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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Secrets Along a Gravel Road

The road heard all of my secrets and fears. My tears muddied the powdery dust when my heart was broken and I felt like I could not take another breath. The smell of fresh plowed earth for the soybean crops bordered the road and the musky scent of snakes slithering on their bellies nearby filled the thick summer air.



Also in this issue:

Nostradamus and World War II

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Secrets Along a Gravel Road

by Derek Robertson

The road of life takes us down many different paths during life's journey. Though we have an idea of where the path leads we are never quite certain of the destination.

I grew up on a dusty gravel road that dead ended into a farm and that is where I thought my road in life led, too, a dead-end. My footprints have been imprinted in the dust of that thoroughfare. Many days were spent walking upon the gravel thinking about life's problems, girls, friends and my heart's worries. I remember fondly the walks in the cool mornings and evenings where my bare feet would not burn from the hot limestone rocks that baked in the sun's piercing rays during the middle of the day.

My mother cursed the road claiming she could never keep the house dusted properly because of all the dirt kicked up

by the trucks and tractors. I think she mostly cursed it because she knew her life came to this dead-end road and she knew deep in her soul where her life would end.

I loved the road. It is where I spent much of my time when I could get away from my family. Ditches ran along sides of the road where many summer days were spent catching tadpoles, frogs and if lucky, a crawdad or two. My skin was claimed a number of times by the gravel when I lost traction on my bicycle showing off for the red-headed neighbor girl. The same girl I challenged to a barefoot race on the rocks and went across the finish line victorious.

The road is where I met my enemies to fight and provided ammunition for my sling shot. The road was where I boarded the school bus. It is where I saw my dog lose its life by a speeding car that never stopped to check on me or my canine friend. The smell of fresh plowed earth for the soybean crops bordered the road and the musky scent of snakes slithering on their bellies nearby filled the thick summer air.

The road heard all of my secrets and fears. My tears muddied the powdery dust when my heart was broken and I felt like I could not take another

"If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes - learn from them."

Bill Gates



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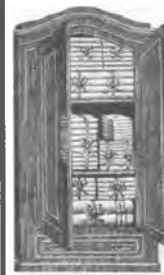
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breath. The gravel listened to my temper, cussing and fussing about my life's troubles. It provided a bend, hiding me from the sight of my folks, so I could smoke a cigarette I stole from my mother's pack undetected. This gravel road and I shared a part of my life together. It will forever be a dear friend.

The gravel road was a place where I felt safe. It was my sanctuary. There was never any privacy in my home. I shared a room with my brothers. My mom and step-dad spent most of their time at the kitchen table drinking beer, fussing at us to mow the yard or leave them alone. The road was my best friend and refuge. It always listened to me and never left me alone. It dried my tears, help pass time, and allowed me to be by myself within my own thoughts. It was a friend to me when others were not and was my companion until the day I would leave the road,

never to return.

As I grow older I often recall my journeys I took down my old friend. I have since traveled all over the world and have taken many paths. I have experienced what I consider my fair share of trials and tribulations. I found a point in my life where I was alone and scared. Though I had people around me, I knew not why I felt abandoned. I yearned for my old friend that was always loyal to me. The Bible says to "ask for the old paths, where is the good way." I allowed myself to reminisce to the days of my youth. I wished I could take one more walk down my dear old friend. I traveled to a place in my heart's memories, in the recesses of my mind; I recall a journey that changed my life forever.

I told my wife that a husband is like a fine wine; he gets better with age. Next day, she locked me in the cellar.



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September is Gynecologic and Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. We're proud to support this year's *A State of Teal* event to raise awareness about these cancers.

Ovarian Cancer

- There is no screening test.
- Know the symptoms - bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, urinary symptoms (urgency or frequency).
- Know your family history.

Cervical Cancer

- Most often there are no symptoms.
- Get Pap tests regularly when recommended.

Endometrial/Uterine Cancer

- This is the most common gynecologic cancer.
- The primary symptom in older women is bleeding after menopause.
- Know your family history.

It was as if the old gravel road was speaking to me again telling me to remember. I soon recollected a special walk I took in the cool of the day to call upon two dear old neighbors whom I considered my Grandma and Grandpa. This special memory gently reminded me about the purpose and direction the road of my life was meant to trek. My visit with my dear old friends on this occasion came with many questions and inquiries about life. What did life mean? What was life's purpose, I asked them? What happens to us when we die? These questions were asked with trembling lips and tears dammed behind my eyes. My heart ached to know my purpose on this earth.

I heard the creak of the old man's chair as he leaned over and picked up his Bible. His wife drew near to me on the sofa and gently placed her soft hands in mine. He opened God's black book and they began sharing His word with me. Soon after hearing those Holy Words, I found myself on bended knees giving my heart to our Lord. After my sinner's prayer, a joy entered into my heart and accompanied me down the gravel road as I took steps back to my home.

The old man was one of very few words, but when he spoke it was with wisdom and patience. My favorite walks were the ones I would take to visit them during the summertime. It was their busy time of year since they had


a garden that supplied their pantry with an endless sea of Mason jars filled with vegetables, not to mention supplying the pantries of neighbors throughout our rural community.

The summer after my newfound salvation, I agreed to help them with their potato harvest. The sun beat the ground and the air was still on this particular day. It hurt to draw a breath of the hot air. The potatoes were laid over by the plow, rolling them on both sides of the furrows. The old lady sat in the shade cast from the row of pole beans, shelling field peas picked the evening before.

The wind had not blown all morning. My back and arms grew sore from picking up the endless amount of potatoes. All I could think about was the spot on my

road that stayed shaded all day and dangling my unshod feet in the cold stream that ran through the twists and turns of the land.

My knees in the dirt beside the row and my hands on my sides, I leaned back, looked up into the heavens and de-



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A bald spot is like a lie - the bigger it is the harder it is to cover up.

cided to ask the Lord for some relief.

After all, I learned from the Bible we should go to Him with all things in prayer. Silently in my heart I made my request heavenward. The deafening silence broke, as I heard the corn stalks a few rows over begin to rustle and in a few moments the cool air met my sun kissed face. It felt like a gentle hand with a cool, wet cloth wiping my brow. I took a deep breath and enjoyed my answered prayer.

A soft voice from this wise lady said, "The good Lord knows when to send a breeze when you need one." It seemed she was so close to our Savior that He told her my heart's request.

The path taken that day solidified my faith once more. Thirty years have passed. She and her helpmate have been in paradise for quite some time, yet I hear her soft-spoken words every time I find myself walking in this life's journey in need of a cool breeze.

The desired breeze these days is not for garden work but to give me another breath to reap what I have thus sown in my life.

I have drifted on many paths throughout my lifetime but every time the steps taken in my memories always lead me back to the gravel road I traveled in the morning time of my life. The very same road I took to their house that day where I became a child of God. I now know all the time while walking in the cool of the day upon the rocks; God was walking with me and listening to me. One day He took me by my heart and led me to the house of those God-fearing people that forever changed my life and provided me with an eternal life.

Though I do not take the physical steps on the old road any more, in my memories I walk the old path with our Lord to speak with Him, cry to Him, spend time with Him and skip rocks with Him... in the cool of the day.

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The Sad Death of a Young Father

by William Sibley

On January 20, 1876, two Huntsville, Alabama newspapers, THE HUNTSVILLE INDEPENDENT and THE WEEKLY ADVOCATE, printed stories about the sad death of a young man whose badly decomposed body was discovered on a Sunday morning in a deep ravine on Monte Sano mountain.

THE WEEKLY ADVOCATE'S story was entitled "The Monte Sano Mystery" and THE HUNTSVILLE INDEPENDENT'S story was entitled "Found Dead."

A Mr. Wells (no first name given) saw a dog with a human foot and leg in its mouth. Afterward, the body of a young man was discovered and one of the newspapers reported, "Rumor was rife Sunday morning when information reached the city that a man had been found dead in one of the numerous ravines running down from the

top of the mountain."

Several men were speculating about the cause of death and it was the opinion of most of them that the man was the victim of suicide or murder. According to a coroner's report, they were wrong.

Coroner Franks (no first name given) held an inquest and "...the jury of inquest found no marks of violence upon the body, therefore it is supposed he died a natural death."

The young dead man was identified as Clinton Graham and the coroner released the following information: "He died of a chronic disease and he had been dead for about forty days before his body was found."

Clinton Graham, whose home was located about six miles southwest of Huntsville, had formerly worked on the Moore plantation and "...had started up the mountain to Mr. Moore's (no first name given) plantation. Mr. Graham had been suffering from ague for quite some time and "...was reduced in flesh, weak and almost unable to walk."

An unidentified gentleman, "...who happened to be walk-

ing up the mountain," assisted Mr. Graham, helping him reach the top of the mountain. Darkness was falling and Mr. Graham decided to spend the night on top of the mountain.

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following morning before day-break, Mr. Graham "...set out to go down the mountain to Mr. Moore's plantation. He lost his way and sank down and died within a stone's throw of friendly shelter." It is not clear whether Mr. Graham walked into the ravine or fell into the ravine, but the coroner's report found no "marks of violence" on the body.

THE HUNTSVILLE INDEPENDENT reported that "hogs or dogs had fed upon the lower limbs of the body and his body was found in a deep ravine that leads to Mr. Moore's place."


This writer has tried to find out who "Mr. Moore" was and has come up with the two following possibilities: Andrew Jackson Moore, Sr. married Margaret Catherine Hodges in 1845 and John C. Moore married Amanda Sadler in 1859.

Both couples had farms in the Dug Hill area of Big Cove community, which was usually called Haden at the time. Both farms were located at the foot of Monte Sano Mountain. Both couples reared families in Big Cove during the 1800s and both couples have descendents living today in Big Cove, Gurley, Huntsville and other nearby locations.

The MADISON COUNTY MARRIAGE BOOK NO. 6, page 482, shows that Clinton Graham married Odella Roach on Feb. 17, 1873.

THE WEEKLY ADVOCATE reported, "The deceased was about 25 years of age and leaves behind a wife and small child to lament his tragic and untimely death."





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Sarah Lou Tipton Elliott

by Austin Miller

I grew up with Sarah Lou Tipton Elliott. Her father, Lawrence Cleveland Tipton, was my grandmother's brother. That made Sarah Lou my second cousin. Her Daddy was nicknamed Bunky; all the younger relatives called him Uncle Bunk. He had a reputation as a grouch, but in fact he was a community minded, kind-hearted man. He had little or no formal education and was known for badly mispronouncing a lot of commonly used words. His trade mark expression was "by-grabs", probably in lieu of using profanity.

Despite his lack of education he was a successful businessman and made a good living for his family. He farmed, sold fertilizer to local farmers and lent money. As I recall he didn't charge his relatives interest.

When Shiloh Church burned to the ground in 1931, he spearheaded a drive to raise enough money to build a new church. This was during the lowest depths of the Great Depression when money was almost nonexistent but he was successful. The core of what he helped build in 1931 and 1932 still stands today.

Besides Sarah Lou, Uncle Bunk and his wife Mary Clark Tipton had two other daughters, Ann and Alice. All three were

strikingly beautiful women. A couple of years in the early fifties we farmed Uncle Bunk's land located at the corner of Dug Hill and Wall Roads. They helped us with the chopping and picking and Sarah Lou and I always teamed up together. We managed to get rows next to each other so we could talk. We both got fussed at a lot because we did more talking than working. Sarah Lou's mind was usually in some place far away from that cotton patch; so was mine. At sixteen she quit school and not too long after that she married. I never met her husband and don't remember his first name.

By the latter part of 1958 all three girls were married and gone. That autumn was the beginning of the worst of times for the family. This dark time for them seemed to put a pall on the whole community.



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Mark Twain

Uncle Bunk was diagnosed with colon cancer that fall and sometime before Christmas his house burned with all their belongings. But the worst thing happened on a rainy night in March of 1959. Sarah Lou and her husband were driving home on Moore's Mill Road where they were hit head on by a drunk driver. Sarah Lou was killed instantly. She was nineteen years old. Her husband was badly injured but recovered. Her funeral was at Shiloh Church, the church that her father helped rebuild almost 30 years earlier.

I remember the service like it was yesterday. At the end the casket was opened and everyone was invited down to review the body. I couldn't bring myself to go see her.

She was buried in the (then new) Sanford Cemetery located next to Shiloh Church across the drive that goes up to our house. The cemetery is about 100 yards from our front yard and we had an unobstructed view of her grave. She was one of the first, if not the first person to be buried in the new cemetery. Every time I went outside I could see her lone grave, a sad and constant reminder of a senseless loss.

About two weeks after her death Uncle Bunk died and was buried next to her in the new cemetery. Since then hundreds of people have been buried there and I don't believe there are many vacant spots left.

Mary lived about forty more years. In her later years she came to visit my parents every Sunday morning. They would have a good time laughing and talking for a while; then the three of them would walk out our drive together to Shiloh Church. I know that Mary grieved over the loss that befell her family in such a short time but she never let it show. Her faith never faltered and she became a positive example for others in the community during times of trouble

and loss.

Mary died in 2002 at the age of 88, Ann died a few years ago and Alice died last year. They all live on in the memories of those that knew them, especially the ones of us that knew them in the fall of 1958 and the spring of 1959.

Mary and Uncle Bunk have two grandchildren that still live at Ryland. Ann's son, Harvey D. Parton, Jr., owns a successful earth moving business and lives on a nice farm bordered by Wess Taylor Road to the south and Flint River to the north. Alice's daughter Pam Jarvis Brewer lives on the land owned by her grandparents.

The other day I was driving up the driveway past the Sanford Cemetery when I spotted Sarah Lou's marker. If she had lived she would be seventy-five years old. I thought about all those years she lost and the things she never got to see. All because one person she never knew made the choice to drive drunk on the Ides of March in 1959.



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News From the Year 1930

News From Huntsville and Around The World

Nation Celebrates 10th Anniversary of Prohibition

The friends of temperance celebrated and its enemies tolled bells as America observed the 10th anniversary of Prohibition this month. The ban on alcohol, as provided under the 18th Amendment, has been the center of nationwide controversy since it took effect at the stroke of midnight, January 15, 1920.

Prohibitionists have called it a blessing, with money once spent on liquor now being used by working families to feed and clothe their children. Opponents, in turn, claim that the law has spawned graft and murder, enriching bootleggers and causing countless deaths from impure alcohol. Because of Prohibition, say the officials of the Moderation League, "a spirit of revolt" is abroad in the nation.

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company has reported that deaths from alcoholism among its policyholders last year was six times the rate of ten years ago. Despite widespread opposition, it is not expected that prohibition will ever be repealed.

Giant Department Store Coming to Huntsville

In a startling announcement today, W.E. Struve announced he was signing a fifty-year lease with S.R. Kress & Company for property downtown on Washington Street.

The store is expected to carry a wide range of merchandise at most reasonable prices. Many of the smaller merchants were upset at the giant department store's decision to locate in Huntsville.

It is feared by many that the smaller stores will not be able to compete and will be forced to close as a result.

The store will employ 18 people and will be open six days a week.

New Gang War in Chicago

With the nation in the grip of a crime wave, a new Chicago gang war was launched this morning when machine guns served up death at a dinner party at the Fox Lake Hotel, a resort 50 miles from Chicago favored by the remnants of the "Bugs" Moran gang.

The killers appeared at a dining room window and began showering the guests with a leaden entree, killing three and wounding two. Sources claim the Capone mob is responsible.

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THE SPIRIT OF MAN

by Leo Larkin

As you approach my small hometown from the south on Hwy. 431 you encounter lots of hazardous curves. Probably more curves than Jane Mansfield, Mae West and Marilyn Monroe put together. The old-timers say the road was built that way to "get paid by the mile." In addition to the curves, the old highway is as narrow as our county roads.

At the bottom of Coon Holler Hill, the community of Cleaton, Kentucky lies in a hollow or holler as mountain folk like to say. To the east of that narrow road is Possum Holler. If you continued north up a long hill towards Central City, you would come to Pumpkin Center, a wide spot in the road. In a more pastoral scene it would be called a valley, but this was coal-mining country, rough and rugged.

Walter lived at the bottom of those hills. He lived with his mother, without his father, who was probably killed in the mines. Walter had cerebral palsy but he also had a head full of sense. His mother took in washing and his sister had a houseful of kids. Thirteen by the time she was through. It was told that his mother shipped her son-in-law with a piece of stove wood for stepping out on his

wife. There was a younger brother, and like his mother, endowed with coal-black hair and black eyes. When I was a toddler, they lived next to my grandmother but their home burned.

The bank and grocery store was located in Central City, which was four miles from Cleaton. Walter helped his mother financially by selling pencils outside the IGA grocery store most days. On Fridays he moved to the bank because he knew that people got paid on Fridays.

There was always a checkers game going at the IGA and he could not be beat at checkers. His transportation was a sturdy, heavy-duty wooden red wagon. He pushed himself backwards to go to his work and anywhere else he wanted to go. They did not own a car and with

a certain amount of pride and gut-filled determination, Walter managed on his own. He pushed himself up that steep winding road and sometimes, when he was lucky, someone stopped to give him a ride to town. The Continental bus traveled that road and sometimes would stop and pick him up.

My mother and I stopped once and it was all we could do to pick the wagon up and put it in the trunk. Walter was a large man with strong arms and shoulders and with great

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effort, managed to haul himself into our car. Everyday had to have been a struggle for him.

Things went fairly well for him until they built a new highway on the other side of our town. The road crew blasted through the hills and created a straighter road, but that encouraged faster driving and he was nearly blown off the road. Sometimes he went that route which didn't have a hilly terrain, but other times he still continued that same old mountainous route. Rides were probably easier to get. In later years it became more difficult. Once he lost control of the wagon and had a terrifying ride and nasty spill down that hill.

Everyone of decent folk admired and respected Walter for his spirit, independence and dedication to helping his mother financially. The employees at IGA and bank held him dear in their hearts and provided the pencils

for him and helped him in other ways. How much they helped, I'm not sure, but he was very spastic.

Now, I said every one of decent folk, and that's because there's always someone lacking moral fiber and in the category of downright despicable. A man known in the community stopped and gave Walter a ride. He drove to an isolated spot, robbed Walter and pushed him out of the car, along with his wagon. Walter managed to crawl to the road where a passer-by found him. He identified the man, who was then arrested. People were so furious and up in arms they had to have his trial out of the county.

When I visited home and

"If the rich could hire other people to die for them, the poor could make a wonderful living."

Yiddish Proverb

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went to Central City, I'd see Walter outside the bank and I'd always talk to him. He'd blush and try to talk to me, but most of the sounds I couldn't understand. However, I'd always get ee-oww (Leo).

My grandfather held two political offices at various times. He was at one time mayor of Drakesboro, located four miles from Cleaton. He was also judge there for a number of years. I'm not sure of just which office he held when he drove to Louisville, a three-hour drive, to attend a banquet requiring coat and tie. When he arrived, Walter was there, dressed in his usual attire of overalls, shirt and cap along with his red wagon. Although, I think one of the bankers was responsible for that, I have an inkling that Jesus had something to do with it.

Souls were hard to win in this tough, two-fisted coal-mining area. I don't know the condition of Walter's heart, but I know that he cussed terribly if you got him riled up. One day he arrived at the bank and there was a panhandler in his spot. Walter gave him a cussing and ran him off.

Another time, my Uncle Bill parked his car on the street in front of Walter, plugged the meter and went into the bank. He was gone longer than he intended and his parking meter expired. A policeman was coming up the walk issuing parking tickets.

Walter waited until just before he got to Uncle Bill's car. He then rolled his wagon up to the meter and with those spastic hands put a nickel in the meter. He laughed loudly as the officer arrived and fortunately the officer laughed with him.

As his mother grew old and couldn't help care for him, arrangements were made and they both lived out their lives in a nursing home. Knowing the funeral director and the history of the town folk as I do, I suspect that the finances were taken care of.

I brought many memories with me when I moved to Alabama. Unless a disease ravages my mind I will

always remember Walter and others who made an indelible impression on my young childhood years.



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Huntsville Medicine in the 1800s

In the latter part of the 1800s the Surgeon General of the United States declared Huntsville to be one of the healthiest places in the nation, second only to West Point. Hopefully this did not come about as a result of the medicine and home remedy ads advertised in the Huntsville newspapers.

One of the greatest claims of that day was made by Swift Specific who advertised that its product cured cancer and also helped you sleep at night. Rangun Roote Liniment also claimed to cure cancer and ease aching muscles. You could also use it for your horse.

Prices were reasonable, too. Indian Wild Bark promised to cure your cancer for only \$3.50 and for another fifty cents you could purchase a bottle of Works Scalp Lotion, guaranteed to stimulate your mental processes and reverse balding.

Local newspapers often carried testimonials from citizens attesting to the miracle cures of these products. W. T. Hutchens, a well known citizen of Huntsville, claimed in a newspaper ad that "Dr. Humphrey's Blood Purifier" cured his rheumatism in only three days.

And for the ladies, there was Scott's Elixir, which guaranteed to ease cramps and to provide a better disposition. The Elixir lived up to its promise to provide a better disposition, but it also provided a terrible hangover.

Another well known Huntsville citizen, John Hill, advertised a cure for addiction to opium and whiskey. Evidently, it did not work too well as the same newspaper also carried an article about him being fined for "public intoxication."

Conquering the Chipmunk

We have noticed a lot of chipmunks burrowing under lawns. A humane way to discourage them that really works is to slice up some hot peppers like jalapenos and put them in the chipmunk hole. In a few days if you see no activity just step on the hole. Check in another couple of days and if you see no more holes you've conquered!

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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*

Our August Photo winner for last month of was **Mike Shelton** of Huntsville. Mike worked as Service Manager at Environmental Systems Corp. and grew up close to Ryland, so he remembers lots of the stories of **Malcolm & Austin Miller**. The photo was that of **Jerry Hayes**, who is News Anchor at WHNT Ch. 19. Jerry has been working there now for 36 years!

Then we had SO many people call to identify the location of my hidden hummingbird, which was on page 23 of the August issue. I thought I did a great job hiding it but not by the number of calls I received! Our next hidden character will be in the December issue, we'll give it a rest for now.

Anyway the first caller to tell me she found the hummingbird was **Betty Finley** of Big Cove, AL. She worked for 11 years at Redstone Arsenal in Finance & Accounting then left to raise her family. Congratulations to Betty!

Bobbie Peterson's (of Madison) mom is **Mary Cox**, and she lives in Charlotte, NC. She is an elegant, sweet lady and just loves little birds & hummingbirds espe-



cially. She's in her 90s and hasn't been feeling well lately - we want to send love to her from Huntsville and to let her know we're thinking about her.

Doris Barenchi is a Lakewood, CA lady who loves history and in addition to getting "Old Huntsville" delivered to her, reads 2 newspapers a day. Did we mention that Doris just had a July birthday and is 91? Her cousin in Woodstock, GA (also our editor) **Cheryl Tribble** wants to send special love to Doris just for being her!

Congratulations to our friend **Oscar Llerena** who has a brand new grandson - **Logan Llerena** is the new son of **Daniel and Lalita Llerena** who live in Tampa, FL. Logan joins his four year old sister **Daniella** who will help take good care of him!

Alan and Debra Jenkins bought and completely renovated Merrimack Mill on Triana Blvd. and it now provides visual and performing arts education to

children and adults with special needs as well as providing professional entertainment venues for the community. Alan was in the hospital recently but is on the mend now. We send wishes your way Alan to get well FAST!

Fred Simpson was a force to be reckoned with in the courtroom, but at home he was a loving, funny, attentive Dad and husband who put his family first always. As a **District Attorney in Huntsville for over 20 years** he was instrumental in getting the first state laws written against drunk driving and against child abuse. In addition to practicing criminal law and taking on tough capital murder cases, Fred was an artist, photographer and an author of 3 books that were hugely popular. Fred passed away at the age of 78. He leaves his beloved wife **Peggy**, son **Bryan Simpson** of Atlanta; **Cindy Howard (Tim)** of and **Derek Simpson (Shannon)** of Huntsville. Fred was so proud when son Derek joined him in his law practice in 1995. **Tom Carney** and Fred would spend hours discussing stories for Fred's books, and Tom loved to see Fred come by for a visit. We send our

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Photo of The Month

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

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Hint: This little boy's signs have been seen all over the historic districts of Huntsville.



deepest sympathy to Peggy and their children & grandchildren who will always remember the many wonderful years with Fred.

There are many nurses and Resident Assistants at Skilled Nursing in Redstone Village who take such good care of the people who live there. One of the ladies who is Activities Director there is so creative and full of energy, she is **Sarah Presson** and happens to have an August 26 birthday. She didn't give an exact number as far as age but did say that she's 29 again, and again and again!

Another lady who keeps the residents happy and cared for at Skilled Nursing/Redstone Village is **Joan Jones**, a Certified Nursing Assistant. She had an August 8 birthday and is proud to be 57 years old. To me she looks 40. She pays special attention to the older folks who live there and has so much love for them, it shows! Happy Birthday to both you beautiful ladies!

The **Historic Lowry House** has been hosting outdoor concerts for the past several months and they get alot of attendees. On Sep. 19 Rick Taylor will be performing with his full band with opening music by **Rebecca Holbrook** and it promises to be a really good night, so make plans to attend and check out the full schedule on Facebook for the Lowry House.

It's been a few months ago but on May 17 **Mary Myrick** passed away, at the age of 90. She was a special lady who will be missed

so much. She leaves her children **Nolan Myrick** of Fayetteville, TN, **Linda Myrick McGowan** of Carolina Beach, NC and **Gayle Myrick** of Charlotte, NC as well as grandchildren, friends & family who loved her dearly.

Darryl and Linda Goldman, of Weichert Realtors, celebrated their 45th anniversary in August! The lovebirds live in Twickenham in a beautifully restored old home and these two are just meant to be together! Congratulations on 45 years and counting!

Many people in this area know **Jean Pitsinger**. She and her husband **JB Pitsinger** owned and operated the Farmers Trading Post on Huntsville's South Side Square for many years back in the day. They sold meat, supplies, a little bit of everything. JB passed away many years ago but Jean will be celebrating a birthday in December right before Christmas - she will turn 100 years old! She has a good story in this issue regarding her memories of the **Kildare Mansion**.

A special hello to our friend **Ann Franklin** of Huntsville, she hasn't been up to par lately and feeling badly - we send love to her and wishes to feel better soon!

I heard a great tip the other day and had to pass it along. When you are in your car adjusting your side mirrors, do this: For the left one lean over til your head touches the left window, then adjust the mirror - it'll actually swing out farther than you're used to. You'll

still see the side of your car as a reference point but doing this removes that blind spot that we all have. Do the same with the right, just lean towards the middle of the car, then adjust. You'll be amazed, once you get used to it, how much safer you feel! I have to be able to see around me at all times!

Don't forget that the annual **Trade Day Around the Square** is happening Sep. 6, Saturday, from 8-5. You might find a special treasure, get some food and a drink, and at the least get some good exercise walking around the square!

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- 2 t. minced onion
- 1/2 c. sour cream
- Dash cayenne pepper

Peel cucumbers, cut in half, remove seeds, chop or grate them. Mix with remaining ingredients, adding sour cream last. Refrigerate in a covered jar. Sprinkle with cayenne when serving. This is delicious on any seafood or meat.

Annelie's Clam Dip

- 1 lg. container French onion dip
 - 1 can minced clams, drained but liquid reserved
 - 1 t. garlic powder
- In bowl mix the onion dip

with the drained clams. Stir well and add the garlic powder. Add some of the reserved clam juice til of desired consistency. Add salt to taste, refrigerate an hour.

Fried Corn with Brown Crust

Place about 4 tablespoons butter in a large frying pan and let melt. Pour fresh sliced corn kernels over the butter and let cook over low heat about 30 minutes. When ready to serve use a metal spatula to flip the corn onto a plate with the brown crusty side facing up. Enjoy while hot!

Sweet Potato Balls

Cream boiled sweet potatoes very smooth and fluffy with butter, dash salt, a little sugar and

a little sherry. Dip out a large kitchen spoonful - push a small marshmallow into the center, shape into a ball and chill.

Roll in crushed corn flakes and bake in oven at 400 degrees til heated and lightly browned, not too long.

Lemon Kiss Pie

- 4 egg yolks
 - 1/2 c. sugar
 - 3 T. lemon juice
 - 1/4 t. salt
 - 1 c. heavy whipping cream, whipped
 - Cooked pastry shell
- In a bowl mix the yolks, sugar, salt and juice. Put in a double boiler and cook til thick. When slightly cool, fold in the whipped cream. Pour into a prepared pastry shell and top with dollop of whipped cream, chill.

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Bishop Whipple

- 2 eggs
- 1 c. sugar
- 2/3 c. flour
- 1 t. baking powder
- 1 c. dates, chopped
- 1 c. pecans, chopped
- 1 t. vanilla

Beat eggs, add sugar; then flour sifted with the baking powder. Fold in dates, nuts and vanilla. Spread in a buttered pan and bake in 375 degree oven for 20 minutes. Break into pieces, sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serve with whipped cream.

Caramel Powder

Caramelize 2 cups sugar in a heavy skillet, add 1/4 cup boiling water, stir til smooth. Strain & cool. When brittle, pound in cloth bag until it is a powder. This is very good for decorating many desserts, as well as baked ham.

Caramel Topping

- 4 c. sugar
- 1-1/2 c. water
- 1/2 c. cream
- 1 t. cream of tartar

Mix first 2 ingredients and boil til golden brown and spins a thread. Cool slightly. Stir in cream & cream of tartar til mixed.

Yum Yums

- 1/2 lb. melted butter
- 1 box light brown sugar
- 1 c. white sugar
- 4 egg yolks
- 2 c. flour
- 2 t. baking powder
- 1/2 t. salt

- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 4 beaten egg whites

Mix the butter, sugars and egg yolks together. In a separate bowl mix the flour, baking powder and salt. Add the liquid ingredients to the flour mixture, blend well.

Add the pecans and fold in the beaten egg whites. Bake in greased and floured pan, spreading thin, for about 20 minutes at 350 degrees.

Cut in squares while warm, and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Buttercream Mints

- 1/4 lb. butter
- 1 egg
- 1 lb. confectioners sugar
- 1/8 t. salt

Cream butter, add half of the sugar, add egg and remaining sugar with salt. Use more sugar if necessary to make dough stiff enough to stand.

Drop on oiled paper with spoon or run through pastry tube. Allow an hour to dry. Store in air-tight container.



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Not Too Late for Love

by Herbert Kenneth Croll

Written by Herbert Kenneth Croll, about his father Herbert Cree Croll, in 1951. Herbert Kenneth wrote this on an old typewriter, with tears in his eyes, because his Dad had just passed away and he had been unable to attend his Dad's funeral. Submitted by Pat Riley, whose father was the writer.

My father was a very admirable man but from the time I was a small boy, I was always intrigued by a certain mystery concerning his procedure through life: why was it that everything he planned always seemed to be just one step late, in comparison with other people?

For instance, my first recollection of home-entertainment was a mammoth gramophone, complete with huge, red horn and numerous cylindrical records. How we loved that machine and the magic it could impart: Caruso, John McCormack, Sousa, etc.

Until the day, when in my youthful ignorance of science's progress, I gave a graphic description of our magic-machine to one of my playmates, only to be scornfully told: "Huh! WE got a radio and we can hear people singing and dancing and acting out plays - right when they are doin it! My daddy even heard the champeen fighting on our radio!"

Could this be possible? I accepted his invitation to see for myself and a new field of magic was invitingly dangled before me. Naturally, I enlisted the aid of my brothers and sisters in staging a campaign to coax Dad into buying one of these miraculous devices. It took quite awhile, though, because - you guessed it - he bought one of those sets, complete with half a room full of rechargeable batteries, right after all our neighbors traded in their sets for a more advanced device which you merely plugged into a socket on the wall!

I think I should go back a little further to show the biggest trend that Dad was too late for. All my playmates were either "the only



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child," in their families, or else they had just one brother or sister. I guess Dad was accustomed to the system prevalent in Ireland prior to 1900 because there were seven of us!

Our house was the last one on the street, right next to the railroad tracks (Dad always said that someday they were going to relocate those tracks and then our property would triple in value. Recently, 40 years later, our city council adopted a resolution pertaining to track relocation and when Dad decided to take the family downtown for any reason, we would inevitably start out toward the streetcar stop, two blocks away, just as the streetcar approached our corner.

It was always the same; Al, the oldest, would run like a deer and ask the conductor to ask the motorman to wait a minute. Minute? Two or three was more accurate; one by one, we would all reach the waiting street-car, panting breathlessly and with much oral gratitude and promises to be more prompt the next time!

Another time, as we entered that public conveyance, one by one, resembling old fashioned slides in a lantern, a very blase, sophisticated gentleman exclaimed in a slight tone of derision: "My Lord, what a family!!" He must have used the wrong tone because that was one time Dad was NOT late; he acted with swift purpose and the vociferous gent was quite bewildered to find himself held eight inches off the ground by a thoroughly indignant Irishman.

I can still hear Dad ask him menacingly: "And what, me bucho, is wrong with this family?" Mr. Moderne shakingly placated his parental pride with the trembling endorsement: "Oh, it's a fine family, indeed, sir. Only wish I had such a large brood of my own. Please put me down, sir."

I think that was the first time I became conscious of the hidden attitude of superiority by people who had small,

"planned" families. But many is the time I overheard their derisive remarks: "What an old-fashioned family----seven! It's all we can do to clothe and feed one!" Dad was just a little late for the social advancement of birth-control.

Streetcars symbolized the transportation of the impoverished; to us kids, an automobile was the badge of financial success. Naturally, we combined forces, again, in our campaign to get Dad to buy a car. I think that the calendars which his sister sent him from Ireland each Christmas must have had a big influence on him because Dad always said: "In my day, a 'johnny-car' was good enough for anyone." However, we of-

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ten caught him looking longingly at an old Model-T and when a neighbor bought a new enclosed Studebaker sedan, we overheard Dad praising its qualities to the man. Had we finally persuaded him to get a car for our family's very own? It certainly seemed like it, because it wasn't very long before we began noticing that Mom and Dad were doing a lot of figuring, after we all were put to bed at night. They'd whisper encouraging phrases like: "Do you think we really can afford it?" and "Won't it be using money that we need for the children's shoes?" etc., etc.

A sort of "Christmas Spirit" permeated our house, inflicting everyone with an intoxicating excitement. Anticipatory deleriums! Oh, the joy of a youth's expectations! In half disbelief, we'd ask one another: "Are we going to have our very own car?" Mabel would say, hopefully: "Do you think it will have big glass windows?" And little Doreen would chime in: "Un we wone hav ta wun for da ole stweet cah, huh?" And Kay would caution us: "Wait and see!"

Then, one day, as we were coming home from school, we turned down our street and old Mrs. D. scurried out and said, "Hurry, home, children, your parents have a NICE surprise for you!"

"The CAR!" we all hollered and did we run! Four houses more and Mrs. M. shouted from her porch: "Boy, are you kids going to be surprised, when you get home!"

"Oooh, golly!" we shouted back. Three times, in the next block, genial neighbors came out to prod us on with their

suggestive words: "Lucky kids!" "Wait 'till you see it!" etc.

Like converts rescued from Hades, we rushed up onto our porch and threw open the door, screaming, "Mom, Dad, did we get it?" Our parents, wise to the terrific aftermath of emotional hysteria, calmed us down with the assurance that we were getting a nice surprise - something that we'd always wanted - just as soon as Dad explained our required care and stewardship of same.

"Children", he began,

"Mother and I have given this much thought and we want you all to have the same benefits that other children are blessed with. So, today we got it. You all will get the chance to try it out but you must be very careful and never scratch it. You must all keep it shiny and new looking. Now, come with me and see how you like it."

Instead of going out into the backyard, as we had expected him to, Dad led us into the den - and there it was - a brand new player piano!

How odd those piano rolls looked to me, through a veil of



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uncontrollable tears! Poor, dear old Dad was even more pleased when he saw my emotional reaction. "Look Mother," he said, "Herby is proud as punch!"

I am glad that Dad never knew how that piano came into our lives just a little late. And one of my sisters even managed to learn to play the scales on it.

My first job was that of an office position: mail-boy. Part of my duties was to go to the Post Office and the bank and I kept urging Dad to let us get a car so that I could impress my employer with my promptness and also transport Dad to his place of employment each day. He was a lot older now and he suffered from arthritis which crippled his knuckles and legs severely. Dad was still very much a dominant man and he agreed to a partnership deal in buying a car, with the proviso that he be taught to drive, too.

In my teenage mind, I was a polished driver within two weeks and miraculously enough, I earned my driver's license right away. We got a terrific deal on a repossessed sedan - \$45 down-payment and three years for the balance! We found out later that the car wasn't really repossessed - it was thoroughly used up by a claim chaser for a finance company.

Nevertheless, we were proud of our first family automobile and every night, after work, I'd take Dad out for a lesson. In his attempts to learn parking, we placed bushel baskets on the pavement to simulate two other parked cars. Dad would painfully grip the steering wheel, twist around and promptly back-up, crushing two or three of the baskets. Oh, the many times we tried that!

One day, while I was working - and Dad was not - he took the car out alone and within two minutes' time had driven it down into the huge ditch that separated the two railroad's right-of-way! When I came home he calmly reported that the car had gotten a large cut in the front tire and he had called a man to take the car to the garage for repairing. I actually believed it - until a boy on the next street showed me a picture he had taken of the car - down in that ditch. Of course, this was weeks later.

One day, Dad announced that he was ready for his road test and he wanted to practice by driving over the same route the inspector would take him on. In spite of my urgings that he wait awhile, he insisted, so we drove downtown to our Main Street and began the rehearsal. The stoplight at the first intersection was red, so Dad stopped. I could see the anguish on his face from the physical strain involved due to his crippled hands.

With the green light, however, Dad accelerated bravely, turned the wheel and tried to shift the gears. He just couldn't quite do all three things successfully and he slammed head-on into an approaching car! The hoods flew one way, glass another.

Climbing out, we rushed over to the occupants of the other car and Dad immediately accepted the blame, in front of all the witnesses, saying: "We are insured; everything will be taken care of!" (Who does that anymore?)

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Sensing their legal victory already, the two gentlemen in the other car began moaning about their poor, poor backs. The next day, we received a call from our insurance company: they could no longer carry our policy, especially since they would be compelled to pay for the periods in which our two "victims" would be unable to work. This would entail quite a lot of expense because the two gentlemen were "both medical doctors."

When I steer my automatic car today, I feel sorry time and again that Dad was just a little late, as the years of life go, for being able to enjoy the engineering marvels of modern motoring. Even crippled as he was, he could have easily mastered today's cars. But he never tried driving, after that accident.

Dad was a little bit late for another social advancement: pension funds. He worked faithfully for thirty-eight years in a local plant. Then, without any compunctions, they closed down the plant and Dad, like so many others, was left to his own resources. Raising such a large family hadn't allowed for much in accumulation of resources, so Dad finally sold his furniture and he and mom went all the way down to Texas, to live with my eldest sister and her husband. They were operating a camp for children and Dad fit in real well as an all-around leader, handy-man and dog-trainer.

But one day, when Dad was at the camp all alone, he smelled smoke - some fields were burning near the bunkhouse.

He rushed out to fight those threatening flames, eager to save the property, with his whole heart. But his heart wasn't quite capable of the battle. They found him there, later, his arms outstretched toward the holocaust which actually burned itself out. And Dad's life with it. He didn't put out the fire. He was too late. God called him first.

When I heard of Dad's death, an awful shock came over me: how I loved that good, old-fashioned, well-intentioned man; what a grand parent he had been.

"Gee, Dad," I wanted to say, "you always were tops with us kids. You are the grandest person in the world to me!"

But I was too late!

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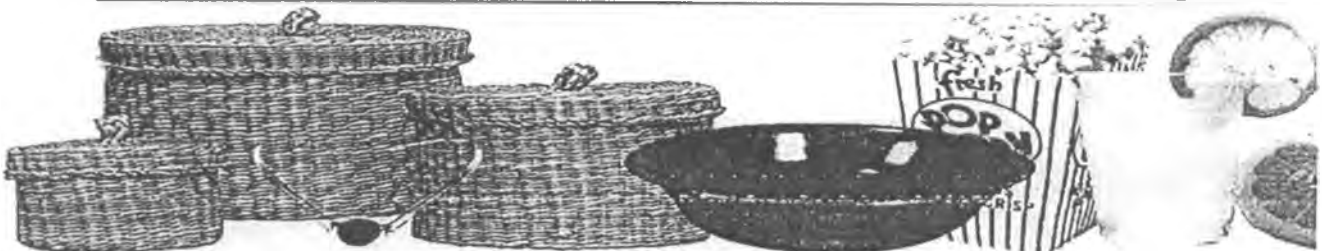
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Nostradamus and World War II



Is it possible to predict the future? Decide for yourself as you read this article originally published in 1942 as the world was immersed in WW II.

Many persons believe that it is possible for certain persons to foretell outstanding events of the future. Some of these prophets have put their prophecies in writing in order that when read at a future date, a comparison could be made with the actual happenings.

Our present World War has brought to public attention 2 such prophets who are said to have prophesied it. The first of these is Nostradamus who wrote in the year 1564, the following: "1939, War. A great war shall burst forth from fishes of steel and machines of flying fire. The Germans and neighboring countries shall be at war, coming through the clouds."

Of the next year and the fate of France, Nostradamus said, "The year following will come pestilence so very terrible that young, old and no beast will live; Blood and fire is the sign of France."

This prophecy may be found in the Newberry Library of Chicago, Illinois. Certainly it predicts airplanes and submarines,

selects the exact year for the war to start and for the fall of France. It also predicts Italy's attack upon France. Nostradamus does, however, predict an Allied Victory in his mention of Briton.

"The effort of the German Eagle shall be great. The doors to the oceans shall be opened. The British brotherhood, exposed save for ships, shall tremble for seizing the oars too late. The isles of the commonwealth shall recover vigor against their enemies."

Historians are inclined to put considerable weight upon Nostradamus' prophecy because he foretold some very important events during his own lifetime.

During the seventh century St. Odile in a letter to her brother prophesied the present world conflict as follows: "The time has come when Germany will be called the most belligerent nation of the world. The period has arrived when out of her bosom will come the terrible warrior who will undertake to spread war in the world. The men in arms will call him the Antichrist."

"The conqueror will come from the banks of the Danube. He will be a remarkable chief among men. The war that he will make will be the most terrifying that men have ever undertaken - the nations will be astonished and will say: 'Whence comes this force? How is he able to undertake such a war!'"

"And the war will be long. The conqueror will have attained the apogee of his triumphs towards the middle of the sixth month of the second year of hostilities. This will be the end of the first period of bloody victories. He will say; "Accept the yoke of my domination", while continuing his victories. But his enemies will not submit and the war will continue and he will cry out "Misfortune



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will make them fall because I am the conqueror."

The second part of the war will be equal in length to half of the first part. One will see also prodigies in the Orient. The third period will be the shortest of all and the conqueror will have lost confidence in his warriors. This period will be called the period of invasion because by just retribution the land of the conqueror, by reason of his injustice and his atheism will be invaded in all parts and pilaged."

This prophecy foretells the falls of Germany and the partition of the country for all time. Certainly the parts relating to HITLER'S false peace offers have already come true..

Whether one believes in these prophecies or not, you must recognize that they have a startling similarity to present day facts.

It has been said that many prophecies are written after a complete study of the stars had been made. Many of the world's great warriors were strong believers in this effect of the stars upon the course of human events. Historians tell us that Alexander the Great was a follower and firm believer in astrology.

Astrologers who have forecast events for 1942 show many hopeful signs for America and her Allies. It is said by leading astrologers that by the end of the year America will have gained complete control of the Atlantic. We will be supreme on the ocean, on the west coast of Africa and in the western Mediterranean.

It is predicted that Japan will lose entirely unless she soon forsakes the Axis. China, it is said, will become more powerful by the hour.

Astrologers maintain that England will not be successfully invaded. It is doubted by many whether Germany will even attempt an invasion. England's

invasion of Europe however, with the help of the low countries, is quite generally forecast.

Astrologers claim that the end of Hitler is very plain to them. He is said to be born under influences which make him want more and more power. They feel that before the summer of 1942 he will see himself losing and will become even more dangerous. His horoscope is said to reveal a violent death with imprisonment, insanity, or both. His horoscope shows that the next twelve months are his most dangerous and astrologers claim that he is certain to lose. In March or before the middle of May he runs a very strong chance of losing his mind completely, or of being overpowered personally.



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Change Came to Madison County

by Rob Williams

I knew something was up when my father borrowed a .38 revolver from a friend. I later found out that neighbors needed protection. I believe the year was 1962 and the area in what was becoming southeast Huntsville was changing. I remember seeing a man putting in a steel pole at the corner of Dellwood Road and Edgemoor Drive. When I asked him what he was doing, he said "I'm putting up a stop sign." I asked why he would want to do that. He replied, "You're in the city now, boy."

Huntsville was growing, and my area of Madison County had just been annexed by the city. For four years, I had been a student at a county school named Farley. I was now zoned to attend a city school, Whitesburg Elementary. My neighbor down the road, Betty Sue, was not to be a student at Whitesburg. She was my age and we regularly played together, but we had never attended the same school. I had attended the Farley School for whites and she had gone to the Farley School for blacks. It was her family that needed my father's protection.

Betty Sue lived in a small house at what was the end of Dellwood Road, about a hundred yards down from my family's home. Three generations lived in her house; Betty Sue and her siblings, her mother Alberta, and her grandmother Laura. I liked Laura. When my parents went out at night, they would often ask her to stay with me and my little brother. Laura's husband had passed away and was buried in Lacey Cemetery off Dellwood Road.

Earlier, a white building contractor had stopped a funeral procession and told the participants that this was to be the last black person to be buried in Lacey Cemetery. He told them that white people were moving into the area, and that funeral processions for blacks would no longer be allowed. This meant that Laura would not be allowed to be buried

next to her husband.

You won't find Lacey Cemetery now, although it is easily seen on a 1970 Madison County map. As houses began to be built on Weatherly Heights, rock had to be blasted to accommodate foundation work. It became apparent why the building contractor stopped the burials at Lacey Cemetery. Boulders produced by the blasting were dumped in Lacey Cemetery. Some tombstones were broken, but the worst damage was done to the graves having ground level concrete vaults. Those vaults were made of six slabs of concrete; the top slab was ground level with the names and dates of the deceased inscribed.

Boulders sometimes rolled across the top slabs, breaking them in and exposing the contents. These were old graves and often the caskets had rotted away - leaving skeletal remains exposed.

On one occasion, a couple of childhood friends and I were spooked when we witnessed a large dog chewing on a leg bone.

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While playing in that cemetery on another occasion, I fell into one of those open graves by accident. I found myself lying beside a skeleton. Needless to say, it didn't take me long to get out of that grave! Adrenaline is surprisingly effective. Another child in the neighborhood called a local radio station and reported the open graves. The county brought trucks of dirt and filled them in.

Years later, a neighbor on Edgehill Drive claimed the cemetery property as his and began paying taxes on it. There are no longer signs of tombstones or ground level crypts, but many bodies remain buried there. Several people living in the area today think this is just a neighborhood "green space".

As more homes were built and more white families moved into the area during the late 1950s and early 1960s, a building contractor realized the value of the property owned by Betty Sue's family. This property is where Willow Hills and Seaton Drive now exist and the family should have been able to make a large sum for the property.

They were pressured to sell cheaply, and when they refused they were threatened. Someone would come outside the house at night and issue threats and make attempts to scare the family into selling out cheaply. A group of neighbors, a posse made up of both white and black men, decided to attempt to provide protection for this family. This is why my father, a white man, needed to borrow a revolver to help

protect a black family.

At night, this group of men waited in the woods that surrounded the home and watched for who threatened the family. This could not be done on a continual basis, so eventually the family sold out cheaply. I was told that they traded the land for an old house in the city and a small amount of money. Soon after moving in the old house, it was condemned by the city of Huntsville. The family ended up in the Norwood public housing project on University Drive. My mother and I visited them at the old house and then at the project.

I have fond memories of playing outdoors on Dellwood Road with Betty Sue. We had sort of a Charlie Brown - Lucy relationship. Lucy was always convincing Charlie Brown that she



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would hold the football for him as he attempted to kick it. At the last second, she would jerk it away. Charlie Brown fell for this over and over. Betty Sue wasn't as mean as Lucy, but I think she enjoyed watching a boy repeatedly make a fool out of himself because of his male ego. It's amazing how little it takes to lead even an eight year old boy to cast aside his brains for the sake of showing off. She told me that she could tell how fast I could ride my bicycle by just watching me. I would start at the corner of Dellwood Road and Edgehill Drive and I would ride down Dellwood as fast as my small legs could pump the pedals.

Dellwood was a country tar-and-gravel road in those days and it was not uncommon to have larger rocks on the road. On one occasion, the tire of my bike hit one of those rocks as I whizzed past Betty Sue. I ended up on my back in a ditch. On another occasion I planned to hit the brakes at the last moment in front of her house, which would cause the bike to slide sideways in the gravel - coming to an impressive stop. I had been pedaling so intently that I didn't realize the chain had come off the sprockets. The road ended at an unrepaired barbed wire fence. I caught the one strand of wire by my neck, and was instantly jerked from the bike.

Lying on my back in the road, I lifted my head to see my bike independently continuing a venture of its own down through a pasture. My neck hurt and my back hurt. Within seconds, it seemed Betty Sue's entire family emptied out of the small house to poke fun at the dumb white boy lying in the road. I was so humiliated that I left my bike in the pasture and returned home without it. My pride hurt worse than my neck. Fortunately, I hit the strand of wire between the prongs. I later returned for the bicycle after her family was inside the house. I remember creeping past the place on the other side of the road, in hopes they wouldn't hear my footsteps on the gravel. I felt stupid enough, without additional ridicule.

However, the treatment of this family is an unpleasant memory. Their disastrous situation resulting from the pressured selling of property was one of the worst cases of injustice that I have ever witnessed. This story needs to be told, and it should not be forgotten. White property owners in the area made a lot of money selling land for development and Betty Sue's family should have been treated with the same respect.

I lost touch with them over time and I don't know where Laura was finally laid to rest - but it is pretty certain that her body wasn't placed next to her husband's.

His body is still buried in that "green space" off Dellwood Road, in what is now an unmarked grave - along with many others.

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A New Dress

by Tom Carney



In 1935 sixty-five percent of the cotton farmers in Madison County were share-croppers. These people, immersed in poverty, became the forgotten history of our land. In an effort to understand what it was really like, I talked to three elderly people, two women and one man, who had lived as tenant farmers. The following is a composite of all their stories.

Under the hot broiling sun, scorching everything its rays came in contact with, a wizened old man with skin burnt like aged leather labored tiredly between the cotton rows. In the next row, his wife, wearing an odd apparel that had lost any resemblance to a dress years ago and bleached white by thousands of scrubblings with strong acrid lye soap, knelt on lacerated knees and desperately plucked at the ripened bolls.

Sunup to sundown; 200 pounds at 1/2 cent per pound. Pay the man at the store for the sack of flour you bought yesterday. That takes all the money, but you can buy again on credit tomorrow.

You have no other choice. This is your only way to earn a living in the bleak existence that nature has so cruelly bestowed upon you. For most, there was no hope of escaping the vicious cycle of tenant farming. Bound by debts to the land owner and untrained for other types of work, all they could expect was a pair of cheap shoes for the children to wear to school, or maybe a few store-bought groceries to supplement their standard diet of beans,

fat-back and cornbread.

In another few weeks the rains would begin and following that would come the cold, frigid blast of winter, 'spreading its gloom on the now exhausted fields. Young boys and old men would pace the floor like caged animals, pausing every so often to stare out the windows of the broken down hovels they called home, and curse the fate that made them slaves to unseen cotton mongols a thousand miles away.

Keep the fire going, ration what meager food there is and wait for the frozen ground to thaw. Walk down to the store. Maybe they will let you add some tobacco and a bag of flour to the long overdue bill.

Stop and talk to Lem Wilbanks over on the next farm. His daughter's expecting any day and her husband is up North, in Chicago, trying to find a job. Talk and kill time and wait. Wait for the warm showers of spring that will thaw the frozen earth and bind you to another year of servitude.

"Maybe next year," they would say, year after year, "Maybe next year will be better."

Spring jumps out suddenly across the barren land. The sopping red clay is now dry to the touch, waiting to embrace the seeds of a brand new cotton crop. It will be a new beginning, the start of new dreams. Tonight you will sleep the slumber of a conquering warrior, for tomorrow you will prove your manhood. You stand and look at the fields thru the early

morning twilight, daring and challenging the gods up above to anoint you, let you pay off your debts and maybe have enough left to buy your wife a new dress.

But as you pick up the hoe and begin trudging silently toward the dismal fields, a truth begins gnawing at you, deep inside. And no matter how hard you try to suppress the thought, it keeps coming back, and coming back, until it envelopes you in its overwhelming reality. And then, with your body shaking in convulsions, you hold your head in your hands and cry like a baby.

This year won't be any better and there won't be a new dress.

Cotton will still be King in Madison County. . . . But not for the people working in the fields.

Almost sixty years later, when the man talked about not being able to buy his wife a new dress, his eyes began blinking, and in an effort to hide the tears, he pulled out an old worn handkerchief and loudly pretended to blow his nose.

After regaining his composure, he refused to talk any more about share-cropping.





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Old Slew Foot (A Ghost Story)



by M.D. Smith IV

This story is real and was typical of many summer and fall evenings back in the late 40s. In the 40s when I was around 9 years old, my parents, Kirby and M.D. Smith, III had a group of friends and they would have social parties what seemed like every other weekend, but perhaps it was once a month. I was 9 and my sister was 4 years old and it seems all these other couples had one or two kids my age and younger. Sometimes it was held in backyards, but other times it was held in a park with a BBQ pit where they'd cook out.

My father bought WAAY Radio in 1958 and changed the call sign from WHBS to WAAY. He was not only a promoter, marketer and loved contests, but he was a story teller extraordinaire.

My parents had friends

in Homosassa, Florida where my father would go bass fishing several times a year. Those old salt fishermen, would hang out at a bar and they'd all tell the most astounding stories, tales and fables you have ever heard.

I think that's where my father got his penchant for story telling that would amaze young children. He was in the best mood for story telling when he was a bit "lubricated" at these parties. The adults didn't seem all that interested in his tales and fables, but the kids sure were.

I am sure he was amused from watching us gather round a Coleman lantern not far away from the campfire, but on the edge of the woods. It already felt a bit scary on a summer night with the night sounds in the forest nearby.

My mother would say, "Now M.D., don't scare the children. They'll never be able to sleep tonight."

And my father would promise to keep it non-scary, but it always was for us. He'd talk in a hushed tone and slowly look around at each one of us when he spoke, to make sure they were paying attention. I know he'd make some parts of the story differ-

"The reason women don't play football is because you'd never catch 11 of them wearing the same outfit together in public."

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ent each time, but often he'd start with the same character and the story would end differently and always scary.

His favorite and most terrifying character was "Old Slew Foot." Even at the beginning of the story, the way he'd describe this part man, part creature was scary. He'd say that no one ever saw Old Slew Foot in the daylight, but you could hear him coming from around a darkened corner on a street or from out of the forest on a summer's night.

Old Slew Foot had some kind of terrible foot deformity and his left foot sort of hung to the side. After he'd take a hop step forward, he'd drag his outward pointing foot and wore old shoes that had holes in them. This would make a dragging sound that my father would speak with a "ppppppsssstttt - thump" kind of sound with each step. This certainly got our attention.

Sometimes there might be a little girl or two with us boys, and often they'd leave even before the end of the story. Well, that's "girls" for you! We guys loved it. We loved to be scared. This was a time when we listened to "The Shadow" and "Inner Sanctum" on the radio late on a Friday or Saturday

night. These were good and sort of scary but nothing like my father's stories.

So here we are, with him sometimes putting himself in the hero's role, and telling of "Old Slew Foot" on his trail as he took a short cut through the graveyard going home from my mother's house when they were dating. Then he'd get real quiet and say, "Listen... do you hear something in the woods?"

The pause was deafening and we heard all sorts of things, but not the dragging foot sound. So my father would say, "Well, I guess not. It's too early." He'd continue to tell his tale with great enthusiasm and emphasis on certain words, just like those radio mystery dramas, only better.

As he would near the end of his strange and sometimes gory tale of ghosts walking in the graveyard and shadows following him, he'd always end as he'd be nearing safety of lightened streets or his home and "Ole Slew Foot" would be catching up with him. At this time, he'd talk slower and in more hushed tones and drag out all the words to make sure we heard every one as clearly as possible.

When he'd finally decide it was time to end the story,

as he was talking slow in hushed tones he'd say, "And while I am here to tell the tale, I just want to remind you kids to be very, very careful when you are out at night and you better watch out....(and then in a very loud voice, throwing up his arms and arching his back), OR OLD SLEW FOOT WILL GET YOU!"

At that point, every kid would scream and run back to the safety of their parents. Since I had heard parts of these stories before it didn't scare me ... as much. I really laughed at the startled shrieking of the little girls (if any were left) as well as my guy friends who were running as fast as their little legs would carry them, back to their mamas.

Those were really fun times and I wish my father were here today to tell me whatever happened to "Old Slew Foot" who I guess is immortal. If you ever find yourself walking through a graveyard on a quiet dark evening, you better be careful, or Old Slew Foot will get you!

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Let Me Introduce Myself

by Judy C. Smith

Let me introduce myself, I'm Samantha Lexis Smith. I live with M.D. and Judy Smith. Miss Judy, as I'll call her, rescued me from an orphanage, where I had lived for three years. One day I looked up and there she was with Miss Betty who comes to visit me twice a week. She brushes me and feeds me. I'm much appreciative of her kindness.

As you can probably tell by now I'm a cat, but no ordinary cat. I'm a registered CFA Blue Point Himalayan. I don't shed and I love to be brushed twice a day. You see I'm a high maintenance cat. Miss Judy saw Martha Stewart on TV talking about her Himalayan cats and how they had to be brushed twice a day. She just laughed telling Mr. M.D. "Who in Heaven's name would have time to do that?"

Well guess who bushes me twice a day? I never "Meow", I'm afraid I'll be sent back to the HOME. I like to sit at Miss Judy's feet on a piece of newspaper. At least it's better than on the bottom of the birdcage. I sleep under her bed, not on it. The other day Miss Judy was so sick so I jumped onto the bed and lay quietly beside her for several days. I'm so glad that she is better now.

Maybe she will take me to her lake house this weekend as I love to ride in the car. One of my favorite things to do at the lake is to sun myself on the top of the hot tub cover on the sun porch. The sun feels so good. I can watch all the birds and squirrels up close.

So my friends, go to an animal shelter and give a cat or dog another chance on life, like Miss Judy did. Uh-oh - here she comes with another cat, a Turkish Angora and he's big. What will Mr. M.D. say to that? Well, that's for another story.



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Tweetie's Pet Tips

Summer Tips for your Dog

"In the summer, dogs should learn to stay inside in a cage like sensible parakeets." *Tweetie*



Food

- No food will keep your dog cooler, but food helps keep body temperature up, so dogs may not need to eat as much in the summer.

- If your dog stays at a dog-friendly hotel with you or at a kennel, consider bringing food from home. A change in diet can cause diarrhea.

- Barbecues and picnics are a veterinarian's nightmare. Keep pets in the house or on a leash to prevent them from being fed or lapping up things that are bad for them, whether it's spilled alcohol or onion dip. Onions, garlic, grapes, raisins and chocolate are the most toxic foods for dogs.

Vacations

- Dogs can get carsick if they're not used to driving, so go for small trips before a road trip.

- On boats, consider a doggie life vest. Protect the dog from gasoline and other toxic products. At the beach, provide drinking water so the dog does not drink salt water.

- On planes, if your pet is small enough, keep it in the cabin with you. Call ahead because some airlines limit animals per flight. Be prepared to pay a fee and check on necessary paperwork.

- If your dog must fly as cargo, note that the U.S. Department of Transportation says short-faced breeds like pugs and bulldogs die during air transport at much higher rates than other breeds.

- If you're boarding your dog, remember that many kennels require proof of vaccines such as rabies and kennel cough.

Lawns

- Some lawn products are toxic to dogs and cats. Weed killers and herbicides are the worst — some cause cancer. Some fertilizers are also toxic. All a dog or cat has to do is walk on the lawn and lick its paws to be exposed.

Overheating

- Recognize overheating if you see it — excessive panting, difficul-

ty breathing, increased heart and respiratory rate, drooling, mild weakness, seizures, and elevated body temperatures over 104 degrees.

- A dog's coat is like insulation, warding off cold in the winter and heat in the summer. Trim, but don't give your dog a crew cut or such a close shave that it takes away that protection.

- A lot of dogs will just keep running until they drop because they have so much heart and so much energy. You have to be proactive.

- Animals with flat faces, like pugs and Persian cats, are more susceptible to heat stroke since they cannot pant as effectively.

- Sponge the animal with lukewarm water and seek veterinary care if you suspect overheating.

Windows

- Vet clinics frequently see pets that have fallen or jumped from apartment windows, roofs, balconies or fire escapes. Multiple limb fractures or potentially deadly internal or brain injuries often result.

- Use window screens, open windows from the top instead of the bottom, consider child-safety window guards.

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

Court Martial of the Mad Cossack

by Tom Carney

The crowd hissed and booed as Colonel Ivan Turchin, surrounded by armed guards, was escorted into the Huntsville courthouse.

A Russian emigre, he had offered his services to the Union at the beginning of the Civil War and became the symbol of all things considered despicable by the people of North Alabama.

Brigadier Gen. James Garfield, presiding officer of the court martial, made several attempts to start the proceedings, but his demands for silence were repeatedly drowned out by the ugly scene from outside the courthouse. Finally, angrily, he ordered the guards to clear the entire block surrounding the building.

The crowd, prodded by bayonet tips, grumbled but slowly dispersed, making sure their utterances reflected their condemnation of the beast who was standing trial.

Peace finally restored, the crowded courtroom's attention centered on the presiding officer. It was Garfield's first time to preside at a court martial and he found the assignment distasteful.

Curtly ordering the clerk to read the charges, he seemed in a great hurry to complete the entire affair.

"How do you plead?" He asked the short, heavy-built man in the

defendant's chair.

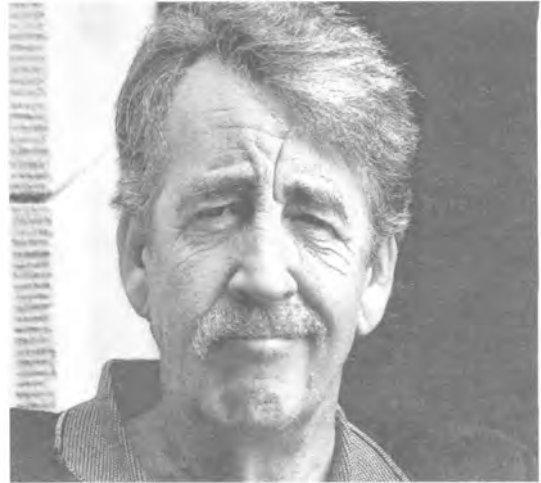
Col. Turchin, a haughty figure in his full spit-and-polish parade attire, jerked himself erect in a military manner reminiscent of his Prussian background. Delaying his response long enough to assure that he was the center of attention, he barked in a loud and commanding voice:

"Nyet guilty!"

He had been named Ivan Vasilvetich Turcheninov at birth, in Russia, and had pursued a military career before emigrating to America in 1856 with his wife, Nadine, a dark-haired beauty.

The outbreak of the Civil War found America's Union Army woefully short of trained officers. Through the efforts of his friend, George McClellan, Turchin was commissioned a colonel in the Nineteenth Regiment Illinois Volunteers.


From the beginning of his



American military career, Turchin had trouble obeying orders. Openly contemptuous of his commanders, he constantly reminded all within earshot that "the way to win wars is by fighting, not pulling garrison duty guarding potato patches!"

In addition, while wives of military men were forbidden to follow their men on military maneuvers, Turchin's wife accompanied him on his various campaigns. This caused considerable consternation among his junior officers and animosity among the other wives. He even had a uniform altered to fit Nadine, who often rode along-


A friend was bird hunting with Bear Bryant when the Bear took a shot. The bird kept flying. Bryant said to his friend, "Now that's something you don't see every day - a dead bird flying."



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side her husband at the head of the column of troops.

On April 11, 1862, General Ormsby Mitchel captured Huntsville in a surprise raid. After securing the town as a base of operations, he sent various units into the surrounding areas to occupy and guard them from Confederate forces.

Col. Turchin was sent west toward Tusculumbia and Sheffield to block the movements of Confederate units. One of these Rebel units was under the command of young Col. Ben Hardin Helm, a longtime thorn in the Union's side.

A brilliant officer of the Confederate Army, Helm was, ironically, President Lincoln's favorite brother-in-law.

Turchin quickly realized it would be impossible to conquer the Shoals area without maintaining a permanent garrison there. He would occupy a community one day, but as soon as he left, the citizens would, once again, defiantly raise the Stars and Bars.

After weeks of fruitless maneuvering and being taunted by Confederate sympathizers at every turn, Turchin's patience wore thin. He knew these people were aiding the Rebel cause while at the same time asking for Union protection, but Army regulations forbade him from taking any action against the citizens.

By May 2, 1862, when the 19th Illinois marched into Athens, Turchin was ready for revenge. What happened next became one of the bleakest episodes in Alabama's history.

After assembling his troops in the middle of downtown Athens, Turchin sat on his horse and stared at the soldiers for what seemed an eternity. Finally he spoke in his heavily accented voice:

"Men, I close mein eyes vor von hour." Dismounting, he turned his back on the troops and walked across the street to the hotel.

At first the troops remained in formation, confused at what they

had just heard. Finally, a grizzled old sergeant who had served with Turchin on earlier campaigns, let out a loud whoop and hurled a rock through a store window.

"Come on, boys," he yelled, "the town belongs to us!"

Instantly the soldiers, a normally well-disciplined unit, became a wild, lawless mob. Surging through the streets surrounding the square, they demolished doors and pillaged stores and homes in their frenzied delight. Residents who tried to resist the intrusions were cruelly beaten and, in many cases, the women raped.

One squad, which apparently included a demolitions expert, took vaults from the stores and blasted them apart in the middle of the street.

Within minutes the streets were littered with Confederate money, bonds and stock certificates. The only valuables the Yankee soldiers were interested in were Union greenbacks.

Had the scene not been so horrible, the townspeople might have laughed at some of the incidents unfolding before their eyes.

Three of the Yankee soldiers, in a drunken craze, plundered a woman's wardrobe and paraded up and down the main street wearing petticoats. Other soldiers, heeding the proverb


that "an army travels on its stomach," chased chickens and turkeys through the streets.

Meanwhile, Col. Turchin availed himself of the best room in the hotel, puffed a cigar and calmly read from a book on European history. His solitude was interrupted by a knock on the door.

It was the colonel's adjutant. "Sir," he said, "the hour is up."

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"Are the men done?" asked Turchin.

"Well, sir, they are scattered all over town." Taking a long draw off the cigar, Turchin reflected on what course to take next. If he did not stop his men now, what other atrocities might be committed?

His next comment shocked no one who knew him: "Let the men continue."

At the outset of the looting, several townspeople had mounted fast horses and traveled to Huntsville to seek protection from Gen. Mitchel.

At first Mitchel refused to believe the reports, but as word of more atrocities were received hourly, he became alarmed. Quickly he dictated a telegram to Turchin, demanding to know the cause for the accusations reaching Huntsville.

"Isolated incidents," replied Turchin. "I have everything under control."

Although Turchin may have tried to stop the looting in the days that followed, the situation had gotten out of control. The crimes continued.

Over the next several weeks, Gen. Mitchel repeatedly admonished Turchin to bring his troops under control. It was to no avail, however.

Finally, an exasperated Mitchel sent Turchin the following dispatch:

"I would prefer to hear that you had fought a battle and been defeated in a fair fight than to learn that your soldiers have degenerated into robbers and plunderers."

A few days later, court-martial charges were filed against the man who had become known as the "Mad Cossack."

The court-martial began on July 7 in the Athens courthouse. Twenty separate charges of rape and pillage were filed against Turchin. As presiding officer, Gen. Garfield was so shocked that he wrote his wife:

"I cannot sufficiently give ut-

terances to my horror of the ravage and outrages which have been committed. There has not been found in American history so black a page as that which will be the record of this campaign."

The townspeople of Athens made no secret of their hatred of the accused. Within two weeks, Garfield was forced to move the trial to Huntsville, hopefully to a more impartial atmosphere.

A recurring bout with jaundice had so weakened Garfield that he had to be carried into the Huntsville courthouse on a stretcher.



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In less than a month he had lost 43 pounds. His ill health, combined with having to live in the midst of Confederate sympathizers, caused his attitude toward Turchin to slowly change.

Although never a friend of the South, Garfield's bitterness toward the Rebels seemed to increase every day of the trial. A few days earlier, he had written: "Until the Rebels be made to feel that rebellion is a crime which the Government will punish, there is no hope of destroying it."

Now, as he listened to Turchin's testimony, he felt he had found a kindred soul.

"Since I have been in the Army," testified Turchin, "I have tried to teach these Rebels that treason to the United States was a terrible crime. My superior officers do not agree with my plans. They want the rebellion treated tenderly and gently. They may cashier (discharge) me, but I shall appeal to the American people and implore them to wage this war in such a manner as will make humanity better for it."

The trial lasted thirty-one days. Toward the end, Garfield was very sympathetic with Turchin, saying, "It would be good to have a few towns in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio suffer the same treatment."

Regardless of personal feelings for the defendant, the court was forced to find Turchin guilty because of the overwhelming evidence. The man now known as the Mad Cossack was found guilty of nineteen of the twenty charges and was ordered dismissed from service.

Despite the findings of the court, Garfield recommended that Turchin be granted clemency.

Weeks later, the dismissal came to President Lincoln's attention.

Lincoln was keenly aware of the publicity his "Southern in-laws," Ben Helm in particular, were generating in the Washington papers. Already, one New York pa-

per was editorializing that Turchin had been dismissed because of his pursuit of Lincoln's brother-in-law.

Col. Turchin's wife, the elegant Nadine, who was now in Washington, made sure the President read these editorials.

A short while later, Turchin's dismissal was overruled by Lincoln, who also raised him to the rank of Brigadier General. However, the rank and file of the Union army never respected him, and Turchin finally resigned in disgust. Ironically, his nickname, the "Mad Cossack," became prophetic. He died in 1901 as a raving maniac in an insane asylum in Illinois.

As for Lincoln's brother-in-law, Ben Helm, he died heroically on the field of battle while leading his Kentuckians at Chicamauga. Lincoln reportedly wept when he heard the news. Helm's widow and children, Confederate to the core, were taken to Washington

and became residents of Lincoln's White House.

Such furor arose over Mrs. Helm's constant outbursts against the Yankees, however, that Lincoln was forced to send her across the line to her old Kentucky home, along with her children, who had unnerved the White House staff by raising a Confederate flag on the Presidential lawn.

Helm's son had also raised eyebrows by running through the White House yelling, "Hoorah for Jeff Davis!" and arguing with Lincoln's son over who the real President was.

Despite his sentiments that other towns deserved the same treatment as Athens, Alabama, Gen. Garfield, upon returning to civilian life, entered politics and was elected President of the United States.

He didn't get many votes in Huntsville or Athens.

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A History of Giving - HEALS

by Pam Clasgens

In 1997, Priscilla Condon read an article in the Vanderbilt University alumni news letter about the school of nursing opening a School-Based Health Clinic in a low income school in Nashville. Thinking that Huntsville had several schools that would benefit from a similar program she started talking with community leaders.

Nancy Kramer (not her present name, she is remarried) helped put together a luncheon sponsored by Church of the Nativity to pitch the idea to local medical groups and principals from local low-income schools. Jim Black, Principal at Lincoln Elementary, was the only representative from the school system to attend. He enthusiastically embraced the idea and joined in the effort to get the first clinic opened at his school.

Originally there was a lot of opposition from the community and especially the school system that felt the liability of giving medical care without parents present was far too great. It took many months and meetings to convince enough people that the benefits far outweighed the risks.

Finally when it seemed

"Never go to bed angry. Stay up late and plot your revenge!"

Maxine

there was general support, Ms. Condon wrote a grant to the Huntsville Hospital Foundation Healthy Community program. This award was contingent upon UAB School of medicine being willing to work with the program.

A meeting was set up with Dean Fred Berg M.D. who invited Rachele Cassidy, a young physician in the Family Practice department. She agreed to be the medical director.

In January 1998, Ms. Condon was hired by UAB as the first Executive Director/Nurse Practitioner and Carol Anne Brown was hired as the first Social Worker. Besides the Huntsville Hospital Foundation, several local churches and clubs gave funding. Unfortunately, I don't remember all the wonderful groups who donated time and effort to get the clinic open.

I do remember that the youth group at the Church of the Nativity cleaned, painted and helped furnish the original clinic and that Nativity paid \$8,200 for the first year's rent.

The next task was to find a suitable name. Jim Black talked about how head lice was the number one cause of his students missing school and jokingly the group came up with Head Lice Eradication at Lincoln School. We realized that spelled HEALS and the name was born. Instead of headlice, it became Health Establishments at Local Schools.

In January 1999, the Lincoln clinic finally opened. The parents, teachers and children enthusiastically embraced the clinic and almost immediately the clinic was packed with sick

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children. Children who had not had access to any medical care were receiving well child check-ups, treatment for chronic illnesses and immediate care for acute problems. Many children had received only emergency room treatment of their asthma and for the first time they had access to preventive measures. Parenting classes were taught along with help in enrolling families in Medicare.

Soon after opening the staff realized that one of the biggest needs of the children was access to dental care. A grant was submitted to the Robert Wood Johnson foundation and HEALS was selected as one of four programs in the country to receive funding for a dental program. The \$250,000 grant paid for refitting an old classroom trailer that was donated by the school system and used by staff for 3 years. Local dentists were recruited to volunteer and in September 2000 the dental clinic opened.

It didn't take long for the community, especially the school system, to see the benefits of having medical care available in the low-income neighborhoods. Student attendance and test scores improved. Within a year Terry Heights and West Huntsville schools approached the board of directors trying to get a HEALS clinic at their schools.

During the second year of operation, Rachelle Casity suddenly died and Michael O'Dell, M.D., Director of Family Practice at UAB, took over as medical director. The clinic at Lincoln was named in Dr. Casity's memory and the second clinic at Terry Heights

was named in Michael O'Dell's honor.

Unfortunately, I don't remember all of the people who helped get the program started but I do remember Peggy Fambrough was instrumental in getting UAB to agree to sponsor HEALS and she served as the first President of the Board of Directors. I thought I would remember more details but time has erased many of the names from my memory.

I do remember that other than the Robert Wood Johnson grant, 100% of support came from local funding. Local businesses and churches were incredibly generous.

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GRANDMA'S KITCHEN TIPS

If you put a toothpick in a clove of garlic before you put it in your soup pot, it will be easier to find to remove it later.

Freshen up wilted vegetables by soaking them in a tub of water that contains the juice of one lemon or a tablespoon full of vinegar.

You can reheat baked potatoes by dipping them in hot water, then rebaking them in a moderate oven till hot.

To chop small amounts of food, use your kitchen shears.

To keep rice kernels separated when cooked, add 1 1/2 tsp lemon juice to the boiling water.

Carrots cooked in their skins until tender, the skins will slip off easily when cooked.

For a new taste in tea, add a small bit of dried orange peel to the teapot.

For a delicious change in fish, stuff it with a dressing of rice and seasoning.

Pin feathers from poultry can be picked off with a strawberry huller or tweezer.



My Memories of Kildare Mansion

by Eugenia "Jean" Pitsinger as told to
Susan Holiday Aug. 2014

There once was a magical place in Huntsville called Kildare Mansion. I have the fondest memories of visiting that castle as a child on May Day.

It was spring of 1922 when we were invited to spend the day at the beautiful brick home. The grounds covered acres of land. It was a beautiful castle, with towers, tall windows and balconies. There were tennis courts and an iron fence surrounded it all. As far as I could see, there were acres of groomed lawn. The air was fragrant with trees, wisteria, flowers and grass. Huge shade trees were scattered throughout the grounds so that we weren't in the sun for very long during that day. There was a small fountain.

We could see that big stately house from Meridian Street, off to the left just as

we left the city going north. We didn't have anything but a little two-lane gravel road going out there then. It was way out in the country. The house was also called the

McCormick House because by then Miss McCormick lived there in the summers.

This was the time before pants were in style for girls. We wore our very best little summer Sunday School dresses with new slippers of white or black. Full skirts billowed in the breeze. It was such a colorful day because the dresses would flounce and bounce when we danced the May Pole and criss-crossed its colorful ribbons.

After weaving the ribbons we had to reverse the process and let the next group dance. Group after group danced the May Pole that day. The boys wore their Sunday best too. The day seemed to be over far too soon. We had such fun.

We must have played other games together, because I remember there was an adult who was organizing the event but I don't

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recall other than dancing around the May Pole.

A small white deer, a pet on the grounds, danced with us and added to the feeling of magic in the forest. We never saw other animals; they must have been in the trees but I do remember being more interested in the deer than in the May Pole.

The big house was elegant and seemed magical to us. Its many stories were beyond any other house in the Huntsville area.

The inside was said to be gorgeous but we children were not allowed inside, especially after we had eaten the sandwiches, drunk the fruit juices and savored ice cream cones; the tall type, not the short flat bottomed ones, with two big scoops. We could rinse our hands in the small fountain outside. The rest rooms were located at the rear of the house.

Miss McCormick was brought out on the second story porch located over the entrance. She looked out over all of us and she would clap and seemed to enjoy it all. I thought she must be the queen of her castle, just like a fairy tale queen.

Miss McCormick was not well but her companion (nurse and attendant) Mrs. Walker, attended to her business. They would arrange for various groups of mill children to come to a celebration on

the lawn. Our group had May Day that year and there was a tall May Pole with lovely streamers floating all around it.

My father had been superintendent of West Huntsville Mill until he died in the influenza epidemic of 1918. In 1922 my mother, brother and I were still living in the mill village and were kindly included in many of the events arranged for the children and families.

My father and other business men had asked Mrs. Walker previously to fund the West Huntsville YMCA for all of the families in the area. She (through Mrs. Walker) arranged for it to be built so we knew that she was very generous. I spent many happy days at that YMCA. There were showers which was such a treat compared to the #3 washtub

before our kitchen stove at home. There were bars of Palmolive soap and the scent of the soap still takes me back to those steamy delicious showers.

The YMCA also held kindergarten classes and I still have my certificate, believe it or not. On Saturday evenings there were family movies and I can still see the flickering images of the heroine in peril on the railroad tracks and the hero riding in at the last second to save her. My mother, brother and I enjoyed those days immensely.

That May Day vividly lives on in my mind's eye even though many years have passed.

It is a moment I visit often in my memories and truly wish that everyone could visit that graceful, gorgeous, most perfect place and day with me.

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DOLLFACE
A MOSSES PALMER CRIME THRILLER
J. D. FROST

From Huntsville to Hollywood - the Accomplishments of Harry Townes



by *Cathey Carney*

Harry Townes was born in Huntsville on September 18, 1914 and died 23 May 2001. This month Harry would have been 100 years old. He is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery and the city is very proud of their "Home Town Boy".

Harry Townes was born and died in Huntsville. He attended the University of Alabama in the 1930s, but moved to New York before finishing, in order to study acting.

He found his niche at Columbia University where he also received his undergraduate degree. From there, it was on to roles on stage — his first in 1936 playing Captain Tim in "Tobacco Road".

A two-year run in the part of a leprechaun in "Finian's Rainbow" came next -- a role that also took him to London.

After a spattering of roles in the movies, Townes found his greatest presence on television, amassing a very large portfolio of roles for his handbag of characters.

Studio One in Hollywood (1948), Playhouse 90 (1956) and Ponds Theater (1953) all enjoyed his contributions. The more popular Gunsmoke (1955), Perry Mason (1957), Star Trek (1966), Rawhide (1959) and Bonanza (1959) also benefited

from Townes' unique acting skills.

Though he continued to perform occasionally into old age, he quit his Beverly Hills home and lifestyle, entered the priesthood, put himself through the seminary and settled back into his hometown of Huntsville in the 1970s where he served as an ordained Episcopal priest. Aside from Huntsville and the priesthood, he had a distinguished, prolific and quite lengthy career as a character actor in movies and on television.

Harry Townes appeared in "The Four of Us Are Dying," a Twilight Zone episode, and in "The First," a two-parter of the Incredible Hulk TV series. In both, he played a man who could change his form (in the Twilight Zone, he could change his face; in the Hulk, he could also turn into a Hulk).

In both, he planned to run away with a wom-

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an, but before he could, was accosted in his hotel room by a man with a gun. In both episodes he escaped and changed form, only to be shot to death by still another person with a gun, who only shot him because he was in his other form. In both, he reverted to his original appearance in death.

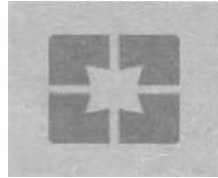
Harry Townes is interred at Maple Hill Cemetery in Huntsville, Alabama. Not many people knew that Townes served in the Air Corps for four years during World War II.

One of Harry's last quotes, in thinking about his life and what he had accomplished, was:

"I guess we're never entirely happy with what we do; we would like to do better. I feel I was lucky to get the work that I did. You always feel thankful because there are so many actors for so few jobs that it seems God is being good to you when you get a job. Of course, I would have loved to have done better, we all would. But we always think we can do it better in one more take."

"On the whole, I'm satisfied, though. As long as the audience was satisfied, then I'm satisfied."

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Earl Claxton Warren

by Malcolm W. Miller

Earl Claxton Warren was born June 12, 1925 in Jefferson County, Alabama, the son of Elijah Ewing Warren and Willie Mae Stephens Warren. A few years after Claxton's birth the family moved to the Meredeanville, AL community. After a short stay there they moved to the Ryland community where they lived about a mile down Wall Road from where I was born.

The Warren family were all good salt-of-the-earth people. Like my family they were very poor tenant farmers trying to make it from one year to the next hoping for better things each year. However, during the Great Depression and World War II those better years were slow coming.

Like many farm families back then, the Warren's had a house full of kids. I only knew some of the older ones: Louise, Marvin, Earl Claxton, (who I called "Clax"), Malcolm "Craw Dad", Wilma and Sue.

There always seemed to be something special about Clax. I played on the basketball team with him at Central and he was always outstanding in every way. He had a strong muscular body and a magnetic personality that most people were drawn to. He was the type of individual that you just knew would be successful in whatever endeavor he undertook.

I lost track of Clax after he finished school at Central and I moved to Meredianville. When Pearl Harbor was attacked Claxton was sixteen years old. He tried to join the Army when he was sixteen but couldn't get in. His Dad would not sign for him and wanted him to finish high school. When he turned seventeen he volunteered and was accepted; at the age of seventeen he did not need his Dad's signature.

Six days after his 18th birthday Claxton landed in Pointe du Hoc, France, as a member of the 2nd Ranger Battalion in the European theater during World War II. He and his fellow soldiers were charged with scaling the cliffs and destroying cannons so the Allied invasion fleet could land. Taking advantage of bad weather, fog, rain and cold, and catching the Germans off guard, this group was able to destroy many enemy cannons.

Although more than half of his fellow soldiers were killed in the process, they had cleared the way for their invasion fleet to come ashore.

Claxton later fought in the Hedgerow Battles for two months. It was called the Hedgerow Battles as the French had farms with hedgerows for fences. There were open spaces at the corner of each field. The Germans had

machine gun nests covering each entrance. It took a lot of time to cover the next 30 miles before reaching St. Lo, France. By the time they reached St. Lo, General Patton had taken command of the complete Third Army. He had replaced General Omar Bradley. General Patton had a nickname, "Blood and Guts".

Colonel James Rudder who was over the Second Battalion joined Claxton's unit just prior to the Battle of the Bulge. The units went past Paris through Luxemburg toward the Battle of the Bulge. Due to the beauty of Paris, the Red Cross negotiated an agreement to not destroy Paris. Paris was occupied by the French underground forces and not damaged.

At the Battle of the Bulge Claxton's feet were frozen, however the doctors decided



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to save them. Of his original company that landed in Normandy, only five survived. He later told his friends and family that it was impossible to describe the horrors and suffering during World War II and was also impossible to erase the bad memories that linger with soldiers as long as they live. Claxton was awarded four Bronze Stars for his service to our country.

After Claxton was discharged from the Army he went on to graduate from Madison County High School, then attended Tennessee Tech University on a four-year football scholarship. He then earned his MBA from Memphis State University and was active in banking and insurance in Hartselle. His last employment, for a span of thirty years, was as an agent with ALFA Insurance.

He was active in Hartselle civic activities including Kiwanis, Rotary, School Board and Chamber of Commerce. He was also Chairman of Hartselle Housing Authority for nineteen years.

Earl (Clax) served his Lord as an Elder in the Hartselle Church of Christ for 24 years, a song leader for 47 years and a Bible teacher for 50 years. On several occasions he served as a missionary to Romania.

Earl was known to friends as "Coach" as he was a teacher and coach of basketball, football and baseball for eleven years. He was inducted in DeKalb County Sports Hall of Fame in 2000 and Morgan County Hall of Fame in 2009.

Claxton had a paralyzing stroke October 13, 2012. While he was in a nursing home rehab he was presented the Paul Harris Fellow Award from Rotary International for his service at Port Du Hoc, France on "D" Day.

He passed away May 9, 2013. He is survived by his wife Christine E. Richardson Warren as well as his daugh-

ter Susan Warren Nolen, two brothers, two sisters, many grandchildren, greatgrandchildren, nephews, nieces and many friends. He was preceded in death by his wife of 49 years, Anna Louise Alverson Warren and a daughter, Linda Susan Warren.

On July 4, 2013 at the Spirit of America Festival in Decatur, Alabama, Claxton was awarded the Barrett C. Shelton, Sr. Freedom Award, after his death. This award honors "The Teenager at Pointe Du Hoc" who bravely served his country and made significant contributions to his community and state."

There are so many of these World War II heroes, as well as heroes from other wars, who have given their lives in battle for our freedom. Also those who lived to return to their families had a lifetime of war memories that followed them in whatever they did and wherever they went.

We all need to be very thankful for those who have fought and died for our freedom.

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