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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Frank James - the Huntsville Trial



Just after midnight on February 20, 1884 a man was moved to the Huntsville County jail and the booking procedure was finished. The prisoner was allowed to enter his cell where he immediately laid down on the cot, turned his back to the curious guards and went to sleep.

It was not until the next day that the citizens of Huntsville realized that one of the most infamous outlaws in history, Frank James, was locked up in their county jail.

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Domie Lewter
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Frank James - the Huntsville Trial

by Tom Carney

As the south bound train from Nashville slowly pulled to a stop in front of the Huntsville Depot, an armed sentry carefully surveyed the dark and empty platform. After reassuring himself that it was safe, he motioned to the waiting train car. In a few minutes a middle aged man, in handcuffs, emerged from the train, followed by a heavily armed Federal Marshal. Quickly the men boarded a waiting carriage for the short ride to the corner of Clinton and Green Streets, the site of the Madison County jail.

Inside the jail there was a brief heated discussion between one of the Federal Marshals and John W. Cooper, the Sheriff. The Marshal wanted to book the prisoner under an alias but Cooper refused, saying it was against regulations. Another complication arose when it was realized there

were no empty cells. The problem was quickly solved by removing two prisoners from an upstairs corner cell and locking them up in a downstairs storage room. Finally, a few minutes after midnight, on February 20, 1884, the booking procedure was finished and the prisoner was allowed to enter his cell where he immediately laid down on the cot, turned his back to the curious guards and went to sleep.

It was not until the next day that the citizens of Huntsville realized that one of the most infamous outlaws in history, Frank James, was locked up in their county jail.

Excitement in Huntsville had been building ever since a small column appeared in a February 12 edition of a Huntsville newspaper. The article related how Frank James had been found innocent of a train robbery in Missouri and was scheduled to be brought back to Huntsville to stand trial for a robbery of a United States paymaster at Muscle Shoals on March 11, 1881.

Originally James had been scheduled to arrive on an afternoon train but as anticipation began building in Huntsville, the authorities began to have second thoughts. James, an ex-Confederate soldier, was much admired throughout the Tennessee Valley and had many friends in the region. He had been to Huntsville several

"You always learn something from the late night talk shows - usually that you should have gone to bed earlier."

Karl Peterson, Huntsville



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times in the past but always declined to give details of his visits.

In the end, the authorities solved the problem by having James disembark at the Nashville train station and catch a later one, a freight train, on to Huntsville.

Almost immediately, after news of Frank James being in Huntsville began to spread, a crowd started gathering in front of the jail. The building, surrounded by an eight foot wooden fence, had been extensively remodeled since the fall of the previous year when a crowd of enraged citizens stormed the jail and lynched Wes Brown, who had been accused of a brutal murder of a Huntsville policeman. Now the jail boasted of heavy, double-thick doors and shutters that could be closed and locked from the inside. Despite these precautions, however, the sheriff still thought it advisable to post an armed guard at the front door to screen visitors and deter sympathizers.

The first official visitor to see

Frank James was LeRoy Pope Walker, one of the area's most respected attorneys and the ex-Confederate Secretary of War. He had been referred to James by General Joseph Wheeler, another highly respected attorney and an ex-Confederate general. Wheeler had been contacted by James's supporters by telegram almost immediately once it became known that he would be standing trial in Huntsville but had to decline due to other commitments.

After a short consultation, Walker and James, accompanied by guards and followed by a large crowd, walked the few blocks to the corner of Eustis and Green, the site of the Calhoun house which was being used as a Federal Courthouse. At the courthouse there was a few minutes delay while the authorities tried to control the crowd who were scrambling for admittance. Finally, once a semblance of order was established, Judge Bruce read the charges against Frank James and asked how he pled.

LeRoy Walker, speaking for

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his client, rose quickly and answered "not guilty." Trial was set for April 17.

If the city fathers had wanted to plan an event to boost Huntsville's tourism, they could not have done better than the trial of Frank James. Within days almost every hotel room in Huntsville was booked and restaurants and saloons reported a booming business. Newspapers from as far away as New York and Chicago sent reporters to cover the trial and gather local information. Ironically, even at this early date, northern newspapers were already predicting that Frank James would be found innocent, solely because, "the Tennessee Valley is a hotbed of secessionists who would never convict one of their own."

Secessionist or not, LeRoy Walker knew he would have a hard time defending his client. Not only did the government appear to have a strong case, Frank James had already been tried and convicted in the press. For years, whenever an editor wanted to boost readership, he simply printed another lurid story attributing one more crime to the accused outlaw. Needless to say, most of the general public believed the stories.

Walker's first move was to enlist a first-class legal team consisting of his nephew, Richard W. Walker, a former member of the Alabama Supreme Court and James W. Newman, a resident of Winchester, Tennessee.

The prosecuting attorney, L. W. Day, quickly realized that with a trial of this magnitude he was going to need help. He sent word to Montgomery requesting another attorney to help in the preparation. The state Attorney General, William H. Smith, a former Republican Alabama Governor with aspirations to be appointed to the Supreme Court, promptly held a press conference to announce that he was personally going to be prosecuting the case.

While his attorneys prepared for trial, James settled into life behind bars. He had been locked up continuously since October of 1882 when he surrendered to authorities in Missouri. He already had the convict's habit of sleeping twelve hours a night and spent most of his time either reading or playing checkers with a guard. Though at first

he declined to give interviews, after talking with his attorney he began talking with select reporters, probably in an effort to gain favorable publicity. He refused however, to pose for photographs, again on the advice of counsel.

Almost two weeks before the trial was to begin, Huntsville was taken by surprise when Mrs. Frank James and their six year old son, Robert, checked into the McGee Hotel. With them was Mrs. Zee James, the widow of Jesse James.

Mrs. Jesse James had already attended a trial in Huntsville once before when the year earlier she had given evidence against Dick Liddil, one of the men accused in the Muscle Shoals payroll robbery. She had resisted giving any testimony that might implicate her husband or brother-in-law in the robbery but insisted she had heard Liddil brag about it.

"Ate salad for dinner. Mostly croutons & tomatoes. Really just one big round crouton covered with tomato sauce. And cheese. OK, it was a pizza. I ate a pizza!"




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No one could understand why she was in Huntsville again, though.

The trial of Frank James vs. the United States Government began promptly at 9:00 in the morning of April 17. The courtroom, originally designed as a dining room, was packed with reporters with few seats left for spectators. Frank James was seated at a long wooden table with his wife, son and three attorneys while a few feet away sat the prosecuting attorneys. In front of them, to the left of the judge's desk, sat the jury, made up of six ex-Confederate soldiers, three ex-union soldiers and four who had seen no military service. Earlier the judge had replaced one juror when it was discovered there was an outstanding warrant for his arrest.

Missing in the courtroom was Mrs. Zee James, the widow of Jesse James.

After preliminary business, the trial opened with District Attorney Day making opening statements. With a low voice and self assured manner that

belied his youthful age, Day paced back and forth before the jury as he told how Frank James, Jesse James, Bill Ryan and Dick Liddil had conspired to rob the paymaster at Muscle Shoals. The outlaws had been living under assumed names a few miles outside of Nashville where, after reading of the large construction project at Muscle Shoals, it was decided that Frank, Jesse, and Ryan would travel there to rob the paymaster while Liddil remained in Nashville to look out for the outlaws' families. The prosecutor then told how he was going to produce witnesses who would place James at the robbery.

The defense took only a few minutes in opening arguments cautioning the jurors to keep an open mind until they had heard all their evidence. Most

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of the spectators were in agreement that it looked bad for Frank James.

The first witness for the prosecution was Thomas Peden, who owned a saloon near Muscle Shoals. Taking his time, Day elicited the information that on the day of the robbery, three men had stopped at his saloon. He minutely described the men as well as the horses they rode. Asked if the accused, Frank James, was one of the men, Peden replied, "I think so."

Cross examination for the defense was short but brutal. LeRoy Walker approached the witness, and after staring at him for what seemed like an eternity, asked what "I think so" means. Without waiting for Peden to reply Walker motioned for James to stand up.

With feigned anger in his voice he asked, "Can you positively identify this man beyond a shadow of a doubt as the man you saw that day?"

Peden, after swallowing hard for a few seconds said, "I think it is him but I can't say for sure."

"I didn't think so," mocked Walker as he threw a sheaf of papers back on the table.

Andrew Smith, the government employee who was robbed, was called next. He described how he was met by three men, who, with drawn pistols, compelled him to throw up his hands. The men then took from his person \$5,200, forcing him to travel with them for several miles until releasing him. He then went on to tell how he had received a telegram from the Nashville City Marshal several days later asking him to travel to Nashville. They had arrested a man for shooting up a saloon who fit the description of one of the robbers, Bill Ryan. Upon searching him they found two six shooters, a sack of gold coins and a fistful of 20 and 50 dollar bills.

After Smith identified Ryan as one of the men who had robbed him, the suspect began asking about a possible deal if he could implicate Frank and Jesse James.

Although Smith insisted that he thought Frank James was one of the robbers, when cross examined by Walker he said he "just could not be absolutely sure."

The government next called J. N. Wilcome who testified to meeting three strangers on the

Shoals road the same day as the robbery, one of whom he believed to be Frank James.

For once, when LeRoy Walker approached the witness, he seemed unsure of himself, almost hesitant in his question-

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ing. After leading the witness through his testimony again, he asked him to describe the men again.

"Take your time," Walker said, "just describe everything you can remember."

The witness seemed to almost relish the spotlight as he described the men's clothing, hats, saddles and horses in minute detail. After a few moments it was apparent to everyone that Walker was about to spring a trap.

"Do you realize," the attorney asked the expansive witness, "That none of your descriptions match what the other witnesses have testified to? Maybe you want to think about it some more." Walker turned abruptly and returned to his seat leaving the witness still muttering, "... but I still think it is him."

Next, Hugh Riley was called as a witness for the prosecu-

tion. In a short testimony he told how he owned a saloon near Muscle Shoals and how on the day of the robbery three men had stopped at his establishment. After describing the men, he caused the audience to chuckle when he said he noticed them because he thought they were "revenue men."


"Yes," he said, "I believe the man sitting there (pointing to James) is the man I saw that day."

Cross examination was by Robert Walker who was unable to shake Riley's testimony except to note that the horse he described as being ridden by James did not fit the description everyone else had given.

At this point a break was

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called by the judge. Although the trial had already taken almost three hours few people, except for the judge and attorneys, left their seats for fear they would lose them. There were still crowds of people outside clamoring to be let in.

Just as the bailiff started to call the court to order, excited whispering swept across the room as all eyes were directed toward a small demure woman, clad in black mourning clothes, entering the courtroom. Escorted by LeRoy Walker, she was led to the defense table where she took a seat next to the accused. It was Zee James, the widow of Jesse James.

As soon as the court came to order, the prosecution, represented by ex-Governor Smith, called Dick Liddil to the stand.

Immediately, the defense objected on the grounds that he had been convicted of grand larceny in Missouri, and that his infamous crimes made him an incompetent witness. The government countered by offering a pardon granted to Liddil by the Governor of Missouri.

Judge Bruce overruled the objection and let the examination continue.

Asking his questions carefully, Smith had Liddil describe when and how he had first met the James brothers in Missouri and later followed them to Tennessee where Frank was living under the alias of B. J. Woodson. Liddil went on to describe how Frank and Jesse James, along with Bill Ryan, planned the robbery in his presence and

how he remained in Nashville to take care of the families. After the robbery he heard of Ryan getting arrested and warned the James brothers. They immediately left Nashville, with the families following several days later, and headed to a hideout in Kentucky.

The careful and concise testimony of Liddil, combined with his knowledge of the inner workings of the James gang, appeared devastating for the defense, leaving them no choice but to pull out all stops to discredit him.

LeRoy Walker began the cross examination, barely bothering to hide the disdain he felt for the witness.

"Isn't it true that the only reason you are not in jail is because you agreed to testify



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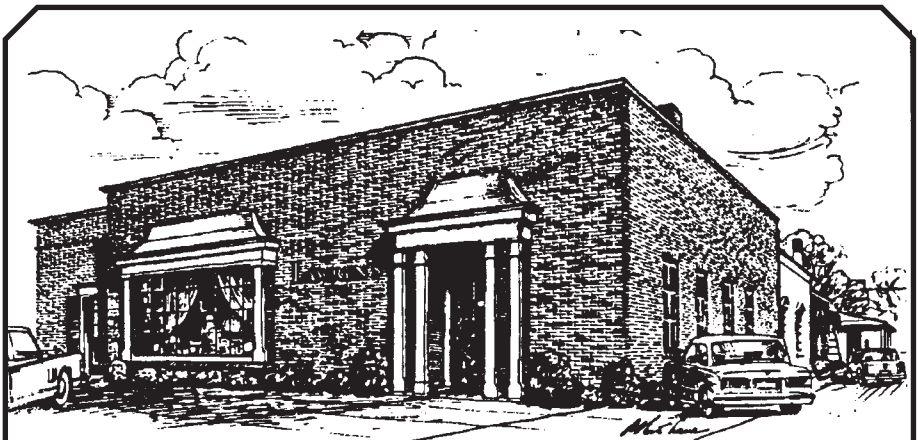
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Groucho Marx

against a man you once called a friend?"

"Objection!"

"Sustained."

Taking another approach, Walker began going over every detail of Liddil's testimony. Liddil refused to budge from his original story. Try as he might, Walker could not shake him. Finally, in a voice dripping with sarcasm, he pointed to the widow of Jesse James and literally shouted to Liddil, "Isn't it true that you conspired with Bob Ford to kill that woman's husband in cold blooded murder?"

Governor Smith jumped to his feet angrily objecting to Walker's line of questioning.

Suddenly, half rising from her seat, Mrs. Jesse James looked Liddil straight in the eye and mouthed the words "murderer!"

The judge sustained the objection but the damage was already done.

The courtroom was stunned. It was not common knowledge that Liddil had conspired with Ford, and regardless of what Jesse James was, or had done, most people found his murder a distasteful and cowardly act. In all likelihood, Walker wanted to get this information to the jury but knowing the court would not allow it, he set up the situation knowing how exactly how Jesse's widow would react.

A half hour recess was called. Everyone in the room stood as the widow of Jesse James, leaning slightly on the arm of LeRoy Walker, made her exit.

Now it was time for the defense to present their case. Although they had already managed to win a certain amount of sympathy for their client, the evidence seemed overwhelming to most observers.

S.H. Fields, a city detective in Nashville, took the stand, and after being sworn in, identified Frank James as the man whom he had known as Woodson. Fields went on to tell about James being employed by the Indiana Lumber Company as a teamster and said he had gotten to know him well. He distinctly remembered seeing James on three different occasions in Nashville on the day of the payroll robbery in Muscle Shoals. When pressed for details, Fields described seeing James in the office of a

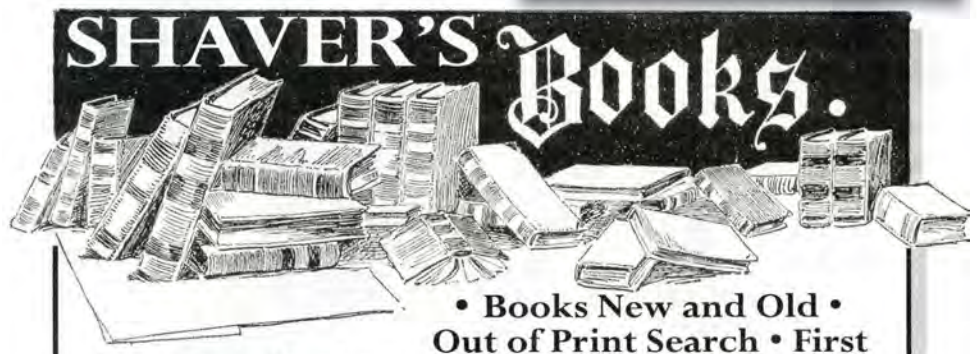
local magistrate, once at the blacksmith shop of Jonas Taylor and once in front of Fisher's restaurant.

Next, Jonas Taylor, a blacksmith in Nashville, was called. He testified that he had known James for several years in Nashville. On the day of the robbery

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James had brought his horse to the shop to be shod. There was no doubt in his mind that the defendant was the man he saw that day. He then produced ledgers to show that James had paid him for the work on the following day.

The prosecution immediately tried to discredit the ledgers by attempting to show that they had been altered. The defense rebutted this by calling an attorney from Nashville who had discovered the ledgers. After a careful examination he testified that they were in the same condition as when he had originally found them.

Mr. Brown, a Justice of the Peace in Nashville, took the stand to swear that he believed the defendant was the same man he had seen in Nashville on the day in question. When pressed for details, he said James had accompanied another man to a hearing in his court and produced the records of the case to substantiate his memory.

By now the prosecution's case was beginning to look frayed around the edges. Governor Smith, probably seeing the handwriting on the wall, left the courtroom and began telling the waiting reporters that he had been there "mainly as a spectator."

Meanwhile, the defense attorneys kept pressing their case that James could not have participated in the robbery for the simple fact that he was in Nashville at the time. Walker began calling a parade of witnesses in a rapid manner, keeping each of them on the stand for only a few minutes.

W. H. Spann testified that he had seen James in Nashville and offered a receipt as proof of his memory. Jack Smith, a detective, recalled seeing James and talking to him on the day

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in question. He said he remembered the day well because he was on his way to serve a warrant. Martin Brewer swore to seeing James that day as well as the following day.

Satisfied that he had made a shambles of the prosecution's case, LeRoy Walker concluded his case.

Assistant Attorney Day attempted to salvage part of the government's case by calling two more witnesses who had seen the outlaws the day of the robbery. Both witnesses, however, refused to identify Frank James as one of the men they had seen. Day made no attempt to hide his anger at the witnesses' testimony.

At this point the trial was literally over except for the summations. Day made a gallant effort to salvage the case in his closing argument but the tone of his voice showed that he knew it was already over. LeRoy Walker, sensing victory, displayed the same oratorical skills that had once made him such a popular figure in the Confederate government. At one point he actually leaned over to the jurors and confided, in a loud stage whisper, "I am proud to be representing Frank James because he was a Confederate soldier."

Evidently he believed the case was so strong he could ignore the Union veterans sitting on the jury.

After both sides had finished, Judge Bruce instructed the jurors and at 6:00 in the evening they began deliberations. They returned within minutes

to announce their verdict: Not Guilty!

Cheering broke out when the verdict was announced and James rushed to shake LeRoy Walker's hand. A witness said later that Mrs. James looked as if she was about to cry.

The jubilation was short lived though when a stranger made his way through the crowd and presented James with a warrant from Missouri for his arrest. Handcuffs were placed on his wrists and he was once again led back to the cell from which he had hoped to be free.

Early the next morning Frank James, accompanied by armed Marshals, boarded a northbound train for Missouri, never to return to Huntsville.

Although Frank James was found innocent, legends and myths about his time in Huntsville continued to thrive. Within a few years the trial itself was largely forgotten but locals would swear that Frank and his brother, Jesse, had robbed the bank here and jumped off the Big Spring bluff while making their escape.

Another persistent story, actually printed in the newspapers at the time, had Frank James charming the women of Huntsville and buying

drinks for the jurors after the trial.

Historians never realized that reporters, in an attempt to make deadlines, had written the story before the trial was even over.

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SHOOTING AND STABBING IN HAZEL GREEN

from 1878 newspaper



One Person Shot Blind, Another Stabbed by his Own Brother

We learn of two serious difficulties in the Hazel Green district last week. On Tuesday night, Mr. Talent shot William Weaver in the head, the ball

passing through the only good eye Weaver had, leaving him totally blind. They were in a quarrel at Key's Mill and it is said that there was a good deal of whiskey around. Also that both men had been drinking all day. Talent was arraigned before Justice Fowler and after an investigation was discharged. Weaver was alive when last heard from and may recover.

The second affair was between two brothers by the name of Holloway, in the same district four miles from Hazel Green, last Friday, in which Gabe Holloway was cut in the abdomen by his own brother. There was a game of cards going on and Gabe Holloway was trying to induce his brother, who was engaged in the game, to quit playing and go to work, whereupon his brother grew angry, according to our information and cut him. He is in very critical condition.

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Memories *by Herman H. Hunt*

I was born in Elon, Alabama in 1919. Most people don't know where that is - it is between Hobbs Island and Bugg Chapel. The population was 100 people or less. Frank Colbume had a grocery store and Charles Watson was the County Commissioner with the shed at Elon. Bush Cemetery at Elon is where my people are buried.

I have some really good memories of those days. My Uncle Erskine told everyone that Guntersville Dam was going to burst. My cousin crawled under the floor and attached a wire to the radio. He said, "Attention, folks, the Dam has broken, head for the mountain." It caused quite a stir, but wasn't true.

My uncle Erskine and Wonnie Watson decided to play a trick on their friend William Rice. Erskine went ahead and carried a gun. William Rice had a lantern. Uncle Erskine shot in the air, and Uncle Wonnie fell to the ground. Mr. Rice threw the lantern in the air and jumped a ditch. His hat was never found. He ran to an old crank phone and told Mrs. Watson that her husband Wonnie was dead. She was happy to find out it wasn't true.

We had a sink hole on our land. Someone placed a dummy in the hole with shoes sticking straight out. Nearly everyone in Elon went down there to look at the "body." Uncle Erskine said, "You ladies stand back." He pulled at the shoes and found out that it was just a joke.

Our school bus had to have the front wheel jacked up to be cranked. Mr. Ikard carried his daughter to school in a covered wagon.

Some boy one time tied a bunch of empty cans to a mule's tail. You've never heard such a racket. Somebody even called the sheriff.

I went to the Yellow Bank 2-room schoolhouse at Yellow Bank next to Bugg Chapel. My teachers were Clara Payne and Lucille Rice. They both boarded at Walter Brannum's across from the school. Back then, you couldn't be married and teach.

"That scoundrel deserves to be kicked in the rear by a jackass and I'm just the one to do it."

Candidate running for office in California

Mr. Hill, our principal, oftentimes had to use a boat to Yellow Bank school when the water would flood and get over the road.

New Hope played Bugg Chapel in baseball. They sent Bugg Chapel a box of cigars, saying "How dead is Bugg Chapel!" They sent New Hope a box saying how crooked New Hope was.

I saw the St. Louis Cardinals World Champions play at what is now Big Spring in the early 30s. They loaned us Dizzy Dean, but we still lost really bad. Gabby Street was the St. Louis manager. He called my father a "Jay Bird" one day and that resulted in a big fight between the two.

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GHASTLY DISCOVERY FOUND AT BIRD'S SPRING DURING FULL MOON.

HUMAN SKELETON FOUND JUST FIFTEEN FEET FROM ENTRANCE, AROUSING MUCH INTEREST IN LATE WAR!

from 1888 Huntsville Newspaper

On Monday evening last, a man by the name of G. A. Lippincott of this city, accompanied by his brother-in-law, Mr. Hicks, started to explore a cave at Bird's Spring on the property of S. W. Harris. Their exploring tour satisfied them enough to warrant another, and a more searching one to take place at an early date. The moon was full which afforded plenty of light to the adventurers.

One of the shocking discoveries of the cave trip was the sight of a skeleton near the main entrance of the cave - the skull and several bones are now on display at the office of Mr. Harris on Eustis Street.

A Mercury reporter saw the skull last evening which was that of a full grown person, but how the owner of that "dead head" came to inhabit the cave is a matter in which the field of conjecture is wide.

During the late great unpleasantness both armies alternately camped on the Harris property and the bones now exposed to view may be those of some stalwart soldier of one of those armies. How he came to be buried in a cave will probably never be revealed in this world, but the ghastly, grinning skull reveals the fact that the Bird's Spring cave has been trod by mortal feet long before Mr. Lippincott and his kin explored it.

Mr. Lippincott informs us that there are two apertures leading right and left after entering the cave, and he is determined to find out where they lead to, or at least satisfy himself to the probable dimensions of the cave.

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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Well the ornament search was quite successful. I decided to give the youngest person ever to guess the first prize. That is **Jesse Taylor** of Old Town and he is 10 years old, and is home-schooled by his mama **Jacquie Taylor**. Congratulations to you Jesse!!

Ted Smith of Huntsville called and found his December issue at Brueggers (manager, Emily) on Cecil Ashburn Drive. Ted spends alot of time at the coffee shop as he is retired from working on the Arsenal and just enjoys life now. **Pamela Sandusky** found the little ornament that was hidden on page 49.

Then we had a call for the Photo of the Month from **Patricia Reed** who was my out of town caller She is retired and

loves keeping her sweet grand babies. The photo was that of **Mitch Howie**, who has a law practice on North Side Square. Congratulations to all the winners of a free year's subscription to Old Huntsville! My skills at really hiding small items in the magazine are no match for you sharp-eyed readers.

Bill Drake was known and loved by many in Huntsville. He had a smile and handshake for everyone. Bill passed away after years of suffering with Parkinson's, on November 25. He greatly enjoyed his memberships in Valley Hill Country Club, Scottish Rite Masonic Lodge, Cahaba Shrine Temple and playing bridge and poker games. He loved watching his Roll Tide team win week after week with wife **Linda** and their puppy **Gigi**. Bill was a loyal member of the Metro Kiwanis Club of Huntsville. He leaves wife **Linda**; daughter **Terri Gillis (Rex)**; son **W. R. (Randy) Drake, Jr. (Debbie)**; and grandchildren and great-grandchildren whom he adored. As a final unselfish act, Bill planned to have his body donated to the Anatomical Donor Program at UAB. He will be so missed.

People think it takes forever to make oatmeal but here's what I do. Put about 1/2 cup regular oats into a bowl. Add about 1/4 cup water and a dab of butter. Put in microwave for 1 minute. Mix it up and add some crispy

bacon to the top for a real treat. Not the sugary stuff you might be used to but this will fill you up for quite a while. And another excuse to have some bacon!

Malcolm Miller has not been feeling well lately and we want him to know we love him and we're thinking about him. Visits are planned too!

David Nuttall, of Artimaps at Lowe Mill, is a coffee genius. He takes a teaspoon of Hershey's Dark cocoa and adds it to his coffee for a great chocolate taste. I tried that and added just a dash of cinnamon.

Rosemary Leatherwood has a birthday on Jan. 28th and we wish this sweet lady the best of days. Her grandson **Alex's** birthday is Jan. 31st and he will be 9. He is very outgoing and loves church and school. His granny loves him so much and they're missing Rosemary's husband **Billy Leatherwood** who passed away this year.

Wanda Siniard is a subscriber in Owens Cross Roads and we want to tell her thank you for holding the record for being the longest continual subscriber!

Photo of The Month

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

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Here's a good tip - if you have to attend a funeral of a family member, be sure and get someone to stay at your home during the event. You'd be surprised how many thieves read obituaries, then go to the home of the person who died, hoping it'll be empty for a few hours. Pretty sad.

Green tea is supposed to be good for you and I like it especially at night when it feels cold outside. Since most green tea tastes a bit weak compared to other teas I have started to mix them. This way you get the nutrients AND the taste. My latest favorite is cinnamon tea with green tea - delicious! Just steep the two bags together and it's ready to drink.

There are many **Thiokol Chemical Corp.** retirees still living in Huntsville. At one time the company hired thousands in this area. **John Loren Williams**, known as **J. L.** to his friends, recently passed away at the age of 88. He was a lifetime member of the Jackson Way Baptist Church and had 40 plus years of employment at Thiokol. He is survived by his wife of 32 years, **Montez Williams**; two daughters, **Cathy Hall (Steve)** and **Jerolyn Kramer (Chuck)**; brother **Maurice Williams**; 8 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren along with nieces, nephews and friends. He was preceded in death by his two daughters, **Carol Jean**

Carroll and Kay Fain. We send our deepest condolences to the family.

We have some hometown musicians who played recently at Merrimack Performance Hall and brought the house down. The **Woodpickers** include **Alan Jenkins, Chuck Rutenberg, John David Wheeler, Danny Aldridge, Jason Schrimsher, Brad Flowers, Preston Watts and Ted Chenoweth.** We heard that **Allen Little** sat in with the group and performed as well. So proud of them! Plan to go to one of their performances - really good!

The Christmas Tour of Homes and Luminaries drew so many people to the historic districts of Huntsville. The homes featured were cozy with Christmas decor and it really was a beautiful night with good weather and candles lining every street. Thanks to all the hardworking folks who gathered to put together bags of sand with candles and distribute them to the houses.

The old YMCA was purchased by **Buck Watson** who completely renovated it, to make it one of the most beautiful buildings in downtown Huntsville. He moved his law firm into the building and every year he hosted a Christmas party in the Y. When **Buck** passed away in January of this year his wife **Janet Watson** and daughter **Rebekah Keith McKinney**

continued with the tradition. The party held this year was full of love and friends and memories of **Buck**. Two people that were there were **Joe and Ramona Zullo** who were so much fun to talk with. **Ramona** is retiring after 25+ years working and has lots of plans for traveling and being able to live life and have fun! It was a really memorable event and **Buck** would have been proud to see his friends all gather for a good cause. Everyone brought school supplies to give to Free2Teach, which gives out supplies to school teachers who normally have to pay for the supplies themselves.

Jessie Mae Bledsoe came to visit me one day and she was crying. She said that someone had stolen a cement statue of a small angel that she had put at her daughter's grave, in Maple Hill cemetery. The little angel was never found but she replaced it with another one. **Jessie** was 83 when she passed away on November 21st. She was a kind, sweet lady who had a smile for everyone. She leaves her husband of 60 years, **Ed**; daughters **Elizabeth Coulliette (Barry)**; **Nancy Lynn Bonner (Jim)** and **Rebecca Grimm (Jeffrey)**. She had grandchildren and great grandchildren who were the joy of her life. We are so sorry to hear of the loss.

Have a warm, safe January and stay healthy. Make sure your pets stay warm too!

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1 pkg. frozen spinach, cooked and chopped
 1/3 c. sour cream
 3 T. butter
 2 t. horseradish
 1/4 t. tarragon
 Salt and pepper to taste
 In a saucepan, add all ingredients. (Spinach should be hot). Stir well and heat slowly. Serve hot.

Spicy Black Bean Soup

2 c. dried black beans
 3 qts. water
 1 lg. onion, chopped
 2 stalks celery, chopped
 2 beef bouillon cubes in cup of water
 Ham hock
 1 T. garlic powder
 1 t. cayenne pepper ground
 Cover beans with water and

let them soak overnight. Next day, drain all the water and add more to cover with about 2" over the beans. Cover with lid and simmer for about 2 hours. Uncover and add the rest of the ingredients. Cook longer til the beans are tender. Add salt to taste.

If you like it thicker, put half of the beans in a blender and add back to the mixture. Top with sour cream and chopped green onions, or try some of the Tabasco Jalapeno pepper sauce.

Layered Mexican Dip

1 16-oz. can refried beans
 1 pkg. taco seasoning mix
 1 carton sour cream
 1 c. avocado mixture or dip
 1 4-oz. can chopped green chilies
 1/2 c. chopped black olives
 2 large tomatoes, diced

8 green onions, chopped, greens and all
 1-1/2 c. chopped Cheddar cheese

Sour cream to dollop on top
 Picante sauce and chopped jalapeno peppers to taste

Heat and combine the refried beans and taco seasoning packet. Spread the mixture in a 12x8x2 inch dish, layer the remaining ingredients in the order listed. Serve with warm tortilla chips.

Blackened Fish Spices

1 T. paprika
 2-1/2 t. salt
 1 t. onion powder
 2 t. garlic powder
 2 t. ground cayenne pepper
 1 t. white pepper, ground
 3/4 t. black pepper
 1/2 t. dried thyme
 1/2 t. dried oregano

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Spicy Rotini

1 box tri-colored Rotini

Bring large pot of salted water to a boil, add pasta. Cook for 8 minutes and drain in a colander, rinse with cold water to stop the cooking. Put in a large bowl and mix with 1/2 cup dried parsley.

In an 8 cup plastic container with lid combine the following:

- 1/2 c. olive oil
- 1/3 c. red wine vinegar
- 2 heaping t. prepared mustard
- 3 t. dried oregano
- 2 t. minced garlic
- 1 t. cayenne pepper, ground

When thoroughly mixed, add back into the covered container. Let spices blend on counter top for 15 minutes, eat room temperature or cold.

Fast and Hot Chicken

1 package chicken breasts, boneless and skinless

1 c. Kentucky Kernel Seasoned Flour (in your grocery store flour section)

1 t. cayenne pepper, ground

1 c. green onion, chopped with greens

In a frying pan, pour about 1/2 cup olive oil. Heat until a piece of

the green onion sizzles, add the chicken that you have thoroughly coated with the flour and cayenne pepper.

Heat on both sides for a few minutes til flour adheres to the chicken, then turn down heat and cook slowly for about 20 minutes. Turn once. Add the green onion, cook for another 10 minutes. If there is any oil left, make a gravy by adding a bit of water and stirring.

Savory Sausage Casserole

- 1 lb. hot sausage
- 1 c. Cheddar cheese, grated
- 6 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 c. milk
- 1/2 c. butter, melted
- 1/2 t. dry mustard
- 1/2 t. salt and black pepper
- 1/2 t. garlic powder

Cook the sausage til browned, drain grease and layer the sausage on the bottom of a 12x8x2" baking dish. Sprinkle it with the cheese. Combine the eggs, milk, butter, dry mustard, salt, pepper and garlic powder in a separate bowl. Pour this mixture over the sausage and cheese.

Refrigerate overnight, covered with plastic wrap. Next morning cook for 35 minutes at 350 degrees, or until set. Makes a spicy and warming breakfast for these winter days!



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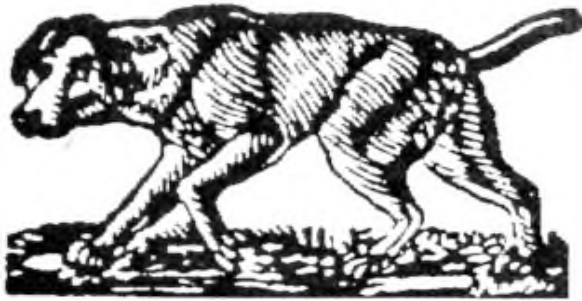
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A Penitent Dog

From 1913 Newspaper

Dog stories have become so common that they bear as much credibility as "fish stories," but the following is so well vouched for as to leave no possible doubt of its truth.

A lady in Huntsville owns a very intelligent dog named Jeb, of whom she desired to have a picture. She accordingly took him to a photographic gallery, and with the assistance of the artist, endeavored to make her pet take and keep a suitable position before the camera. The jittery dog however was not in an accommodating mood that morning and, after repeated trials, the attempt to conquer him was abandoned in despair.

"Go home!" the lady said, at last, pointing to the door. "You are a bad, naughty, naughty dog!"

The culprit changed instantly his saucy manner, and, dropping his tail between his legs, slunk away in confusion. All the rest of the day he seemed to realize that he was in disgrace, crouching in corners and wearing a shamefaced air. The next morning he was missing, not having come home at all the night before. All search failed to discover him.

About noon he reappeared at his mistress' doorstep, much elated, and fastened to his collar was a very handsome photograph of himself. Upon investigation, this is what was discovered.

When the photographer had gone to his gallery to open up that morning, there at the door was the same pooch who had refused to pose for any picture. It appeared that it had been waiting patiently for quite some time. As soon as the door to the gallery was opened, Jeb dashed upstairs to the same room they had been in the day before, and immediately leapt upon the chair on which he was supposed to pose, and did so now.

Seizing the opportunity, the artist made his preparations with all possible speed, and the result was the delightful picture which the four-footed penitent had taken home, a peace offering to his mistress.

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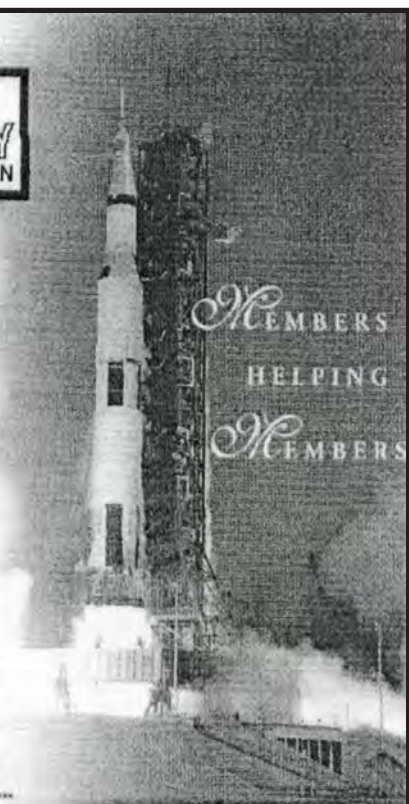


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Like Mark Twain said, "Buy Land. They're not making any more of it."

Washington "Wash" Anyan of Big Cove (1842-1920)

by William Sibley

Several generations of Anyans have lived in Big Cove, beginning with George Anyan, who owned land in Big Cove as early as 1810. George was the father of Captain Bendall Anyan. Captain Anyan and Mary Ann (Stammers) Anyan were the parents of "Wash".

Two local historians, the late Lillian (Williams) Power and the late Margaret (Sanford) Connally, told me there had been a Stammers Cemetery located in Big Cove in the vicinity of Hays Nature Preserve in Big Cove's Flint River bottom. When the present Highway 431 was rerouted through Big Cove, it became necessary to relocate Stammers Cemetery.

Big Cove merchant Leonard Morgan Taylor was appointed to supervise the removal of the coffins, which were all put into a common grave. As I understand it, the removal was done according to law, but nobody has ever been able to find the reburial spot.

I learned that the first Stammers family member to come to America was a stowaway on a ship and that the stowaway settled in Big Cove. I am almost positive that Wash's mother, Mary Ann (Stammers) Anyan, was a direct descendant of the stowaway Stammers.

The 1840 census indicates that the Anyans who lived on the west side of Old Big Cove Road were neighbors of my great-great-grandparents, Mills Jenkins (1805-1875) and Jane (Wright) Jenkins (1802-1885), who lived on the south side of Sutton Road.

The children of Bendall and Mary were John, b. 1829; George, b. 1831; Elizabeth "Lizzie", b. 1834; Thomas, b. 1837; Benjamin Franklin, b. 1838; Wash, b. 1842; Kitty, b. 1844; and Sarah, b. 1847. On Dec. 17, 1870 the Alabama Legislature passed a bill which required all Alabama public schools to elect school trustees if their school districts were receiving state tax money. Election officials for Camp Ground (Big Cove) were John Anyan (Wash's brother), William King, J.L Webster and John Wesley Miller, my great-grandfather.

"Why do round pizzas come in square boxes?"

Janni Rice, age 8



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Not many of us are left in Big Cove who heard stories first-hand about Wash from those people who knew him personally. My mother and father and their ancestors were friends of the Anyans, and the stories they told us about Wash were very entertaining.

Storytellers usually began by telling us that Wash was the undisputed drunk of Big Cove. After the Andy Griffith Show began on TV, the storytellers insisted that Wash was exactly like Otis Campbell. Both men were very good-natured and likeable and never bothered others when they were drunk.

Rev. Burns Pickens Drake, a highly respected minister in Big Cove, when speaking to the Big Cove Homemakers Club (my mother's club), described Wash as one of the kindest men he ever knew. He said that Wash had set out the mature shade trees in the yard of the Drakes' mid-1820s home. Rev. Drake told the ladies present that if he had ever written a book, Wash would have been his subject.

The Anyans were good neighbors of Rev. Burns Drake's grandfather, Rev. John Henry Drake, who preached in Big Cove during the Civil War era. Howard Wilson Drake, late great-grandson of Rev. John Henry Drake, and I used to trade Anyan stories.

When my youngest brother Earl Carter Sibley was in the fourth grade at Big Cove School, his teacher, Mrs. Janice Millican, read to her class every day. Carter always gave Mrs. Millican credit for his lifelong love of reading. Carter's favorite author was Jesse Stuart. Mrs. Millican read "The Thread That Runs So True" by Mr. Stuart, who was a teacher in the mountain schools of Kentucky and had been a teacher in a one-room school, a principal, and a superintendent of schools. Carter read every book that Mr. Stuart wrote. When Carter was a student at Athens College, he had a professor who was a personal friend and a professional colleague of Mr. Stuart. The professor told Mr. Stuart how Carter liked Mr. Stuart's books. The professor, like Mr. Stuart, had been a teacher in small schools in Kentucky and had risen to principal and superintendent.

To be a teacher in Kentucky's public schools in those days, one had to be at least 18 years old and have passed the teacher's examination. When Mr. Stuart was almost 17 years old, he was in the room when the examination was given and he was handed a test which he passed, qualifying him to teach.

One reason that Jesse Stuart wanted to teach was because Guy Hawkins had whipped Jesse's sister when she was his teacher, and she had to resign from her job, Guy Hawkins and Ova Salyers had both been in the first grade for eight years.

Luckily, Mr. Stuart got a job teaching where Guy and Ova were students. On the first day of school, Mr. Stuart sent the two of them to a neighbor's home to



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get a bucket of water. Mr. Stuart had to send for fresh water several times a day, and the task always went to Guy and Ova. Mr. Stuart knew that those boys were chewing tobacco, but he couldn't allow them to use tobacco in front of the other pupils.

Guy had been telling people for days that he was going to whip "Old Jess" just like he did his sister. One late afternoon Mr. Stuart was alone doing some last-minute work when he saw Guy enter the school grounds. Mr. Stuart politely asked Guy if he had forgotten something. Guy told Mr. Stuart that he had come to whip him.

Guy took a punch at Mr. Stuart and missed. After they traded several punches, Mr. Stuart knocked Guy to the floor, and he had difficulty getting to his feet. Guy told Mr. Stuart he did not know that teachers could fight so well. Guy didn't know that Jesse had been a good football player in high school. Guy was a changed person after that fight and did well in school.

Mr. Stuart always sent boys after water for his school, but at Camp Ground (Big Cove), girls always had that task. In 1913, Camp Ground teacher Miss Elizabeth Monroe sent four girls to Anyan Spring for water. The girls came screaming to Miss Monroe that they had seen something terrifying. Miss Monroe wrote a clever poem titled "Monster" and dedicated it to "My Four Brave Little Girls", describing that experience. Those girls were Annie Lee (Miller) Roach, Alma (Taylor) Drake, Ora (Nunn) Buford, and Carrye (Lyle) Hardin. That poem appeared in an earlier edition of Old Huntsville in a story I wrote.

One day when Aunt Stella Sibley and a female classmate were sent to Anyan Spring for water, they were helping themselves to the turnips in the Anyans' garden when a lady at the Anyans' home hollered, "You can have all the white turnips you want, but don't get the rubber bellies." By rubber bellies, she meant rutabagas.

Wash's sister, Elizabeth "Lizzie," married Eli B. Smith in 1870. My parents and Aunt Stella always told me that one of Wash's sisters married Boone Smith, so I assume that Eli B. Smith and Boone Smith were one and the same. Lizzie was the lady who hollered to the girls.

My Sibley relatives have lived on Old Big Cove Road for generations, and my Sadler relatives lived on Cove Creek for generations. On any given day my relatives could usually see which people went to Huntsville that day. My grandfather, William Henry Sadler and my great-grandfather, William Alfred Sadler, would be uneasy about Wash when they knew he had gone to town because he always returned home "loaded."

About halfway up the south-

east side of Monte Sano Mountain near the current site of the wedding chapel is the historic Trough Spring, where Bushwhacker Johnston surrendered to the Federals during the Civil War. People from Big Cove, Owens Cross Roads, New Hope, Poplar Ridge and various other communities would stop at the spring to water their horses. My grandfather and great-grandfather could hear Wash as he stopped at Trough Spring, and



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they would go to the highway and stop him to be sure he was sober enough to go home. My younger sister Sherry told me that when she was growing up and hearing tales about Wash, she thought Washanyan was one word. Sherry always liked fresh vegetables and would pile her plate high, and Mama would tell her that her plate looked like Wash Anyan's.

Wash cleaned his clothes by laying them in a mountain stream. Wash was attacked by a vicious dog which everyone insisted was rabid. Wash never received medical treatment, and he never got rabies. Old-timers in Big Cove believed that Wash was so full of liquor that the alcohol kept him from becoming rabid. Beryl French (Broad) Tidwell, whose house is near Wash's house, and Beryl's daughter, Kay, told me that Wash ate lots of herbs after the dog attack, which might have contributed to his survival. As they say on TV, do not attempt this at home.

On April 20, 1920, near the noon hour, a killer tornado struck the Big Cove community, missing Camp Ground School by yards. Teachers and students were witnesses to the tragedy. Killed in the "cyclone," as Big Covers called it, were Elijah Donnell "Don" Drake and his sons, Gordon and Charlie. (Gordon was one of my father's best friends). Wash died of bee stings he received when he was blown into his beehives. The Drakes in this story are buried in Camp Ground Cemetery in Big Cove.

My people attended the Drake's funeral and probably attended Wash's funeral. Wash's grandfather, George Anyan, in 1833, made provision for a family burying ground in his will, but efforts to locate the Anyan Cemetery have been unsuccessful.

Fortunately a gravestone for Wash has been placed in Camp Ground Cemetery, which reads:

*Washington Anyan
PVT CO A 2 TENN Infantry
Confederate States Army
Mar 1842 Apr 1920*

Those of us who were privileged to hear the original stories of Wash Anyan want to pass these stories on to future generations.

The girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.



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Dead Man's Gold

by Charles Rice

An often told tale in northern Madison County concerns a buried treasure that supposedly was hidden 130 years ago near the town of Hazel Green. Now don't get excited and run off to look for it, because it is said to have been found long ago. Well, it just may have been — if it ever existed.

The swashbuckling story concerns the quite respectable Townsend family, early settlers of our region and very wealthy cotton planters before the War Between the States. We leave it to you to decide how much truth there is in the tale.

The patriarch of this old Madison County family was one Parkes Townsend, gentleman. Born in Lunenburg County, Virginia, in 1795, Townsend had left his home in 1827 to seek new lands in Alabama. He grew rich here and fathered a large family before his untimely death in December 1849 at the age of only 54. Even after his property had been divided among his heirs, it remained quite impressive. In fact, in 1860, just before the Civil War, Townsend's widow, Mary, still held title to \$30,000 worth of land, while her personal property was listed at \$74,870. This was a virtual fortune in those long ago horse and buggy days. Townsend's son Daniel owned \$20,000 in land plus \$51,685 in personal property, while another son named Samuel claimed some \$18,120 in real estate and \$151,000 in personal wealth. Exaline Townsend, apparently a widowed daughter-in-law, owned land valued at \$36,000 as well as a personal estate of \$50,000. Clearly,

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the Townsend family was among the wealthiest in Madison County.

This much of the story is verifiable. However, what follows clearly falls into the realm of legend. According to old timers around Hazel Green, in 1862 some of the Townsend family became frightened at the approach of the invading Union Army. Realizing the "thieving Yankees" would take everything they owned, they loaded several barrels with gold and silver and drove off one evening after dark. Allegedly, a slave or two accompanied them. Stopping at a large walnut tree somewhere near Charity Lane, the Townsends ordered the slaves to dig a deep hole and conceal the treasure. Then, imitating the bloodthirsty pirates of the Spanish Main, these respectable Alabamians supposedly murdered the inoffensive slaves and threw their bodies into the pit. Refilling the hole, the Townsend men returned to their homes to quietly await the return of peace.

So what do you think happened next? You guessed it. Somehow the walnut tree mysteriously disappeared during the course of the war, and the Townsends could never find their treasure again. Foolishly, it would seem, they rented the land to a stranger — a virtual sharecropper, more or less. After about two years, the stranger up and disappeared one day. No one around Hazel Green ever saw him again, but he reportedly bought himself a fine farm in Tennessee and lived there happily ever after.

A good story, right? But realistically, could such an event actually have happened in Alabama? Slaves in the antebellum South had few legal rights, but one simply could not go about murdering African-Americans with impunity. Surely, the Townsends' other slaves would have talked, and the Union Army would have taken action even if the Alabama authorities did not. Furthermore, were the Townsends really such a brutal lot? This prominent family remained in the area long after the war, and retained the respect of their neighbors — something that would not have been possible had they been viewed as murderers.

Perhaps something really did happen back in 1862. Maybe the Townsends hid part of their wealth and could not find it again. And just possibly a tenant farmer did discover it and take off for parts unknown. But the rest of the tale has too much of the "Yo ho ho and a bottle of rum" in it to be believed. It sounds rather like some

of the old boys at the Hazel Green town "liars' bench" had been reading about pirates, peglegs, and Long John Silver and simply decided to spice things up a bit. After all, the real fun in any story is the telling of it, isn't it?

And now I have had my say.



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Banking in Years Past

by Margene Hudson,
Vice President First Alabama
Bank in the 60s

Originally Published in
Old Huntsville in the early 1990s

I remember when banking was not so complicated and a lot of fun.

Forty years ago, whoever heard of a financial statement, disclosure statement or RESPA?

Downtown banking was not only for your financial needs, it was your social life also. All of the local happenings and a little gossip could be gotten when making a deposit or cashing a check.

Being treasurer of my local high school class was very exciting for me. The Henderson Bank was the one I chose to open a checking account for my class. The building was located in the Struve Building on the east side of Washington Street. The building burned and I really got upset, because we had worked so hard for the funds to take a class trip. Little did I know that the bank's records were all kept in a safe and fire-proof vault.

What a fun time we had working downtown. After obtaining a job with First National Bank (now First Alabama Bank) we could go shopping on our lunch hour or before we caught the bus for home at Dunnivant's store. We would buy shoes at Uptain's Shoe Store, clothes at Dunnavants where Ma Venable was in charge of alterations; and no one dared go to church without a hat from the Bonnet Box. If you were looking for bargains there was Dobson's basement. My first curtains came from there for that tiny apartment on Pratt Avenue. Zesto had the best milkshakes in town along with the foot long hot dogs.

For a night on the town, a movie could be a big choice: The Lyric, The Grand, or the Elks. We later had the Center but we would have to ride the bus to get there.

Everything you needed to buy could be purchased downtown within a six block area. I bought my first electrical appliance, an iron, from Mr. Larkin's Firestone Store on the South Side of the Square. At lunch time we would go for ice cream at City Drug Store owned by Mr. Tom Dark. We could also stroll past the telephone switchboard located on the South Side of the Square upstairs. With no air conditioning they kept the windows open in the summertime. This was great for finding out what was really going on in the city.

We also liked to visit the Farmer's Market in the summertime. It was located behind the First National Bank (now First Alabama Bank). The farmers selling the produce were either related to some of us or they were customers of the bank.

The Chairman of the Board of First National Bank, Mr. M.B. Spragins, owned the ice plant where he kept watermelons in the ice house. The plant was located where the Huntsville Utilities building is now. After closing the bank in the afternoon, he would decide that he wanted watermelon. He would

When chemists die, apparently they barium.

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send down and get them and we cut and ate on the front steps of the bank, all the watermelon we wanted. People passing by were invited to join us. There were no strangers in town; we knew everyone. Mr. Spragins also liked to have picnics so when we closed the bank on Wednesday or Saturday afternoon, off we would go for fishing or a picnic.

In the 1960s things began to really change for downtown and the banking industry. The revitalization of Redstone changed our working lifestyle and social life forever. People came in droves looking for work. We did not have branch banking then so our work loads became more hectic.

The Redstone PX always created a show for strangers. In making their deposits or picking up their change order, they brought along jeeps with armed Military Police. They would station themselves across the front of the bank with rifles drawn. A couple of them would come in the bank with their rifles drawn. The kids loved it!

One of the things I remember most were the parades before the local football games. Each school had a home-coming parade with floats and a home-coming queen. There was a lot of competition to have the best parade float. Each was decorated by the students themselves. The floats were very impressive and the bands were just great.

The Christmas Parade was always at night and only a couple of weeks before Christmas. The majorettes strutted with bells on their shoes, white earmuffs and lighted batons. We all looked forward to Santa Claus and knew when he was coming because Alabama A&M's band was always in front of him, this being a long time tradition. It was always cold. Your teeth would chatter and your hands and feet be so numb. The hot chocolate afterwards made it all worthwhile.

One of the things that brings back such happy memories was the Sesquicentennial held in Big Spring Park. All the townspeople participated in the play that was held every night. Some famous acting careers were established during this week long celebration. Mrs. Ethel DeArmond was one of the volunteers who did so much work to put this play on.

Each day at noon we had a parade. The three banks had a float called the "Silver Dollies". We took turns wearing our long dresses and riding the float. What fun!

Memory is the function of the brain that lets us store up happy thoughts and

events in our lives, like we store mementos in a trunk, that when unlocked brings a smile to our faces and sometimes a tear or two. Mercifully this same brain function lets us forget the unpleasant times and disappointments. I sure do love all those memories.

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AN 87 RESOLUTION

by Joe Zullo

Congratulations to me on my 2016 New Year's resolution, I get an 87. I stuck with it; well, not stuck like a hangman-thing, but simply "I did what I said". So, an 87, that's pretty good.... Well, not perfect, but perfect could have been boring, and could have been "holier-than-thou" with a mouth running ego, castigating my friends to earths' end, to a time when they would dread hearing my cackling, accomplished voice. Instead, I left a bit of breathing room for the "little-cheat"; after-all, a bit of spice keeps sparkle in the mood, and you know what they say....."it's that sparkle that makes the world, well, twirl". So, put on your bobby-sox, hear that Chubby Checker beat, and twirl, and shout....or is it twist?

Getting a 100 would have been like entering my life into a convent; and heck, I wasn't ready to kneel or genuflect or any of those aerobic-crazed prostrations. I would have walked statuesque, and talked sorta backwards and downwards like Rome's Caesar addressing his consorts. You know where thata-gotten me. I'd a-been the cootie-man, friendless, like a social-leper at a bachelorette party.

Jeeze, it was only my New Year's resolution... that sorta translates to 1 year of my life.

So, I gave-up most of my tasty breakfast carbs (toast, breads, biscuits, muffins, cake, pie,) and settled for Greek yogurt; after all, it was for my better health. Well, I've gotten fond of that yogurt stuff; I made it through the year; and I like its taste and results enough to continue. Sure, I cheat (I'm eating a toasted bagel with butter & peanut butter as I type) with my bobby-sox on and a twirling smile on my face; hence, my 87.

I think for my 2017 big-resolution event, I'll add some fruit to my yogurt. Now, that will be a challenge to a guy who shies away from that nutritious, fresh stuff. But, I'm going to give it a twirl. I hope your next year's resolution gets you twirling..... reach for an 87, it is an accomplished number within reach!



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Useful Tips You Can Use

by Cathey Carney



* Surround yourself with people who make you feel good about yourself, not the ones who insult you.

* NEVER believe that guy with the heavy accent who calls and says he's from Microsoft and he can fix your computer right over the phone. It's a scam.

* Ice on the sidewalk or steps can look lovely, but it can send you to the hospital in minutes.

* If you're lonely, go out and find someone you can help. It'll take your mind of yourself, instantly.

* NEVER give out any financial info over the phone - banking, credit or debit card numbers, etc.

* Stay on your feet at all costs. No falling is allowed.

* When you have a very important decision to make, choose the one that gives you the most peace (from my daughter Steph).

* Get caller ID and use it - if you don't recognize the number of the caller don't answer. If it's important they'll leave a message.

* Clean one closet at a time - not the whole house.

* Get out and walk if you can - even if it's half a block - every day.

* Treat yourself to a good night's sleep. And try to do that every night.

* NEVER answer the door after dark unless you know who it is.

* Watch out for your neighbors, they may be in worse shape than you.

* If you don't feel good and can stay at home, don't drive. It's not worth getting into a bad accident.

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Curly Putman - Master Song Writer

by Malcolm W. Miller, written 8 years ago



Some time back I gave Jerry Brazier, owner of Jerry and Bill's Barber shop where I worked for many years, a box of barber tools and parts that I had accumulated over the years since I was no longer able to cut hair. A few weeks later when I went to his shop he said that I had given him something I might want to keep. When I saw it I did indeed want it. It was a very old letter in pretty bad condition but when I saw Tree Publishing Company letterhead, I knew it was from my good friend Curly Putman. Ironically the date on the letter was June 2, 1964. In the letter Curly said he couldn't use the songs I had sent but to send him some more, but most importantly he said that he was still trying to write that big hit. You see up till this time Curly had been struggling, however lo and behold a few months later he wrote "Green, Green Grass of Home" and the rest as they say is history. It was first recorded by Johnny Darryl, then Porter Wagner, Jerry Lee Lewis and finally the biggest hit by Tom Jones.

On January 8th I had a long talk with Curly and he said this particular song had been recorded five hundred times and in every known language.

This was only the beginning for this tall, somewhat shy man from Paint Rock Valley, AL. His songs were recorded by many of the legends of country music. He wrote Dolly Parton's first hit "Dumb Blond", Tammy Wynette's "Divorce", T.G. Shepperd's "Do you Want to go to Heaven".

"I don't mean to brag, but I finished my 14-day diet food in just 3 hours and 20 minutes."

Phil Taylor, Hampton Cove

The list goes on and on but the greatest of all was a song by George Jones that was named the number two country song of all time - "He Stopped Loving Her Today", co-written with Bobby Braddock.

Life wasn't always easy for Curly, when he got out of high school at Princeton he joined the Navy, and after his hitch in the Navy he met and fell in love with a pretty lass Miss Bernice Wilson. Like many couples back then

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they went to Iuka, MS and got married. Another musician buddy of mine, Lamarr Cox and his wife Laneva drove them there.

The first time I ever saw Curly he was traveling with a member of the Grand Ole Opry, I believe it was Bradley Kincaid. Later on he joined Slim Lay and Hap Wilson's band along with the late and great guitar picker Maurice Ramsey. Carolyn Gossett was the girl singer for the band. Curly really worked hard trying to support his family, by now they had two sons. He had several jobs; shoe salesman, storm door and fence salesman and a stint working in Slim Lays record shop. I even tried to get him a job with the Huntsville Fire Department by talking to a city councilman I knew, all to no avail.

As I look back over the many years I have known Curly I truly believe that all these jobs and hard times only proves that Curly Putman was a man destined for greatness. Now Curly can look out over his sprawling twenty-five acre estate near Lebanon, Tennessee with pride because he overcame many obstacles and finally reached the top rung of the ladder of success. And friends, the best could be yet to come for he told me that at age seventy-seven he has started writing again. With him writing again we may hear some real country music over the airways again. I for one am certainly ready for it.

Curly Putman passed away on October 30, 2016 and all newspapers carried his obituary.

A songwriter whose teary ballad with a twist ending, "The Green, Green Grass of Home," became a worldwide hit for Tom Jones in 1967, and whose

long string of country classics included "D-I-V-O-R-C-E" for Tammy Wynette and "He Stopped Loving Her Today" for George Jones, died on a Sunday at his home in Lebanon, Tenn. He was 85.

The cause was congestive heart failure and kidney failure, his son, Troy, said.

Mr. Putman turned out hundreds of songs, many of them country chart-toppers, after moving to Nashville and signing with Tree Publishing in the early 1960s. He was renowned as a song doctor who could transform a promising tune into a sure thing, and although he often wrote solo, his greatest hits were collaborative efforts.

He teamed up with Bobby Braddock on "D-I-V-O-R-C-E" and again on "He Stopped Loving Her Today," which revived Mr. Jones's career and was named the song of the year in both 1980 and 1981 by the Country Music Association. With Sonny Throckmorton, one of his proteges, he wrote "It's a Cheating Situation," recorded by Moe Bandy with Janie Fricke, which the Academy of Country Music named song of the year in 1979.

No song of his proved more durable or popular than "The Green, Green Grass of Home," about a man who imagines returning home to his family and sweetheart, only to wake up and realize that he has been dreaming in his prison cell. "I wrote the best song I ever wrote and didn't know what I was doing," Mr. Putman told a magazine in 2009. "I do know I was touched deeply when I was singing it. I almost cried. I was struggling, trying to come up with something different."

Originally recorded by Johnny Darrell in 1965, it became a Top 10 country hit for Porter Wagoner that year and reached a crossover audience after Tom Jones, who had heard Jerry Lee Lewis's version, recorded it.

4 year old James was listening to a Bible story. His Dad read: "The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee from the city but his wife looked back and was turned to salt." Very concerned, the little boy asked, "What happened to the flea?"

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THE MESSENGER OF GOD

by Antonio Howard



She's one of the most translated American authors of all time. Her writings have been printed in over 140 different languages. She is also cofounder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and was instrumental in the establishment of Oakwood College. Her work and teachings influence the lives of thousands of Huntsvillians every day but few even recognize her name.

With over 115 book titles credited to her name, Ellen G. White is known by millions of people throughout the world as a "Messenger of God." Ellen Gould Harmon was born on a farm in Gorham, Maine in the year of 1827. When Ellen was nine years old, she was struck on the nose with a rock thrown by one of her schoolmates. The

injury caused serious medical complications and as a result her education came to a end. Over the years her health continued to deteriorate.

Ellen, a Methodist at the time, began going to Bible meetings given by Preacher William Miller, founder of the Millerite Movement. Also known as "Adventists", the sect believed that Jesus Christ would soon return to earth. Miller's teachings attracted many followers, many of whom sold all of their worldly possessions in preparation for the expected return.

When Miller prophesied a return date for October 22, 1844, and Christ failed to appear, many people began to abandon the Adventist belief. This period was known as "The Great Disappointment."

On a wintry day, in December of 1844, 17 year-old Ellen Harmon (weighing just 70 pounds) and four of her friends gathered for Bible study. It was then that Ellen claimed to have received her first vision from God. Her vision, as she later described it, was about "the Adventist people going to the City of God." Despite her obvious sincerity, she and her friends were labeled fanatics and the vision received widespread ridicule.

To the Adventists who had left the faith after "The Great Disappointment," Ellen Har-

mon appeared to be a true prophet. Over the next 70 years she was said to have received more than 2000 visions, many of which she shared by writing books. The topics included such diverse subjects as health and nutrition, marriage, child guidance, voice cultivation, evangelism and education.

In August of 1846, Ellen married a preacher named James White. Not long after their marriage they came into possession of a pamphlet printed by Joseph Bates entitled "Seventh-day Sabbath." The booklet set forth the argument that if Sunday was the first day of the week, then Saturday must be the holy day.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

After adopting their interpretation of the fourth commandment, the Adventists started celebrating Saturday, the seventh day the week; as the Sabbath; hence, the appellation "Seventh-day Adventists."

Within a short time the new religion had attracted numerous followers, with a strong emphasis being placed on missionary work. On March 21, 1891, in Battle Creek, Michigan, Ellen read an appeal to 30 church leaders of the General Conference of Seventh Adventist. The appeal, entitled "Our Duty

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to the Colored People," urged the church to spread its work into the Southern States. Motivated by the writing of his mother, James Edison White built a missionary boat called The Morning Star and, along with some helpers, traveled to Vicksburg, Mississippi to begin evangelist work.

The conditions White discovered appalled him. Lack of sanitary conditions, poor health care and especially, the lack of suitable education caused him to write many letters to the General Conference asking that something be done.

In the fall of 1895 the General Conference selected three men to locate land for a school. The three men, George Irwin, Ole Olsen and Harmon Lindsey, ventured to Huntsville, Alabama to inspect a 380 acre farm in the northwest part of town. After submitting a report to the General Conference, the men returned to Huntsville in January, 1896 and purchased 358 acres from Michael O'Shaughnessey for \$6,300.00.

The land was a former slave plantation that consisted of four buildings, nine slave cabins and a house known as the "Old Mansion," where it is believed President Andrew Jackson had once visited. Although the purchasers did not know it at the time, the plantation had once been the home of Dred Scott, the slave who sued for freedom and whose lawsuit helped precipitate the Civil War. Now the same plantation would be used to free the ex-slaves, and their descendants, from illiteracy.

The new school was named Oakwood because of the huge oak trees lining the drive.

With only four teachers, 16 students, and one copy of reading text to be shared among them, Oakwood

opened its doors for the first time on November 16, 1896. Oakwood was a twelve grade school the first 21 years. The following 26 years it served as a junior college, and since 1943, Oakwood has been a four-year senior college.

On June 7, 1904, the old and venerable Ellen G. White visited Huntsville for the first time to see what her visions had wrought. After touring the school and meeting the faculty, she confided to the assembled students as to what visions for Oakwood were, saying "this is the Lord's institution" and "the instruction given me, never part with an acre of this land. It is to be used in educating hundreds."

Ellen White died in 1915, ridiculed by many but praised by others. Oakwood College is today one of the premier black educational facilities in the country and stands as a memorial to the woman whom many people called "the Messenger of God."

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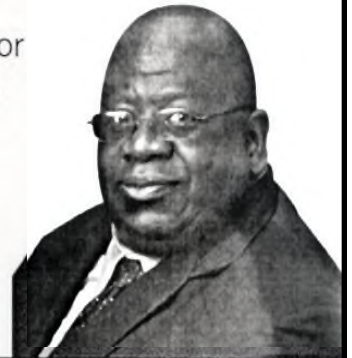
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How to Prepare Tofu:

- Throw it in the trash can
- Get some meat
- Grill it

A Romantic Wedding

by Miss Jane Thomas



Between 1820 and 1830 there was a very romantic wedding in Nashville. Thomas and John Price, salt and commission merchants, owned a warehouse on the river-bank at the mouth of Broad Street. John's wife was Miss Rucker, of Murfreesboro. Tom married a beautiful woman, Miss Robertson, from Kentucky. They went to house-keeping on High Street where Mr. Pilcher now lives.

Soon after they gave a party. One of the most prominent men in Nashville had a very beautiful daughter about fifteen years old. A young man from Louisi-

ana came here with Charlie Dickerson to go to school, and fell very much in love with this young lady. (I boarded in the house with the young man.)

The young lady went to the Nashville Academy, and she used to meet the young man nearly every day on her way from school. She was invited to the party given by Mrs. Thomas Price, and she wrote a note to the young man. She told him to come to the party prepared to run away and marry her, as her father was going to send her away to school the next day to stay two years.

She was dressed in a pink silk dress, with low neck and short sleeves, and had on satin slippers. There were four inches of snow on the ground. The young man procured two horses. In those days the men wore woolen cloaks and "large plaids", which were lined with a very thick woolen cloth. They had very large capes. He got one

of the cloaks.

The young lady left the party and met him at the corner of the street. She put on this large cloak, tied his handkerchief on her head, and got on one of the horses behind him, and a friend of his accompanied them on the other horse. They rode all night, and stopped at a tavern just this side of Franklin, and he bought her a sunbonnet. They rode all day, and the next night about nine o'clock they reached Winchester. They went to the clerk's office and were married.

The next day they reached Huntsville, Ala. and went to a hotel. Mrs. Coleman, who was well acquainted with the young lady's family wrote to her mother to send her trunk and clothes. They remained in Huntsville until she received them, and then went on to Louisiana to his father's home, who was a very wealthy planter. They lived many more years in happiness.

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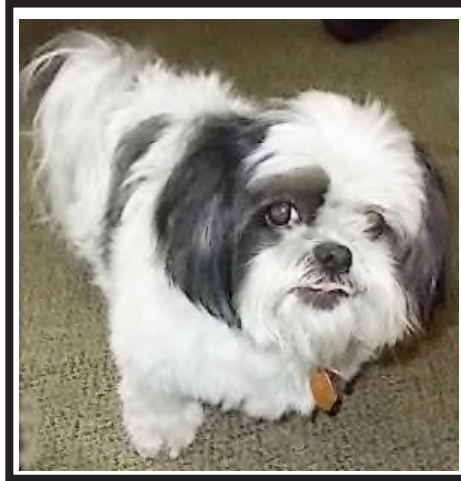
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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Just Plain Tips



* If you have a kitty that is scratching the furniture, just spray the area with a spritz of lemon juice.

* Ear mites in your cat or dog's ears can be solved with simple olive oil. Just steep the oil with a couple of garlic cloves overnight, then use a few drops in each ear. Repeat every other day for a couple of weeks. The oil will smother the mites and will moisturize the skin inside the cat or dog's ear.

* If you have an anxious pup when you leave the house, put a bit of peanut butter into a dog toy. The yummy toy will keep your pet occupied & busy til you return home.

* If you have a cat or dog in heat, try a diaper - just cut a hole in it for the pet's tail. Sort of acts as a chastity belt.

* Your dog wants to play with you! Try hide and seek, with one person hiding while another stays with the dog to keep him from following til you're ready.

* If you have a long hallway in your home it's perfect for fetch. Make it more interesting by getting your dog to sit or lie down, then throw a ball as a reward.

* Set up weekly play dates with your friends who have pets. You could even set up a "Yappy Hour" with your friends who have pets with a little adult beverage for the adults, while the dogs socialize.

* If you have a dog or cat with dry skin, add a capful of fabric softener to your pet's bath water to reduce dander. Something else that works is a teaspoonful of Wesson corn oil added to his food each day.

Using Johnson's Baby Shampoo during your pet's bath is a gentle way to help rid dander and excess hair. This

will lessen the amount of allergy-causing dander and shedding.

* When other pet owners don't clean up after their pets and you find the remnants in your yard, just try sprinkling the grass with cayenne pepper. The pet will get the message very clearly.

* If you have a dog that barks, put some un-popped popcorn kernels into an empty soda can and tape the opening. When the dog barks, shake the can. He won't like the sound.

* One easy way to pamper your pet is to plan activities with him in mind. If your pet loves nothing more than exploring the great outdoors, consider taking him hiking. Dogs who love playing in the water, like Labrador Retrievers, would probably enjoy a trip to the lake. Many communities now have dog parks, where your dog can go off his leash and socialize with other dogs.

* If your pooch isn't the competitive type, but is very calm and loves people, he might enjoy being a therapy dog. Dogs can give comfort, happiness and affection to those in nursing homes, hospitals, shelters and schools. Ask at your local nursing home or hospital to find out if they have a program in place.

* Maybe that plain doggy bed isn't cutting it for your canine companion. If not, you can give your dog a seriously comfy sleeping spot such as a Tempur-pedic dog bed, made of the same viscoelastic memory foam they use in mattresses. Dogs that are short-haired or have joint problems may especially enjoy heated dog beds. Some have microwaveable inserts, while others plug into the wall.

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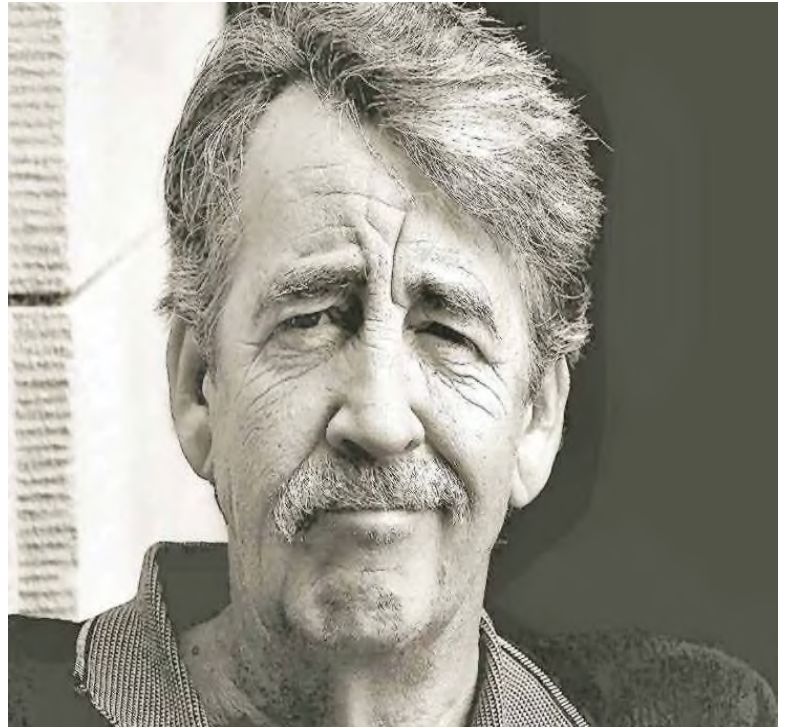
From the Desk of Tom Carney

WAR, THE WAY IT REALLY WAS

Charles Wills, a Union Army officer from Illinois, was delightfully honest in his letters home. He settled in Louisiana after the War Between the States and died there of fever in 1883 when he was only 42. Wills' sister later published his letters exactly as he had written them in a book called "Army Life of an Illinois Soldier." His comments from Alabama still make fascinating and informative reading.

Wills could be surprisingly sympathetic towards the Southern civilians and was frequently critical of his soldier comrades. While on the march in Mississippi, for example, he described the Union soldiers' conduct to his sister:

"Rebels though they are," he said, "'tis shocking and enough to make one's blood boil to see the manner in which some of the folks have treated them. Trunks have been knocked to pieces with muskets when the women stood by offering the keys, bureau drawers drawn out, the contents turned on the floor, the drawers thrown through the window. Bed clothing and ladies' clothing was carried off and all manner of devilry imaginable perpetrated. Of course, the scoundrels who do this kind



of work would be severely punished, if caught, but the latter is almost impossible. Most of the mischief is done by advance of the army, though, God knows, the infantry is bad enough. The d—n thieves even steal from the slaves (which is lower business than I ever thought possible for a white man to be guilty of), and many of them are learning to hate the Yankees as much as our "Southern brethren" do. This army is becoming awfully depraved. How the civilized home folk will ever be able to live with them after the war is, I think, something of a question. If we don't degenerate into a nation of thieves, 'twill not be for lack of example set by a fair portion of our army."

Stationed at Tuscumbia shortly thereafter in August of 1862, Wills again expressed his dismay

"My mother buried three husbands, and two of them were just napping."

Rita Rudner



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with what he saw, though he tried to persuade himself that it was proper. "Orders have been given us to put every woman and child (imprison the men) across the line that speaks or acts secesh, burn down their property, to destroy all their crops, cut down the corn growing and burn the cribs. That is something like war."

"Tis devilish hard for one like me to assist in such work, but I believe it is necessary to our course... I'd hate like the devil to burn the houses of some secesh I know here, but at the same time, I don't doubt the justice of the thing. One of them has lent us his cook, or rather his wife did; and they don't talk their secessionism to you unless you ask them to."

Later at Scottsboro in January, 1864, Wills' infantry regiment was temporarily mounted and became a part of Sherman's notorious army.

"I think that today," wrote Wills, "(Generals) Sherman, Logan or Ewing would not trust a detachment of this brigade on sore-backed mules if they had only three legs. This little squad of 500 men in the two months they have been mounted have committed more devilment than two divisions of regular cavalry could in five years. Ev-

erything you can think of from marrying these simple country women, down to stealing babies' diapers. From taking \$2,700 in gold, to snatching a brass ring off the finger of the woman who handed a drink of water. From taking the last old mare the widow had to carry her grist to the mill, to robbing the bed of its cords for halters, and taking the clothes line and bedding to boot. I'll venture that before we were dismounted, not a well rope, trace chain, or a piece of cord of any kind strong enough to hold a horse could be

found in the districts through which we have foraged."

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"I thought the handle on my recliner qualified as an exercise device."

Bill McCoy, Huntsville

A 50's New Year Practical Joke

by M.D. Smith IV

Fireworks have always been part of my holidays growing up. We got fireworks for Christmas and New Year's Eve. I think my father liked them better than my little sister and me. I'm an 11 year old boy who plays with Gilbert Chemistry Sets, Erector Sets, goes hunting with a BB gun, also knows about gunpowder and practical jokes.

It's New Year's Day, and we had shot off a lot of fireworks the night before. The kind my father and I both liked the best were the big tall tube aerial bombs. Remember the little square red wooden platforms that cemented in a 2 inch cardboard tube that was about 18 inches high? They had a waterproof green fuse at the bottom, and all the explosives were inside. If you looked down, you could see a round cardboard cover inside a few inches, holding everything together. After they were fired, I thought the gunpowder smell was wonderful.

As I was playing with a couple of spent empty tubes that morning, I noticed one that looked almost new and not much burn where the fuse hole was at the bottom. I pulled the same kind of green fuse out of a TNT salute and stuck it in the fuse hole of that big aerial bomb tube. Wow, it almost looked real. So then, I got some shirt cardboard, drew a circle on it and cut out a disk the size of the empty tube. I pushed it in the empty tube about the same distance down as the loaded ones. It looked quite real at that point.

About then I spied my father on the telephone in the breakfast room next to where I was in the carpeted living room. An idea of a practical joke came into my head. (I bet you know what's coming next). I realized if I lit that fuse on the dummy aerial bomb and took it to him, he would not have time to run through both rooms, open the door and get outside, and when nothing happened, I would laugh

and say it was a joke.

It didn't turn out like I expected. I lit the fuse and quickly walked up behind his back with a smile on my face, then came around and showed the big aerial bomb to him with the fuse burning about 1/3 down.

He slammed the telephone receiver down with one hand while snatching the burning fake bomb with the other. He instantly threw it on the floor and stomped it flat crushing it completely and let out some words I had never heard before. Realizing he took it more seriously than I had anticipated, I yelled out, "It's a fake, Dad, it's just a dummy." By now the fuse had finished burning on the linoleum floor and gone out. There was no gun powder to burn or explode. But there was a bad burned spot on the linoleum floor.

He was yelling I could have blown ourselves up and burned the house down. Terrified, I was quickly saying I knew that and repeating over and over it was a fake. My dad was only 38, but I think I came close to giving him a heart attack. My mother got a new linoleum breakfast room floor.

I got my punishment with a belt and not getting to use my BB guns for 3 months to remember that there's a difference between a harmless practical joke and one too serious.

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A Friend Until the End

by Georgia Everson

Fifteen years ago my husband and companion of over twenty-five years decided we wanted to expand our family. We decided on a minia-

ture black and tan Doberman Pinscher. We brought him home and named him Ben.

I thought we would have to teach and take care of Ben, much like you would a child. But through the

years I learned more from Ben than I could teach him.

One of the things Ben taught me, was the body does grow old, and sometimes it aches and has pains but it is OK to remain a puppy at heart. Our pets seem to understand more than we do sometimes.

My husband and Ben together had a routine of check-

ing the house at night before bedtime and again early in the morning to make sure the house was in order.

My husband passed away two months ago, but Ben remained loyal with his daily duties continuing with his rounds of making sure the house was in order and safe even though his hips hurt from a long day.

Ben remained a puppy at heart, loving his belly rubs, even though he could not see any more and hearing was hard for him also.

I have heard all dogs go to heaven. I know Ben is there with my husband because of the love, loyalty and the grateful heart he shared with everyone.

Rest, well Ben!



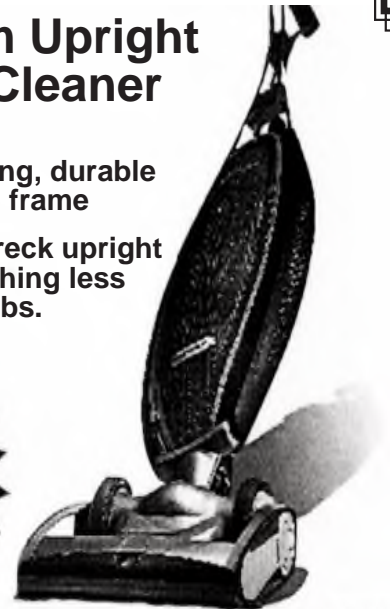
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A Lasting Legacy for Your Family

by Cathey Carney

10 years ago a 58 year old man died in Huntsville of a massive heart attack, while he was out taking his daily walk. He had a wife, 4 children and 7 grandchildren. He had always worked for a high tech company and they lived comfortably in a nice home with two cars. He was planning to retire in about 4 years. His kids were grown and had jobs and families of their own.

He was very thorough when it came to his job, but not so much when it came to communicating to the family. He thought it was too early to make up a will, so he didn't have one. He always took care of the monthly bills so his wife didn't have a clue as to what he paid, from what account, etc. He thought he'd live well into his 80s, at least.

Without going into detail, when he died he left a nightmare for his family. He had a couple of life insurance policies but since he wasn't good about keeping paperwork, it took months to find out even what insurance company he had made payments to monthly.

The personnel people at his place of employment were very helpful in trying to help the family but it took a long, long time. The wife, grieving for her husband, and trying to arrange for his burial, was trying to figure out how to write checks for their mortgage and utilities. A checking account that was overdrawn. Trips to the banks, credit unions, Social Security, veterans offices, phone calls that led nowhere - that was the legacy this man left for his family.

None of us thinks that we might not be around tomorrow. But that is a fact. All we actually have is today, tomorrow's not a promise to anyone.

If you were to die tomorrow, are all your affairs in order? Do you have a will? Do you have a Power of Attorney in case you can no longer make decisions for yourself? Do you know where you are to be buried? Have you shared with your wife or husband how you

pay the bills, where your important papers are, if there's a safe deposit box, if there are accounts anywhere other than the bank, etc.? What other wishes you may have for transfer of property, cars, etc.?

My Dad never knew this gentleman but he did things differently. When he first created his "Family Affairs" document it was



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many, many years ago. It listed all the important phone numbers to call for things like insurance policies, military pensions, Social Security, Medicare, names and phone numbers at Thiokol where he worked, what payments would stop when he died, what my Mom would continue to receive, what banks they used, names and numbers of people at the bank and credit unions, etc. He had living wills for both him and Mom. In addition he chose to preplan and prepay for his funeral and my Mom's so that the family wouldn't have to make all those sad decisions when the time came. He wanted a Military funeral and even specified the phone # to call to get that arranged.

When all that information was put to paper, Dad held a meeting with the family. He wanted my brother and I to know everything that was in it, and ask questions about it. I remember being very reluctant, years ago, at the first meeting because I didn't want to think about my Dad and Mom not being with us anymore. I was still young and young people don't want to think about those types of events.

Dad held that annual meeting for the next 12 years, without fail. Phone numbers, accounts, banks etc. changed but not much. But we always had the very latest information, including his Power of Attorney and their wills.

When Dad passed away, he had the moving military funeral he wanted. Maple Hill was already prepared for the funeral and visitation, etc. and went so smoothly. We used his Family Affairs document probably hundreds of times. We used the phone numbers, the people's names, the wishes he had for Mom, all of it. Dad would have been so proud about how well he had prepared us, and how much it helped when the time came. He wanted to make sure he took care of his family even after he was gone.

And to us, that was quite a legacy. It showed us how very much we were loved.

"Most kids threaten at times to run away from home. This is the only thing that keeps some parents going."

Phyllis Diller

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The Longest Home-Run

by Bill Wright

It was a time when Men's Fast Pitch Softball was extremely popular. Many firms that employed at least 100 employees would likely have a company softball team. Some smaller companies would financially sponsor independent softball teams. Churches would have members' Softball teams. Softball games of that era were greatly followed as a spectator sport. Television was new and most families did not yet own a television; so for entertainment people would attend neighborhood fast pitch softball games.

It was 1954 when a fast pitch softball game between two powerhouse teams would be played. Both teams were undefeated. One team was Saint Catherine and the other team was Oakdale. I would pitch for the Oakdale team and my friend Arthur Cash would pitch for Saint Catherine. Arthur and I had served in the same Army unit in California and later in Japan.

The game would be played at a recreation facility that had two fast pitch softball fields. The two softball fields adjoined with the outfields back-to-back, with no fence separating the two fields. The bleachers were filled that night with spectators, anxiously awaiting the game between Saint Catherine and Oakdale.

The softball game was a defensive battle with no runs scored until the 7th and last inning. Saint Catherine

scored first in the top of the last inning on a misplaced fielding play by the young Oakdale left-fielder; scoring two runs. In the bottom of the last inning the first two batters for the Oakdale team made outs. Only one out remained before the Saint Catherine team would secure a win. Somehow, the Oakdale team then got two runners on base. Coming to bat was the Oakdale Catcher, Buddy Pressley. Buddy was a tall, rangy, strong guy about 20 years old. Buddy was about to make fast pitch softball history (my history).

If one could fast-forward into time, it would have been like a brief moment in the movie, "The Natural", starring Robert Redford, playing the role of Roy Hobbs. In the movie, Roy Hobbs would hit a game-winning home run in the final game of a World Series. The home run would shatter overhead lights. Likewise, when Buddy Pressley's bat connected with the softball, it sounded like the softball had exploded.

Another softball game was

being played on the second field and Buddy's ball landed near second base of the other softball field. No doubt it must have scared the shortstop and second baseman playing on the other field. Some people have estimated the ball carried at least 400 feet in the air. I remember players and spectators on the other field turning and watching as Buddy circled the bases. Obviously, it was a walk-off home run for Oakdale, thus winning the game by a score of 3-2.

I would pitch Fast Pitch Softball for 23 years, in places like Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Mobile, Japan and Korea. Buddy's home run has always remained the longest home run I ever saw in those 23 years. Buddy Pressley died in year 2009, but the memory of his Longest Home Run, on a warm summer night in 1954, remains.

"To collect fumes of sulphur, hold a deacon over a flame in a test tube."

Answer on a 5th grade science exam



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The advertisement includes a logo for HCWA (Huntsville Community Watch) featuring a house silhouette inside a circle with a diagonal slash. Below the logo is the text "FIGHT CRIME!". The contact information is provided as "Join Your Community Watch", "256-722-7100", and "www.hsvcommunitywatch.com". At the bottom of the advertisement is an illustration of a large, multi-story community building with a porch and steps leading up to it, surrounded by trees and landscaping.

HUNTSVILLE RESTAURANTS & CAFES

by *Charlie Lyle*

Huntsville in earlier times had many cafes but not so many restaurants.

One of the cafes was a very popular restaurant called Broadways where young people could go and dance. It was located where Ropers Flowers used to be.

There was the Post Office Cafe, Huntsville Cafe, City Cafe, the Ritz Cafe (owner Junior Taylor) who had glass display cases of every kind of cigarette known to man.

There was the Big Spring Cafe next to the Spring, Wimpy's Cafe and Pool Room next to the Grand, the Pub, a favorite of Huntsville High School students at Five Points, Pub Jr. located where California Street and Whitesburg Drive split.

The Tavern atop Monte Sano was a favorite of teenagers to dance and listen to the juke box on one side and included a restaurant on the other side. Checkered table cloths on one side and a huge fireplace on the other. A favorite of Governor Big Jim Folsom and incidentally the place where this writer played his first dance band job, the Hilding Holmberg Orchestra.

Probably the most famous restaurant of Huntsville's history was the Central Cafe. People from all walks of life came to the Central. You would find professional people, workers, party-goers, gamblers, musicians, outlaws, in-laws, social elite, preachers, construction workers, and on and on.

Over the restaurant was a lounge, called the Mirror Room, the walls and ceiling were all

mirrors. The restaurant stayed open 24/7. One time the Central was renovated, but there were no keys for the workers to lock up their tools.

There was a waiter named Scotty who usually forgot the order and told you to order again. He was a legend in the cafe whom everyone liked, but for a tip, he liked a swig of whiskey.

Some well known friends and politicians used to meet there. There was Senator Sparkman and Milton Cummings (a prominent cotton buyer) whose family used to work in one of the cotton mills. He never forgot his roots. He gave away refrigerators, stoves, furniture, money - whatever a friend needed. He also had a scholarship fund and usually refused to let anyone pay him back or tore up the checks. Well does this writer know that.

The other people involved were Will Halsey, head of the Chamber of Commerce; Mr. George Mahoney, who owned the clothing store next door where people like Mayor Speck Searcy and some others met and then wandered over to the Central for coffee.

The reason this coffee group was so important

was that these were the people who were responsible primarily for the Huntsville Arsenal and later Redstone Arsenal to come to Huntsville in the first place.

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Scruffy, Part 8

by John E. Carson



Lean, hungry and tired, Scruffy somehow managed to stay with us through all the traffic and turns, catching his breath at every red light until we reached the job site. It was a city block on the east side of town where the old, Victorian houses that had once stood proud when

new, now lay in piles of rubble almost a century later, their roofs and spires still topping the siding beneath.

The scavengers had already been here collecting old door knobs and antique hardware, stained glass windows and old doors, fixtures and anything

else that might be worth a few dollars. It was our job to heft the rubble left behind into the waiting dumpsters lined up on the street.

With the help of a bulldozer and a crane operated by city workers, we started at the north end of the block and worked our way from one lot to the other. Wearing gloves provided by the driver of the van, we picked up whatever the metal jaws left behind and tossed it into the giant bins while the crane moved to the next lot.

It was hard, dirty work and even in the waning winter weather it was not long before we were soaked in sweat.

Though the street was closed to traffic, curious pedestrians watched from the uneven sidewalk across the road; probably glad they were not part of the clean-up crew. That thought

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sent a chill through me as I recalled Tony's words on the night of his gang's attack; "We're the clean-up crew," he had said.

I scanned the onlookers for any youthful faces I might recognize; glad that Scruffy sat on guard like the K-9 he must have been. The other men seemed to take some comfort in his presence also. After hearing the glass from the Soup Kitchen window shatter as the bullet struck and the too recent death of Louis at the hands of a mysterious killer, they were justifiably nervous and wary of the onlookers as well.

We were told that half-way through the five-hour job that we would get a ten-minute break and I prayed I could hold back the panic and the flashbacks that rose with the dust from every booming load of debris as it hit the metal boxes; looking and sounding so much like one the combat zones in Iraq.

I kept moving faster and faster as the anxiety in me increased, trying to out-run the

memories that had somehow kept me in the war zone all these years. The other men watched me with worried looks until suddenly all was quiet. It was break time.

The plastic bottles of water waiting in the back of the van were welcome but they could not quench the thirst for something stronger. I took an extra bottle for Scruffy, looking around for something that could serve as a bowl to pour it in.

"Hey," the driver/foreman said, "I thought I told you no dogs were allowed." I felt the anger rising up in me as I turned to face the man. A low growl rose up in Scruffy, warning the man to back off.

The driver did back off, but my anger did not. I saw him as the enemy and flashed back to my days in Iraq. I reached for the knife I carried in the pouch of my web belt and was surprised to find it wasn't there. With no gun and no knife, I was ready for hand-to-hand combat.

The angry yet distant look on my face and Scruffy's growl

sent the man back a few steps more.

"Okay Mac, settle down, the dog can stay - but he can't come into the shelter," he said turning and walking away as fast as he could, muttering something about my mental state. I stood in a daze with two bottles of water in my hands until one of the city workers offered the top of his Thermos bottle to use as a dish.

Slowly my anger subsided as I fought to stay in the present. I reached down to pet the dog as he gratefully lapped up the water from the small makeshift dish. Stroking Scruffy's fur helped calm me and I uncapped the bottle of water in my left hand and took a long swallow and wondered if I would make it to the end of the day.

"The last resort we stayed in had towels so thick I could barely close my suitcase."

Donna Evers, Madison

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From left to right: Caffey Litkenhous, Dottie Robinson, Katherine Robertson, Lida Porter, Kathy Deaton and Becky Theis. (1968)

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF WOMEN'S TENNIS IN HUNTSVILLE

by Margaret Craig

In 1967 the Huntsville Women's Tennis Association (HWTA) was formed under the leadership of tennis teacher Rose Roberts with 60 members. Their mission was "to promote and encourage participation in tennis among the women in Huntsville and in the Madison County area."

One indicator of HWTA's success is a current membership over 300. On February 21st, HWTA will celebrate "Golden Memories, Golden Moments" at a Membership Social from 3 to 5 pm at the Huntsville Tennis Center in John Hunt Park.

Although the HWTA mission remains the same, much has changed over the past 50 years. Charter members played on six clay courts at Big Spring Park. In 1968, when those six courts were lost to new landscaping at Big Spring Park, ten-

nis activities moved to Brahan Spring Park, where there were ten clay courts, four hard courts, and hitting walls. Brick Warden was named Tennis Director and head pro. For the next 40 years Brahan Springs was the prime location for HWTA activities.

In the early years, most members were young, stay-at-home mothers who brought their children to the courts. Infants in playpens and toddlers were welcome at Brahan Spring. Child care was shared by all and babysitters were provided by HWTA to keep kids in fenced play areas while moms played tennis.

Court fees were nonexistent, so mothers dropped off older children at school and went to the courts to play tennis until time to pick up the children from school. Occasionally, a mom might lose track of time

and forget a child at school for an hour or two. In the 70's that was not a big problem.

Roselyn Donnelly, who was affectionately known as Mother Tennis, taught countless women in the early years and encouraged them to join HWTA and compete in challenge ladders, round robins, and tournaments.

When Roselyn died in 2001, HWTA honored her many contributions to tennis by naming the fall charity tournament for her. They also added her name to the annual Most Improved Player Award.

The annual award for sportsmanship was named for Mary Jane Rosenthal, a beautiful young member who lost her battle with cancer in 1971.

To encourage participation in tennis in the 1980's, HWTA volunteers helped teachers introduce tennis to students in physical education classes. In 1999, Spring Break Tennis Camp began with volunteers introducing tennis to 330 youngsters at seven locations throughout the city. This program continued for several years.

Meanwhile, conditions at Brahan Spring Tennis Park had deteriorated. HWTA members were instrumental in working for several years to persuade the city to build the beautiful new Huntsville Tennis Center, which opened in 2005 with Joc Simmons as Director of Tennis. This is the new base for HWTA's many activities.

Much has changed over 50 years, but members' enthusiasm for tennis remains as strong as ever. HWTA looks forward to the next 50 years.

Tips from Liz



* Did you know that you can shake an egg to see if it's fresh or not? If you shake an egg and hear it slosh around, it's bad and you need to throw it away! If you don't hear anything, you're safe. Another test is to put an egg in a bowl of cold water - if it floats you don't want it, if it sinks to the bottom it's fresh.

* Also, keep your eggs in the coldest part of the refrigerator, they'll last longer.

* A good way to sharpen your scissors is to cut through a piece of sandpaper a couple of times.

* A soap sock for the kids: keep a small white sock in your bathroom and put all small pieces of soap into it. Tie a knot at the open end of the sock and use this at bath time for the kids. Very handy and they will love it - it's something different.

* To remove the paint odor in a freshly painted room, cut a large onion in half and put pieces in a pan of water - leave overnight.

* Epsom salts in a water solution is an effective spray for powdery mildew on plants.

* To brighten a rug, sprinkle salt over it before vacuum cleaning. It sweeps out the spots.

* Baked-on stains in your oven? Leave a shallow dish of ammonia in the closed oven over night. The stains will soften and be easy to remove.

* A good way to clean your copper is to take half a lemon, sprinkle salt on it and rub your copper. Rinse with cold water and polish with a soft cloth.

* The layers of a cake will come out of their pans without sticking if you will set the hot

pans on a damp cloth when they first come out of the oven.

* A little sour cream added to mayonnaise for any kind of salad dressing provides that special taste in a salad.

* Cottage cheese and a small amount of grated onion makes a healthy and delicious topping for hot baked potatoes.

* Put egg shells in a dish of hot water for a day, water your plants with this - they'll love it!



Clover

Hello, the Ark named me Clover. The doggie doctor said I was a Beagle mix born in May 2015. A kind young man found me on a busy highway. I was really scared and did not know where I was going to find food, water or shelter. Thankfully, he brought me to the Ark. Guess what? They

have great food, lots of love, provide you with your own bed, healthy treats, and take you on long walks. I am very thankful to the Ark but I did not enjoy the trip to the doggie doctor. My short coat has three colors, white, black and brown. I am a very sweet little girl and have a good figure at 31 lbs. I wish for a loving family that will keep me safe for my lifetime. When you come to the Ark, ask to see Clover. That's me.

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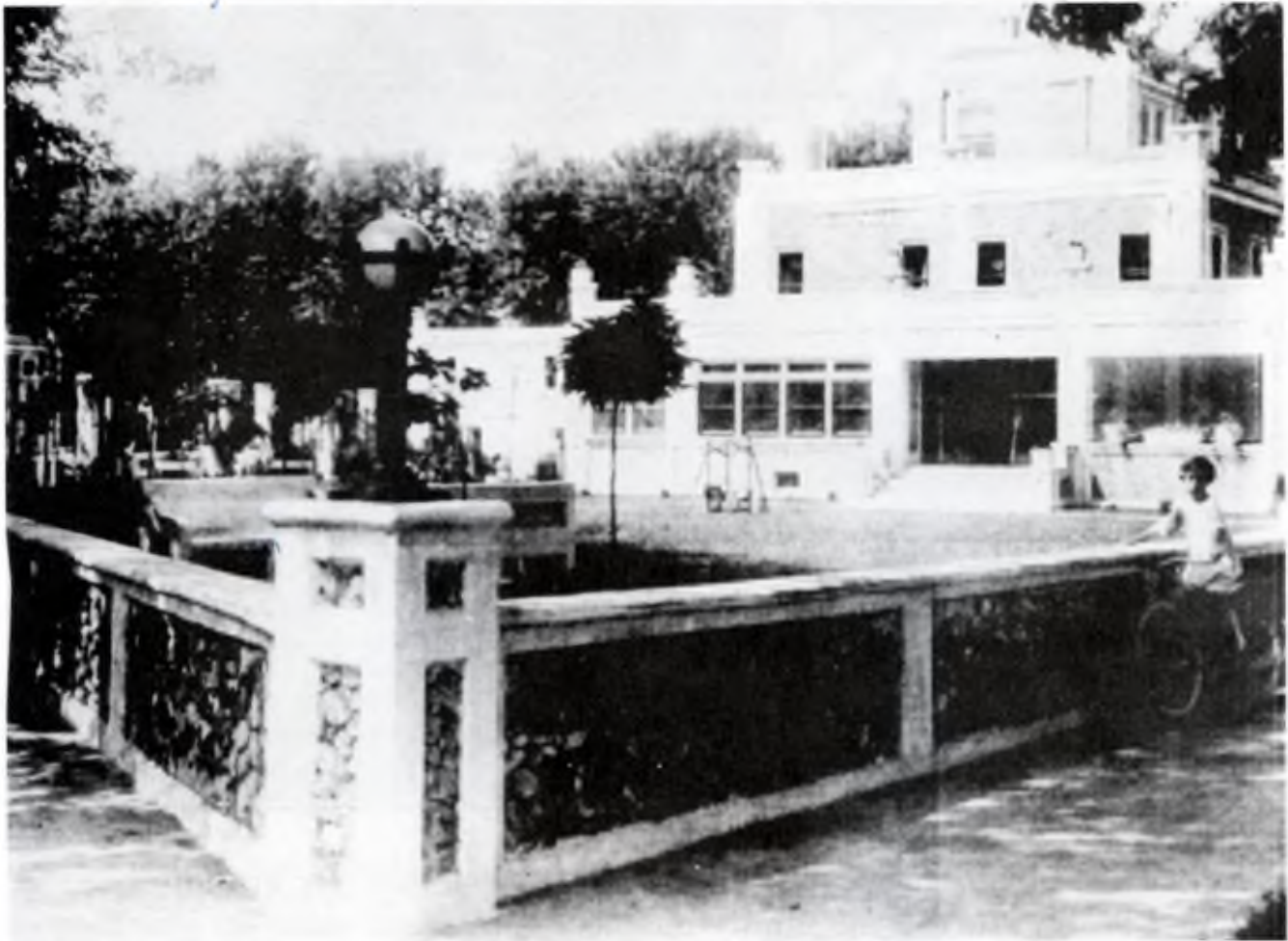
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"Kids today don't know how easy they have it. When I was young, I had to walk 9 feet through shag carpet just to change the TV channel."

John Bzdell

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A local landmark in 1923 was the home of J. Emory Pierce, located on the corner of Andrew Jackson Way and Holmes Avenue. Most people called it "Pierce's Castle". Emory founded the Huntsville Daily Times in 1910 at the age of 28. Sugar sold for 6 cents a pound and service with Bell Telephone was only \$3.20 per month. You can still see a part of this stone wall on Andrew Jackson Way across the street from Ted's BBQ.

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