequently check water level because other outdoor animals may also be using that water source. Wash the bowl daily.

Provide Access to Shade

Don't tether your cat on a deck or other area because she won't be able to move to a shady spot as the sunlight shifts. Your cat needs to be able to reach shady areas. Do not limit a cat's access to driveways or other areas that will quickly become hot. A cat's sensitive paw pads are very vulnerable to being burned when walking across hot pavement.

Prevent Sunburn

Cats are at risk of getting sunburn. The most vulnerable areas are the tips of the ears. If you must allow your cat outdoors during summer, limit the amount of time she spends out there and as mentioned above, be sure she has access to adequate shade.

Don't Leave Your Cat in the Car

In just a few short moments the temperature inside a locked car can skyrocket.

Provide Parasite Prevention

Cats who go outdoors are at risk of flea and tick infestation. Visit your veterinarian for advice on which flea/tick preventive is appropriate for your cat and get her started on it BEFORE letting her outdoors. Feline heartworm is also a risk so talk to your veterinarian about prescription preventive.

Beware of Stinging Insects

Kitty may think it's a game to pounce on a yellow jacket or wasp but it won't have a good outcome. Watch for stinging insects and be aware of nearby nests.

Poison Protection

If you use lawn insecticides, mole poisons, rodent poisons, etc., keep in mind that your cat may come in contact with them. Read labels before purchasing lawn care products to make sure they are safe for cats. Follow instructions



carefully because products will state how long after application it will be safe for pets to come in contact with the lawn again. Keep your lawn treatment signs out for a week or so.

Eliminate Unhealthy Water Sources

When your cat is thirsty, she'll try to drink anything, whether it's safe for her or not, so eliminate any dangerous sources of water. Indoors, this might include a toilet, if you use chemical self-cleaners (or if family members are lax about flushing), so keep the lid down. Outdoors, empty any standing water receptacles that can harbor dangerous bacteria and parasites.

Grooming

With each heat wave, your cat's body is likely to shed mountains of fur. This is prime hairball season, so take care to groom your cat daily. There have been cases where hairballs the size of baseballs were removed from the stomachs of cats, and most of these cases are preventable with regular grooming.

Signs of a major hairball problem and possible impaction are retching, inability to poop, diarrhea, loss of appetite, or a swollen abdomen. See your veterinarian immediately if you suspect your cat is impacted.

Educate Yourself

Take a minute or two now to educate yourself about the symptoms and emergency treatment for hyperthermia. Heatstroke is life-threatening, and knowing proper first aid can save her life.

Heatstroke Symptoms in Cats

- * Rapid Panting
- * Bright Red tongue
- * Red or pale gums
- * Thick, sticky saliva
- * Depression
- * Weakness
- * Dizziness
- * Vomiting - sometimes with blood
- * Diarrhea
- * Shock and/or coma

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

Moonshine & The Law

by Tom Carney

The courtroom was silent as the judge shuffled his papers. Finally, after taking a long look at the man standing in front of him, he asked: "Well, what do you have to say for yourself?"

The defendant, remembering that his lawyer had told him to be honest and tell the truth, replied: "Your Honor, my name is Jim Brasemore and I make moonshine. Matter of fact, I make the best white whiskey in Madison County!"

Jim Brasemore was a moonshiner and he talks freely about it, now that the statute of limitations has run out.

He learned the art of whiskey-making from his father, who had learned it from his father. Young Jim started feeding a firebox when he was only seven or eight years old.

"We had this 'groundhog still' out next to the Flint River," he says.

A groundhog was a still built into the side of a hill or cliff. Such distilleries were hard to detect.

"Every morning Mama would pack us a lunch of biscuits and fatback and we would set out walking. We had to walk about three or four miles to the still, but back then it didn't seem like a long way," he remembers.

The Brasemores had a reputation for making some of the best liquor in the county and of course, that made a lot of people jealous.

"There was this fam-

ily, Ricketts I believe the name was, that used to live close to us. The old man was what you would call shiftless, never did a hard day's work in his life. He used to come around and buy liquor from us and then sell it to the field hands," he recalls.

"Of course before he sold it, he would cut it down 'til it didn't even taste like good whiskey. Everybody knew it was Brasemore whiskey, so they didn't question it too much. When Daddy heard about what Ricketts was doing, he wouldn't sell to him anymore. We had a reputation to maintain, you understand."

Not long after that, the Brasemores got to noticing that someone was stealing from them. Some culprit would sneak into their "holding areas" in the woods, where they stashed their whiskey until it could be picked up by the haulers. Whiskey started dis-



appearing, a couple of gallons at a time.

They put together a plan to catch the thieves.

"One morning just after sunup, Daddy comes and wakes me up. We were ready to put our plan into action. We headed for the stash place and took along this old shotgun, a rabbit-ears Parker. After we got to the stash, we made us a hideout under some brush."

"On up in the morning, here comes old man Ricketts, just lumbering along like some ol' fat hog. We watched and sure enough, he goes straight to the whiskey and helps him-

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self to a couple gallons."

"Ricketts was just about the fattest man I ever knew and when he bent over his 'hind end looked like the broad side of a barn. I reckon it was more than Daddy could resist, 'cause he cut loose with that old Parker and when he got done it looked like termites had gotten hold of the rear end of Ricketts' britches!"

"Fortunately, the gun was loaded with saltpeter and the shot wasn't very dangerous, although Ricketts had to eat his meals standing up for a few weeks."

When the younger Brasemore was born in 1902, homemade whiskey was a respectable and thriving industry in Madison County. Although many people today would frown on the practice, at that time many families depended on it for a living. The alternative was to work in the mills (if they were lucky enough to find one that was hiring) or try to survive as a dirt farmer.

"Daddy got caught the first time in about 1916 or '17. The law was paying informers to tell on people. They put his bail bond at fifty dollars. That was on a Friday, and we didn't have any money, so the next morning Mama gets me to hitch up the mule and we loaded up the wagon with what whiskey we had left. Back then, Saturdays was the big trade day downtown and the streets would be so busy you could hardly walk."

"We tied the wagon in front of the courthouse and just sat there all day, selling whiskey. Everybody knew what Mama was doing, so a lot of people who didn't even drink would stop and buy some. For medicine, they would say."

"On up in the morning a deputy came by and asked her what she thought she was doing.

"I'm gettin' my man out of jail," she replied. Back then no one messed with Mama. "Anything else you want to know?" she asked the deputy.

"No ma'am," the deputy replied sheepishly, "but I reckon I'll take a gallon if you got any left, my croup has been acting up lately."

They got their dad out of jail that day, but he didn't stay free long. When his trial came up, he was sentenced to 12 months on the county farm. "Pickin' peas", he called it.

"I was a pretty good size boy by then and with Daddy in jail it was up to me to run the business," the younger Brasemore recalls. "Before he got caught, Daddy had hid the worm (copper condensation coil) and I got a neighbor to build me a pot. It wasn't but just a couple of weeks 'til I was back in business. When I run off my first batch they said the sheriff thought my father had escaped."

"Nobody makes whiskey that good," the sheriff said, "except for old man Brasemore!"

"I hadn't forgotten about the cur dog that had informed on Daddy, though. Giles was his name. Him and the deputy that arrested Daddy were big drinking buddies. This deputy lived out next to Chase Nursery and every Sunday like clockwork, those two would pitch a big drunk."

"Some of my cousins helped me and we took

this old worn-out still, it only had a ten-gallon pot, and we set it up out back of his house in a brush patch. First thing Sunday morning we loaded it with mash and started cooking. If you have ever been around a still, you know you can't hide the smell. Sure enough, on up in the morning, the deputy gets a strong whiff and decides to investigate.:

"Well, here we are; me and my cousins are hiding in the brush, and the deputy and Giles are stretched out in front of the still sipping free whiskey and acting like they are in hog heaven."

"Next thing you know, there's this big ruckus and when the deputy opened his eyes, there was the sheriff pointing this big pistol at him," he relates.

"You and Giles are under arrest for making whiskey,"

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July 27, 2014 6:30 pm

the sheriff said.

Seems as if someone had sent the sheriff a note.

"Like I said, while Daddy was in jail I was running the business. One of the first things I did, after I got a little ahead, was to buy me a truck. Daddy wouldn't have nothing to do with automobiles, he had worked with a mule all of his life. Well I was bound and determined to impress him, so the day he was to get out I took the truck and loaded it down with as much whiskey as I could put on it. It had not been picked up in a while and we had a sizable load."

"Things didn't work out the way I figured and the truck broke down a couple of miles from the house. I got the mule, hitched it to the truck and began to pull it on home."

"Daddy was sitting on the front porch when I pulled up in front of the house. He took a long look at that truck I had bought and then took an even longer look at his mule that was pulling it. Finally, after spitting out a long stream of tobacco juice, he asked me, 'Well, what else can it do?'"

"He never did like that truck. Every time I got stuck in mud or whatever, he was always there to tell me that with a mule it would not have happened."

Young Jim got married in the fall of 1925 to a city girl who wouldn't have anything to do with making whiskey. One of her uncles got him a job in Merrimac Cotton Mill.

Jim wanted to quit the whiskey business, but working in the mill was not for him. He would come home at night spitting up lint and cotton dust. His wife Laurie, could tell by his look that he wasn't

happy.

"Finally, 'bout a year later I come home from work one day and she's packing our things in boxes. She told me we were moving back to the country."

"Kenneth Abbott and I set up a still down next to Byrd's Spring where there was this hunting club. We ran it most of one year and then we put another one down next to the bridge at Whitesburg."

"That was the biggest one I ever run, a 2,500 gallon groundhog."

"By this time we had two stills running and plenty of whiskey to sell, so we figured we would expand our business. Normally we would sell the whiskey to a tripper or hauler who would distribute it to the bootleggers. We figured that instead of paying the middle man we would

take the money ourselves."

Many people have sought Jim's advice about the whiskey business: "I tell all of them the same thing. Have lots of kin-folks. They are about the only ones you can really trust."

"Anyway, we got Mickey, my second cousin who owned a Ford coupe, to start hauling for us. That went real good. Then George, another cousin, decided to come in the business. He was driving a milk truck and had a regular route at the time. Once a week we



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would load him up with whiskey and he would make home deliveries all over town."

It appeared that the Brasemore crowd was making all the money in the world and that's what caused the trouble.

At that time there was another family in Huntsville that was big in the whiskey business, too. They were connected to a bunch of moonshiners over in Cloud's Cove. Unfortunately they began to get angry when they realized the Brasemore outfit was cutting into their profits.

"The first we knew about it was when they shot Abbott, my partner, at the Whitesburg still. He had been tending it along with some hired hands when someone shot him from behind with a shotgun. It didn't kill him, but he was crippled for the rest of his life."

"Next, they started going after the boys who hauled the whiskey. They shot at them, ran them off the road and they even set Mickey's house on fire."

"The law knew something was going on and they started to really crack down on whiskey making. This hurt us bad, as we couldn't keep a still running more than a month without it getting raided."

"I don't think it bothered that Cloud's Cove bunch, though. There was only one way in there and one way out. If you weren't kin you didn't get in!"

"I was sitting in a shot house in West Huntsville when they shot me. It was Oct. 23, 1934. I had delivered some whiskey and had stopped to watch a dice game. When I walked out they were waiting for me."

"I knew exactly what was fixing to happen when I saw

that car window roll down and I started to reach for my pistol. I never had a chance."

"Claude Murphy had been shooting dice inside and when he heard the gun shots he ran outside. When he saw me laying there, he said, he thought I was dead."

"After I got shot, we pretty well shut the business down. We laid low and just decided to let bygones be bygones."

Three months later, two of the assailants were ambushed near Meridianville and severely wounded.

When questioned about this, Brasemore's only comment was, "I reckon that's what you call bygones."

Things weren't the same after that. There had been too much trouble and the law was

now watching every move the moonshiners made.

"I remember one time when Cousins, a boy we had driving for us, was stopped downtown. He was hauling a load of whiskey and was right in front of the movie theater when the

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law spotted him. Traffic was backed up for a red light and Cousins knew he couldn't get the car away, so he just jumped out and took off running."

"The police jumped out of their cars and started chasing him on foot. Mickey was standing on the sidewalk and when he saw what was going on, he jumped in Cousins' car and when the light changed, took off."

"It didn't take the police long to catch Cousins, but when they got back they discovered the evidence was gone! They roughed him up a bit, but finally had to let him go."

"Was the law honest back then? Let me ask you a question. How many policemen did you know that never took a drink? All of them knew what was going on, but you got to remember — back then, most everyone was kin to one another. We never worried too much about the city or county police unless there was an election coming up, and even then they tried not to bother us too much. They never came right out and asked you for money, but you knew you had to give."

"I remember one election back in the late 30s when the judge was making speeches. He'd be up there talking about getting rid of the bootleggers and I would be outside passing out free drinks to everyone who would vote for him. One time the judge's car broke down up around New Market, so he hitched a ride with us."

"All day long, we drove him around while he was spitting hell and brimstone about whiskey and the whole time he was sipping the white whiskey that we were giving him. When we got back to town that

night, he was so drunk his wife made him sleep on the front porch."

By the time the Second War came around, it had become difficult for an independent whiskey operator to make any money. There were too many "big" family names in the business.

A hardware store owner downtown manufactured various-size stills in the basement. For an extra twenty-five dollars a nearby furniture store would deliver the distillery to its intended site. When sugar became rationed during the war, a downtown grocery wholesale house sold sugar under the counter. Often, when they would receive a large shipment, the wholesaler would sell it off to moonshiners at a private auction to the highest bidder.

One prominent family in Huntsville even financed moonshine operations — at a high interest rate, of course.

Many successful businesses in Huntsville today were founded with the profits of the whiskey business.

"They didn't have sense enough to come in out of the rain back when their granddaddies were making whiskey, now they got fine houses and put on airs like they are blue-bloods or something!"

"Now look at this," he said, pointing to a re-

cent society page from The Huntsville Times. "That girl used to sleep on the back seat of a Ford coupe, sucking a piece of molasses candy while her daddy delivered the whiskey for me."



"Mississippi Whispers"

A Huntsville woman has written a book in the hopes it will help lead to closure in her husband's disappearance.

"It's a true investigation story on my two sons' father," Alexis Heflin says.

Heflin is talking about her recently published book, "Mississippi Whispers".

In 1968 Heflin and her husband Buddy were in different parts of the country. "I had been in Chicago for about a year, and he had been in Jackson, Mississippi and within a year he came up missing."

"They found the car, with bullet holes in the car, but they never found his body."

Heflin never got answers. That is, until a phone call years later. "One of his friends has come forward with information."

That information started the investigation up again. In the meantime, Heflin decided to do some work of her own.

She's been employed at Star Market in Huntsville for years. All the while though, she's been putting her story onto paper.

She hopes it will reach a larger audience, and perhaps reach someone who knows what happened that day more than 40 years ago. "I'm hoping this will put a closure to the case for me and my two sons," Heflin says.

Heflin's book is on sale and can be found at major book stores.

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A Journey Back to the Fifties

by Tom Baker



The other day I stopped in front of what once was Bill's Drive-In off Meridian Street.

For a brief moment, the fence which now surrounds it was gone. The various pieces of machinery and equipment which occupied the once parking spaces with it's call-in speakers were also gone. Instead, the space was filled with 1950s autos & carhops busy bringing orders to carloads of teens. I could almost taste the hamburgers & fries Bill was a master at making.

I watched as various slick cars would make the circle around in front of Bill's, showing off their fine set of wheels to their parked audience.

I saw myself in my new '58 Chevy Impala in this parade also, with the car radio blasting a Buddy Holly song. It seemed at the time - a time of innocent youth, a thing to do, to show off in front of the girls with hopes of maybe impressing one, two, or more with your mode of transportation. However this did not impress the carhops coming out the front door who had to wait for a break in the line. But such was the foolishness of youth during the 50s. For awhile I was 18 again & the world was a beautiful place.

Suddenly the loud blare of a train brought me back to reality, the fence was back and Bill's Drive-In was once again only a landmark in Huntsville, where

those in their golden years could come and remember how it once was.

Leaving Bill's I drove down Meridian Street toward downtown. As I drove along I recalled the line of car dealerships which once occupied this strip along Meridian Street. During the 50s Meridian Street was the main drag into downtown from the North. Crossing the RR tracks, I looked for the site of Pop's Place which was located right next to the tracks. Pop's was a very small hamburger and hot-dog place. When I say small, it was big time small, only 8 or 10 people at a time could fit into the place. When a train would pass, which they often did, the small building would shake. Pop made the best hamburger & hot-dog in town. Hamburgers were 15 cents, hot-dogs 10 cents, a coke 5 cents. After some turns and stops, I pulled in and parked, got out and walked over to the former site. From a distance it was a patch of tall weeds and grass.

I hoped to find some remnant of Pop's Place, but doubt was creeping in. But, to my surprise as I came closer, I saw the concrete floor was still there and intact. Making my way through the weeds I stood on the slab of Pop's Place and the aroma of those burgers filled the spring air. As at Bill's, I was back in the 50s again in front of Pop's old site where the old section of Meridian Street ends.

In the 50s it ran straight across the tracks and continued on the other side of Pratt Avenue. Across

these tracks on the left as you crossed was the elegant Bon Aire Restaurant, where finer dining couldn't be had. Next to it was the Bon Aire Motel.

Back in the car I decided to head for West Huntsville to see how another haunt of mine had fared over the years. Pulling into the parking area of the once Try-Me Drive-In, the building was still standing, its windows arrayed with merchandise of a current business. The site also brought back fond memories of my youth.

On my way back home I began all of a sudden to feel young and vibrant again. But, as someone once wrote, "You can't go home again." But, I think we can if we let our imaginations & memories take us there.

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Bill Stout, U.S. Navy

by Barbara Benjamin

When I hear the word, "Veteran," many faces come to mind. Having been raised as an Army brat, the reference to our nation's military, both active and retired, touches my heart on many levels. I recently had the pleasure of adding a new face to my visual collage; William "Bill" Stout. Bill is a fairly new resident of Tut Fann Veterans Home and undoubtedly a favorite among the staff and fellow residents.

Mr. Stout put on a U.S. Naval uniform in 1950, at the age of 21 and didn't return to civilian attire until 1960. His indoctrination into the service began with boot camp at Keelung Formosa, in San Diego, California. It was here that he attended Supply School for three months before being sent to his first duty station in Lualualei, Hawaii.

Located in the mountains, about ten miles out from Pearl Harbor, Lualualei housed the Naval Ammunition Depot. For two years, Bill's assignment was to make certain the ammunition was successfully routed from

the Depot to the ships at Pearl Harbor.

Upon completion of this tour, Bill was assigned to the USS El Dorado AGC11, which was an Amphibious Force Flag Ship for the Seventh Fleet. For those of you not familiar with that term; this refers to a ship carrying an Admiral aboard, along with his Marine contingent. Over the course of eight years. Bill served with numerous Admirals. The one he remembers the most, however, was Admiral Pride, who just happened to be featured on the cover of Time Magazine in the February 7, 1955 issue.

While at sea, Bill's post during combat was at the telephone, relaying directions from fire control to the gunners operating 50 caliber machine guns. Although the ship was attacked several times by the North Koreans, no major damage was sustained and luckily no casualties. When not at his combat station, Bill was responsible for the on-site store. It was here that ship parts, as well as personal items, were kept and distributed.

Throughout his tour, sailing up and down the South China Sea, Bill had opportunities to enjoy a variety of locations while on liberty. His favorite port was Repulse Bay, on the opposite side of Hong Kong Island. If you've ever seen the movie, "Love is a Many-Splendored Thing", his ship can be seen in the

background of the Bay.

Although Bill did not make the Navy a career, as he originally thought he would, he served long enough to collect memories that couldn't be duplicated anywhere else. While serving aboard ship, he once convinced a gunner to allow him to take a turn shooting at the practice target. His experience was short-lived, however, as he nearly shot the plane down, instead!

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breakfast. Almost sounds like a Southern delicacy, don't you think? But perhaps the most profound memory Bill recalls is that of burying fellow sailors at sea; a moving, surreal moment in time, which cannot be adequately described with words.

As Bill and I talked, it became evident that a spirit of gratefulness has accompanied him on his many travels. He always found it amazing, that at the height of the Great Depression, two loving people adopted him in infancy, from a Mississippi Baptist Orphanage. He never took love for granted. For 48 years he was married to his first love, Camille, and is currently married to his second love, Elizabeth...who just happens to be 20 years his junior!

Despite physical limitations due to spinal stenosis, Bill is quite content with his living accommodations at Tut Fann Veterans Home. Elizabeth comes often to visit. They can frequently be seen together on Sundays at Whitesburg Baptist Church, followed by lunch at Top of the River Restaurant in Guntersville.

William Stout: Born 27 November 1929 and still going strong. I wish you continued good health and happiness. Bill. Thank you for your service.

Post Script:

In good conscience, I can't end my article without mention of two other Veterans, who are very dear to my heart: my dad and my husband.

My father, Robert J. Proudfoot, made the Army his career for 32 years. He served in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Throughout his many assignments, both stateside and abroad, two of them were right here at Redstone Arsenal. One of those times he served as Project Manager for both the Shillelagh and Lance Missile Systems. As a Major General, he commanded White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, before retiring in 1975. My mother, Lois, and the rest of my family miss him very much, as he passed away in 1987 from ALS.

My husband, John Benjamin, served a short stint in the Navy from 1956-1958. At that time, he served aboard the first guided missile cruiser, the USS Boston CAG1. His job involved the

evacuation of Americans from the Port of Said, during the Suez Canal Crisis. Eight years later, he enlisted into the Army and made it his home for 21 1/2 years. His association with the Ordnance Command, as well as the Recruiting Command, gave him a diverse selection of assignments over the years. He served four of those, right here at Redstone Arsenal.

When asked where his favorite duty station was, "Hands down, Ft. Richardson, Alaska!"

Written with Respect and Admiration by Barbara P. Benjamin



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Days of War

by Dottie Cutts

There was only one time in my life that I wished I had been a man!

That was on Sunday, December 7, 1941. The Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, and almost all the men I knew had soon afterwards enlisted. The only avenue left for the women was to man the home front.

We went to work in the defense plants to back up our men and keep the supplies rolling. My first job was with SKF ball bearings. Then I transferred to the Budd Company where I advanced up to welding supervisor on the cargo plane. But this was not the Army! A bill had been introduced to Congress in May of '41 to establish a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, but it failed to receive serious consideration until after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Finally, on May 15, 1942 President Franklin Roosevelt signed the bill into law,

and set a recruitment goal of 25,000 for the first year. That goal was reached by November and I was one of the early lucky ones. Fort Des Moines, Iowa, was the first training facility. It was an abandoned cavalry post from WWI. Our holding area was one of the huge stables. Rows and rows of double bunk beds.

I still don't know how we knew which bed was ours. Maybe we didn't - a bed was a bed. We were told to bring no extra clothes, as we would be issued uniforms. However, a real problem

arose. The corps grew faster than they could make the uniforms. Our first issue was a man's HEAVY all-wool khaki overcoat. Now I'm 5' and it just did not fit. The sleeves had to be rolled up so I could find my hands. The bottom was almost level with the



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ground and acted as a snow plow and pushed the snow up my legs. Iowa can be very cold in the winter!

After a few days we were separated into companies and graduated to the barracks. Still rows of beds, but single this time. Community showers, which were very hard for most women to get used to. Still no uniforms. Finally our first issue came and we received complete sets of underwear (all khaki), not in my favorite color.

One of our first classes was on saluting. After the lesson we were told to go out and salute the first officer we came to. I still had my famous overcoat on and a wool knit cap with a visor. I smartly saluted my officer, hit the visor of the cap, knocked it off into the snow and promptly tried to retrieve it. That left the officer returning the salute to my derriere. We both had to giggle a little.

Gradually our uniforms arrived piece by piece. A khaki shirt and necktie, then our dress overcoat and hat. The shoes were heavy brown leather oxfords and it took many blisters before they were broken in. The skirts were the last of the dress uniform to arrive. They really were nice uniforms when they all were together. We had received striped seersucker dresses for every day.

My first Christmas away from home was spent as a KP volunteer, because I knew it would keep me busy and keep my mind occupied. We used the same metal tray that the men used and were served in the same haphazard way. It all ended up in the same place anyway. A special duty that morning was to separate the coffee grounds and egg shells from the grease barrel. Grease was a valuable recyclable. We did a lot of it then. Fortunately, it was cold and the grease had solidified, so it wasn't too hard. In the afternoon I called home and mother and I both had three minutes of serious crying.

After basic training we were divided into different schools. Our job was to replace the men in the mundane duties (that they loathed) and send them off to war. Some of us went to cooking school,

filing, clerks, R.O. workers, telephone operators, etc. I was sent to Administration School in a hotel in Des Moines. There were four of us in a small room; one sink, no bathroom. It was down the hall. At graduation, since the O.C.S. was not ready for the next class, they asked me if I would like to join a Medical Corps that was leaving that night.

We traveled by train (darkened) at night and arrived the next day at Ft. Oglethorpe,



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Georgia. There I was assigned to the clinic where we took blood from the men and the women. My medical skills were limited; but with the help of an orange, a syringe and needle, and water I soon learned to give a shot with the best of them. We especially looked forward to giving the male recruits their welcome shots. One of us would be on one side with the tetanus shot and the other with the typhoid shot. The tetanus really stung and we had many a man drop to the floor with the needle still in his arm. The typhoid didn't hurt at first, but by night you were in a lot of pain.

Ft. Oglethorpe was also one of the early WAAC Centers, and we had our own ward at the hospital. I was transferred there and had the opportunity to work with a wonderful doctor and nurse.

On July 3, 1943 the WAC became law. No longer an Auxiliary Corps, but a part of the Army with the same

benefits and privileges as the men. At this time we were given a choice of becoming part of the Army or going home.

In the meantime the Public Health Service had started a Cadet Nurse Corps, with a plan to provide the Army with more Registered Nurses. With the encouragement of both the doctor and nurse, I resigned the WAAC and entered the first open Cadet Nurse Corps at Episcopal Hospital.

Before I graduated the war was over, but while I was at the University of Pittsburgh, during the Korean War, I received greetings from Uncle Sam and my dream of being an Army Nurse was finally realized. My tours of duty were Walter Reed Hospital, in Washington, D.C. and Tripler Hospital in Honolulu. After over 50 years I look back on my WAAC days as very important in the shaping of my future life. I'm proud to have served.

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News Briefs in Huntsville - 1899

Lost his Right Leg near Dallas Mills

Charles Hawk, (a young painter of Huntsville, about 24 years old), while attempting to jump on a running freight train that was passing Dallas Mills Sunday afternoon, missed his footing and fell with his right leg under the wheels. It was so badly crushed that it had to be amputated three inches above the knee. The operation was performed by Drs. W. C. Wheeler and Felix Baldrige and the patient today is doing as well as can be expected.

Accident on Clinton Street

On Thursday last, Mr. John Hertzler was riding in a buggy on Clinton Street in this city. His horse took fright near the Baptist Church, ran away and ran the buggy against a tree on the opposite side of the street, throwing Mr. Hertzler out and breaking loose. The horse ran off. Mr. H. was knocked insensible, was taken into Mr. Thos. Jamar's house, remained there for two days and so far recovered as to be taken home. Mr. Hertzler is a good citizen and we rejoice to learn that he is recovering, without permanent injury.

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A son of Lira Elliot, of Lincoln Village, aged ten years, was ill for a year and although having a ravenous appetite, grew emaciated. His physician gave him some medicine that

"Arbitrator" - A cook who leaves Arby's to work for McDonalds.

produced nausea and the boy began choking. Then in his mouth appeared a snake which required all the doctor's force to draw from the boy's throat. It was striped and eighteen inches in length. The lad recovered and is better.

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The Trip

by Judy C. Smith

My childhood friend since grade school, Anna Gene Clift Chesnut, has put up with me for 61 years. She flew me to Jacksonville, FL where we would travel to Gainesville, Orlando and Micanopy, FL. I saw an orthopedic surgeon to discuss my knee problem since I'm using a cane and have on a knee brace. So I need a little assistance getting on and off the plane which Anna had arranged in Huntsville, AL; Atlanta, GA; and Jacksonville, FL.

Would you believe that they lost me in Atlanta causing me to miss my flight to Jacksonville, FL? Well they did. Anna was at the airport along with Dr. Jen Chesnut – but where was Judy – lost in Atlanta!

Upon being rushed in a wheel chair, after I told the Delta representative that I only had 20 minutes, then 15 minutes, then 10 minutes to make the connection. Finally I realized that there was no way I was going to get to another concourse and make the flight. Another rep was summoned to push me in the wheel chair at neck braking

speed, hollering "wheel chair coming through on right please step aside."

Delta was going to hold the plane since I had been left for over 20 minutes asking 3 employees for assistance to no avail. Upon arriving at the gate I was told that the plane was cleared for take-off and there was no way they were going to let me on that plane. Crocodile tears began falling and I knew Dr. Jen would be flying out to Baltimore before I would be in Jacksonville, FL. However, there was a flight in 30 minutes that was booked full. God bless the gentleman that gave up his seat for me.

After arriving in Jacksonville, Anna stopped at a thrift store and bought me a nearly

new set of crutches for \$2.00. (The best \$2.00 ever spent).

In Jacksonville, FL we stayed at a friend's house while they were visiting Spain for 2 months.

One late afternoon while upstairs, I heard Anna calling me. She wanted to know why I had left a rope in the upstairs hall. All I could say was "Anna, it is a SNAKE! You sit in the chair at the top of the stairs and make sure that it doesn't get in my room!"

"Where exactly are you going?" Anna asks me.

"I'm going to finish rolling up my hair and putting on my jewelry in case we have to evacuate," I told her. Anna had on her bathing suit, so I covered her up in a bright pink towel while I went for help. I screamed at Anna to give me the car keys.

(Ad from 2002 Old Huntsville)

(Ad from 1992 Old Huntsville)

"No, I've called Lee the chauffeur and he will be here in 45 minutes," she tells me.

I ran down the stairs with one crutch heading for the nearest house that was in sight. Anna later said that I ran almost a mile on one leg and one crutch. Amazing what one can do when the adrenalin kicks in. I finally made it to the first house screaming HELP! HELP! HELP! This nice lady and her husband who has a shotgun and another couple with hamburger tongs rode me back to the house which was on 2400 acres. I grab a hoe and all 5 of us race upstairs where Anna is still in the chair wrapped in her pink towel hollering "Judy where in the hell have you been". "I've come with help." Anna says the snake is now in the linen closet and has been sticking his head out under the door every two or three seconds.

The younger man with the tongs opens the door and looks at the cold air return and just shakes his head saying that he hopes the snake doesn't end up on the air conditioner vent by morning. I suggest that he move the boxes to his left and lo and behold there is Mr. Snake. He scoops up the snake with the tongs then wraps him around his arm. I'm the first one down the stairs with the other 5 not far behind.

We have to go through the dining room to get to the patio when Mr. Snake decides to untangle himself from the tongs and be free. You can only imagine how frightened I was to see the snake slithering across the beautiful Oriental rug straight for me. I moved with one crutch faster than the other 5. Finally he was caught and released in the back yard to come visit us at a later date. We had our picture made in the dining room. Don't leave your doors open if you don't want snakes to come in.

Within minutes Lee arrived and we told him what had happened and he said, "Mr. J.D. said last week that he thought there was a snake in the library." Well I guess he is not there anymore. We moved him outside.

Anna had our business cards printed that say "Anna and Eve (alias Judy) PSW- Professional Snake Watchers LLC, Inc. Anna watches and Judy goes for help."

Now just call one of us if you have an unwanted house guest by the name of Mr. Snake. We are on call 24



How I got on the plane with 12 (I named them Chicklets) fertile chicken eggs - you will never guess. You will just have to wait until next month to find out. See you in the paper. Don't you just love MD saying "I DO"? Never a dull moment for 55 years. Happy 53rd anniversary - boy do I have a surprise for you. And he says, "I can't wait."

(Editors note: M.D. Smith IV and his wife Judy just recently celebrated their 53rd anniversary)

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Wilson Matthews

by Nolan Myrick

There were two cotton gins when I was living at Maysville. One was in Ryland and one was in Maysville. In the fall of the year, there was a lot going on around the gin. Cotton wagons, with farmer names painted on the sides, were everywhere. There was a lot of cotton ginned. By November, the electric wires by the road were covered with lint and alongside the road were small pieces of cotton that had fallen off the wagons. It was an exciting time of the year for me.

At the gin in Maysville, I met a man who became a friend of mine for all my life, Wilson Matthews. His nickname was "Pistol". Everyone had a nickname it seemed. My nickname was "Crazy" and a lot of people still call me that

today.

I bought a farm up in Hurricane Creek in Berry Hollow back of Earl Blackburn's farm. I had 78 acres and a lot of trees on it. When the cotton was all ginned and Wilson had time, he helped me cut firewood to sell.

I had a Homelite saw and Wilson taught me how to use it. He was calm and had a lot of patience with me. I was always in a hurry. I guess he helped me cut wood off and on for 15 years. We cleared the whole farm with a chainsaw. His wife, Phoebe and a lot of other people helped me. Even now I can still sharpen a chainsaw with just a round file. Wilson taught me.

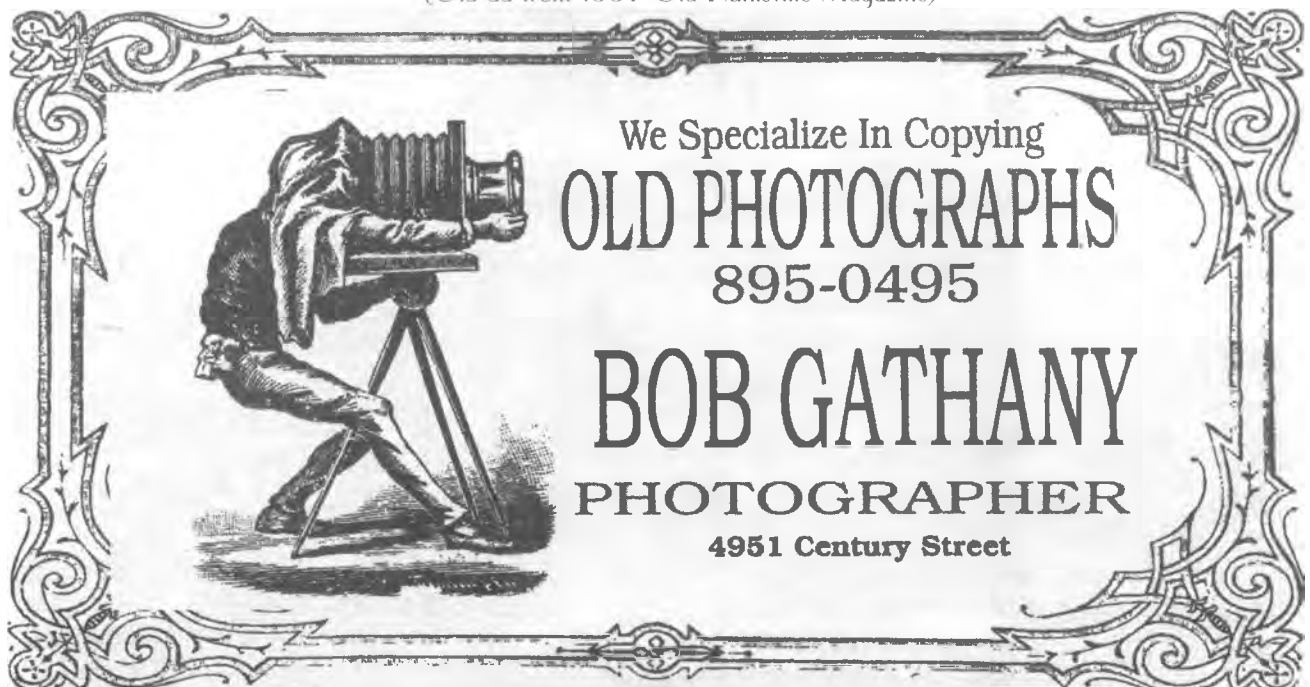
Later on he began to help me in the hay fields. It got to the place where I just wanted him to be with me when I worked. Nearly every time we would go to work, I would have to stop and get a plug of Cannonball chewing to-

bacco for Wilson and a pack of Winston's for me and eight 16-ounce Double Colas. We were heavy on our drinking Double Colas. You could tell by the Double Cola bottles where Wilson and I had been cutting wood.

I sort of lost touch with Wilson when I moved to Fayetteville. Sometimes Phoebe would bring him up here to fish in our pond. Wilson went to work at Maple Hill Cemetery. Every time I would go to a funeral, I would see Wilson. As I stood at the grave while the preacher talked, I would always be looking over at Wilson standing by the dirt trailer. Sometimes it was harder to look at Wilson than at the casket. After the funeral, he would always come over to me and we would give each other a long embrace.

I went looking for him and found he had passed away. He was one of Maysville's finest people.

(Old ad from 1997 Old Huntsville Magazine)



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