



No. 315
May 2019



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

MOLLIE TEAL

HUNTSVILLE'S MADAM



MOLLIE'S BORDELLO IS SAID TO HAVE RESEMBLED A BOARDING HOUSE, WITH MANY ROOMS OPENING FROM A CENTRAL HALLWAY. SHE WASN'T THE ONLY MADAM IN TOWN, BUT WITH AS MANY AS FIFTEEN TO TWENTY GIRLS HOUSED THERE, HERS WAS THE LARGEST OPERATION AND REPUTEDLY THE MOST POPULAR.

MOLLIE'S ESTABLISHMENT INCLUDED A WHISKEY STILL IN THE BACK YARD AND THE SALE OF HER HOME BREW MAY HAVE FURTHER CONTRIBUTED TO HER FINANCIAL SUCCESS. PICTURES EXIST OF THE HOUSE, BUT NONE OF MOLLIE.

Also in this issue: **Booker T. Washington in Alabama**

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Doime Lewter
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Mollie Teal - Huntsville's Madam

by Kay Cornelius

From its beginnings as a frontier town in the early 1800s, Huntsville, Alabama has always attracted many different kinds of people from a wide variety of places. Most, if not all, no doubt arrived in town with hopes and expectations that in Huntsville they would be free to make or add to their fortunes. While some failed and left in disappointment, many others stayed, succeeded and settled down to become civic minded citizens.

Over the years many of Huntsville's most successful entrepreneurs have generously contributed to the betterment of the growing city. One of the most unusual of these donors and certainly the most colorful, was a woman named Mollie Teal, who in the latter part of the nineteenth century made her mark as the operator of the largest and most successful bordello in town.

Before her death the sport-

**"A man's got to do
what a man's got to do.
Then, a woman can do
what he can't."**

Vivian Kruse, Huntsville

ing house that she had run for a number of years was willed as a gift to Huntsville. The building then became the Huntsville City Infirmary, predecessor of the present Huntsville Hospital.

Very little is known about Mollie Teal's early life. According to her tombstone in Maple Hill Cemetery, she was born on August 20, 1852 and died in 1899. Her mother, Mary A. Smith, also buried in Maple Hill, died in 1872 at the age of 43. These facts suggest that either Mary Smith had followed her daughter to Huntsville or that Mollie Teal had joined her mother there at some earlier time. Mollie may have come to Huntsville from Memphis, where newspaper accounts there mentioned that one "M. Teal" had been arrested for prostitution.

Whether she ever worked for anyone else in Huntsville isn't known, but in June of 1893 Mollie paid \$300 for a large Victorian style house at the present-day corner of St. Clair and Gallatin Streets, where she set up her business. Less than a year later she was able to mortgage the house for \$1,900, a note which she later repaid in full.

Mollie's bordello is said to have resembled a boarding house, with many rooms opening from a central hallway. She wasn't the only madam in town, but with as many as fifteen to twenty girls housed



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there, hers was the largest operation and reputedly the most popular. Mollie's establishment included a whiskey still in the back yard and the sale of her home brew may have further contributed to her financial success. Pictures exist of the house, but none of Mollie.

Older people in the community who remembered seeing her reported that Mollie Teal made a most attractive appearance and dressed in the latest fashion when she went out. No doubt she wore the wasp waisted, heavy bosomed styles of the time— leghorn-sleeved dresses with bustles and perhaps trains, sometimes with a feather or fur boa around her neck. Her costume would be completed by a large felt or straw hat, usually decorated with flowers or feathers and probably tilted at an angle. Mollie Teal habitually took an afternoon ride about town in her elegant black Victoria carriage daintily holding a parasol to her shoulder.

Sometimes Mollie paraded her finely attired girls through the Huntsville streets as a form

of advertisement for her establishment. The fact that they wore obvious makeup would have made their profession clear enough, but Mollie's presence also confirmed where they could be found. One of Mollie's most famous outings occurred when she filled her Victoria carriage with some of her most attractive girls and made an unauthorized appearance in the town's Fourth of July parade. Needless to say the entourage created a sensation which was generally welcomed by the men of Huntsville, but perhaps understandably, not by their women.

Like the residents of the town's other sporting houses, Mollie's girls had regular medical checkups under a pragmatic system that privately regulated prostitution while publicly censuring it. Several times a year the local police or sheriff would dutifully raid the bordellos. These shows of official outrage served to appease the segments of the community who spoke out against the operation of the bordellos, but they had other benefits as well.

The raids also netted fines, fees and other legal charges for the city coffers. In addition, the authorities were able to make sure that any girl who might need a health check would receive it before being released from jail.

One of the most often told stories about these sporadic raids concerns a time that Huntsville's volunteer fire department was called to fight a blaze in one of the local bawdy houses. The firemen quickly put out the fire before much damage had been done, but they made no haste to leave the scene, "lest the flames should erupt again." While the firemen were still on the premises, the police descended on the house in one of their routine raids and arrested them all. The volunteers then resigned their fire fighting posts in protest, leaving the city without fire protection for awhile.

Apparently houses like Mollie's never lacked for either cus-

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And if you're counting stars, Healthgrades also gave a Five-Star distinction (its highest rating) to Huntsville Hospital's Total Knee Replacement program.

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tomers or residents, but among the girls there was a steady turnover. According to the late Miss Bessie Russell, a number of Mollie Teal's and the other madams' girls managed to leave their chosen profession and marry into Huntsville families. Such instances horrified the "good people" of the town. They might grudgingly tolerate the presence of Mollie's business as a necessary evil, but they expected its practitioners to keep away from the rest of the townspeople.

Others of the girls probably grew restless and moved on, perhaps in search of whatever elusive dreams had brought them here in the first place. However, Mollie Teal herself stayed on in Huntsville and continued to prosper over the years, acquiring real and personal property, jewelry and cash. In 1898 at the age of 47, perhaps having some premonition that she wouldn't live much longer, Mollie made out her Last Will and Testament.

Although Mollie Teal had relatives, perhaps some who were even then living in Hunts-

ville, she left nothing to them in her will. The immediate beneficiary of Mollie's property was a woman named Mollie Greenleaf, who could have been her personal friend, housekeeper or loyal servant.

After the usual request that her "Just debts and funeral expenses" should be paid, the second clause of Mollie Teal's will stated that she wished to give Mollie Greenleaf during her lifetime "my house and lot, said lot occupied by me now as a residence... together with all household and kitchen furniture." Another clause specified that at the death of Mollie Greenleaf, "it is my will that the city of Huntsville accept said house and lot for the use and benefit of the public schools or for a city hospital, as the city authorities may elect and the household and kitchen furniture be sold for cash and the proceeds be used towards buying a library for use of said public schools." Then Mollie requested that "All my other personal property be sold for cash by my executors and the proceeds to be donated to the



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public schools."

No one will ever know for certain why Mollie Teal chose to leave anything to the town in which she had lived for so many years. One story quotes Mollie as saying on her deathbed, "I've done much to ruin the young men of Huntsville. Now I want to help." However, it is debatable whether Mollie ever felt any such pangs of conscience or remorse about her contribution to the city's morals. Mollie Teal died only a year after her will had been written and apparently Mollie Greenleaf passed on to her reward only a year or two afterward. At any rate, before any of Mollie Teal's property could be disposed of under the terms of her will, it was challenged in court by "John W. Smith, et al" claiming to be Mollie Teal's "heirs at law and next of kin."

In a tangled web of legal suits, the Smiths claimed in Chancery Court that Mollie Teal's bequest to the "City of Huntsville" was void because it should have been addressed to "The Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Huntsville."

When the plaintiffs (the Smiths) won their case, the defendants (the city of Huntsville) appealed and the decision was reversed by the Alabama Supreme Court in a ruling made February 28, 1903. However, the Smiths made one more attempt to gain some benefit from Mollie's estate by filing an Application for Rehearing. They argued that since the money in the bank was not specifically mentioned, it should not go to the city of Huntsville.

In an opinion dated July 9,

1903, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that the heirs were entitled to the money Mollie Teal had on hand at the time of her death, which was deposited in two banks in Huntsville.

Presumably the proceeds from the sale of her other personal property would, however, still be given to the city as Mollie Teal had designated in her will. On August 5, 1903, the Huntsville Daily Mercury quoted City Attorney Murphy as reporting that the contest of the will of the late Mollie Teal had been settled and the city was to get Mollie Teal's house and property.

The gentlemen who ran the city of Huntsville now had Mollie Teal's house and lot, but they found themselves at a loss to know what to do with it. Mollie's primary request, that the property be used as a school and that the proceeds from her personal goods be used to supply a library for the same, could not be honored. The citizens of Huntsville might have been able to tolerate Mollie Teal's presence and profession in her lifetime, but even to think of having their children going to school in or checking out books from a building that had been a bordello too far exceeded the bounds of propriety to be considered.

Mollie's will had specified

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worry looks around, and
faith looks up.

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that the city was to get the house for use "of the public schools, or a city hospital." As such, it could not legally be sold.

Into this dilemma stepped some doctors' wives and other civic minded women who had long advocated the establishment of a place of treatment for the sick in the city of Huntsville. Since such a use as that not only met the legal terms of Mollie Teal's will, but also filled a genuine need, the city fathers decided that the property she had willed to Huntsville should be utilized as a hospital. The large house with the shady past was then extensively remodeled and opened for use in 1904 as the "Huntsville City Infirmary."

In addition to being Huntsville's first hospital, it also housed a school of nursing. Both remained in operation until 1926, when Huntsville Hospital opened.

Throughout the years, the Huntsville City Infirmary's occupants were quite aware of its former history. A woman who trained at the school of nursing in the building recalled that the front screen door would sometimes slam and hook itself shut, at which time it would jokingly be said that "Miss Mollie" had locked the door and was "checking on the customers."

After Huntsville Hospital opened, the infirmary building was sold and soon fell upon hard times. Becoming ever more dilapidated, the building in turn saw use as a cheap boarding house, a "shot house," and it is said, eventually reverted to its original pur-

pose although not in a manner that Miss Mollie would have tolerated or approved of in her day, before it eventually burned.

Although Mollie Teal has been gone many years, tales about her still persist and she has never been completely forgotten. Even to this day, her grave, located near the Confederate soldiers' section of Maple Hill Cemetery, is periodically decorated with fresh flowers. Who brings them no one knows. Perhaps it is someone who thinks that Mollie Teal should be thanked in some small way for adding a splash of color to Huntsville during her lifetime and then giving part of the city's wealth back after her death.

Sour Cream Muffins

- 1 stick butter, softened
- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 1/2 t. salt
- 4 eggs, well beaten
- 1-1/2 c. sour cream
- 1 t. soda
- 2-3/4 c. plain flour
- Pinch grated nutmeg

Cream together the butter, sugar and salt, beat til fluffy. Add eggs, soda and nutmeg. Add flour and sour cream alternately and mix well.

Fill greased muffin tins about 2/3 full and bake at 450 degrees for 15 minutes.



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"Love is a little old man and a little old woman still being friends after they really know each other."

Mandy, age 8

DARING HOLD UP OF THE MILL PAYROLL - 1923



A sensational rumor was current on the streets of Huntsville throughout Friday, that a number of professional yeggmen were in the city and that they were plotting extensive operations here.

A number of bankers and mill men were questioned by the paper, but none permitted their names to be used in connection with the rumor.

It was learned, however, that precautions were being taken to make any effort of the yeggmen to pull off anything here and that they would meet a very crushing reception if anything of the kind were attempted.

One report had it that a mill man had been warned of the appearance of the yeggmen and that he had, in turn, warned other mill workers that he had learned that an attempt would be made to hold up at least one of the mill pay rolls on Saturday.

It was also said that local banks were taking precautions and that extra guards might be employed for any possible emergency. It was stated that in at least one of the local banks every employee was armed for

the yeggmen should they appear and that they knew how to shoot if called upon to do so.

The sheriff's office was aware of the rumor and Sheriff Lane will be fully prepared to meet the situation if it arises.

It was supposedly stated in one quarter that the yeggmen said to be in Huntsville were thought to be the same who have been robbing stores, staging hold-ups and creating terror in several parts of the Tennessee Valley.



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River Mystery in Scottsboro has People Puzzled

from 1927 Newspaper



Great excitement and perplexity has been caused in Jackson County by the mysterious disappearance of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Garland, who were last seen Monday afternoon when they boarded a motor cruiser to go up the Tennessee river a short distance to buy fish. The 24-foot cabin cruiser has been discovered four miles below Scottsboro, abandoned, and at some distance from the shore. No trace of the missing couple except a woman's pocketbook and gloves found in the cabin, have been discovered.

Some people have conjectured that either Mr. or Mrs. Garland fell into the river and that the other lost their life in a vain attempt at rescue.

Empty whiskey bottles found on the boat has added to the mystery as the young cou-

ple were well known for their opposition to alcoholic beverages.

The young couple, married last April, were last seen by a house guest Miss Ruby Manning, who decided to wait on the dock while they made the short trip to purchase fish.

The swollen condition of the Tennessee makes dragging for the bodies impossible, but a lookout is being kept below Scottsboro.

The condition of the boat is very perplexing to officers investigating the strange disappearance, since the ignition to the motor of the cruiser was turned on and the tanks contained fuel. The boat was found hidden in a thicket of trees in a backwater. Numerous footsteps were observed at the scene.



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This is Your Life - Debra McKay

by Hugh Michaels

Hillwood Baptist Church honored one of its most dedicated members on March 11th. Debra McKay was the honoree at the annual event - "This is Your Life". Debra is very deserving of this award. The large crowd in attendance gave their approval by giving a standing ovation when Debra was announced as the recipient. She is the 30th member of Hillwood to receive this award.

Everyone enjoys the fun, food and fellowship which was abundant at this special event.

Huntsville should be proud that so many people can gather together in a Christian atmosphere - "To God Be The Glory."

Hillwood continues to be a beacon in the community under the guidance of Dr. Charles Freeman.

It is always fun listening to the stories told by the guests. Debra was shocked by so many

people who were there, and she wasn't able to identify all of their taped voices, who were recorded earlier then made their appearance!

Debra will remember this for the rest of her life, so will those who were there.

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Grandma was asked recently what she recommends as the best way to discipline one's child. I have ten thoughts on that.

1. Always say what you mean and mean what you say, and stick by it. I have heard parents say, "I'm gonna kill you if you do that again." That is a bad idea for many reasons. You do not mean it and you certainly are not going to do it. But if you said, "stop, and don't hit the dog again or you are going to your room," and the child does it. They must go to their room for time-out. Time-out for a short spell or long as warranted is a very effective punishment. And no TV, music or other entertainment when they are there. If they disobey, remove that device from their room during the time out or for a day or longer.

2. For older children, removing items like a stereo, TV, Game station, iPad or whatever device they use for entertainment for a period of time is also effective. If you say it will be a week, don't give it back in a day or two.

Sometimes chores can "earn" it back sooner.

3. Be consistent and firm, no matter what mood or frame of mind you find yourself in at the time. But be careful what you promise. That works both ways. If you promise you will do something with or for them, DO IT. If you are not sure, say, "Maybe, but this is not a promise."

4. When two parents are involved, make sure they are on the same page. No conflicting orders, permission or anything like that. A child will often get a "no" from one parent, then go in the other room, present the case differently to see if they get a "yes." Don't let that happen.

5. Adding extra chores and forfeiting allowance is effective

on older children.

6. Taking car keys after they are sixteen is golden for a parent as punishment. Use it sparingly, because you'll have to drive the errands they may be doing for you, instead of them.

7. Some parents have required community service for serious issues.

8. Most teenagers want to please their parents, even if they seem to be rebelling.

9. Have firm rules with teens on what is acceptable and what is not.

10. Patience, and a lot of it, is required where a teenager is involved and by all means keep smiling whenever you can. That helps you both. Say "I Love You" often.

A black and white photograph of an elderly couple sitting on a wooden dock, looking out at a body of water. The woman is wearing a striped shirt and the man is wearing a dark jacket. The background shows a calm sea and distant hills under a clear sky.

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The kids, grandkids and I love and miss you so much.

I will see you again my Sweet Bill ♥

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LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

by Malcolm W. Miller

The Good Book says, "It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment," and this will of course always hold true. However, the concern for the families of the deceased and the respect for the dead have changed drastically over the years.

I recall many years ago when someone in the community passed away, word always spread quickly and just about every neighbor dropped whatever they were doing and went to see what they could do to help the family of the deceased. The majority of the neighborhood women would pitch in and clean up the home of the deceased while others would be busy preparing food to carry to the home. In many cases when someone passed there was no insurance or money to pay for any type of burial, so some of the folks would wash, dress and lay out the body.

While this was going on at the home some of the neighborhood men would gather at the local cemetery and take turns digging the grave; then at nightfall people came from all over to "sit up with the dead" as well as to console with the family. I have done this many times myself. As the sun begin to go down the house and the yard would be filled with family, friends and neighbors showing their respect to the family. As the sun begin to come up the next day people were still there praying and paying their respects and caring for the family. People did not believe that the deceased or the deceased family should be left alone.

On the day of the funeral everyone in the area came to the service. After the funeral the remains were lowered into the grave. The men of the community would stand in line for their turn to shovel some dirt into the grave; just another excellent way of showing concern and respect.

Today when someone passes away the funeral home is called immediately and the body is then taken to the funeral home. Many folks already have what I call "a layaway plan" with a certain funeral home and everything is already picked out and paid for. There is "no sitting up with the dead" as the funeral homes

close by ten o'clock at night. The County Commissioner's office is usually called and they send machinery to the cemetery to dig the grave and line it for the oncoming casket or vault, whichever the case may be.

I, for one, am certainly not against progress. I have seen more progress in 88 years of life that anyone can imagine. I am well aware that everyone leads a busier life these days than they did in my younger years, however it is certainly a sad situation when a person dies and the neighbors down the road don't even know about it until they read it in the newspaper or on the internet - many times a day or two after the funeral.

That happened to me just recently. Maybe it is just as well that people don't know about it in time to go to the funeral, that way they don't have to make up an excuse to themselves about not going to visitation or the funeral home to show concern and respect to the family. Some do take a minute or two to go by, run through and sign the guest book. And then there are others that actually go, talk to the family and console the deceased's loved ones. Church families are good about this.

There are some, still today, that "Love thy neighbor as thyself and I can only hope I am one of those.

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"I refuse to think of them as chin hairs. I like to refer to them as stray eyebrows."

Jane Smith, Huntsville

My Mother

by Betty Hallmark Atkinson

My Mother was the first born in her family. Her Daddy was named William, so Mother was given the name "Willie Mae". She was a tall girl for her age and very good at playing basketball. So, when the boys had a game going on, they all wanted her to be on their team.

She married my Daddy when she was 15 years old and had her first baby when she was 16. She raised five children, the last 2 were my twin sister and me.

Mother worked hard all of her life, whether it was in the fields hoeing and picking cotton, planting vegetable gardens, canning food, using the old pressure cooker, or tending to the chickens, cows and hogs.

Mother always wore something on her head; a hair net, a scarf, a rag, while she was cooking, or painting something. There were even times out in the garden, when she would might have been seen with a pair of bloomers on her head.

Mother also worked in the lunch room at school and later as a cook and waitress in a cafe. Her work was never ending. She also took in and cared for her in-laws, and both of her parents when the time came.

She was a very generous person, always reaching out to anyone in need. Strangers, friends, family or neighbors; be it cooking meals, cleaning their homes, washing and ironing their clothes, sitting up with the dying, or tending to the sick.

Her door was always opened, and people were welcomed in. She loved to talk and would, to strangers, the rich or poor, it didn't matter who they were, or their situation in life.

I never heard my Mother gossip or judge anybody. She instilled and taught her children by her goodness, deeds and by example. These were important lessons of life.

When she finally would take a break, I can still see my Mother sitting on the porch with her favorite chewing tobacco, "Days Work", reading her favorite magazine "True Confessions". Sadly she passed in 2002.

Thank you God for giving me the most precious gift of life, "My Mother."

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May Memories

by Elizabeth Wharry



May has always been my favorite month. Growing up near Cleveland, Ohio, it usually meant putting away winter clothes, and the unofficial start of summer.

When I was in grade school, I attended St. Mary of the Assumption. I attended from first grade until I graduated in eighth grade. In May, we would have a pageant honoring the Blessed Mother. Usually, the "big kids" were involved in it. We younger kids got to watch. In order to be considered a "big kid", one was in either 7th or 8th grade. By the time I became a "big kid", the yearly pageant had come to an end.

Advance the calendar to May 1976. It's our country's bicentennial, and the year I graduate. As a senior, I can now attend the prom without permission. It also means that I can officially go to "after prom"!

Tickets for both events were \$50. After prom was held at Cedar Point amusement park in Sandusky, Ohio...3 hours away.

I was dating a young man from another high school. He wanted to attend his prom as well. We came up with a pretty workable solution. Steve

would pay for his prom tickets, and both tux rentals, and I would pay for my prom tickets, the flowers for both proms and the food at Cedar Point. It was a fair deal for both of us. We each laid out about \$120.

Going to Cedar Point meant getting up at 6AM, after crawling in bed after midnight. Steve picked me up about 7AM. The Cedar Point administration had made a deal with the various high schools in the state. The park would open on Saturdays for after proms, before its official opening on Memorial Day weekend.

When I purchased my prom tickets, I was issued 2 paper bracelets. My high school's name was on it and there was room for one's name as well. That got us into the park.

I remember having a wonderful time with Steve. We walked all over the park holding hands, we rode rides and came off them smiling and in general just had fun.

After graduation, Steve and I went our separate ways. Wherever you are, Steve, I hope life has been kind to you.

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Henny Youngman

TIPS FROM LIZ

* If you store your patio umbrella in one leg of a pair of panty hose, this keeps it together and allows it to breath.

* To clean silver; in a tin pie plate mix 1 tablespoon water softener, 1 tablespoon salt and 1-1/2 cup hot water. Add your silver and watch the change.

* A piece of orange rind in your morning coffee cup lends a good, but subtle, flavor.

* A good air freshener is to combine 1/4 cup orange rind (use vegetable peeler for large pieces) with 1 cup of coffee beans (hazelnut is good) in a Ziploc bag. Let alone for a day or so, then open bag and place in small saucers throughout your home.

* To get odors out of your plastic containers, crumple up pieces of newspaper to put inside the container, attach top and leave for a few days.

* Shaving cream rubbed onto your eyeglasses will keep them from fogging up.

* Make your own superfine sugar by whirling regular sugar in a blender or clean coffee grinder.

* Have a bad water ring on your wooden table? Simply coat the stain with a thin layer of mayonnaise to remove.

* Many of your old wall clocks have quit working. To get them going again, use a couple of cotton balls soaked in kerosene, placed inside the clock near the works, to fume away the dust and muck.

* Keep a pair of scissors in your kitchen drawer for quick opening of packages, boxes, etc.

* If you notice your pickup truck is sliding around in the rain, it helps to put 4 fifty-pound bags of sand in the bed of the truck, adds 200 pounds! Truck beds are generally light and that causes sliding on wet roads.

* Keep yourself healthy and you won't have to visit the doctor so often - gives you alot more time to do other important things.

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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



The Photo of the Month for April was none other than **Tom Carney**. Many people called and most guessed that it was **Bill Easterling** so I might have to get that sweet baby picture too. The first correct caller was **Cathy Hicks** of Huntsville. She compared Tom's picture to the one that we run in the magazine each month for his "From the Desk of Tom Carney" and she saw similarities. Cathy is retired and just happy that spring is here.

And we had a first caller for the hidden baseball bat that didn't turn out to be so hidden after all - got lots of calls and even a message from a guy who said it was "hidden in plain sight!" Well **Karl Peterson** was the first caller and wins a year of Old Huntsville. Karl and sweet wife **Bobbie** live in Madison!

So to really put a challenge out there, in this issue I have hidden a **tiny rain drop** in honor of the record rainfall we have had these last couple of months. There's no wait time, if you find it call me but this one will be lots tougher than the baseball bat.

We were so very sorry to learn that **Billy Wayne Daly** had passed away, at the age of 81. He was a lifelong resident of Ardmore, Al and was a Vet. He loved gardening and woodworking, and spending time with his family and Veteran friends. He is survived by his daughter **Jan (Blake) Dorning**, brothers **Louie Daly** and **Fred Daly, Jr.**; grandchildren **Whitney Dorning**, **Austin Dorning** and **Meghin (Matt) Elliff**. His dear friends **Betty McNeese** and **Pat Bryant** will miss him every day, as will Billy's entire family.

A special Hello to **Lynett Wells** of Gurley who always takes the time to tell us how much she loves reading about this area's history!

Many of us have lost our moms and **Mother's Day** is a beautiful celebration for those who can hug their moms or even have a good conversation with them. We send love to all moms this Mother's Day but especially to those who have memories

Our favorite bank - **BB&T on Church Street** - has the sweetest ladies working there. **Ianthe Bridges** and sweet husband **Frazer** will celebrate their 26th wedding anniversary May 15th. Her mom's birthday (**Joyce**

Ramsey) is May 28 and her niece **Raegan Lanier** has a May 12 birthday.

Also at BB&T is **Jane Eller** and she wants to wish her husband **Danny** a 70th birthday on May 16. The family is celebrating at their Titus Ford Lake House and everyone will be there to show their love!

John Bzdell and **Margaret Watson** are so proud to show off their new granddaughter who has the coolest name - she is **Lemon Jade Bzdell!** Her parents are **John Bzdell, Jr.** and **Jessica Bzdell**. Lemon was a March baby and is beautiful.

I know we say this every year but it seems the pollen is thicker than ever. When you see those videos of clouds of pollen in Texas when cars go through the roads and there are just clouds of yellow pollen it makes you want to sneeze. There are some really good eye drops that are for those with bad allergies to pollen and they really work.

Billy Leatherwood was a beloved husband and father and grandfather and he is missed everyday. His birthday is May 2 and not a day goes by that his wife **Rosemary** doesn't think

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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about him.

Our annual **WhistleStop BBQ Festival** is happening here May 3 and 4 and it's located at the Huntsville Depot and Roundhouse. You can be a mile away and smell that great smoky scent. Also there's an interesting Craft Beer Trail that features 12 breweries and Downtown Huntsville will be the epicenter for this exciting event. This was created in order to connect the 4 craft beer stores and 8 craft breweries. To get started you pick up a "Trail Card" from any of the breweries or stores, get it stamped at each location and there are prizes you can win. Google **Downtown Huntsville Inc.** and you'll see all kinds of upcoming events including this one.

The **Chili Cookoff at the Historic Lowry House** in March was a huge hit and it was made even better by the free wine bar. Everyone attending got to taste each of the chilis and salsas and vote, with big prizes for the winner. Mark your calendars for next year!

Since the weather is totally different every year and we have seen people go through pure hell when tornadoes, floods, fires etc. occur, you might as well plan on that. **Do you have a plan in place in case you had nothing tomorrow?** Have you thought

about it? Do you have extra supplies someplace, an escape route in case of fire? It doesn't just happen to people we see on TV, our area has been through it in the past with terrible tornadoes. Just might be a good idea to have a plan in place for you and your family.

Happy Birthday on May 8 to our friend & business partner **Ron Eyestone!** He and wife **Barb** will celebrate in style!

And that traveler **Linda Goldman** will celebrate on May 25 - she and husband **Darryl** are on their dream RV traveling adventure and we are so envious!

Those who have attended **Concerts on the Dock at Lowe Mill** on Seminole Drive are just addicted - it's a free event (\$5 for parking) and there are bands/musicians that set up on the dock and play for the crowds who sit in the grass below. It happens every Friday from 6-9pm and you have 3 restaurants to eat at or can bring your own food/drinks. You do need to bring your alcoholic drinks, chairs and blankets. Google **Lowe Mill Concerts on the Dock** for more information.

A bit early but in August **Downtown Huntsville Women in Music Weekend** returns for its 2nd year. It will feature over 20 female musicians performing

at over 10 downtown area venues over a 4 day stretch.

Raymond Renegar just had a birthday and turned 90 years young. He is a regular reader of Old Huntsville and one day we're going to have to get some of his growing up memories. We hope you had a wonderful birthday with your family!

The **Hidden Gardens of Old Town Garden Tour** will be on June 2, a Sunday, from 1-5. Tickets are \$10 and you can see 12 gardens. In addition there are historic homes of interest along the tour, not to go into but to find out more information. You just park and walk. Rain date is June 9 if needed, but be sure and come by because you'll get some great ideas for your own garden. Wear comfortable shoes and maybe some cold water to carry with you.

There will be a couple of spots for credit card payments but most of the gardens will be cash only, and you get a wristband. That gives you access to all the gardens and it should be a very memorable day. It only happens once every 3 years and the gardens are all unique and beautiful.

Have a gorgeous May and get out there to take part in all the activities in and around Huntsville and our area!



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- 3 oz. shredded Cheddar cheese
- 3 T. chopped black olives
- 1/2 c. finely chopped green onion
- 1/2 c. mayonnaise
- 1/2 t. curry powder
- Party rye bread

Mix all except for the bread and put in fridge overnight. Spread on party rye bread and bake in 400 degree oven for 5 minutes. Garnish with parsley or sliced black olives.

Chipped Beef Dip

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

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

with the pecans and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Serve hot with assorted crackers or chips.

Lemon Spiked Broccoli

- 1 lb. fresh broccoli
- 1/2 c. chopped green onions
- 1 T. plus 1 t. fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 c. butter
- 1/4 c. chopped celery
- 1/4 t. grated lemon rind

Cut tough ends off the broccoli, wash well and steam for about 7 minutes. Melt butter in a small saucepan, add the onions and celery. Cook til tender and stir in the lemon juice.

Place broccoli in a butter-greased serving dish. Pour the onion mixture over the broccoli and sprinkle with lemon rind.

Sour Cream Chicken

- 6 chicken breasts, skinless and boneless
- 2 cans cream of mushroom soup
- 1/2 pint sour cream
- 3/4 c. herb stuffing

- 1 stick butter, melted
- Poppy seeds

Cook the breasts and chop into bite-size pieces. Spread chicken in a greased, 13x9" glass pan. Combine the soup, sour cream, herb stuffing and butter. Pour over the chicken and sprinkle lightly with poppy seeds. Bake at 325 degrees for an hour. Great over rice or pasta.

Hot Cabbage & Potatoes

- 1 large slice cooked ham
- 4 medium potatoes
- 1/2 head cabbage, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cut ham into large pieces and boil in water til it appears to have oil on it. Peel potatoes, quarter them and add this to the ham/water mixture. When the potatoes are almost cooked, add in the chopped cabbage. Do not overcook the cabbage. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Cajun Catfish

Mix equal amounts of hot sauce and mustard. Dip cat-

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fish filets in the mixture, then dredge in yellow cornmeal. Fry in hot oil til brown. Be careful not to burn the fish.

Serve with homemade cole slaw and hushpuppies.

Potatoes in Cream Wine

4 red potatoes, sliced and cooked

2 T. melted butter

1 large sliced onion

2/3 c. milk

1 c. mozzarella cheese

1/2 cup white wine

Saute potatoes in butter for 10 minutes. Add remaining ingredients (cheese should be shredded) except for the wine. Cook for 5 more minutes, add the wine, heat and serve.

Grandma's Sunday Casserole

Boil 4 potatoes and whip them with butter. Rinse and chop a couple of green onions and mix in.

Add 3 tablespoons sour cream. Whip 2 eggs with fork and add. Sprinkle on two cups grated Cheddar cheese.

Put in buttered casserole, sprinkle garlic powder and black pepper on top, bake at 350 for 45 minutes. Serve hot with fresh green beans. Can be frozen in airtight container.

White Chicken Chili

4 chicken breasts, cooked & cubed

2 cans great northern beans, drained

1 can Rotel sauce

1 can chicken broth

1 medium onion, chopped & sauteed in butter

2 t. minced garlic

1/2 t. thyme

Mozzarella cheese, shredded

In a saucepan, mix all ingredients except cheese. Heat to boiling, reduce and simmer for 20 minutes. Top with mozzarella cheese and sour cream dollop.

Brown Bread Pudding

1 c. brown bread pieces

2 c. milk

3 eggs

2 T. real maple sugar

2 egg whites

1 T. sugar

2 T. whipping cream

Soak bread pieces in half a cup of the milk for about half an hour. Make a custard of the rest of the milk, eggs, and maple sugar by just cooking them together over medium heat til thickened.

Pour it hot over the bread. Beat egg whites with a table-

spoon of the sugar and the cream. Fold into the custard, then bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

English Toffee

1 c. butter

1 c. sugar

1 6-oz. pkg. semi-sweet chocolate chips

1-1/2 c. pecans, chopped

Line a 13 x 9 inch pan with wax paper and sprinkle the bottom with 1/3 cup pecans. Stir the butter and sugar in a saucepan over medium high heat, stirring til candy reaches 300 degrees on a candy thermometer. The mixture will begin to brown.

Pour over the pecans and layer the chocolate chips over the hot mixture evenly. Add the remaining pecans. Press into the chocolate and cool in refrigerator for about an hour. Break into bite-size pieces.



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Isaac was born in the beautiful Hurricane Valley in the year of 1916. His Mother died when he was only a year old and it was left up to the other family members to teach him the value of being honest towards his fellow man.

His Dad, Oscar, drove the Hurricane School bus and they also farmed the land belonging to Mr.

WORKING AT THE GIN

by Ruby Crabbe

This is a story about a man by the name of Isaac Crabbe.

Isaac worked for Mr. E. P. Miller well over half his life. He was one of the most honest people you could ever meet. His word was his bond. When he told you something you didn't have to wonder about it. He simply stated the fact.

The feed store in Huntsville that used to be on Meridian Street was the last place of his employment.

"What a kid I got. I told him about the birds and the bees and he told me about the butcher and my wife."

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Nance.

Life on the farm was hard work for the Crabbe family. They worked from sunup til sundown tilling the rich soil of the farm. When Isaac was just nine years old he could plow as well as any grown man. He would have to stand on his "tip toes" to see over the plow handles.

Now if my memory serves me right, I believe Isaac said he and his two sisters worked that 40 acre farm themselves. Of course their Dad helped when he wasn't driving the school bus, but mostly it was left up to the children to see that everything that needed doing was done. Isaac was only a boy and his sisters were only a few years older. Isaac had one other brother but he had left home and was working on a farm adjacent to the Nance farm.

When the school bus was not being used it stayed in the school yard. Some mornings Mr. Crabbe would drive his little flivver to the school and take Isaac with him to drive back home. Isaac would always stand up while driving the car because he couldn't reach the pedals if he sat down.

When school let out in the evenings Isaac and his sisters rode the bus home, changed clothes and then hit the cotton patch. Isaac would pick 250 or 300 pounds of cotton before nightfall.

Sometimes Mr. Oscar would be called up to play his violin at country dances.

It seems unbelievable but wild cats were plentiful in those days and sometimes Mr. Oscar would have to walk backward so he could keep the cats off him by hitting them with his violin case. Isaac also

learned to play the violin at the age of 7.

Later as an adult he played his violin at the Snuff Dipper's Ball in Huntsville. Monte Crowder, Joe Sharp and all the other musicians were dear friends of Isaac.

One day Mr. Crabbe told the family to start packing all their belongings because they were moving to town. He had gotten a job as night watchman at Mr. Miller's Cotton gin.

After all that hard farm work for those years, those children thought they were moving to Paradise.

After the move one of the sisters got a job in the Lincoln Textile Mill. Isaac also worked as a night watchman. Since he worked at night and went to school 5 days a week he didn't have much time to study his books. He would prop a book upon his desk, kind of slouch down between the book and the teacher thought he was studying his lessons.

What the teacher didn't know was he was sleeping behind the book.

Isaac Crabbe died April 21, 1994. The lessons he taught his children will never be forgotten. The principles he taught them will be passed on down to the next generations, and to other generations that are to come.

Did you know that dolphins are so smart that within a few weeks of captivity, they can train people to stand on the very edge of the pool and throw them food?



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MY FRIENDS AT WEST CLINTON SCHOOL

by Anna (Gene) Clift Chesnut



If a person died in the 1960s and came back to life today in 2019 he (she) would not recognize West Clinton Street. Urban Renewal made a big impact! My home, located where Regions Bank is now, was a large brown clapboard house with an enormous front porch. Neighbors gathered there in the summer and fall evenings, while taking strolls, to get out of their heat filled homes. No air conditioning in those days.

That block (heading toward the Von Braun Civic Center) was made up of equally large homes, a few having been turned into apartments. At the end of the block was WBHP, the local country music station, owned by the Pollards, the family that built the first cable TV system in Huntsville.

The sidewalk in front of these homes was the perfect place to improve one's skating skills. At about 5:30 on sunny days I would strap on my roller skates and skate up and down that block until it was time to get ready for school.

West Clinton School was an elementary school across the street from my home and next to a dry cleaning facility (now a new modern building which houses Smith Broadcasting). I crossed the street with the help of the school patrol (kids) and there I met my childhood friends; Margaret Anne Goldsmith, Julia Wynn (Jones), Kay (Rodenhauser), and Sara Ann (Smith).

Huntsville in the 1940s and early 1950s, was a small town. West Clinton School was

a segregated mixed bag of children, rich and poor, inner town kids (today called inner city) as well as kids from the town's periphery, i.e. quasi-rural. No private schools in those days. My friends lived in the inner town, mostly within a few blocks of each other. There were five of us who, over the next six years starting in 1947, formed our little clique that has lasted until today, although one, Sara Ann, died several years ago.

Margaret Anne's family owned the Russell Erskine Hotel and they resided in part of the top floor. Since the hotel was only a block from my home I would often be invited for spend-the-night parties. Like most children at that age we would think up ways to be naughty, on occasion. Our three best ways were opening the screens and spitting on passing pedestrians, opening our mouths filled with food toward the other diners in the dining room, and donning her parent's heavy boots and tromping up and down the hall trying to scare the guests - silly, childish pranks that were quickly quashed by the adults when they caught us. The activity we loved, however, was being able to skate in the whole hotel garage, as the attendant would move all the cars to the periphery. It was sheer heaven!

Julia Wynn lived a few blocks farther away on Madison Street (totally unrecognizable today) and we would gather at her home and tell ghost stories. I am not sure how that evolved but it seems that that was my strongest memory of our times at her house there. When her family moved to Franklin Street she was the first to have a television. We loved to go to her house even though the TV quality was very poor by today's standards.

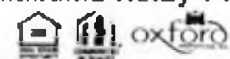
Sara Ann's family managed the Yarborough Hotel (now used for offices) and they resided in a large suite on the second

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floor. The second floor overlooked the first floor, which made for another big adventure! We children could spy on all the incoming guests as well as the ones lounging in the chairs in the lobby, not that there was much to spy on (my teachers would not approve of this dangling participle) but we each thought ourselves young Sherlock Holmes.

Kay lived a bit farther away as her family had a florist shop, and her family had a monkey, a real live monkey as well as other animals. Now, this monkey could make much mischief when he felt like it, much like us children. In fact, I wonder if this monkey instigated some of our pranks. Maybe young children and monkeys have much in common.

When Kay's family moved into town we were able to see more of her, away from school, and our

little clique was complete.

My home had been turned into a pseudo apartment house in 1946 after the death of my father and grandmother (who had been living with us). My mother wanted to have children around her only child so she converted my grandmother's quarters to a small apartment. One room, separate from the other rooms on the apartment side, was rented to my dancing teacher, Miss Hazel Robinson. Music and dancing, with my West Clinton friends in attendance, filled my house for several years.

A few of my schoolteachers lived in the apartment. On one occasion, my little friends and I tied the sleeves of a teacher's clothes together. We giggled with glee!

Our childhood pranks and misadventures seem so benign, now, in our "pressure cooker" world with its tendency toward violence

and despair. One of our responsibilities at West Clinton School was to bring food and help feed the disabled children who also had special classes there. Maybe that gave us a more realistic perspective of life.

Children helping the less fortunate as well as having silly behavior can be virtues in the long run and turn their lives toward responsible adult relationships as our West Clinton School experiences did.

The four of us continue to keep in touch. Only two of us still live in Huntsville, Julia and Margaret Anne. I live in Seattle, Washington and Kay has recently moved from Florida to Ohio to be near her children and grandchildren.

This story was prompted by my trying to get Kay to write a story about her family's monkey. Maybe one day she will.

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GETTYSBURG GHOST STORY

by Virgil "Buddy" Moon

In the summer of 1863, General Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia, about 75,000 men in total, left Virginia and invaded the Northern states. On July 1st, 2nd and 3rd, the Army of Northern Virginia engaged in battle with General George G. Meade and the Army of the Potomac, about 82,000 men, in and around the formerly quiet village of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The first day of fighting ended essentially in a draw. That evening, each army set up their separate camps, resting and preparing for the next day. After midnight, General Longstreet arrived with his corps, giving General Lee needed troops for the upcoming day's battle.

In July of 1998 nearly 35,000 re-enactors from across the country and around the world invaded the same area of Pennsylvania for the 135th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. Each day's activities and re-enacted battle would reflect what had taken place 135 years before.

After marching and reenacting the battle of the first day, tired re-enactors settled in their respective Union or Confederate camps for needed rest. Some of the Confederate camps were set up alongside the same roadbed used by General Longstreet's Corps 135 years earlier.

Sometime after midnight, these re-enactors were awakened from their sleep by the noise of many creaking wagon wheels, horses, and men marching along the nearby

road. Now they lay awake in their tents wondering: who and why are people moving about so late, and do I really want to go out and find out what is going on? Some few peeked out of their tents towards the road and saw nothing. The sounds lasted for almost half an hour before they faded off into the darkness.

The next morning, the commanders of the re-enactment groups camped along the road headed to the host unit's camp, wanting answers. Some were

mad because they had not been asked to participate in the recreation of Longstreet's arrival. Confused, the hosts declared that there had been no re-enactor movements to demonstrate Longstreet's march into the Confederate camp. In fact, camps had been closed to outsiders after sunset.

No one could come up with an earthly explanation of why several hundred re-enactors heard the exact same sound of an Army on the move in the middle of the night.

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Local Gossip - 1885

- A Huntsville washer woman was arrested Thursday on a warrant from Judge Richardson for larceny. It is charged that she received clothes to wash and sold them instead of returning them.

- There is a new manufacturing enterprise locating in our city. It is a cigar factory, to be located on Franklin Street, below the Post Office. The proprietor, J. B. Dierke of Cincinnati, wisely decided on Huntsville after surveying several other cities. He informs us that he will use only the finest of goods and his work will be handmade. So we will be seeing cigars made of only purest of tobacco, without the use of cabbage leaves, old rusty pieces of nails and leather.

- In front of Charley Cummings' grocery store, corner Holmes and Washington, we notice a new invention, known as the "Patent Well Windlass." Mr. Cummings has the county right for its sale.

- The air of quiet which prevails around the Mayor's office proves that we have either the finest police in the world, or we live in the most law abiding city on the continent. If any other city of our population can say as much, we would like to hear from it.

- Mr. and Mrs. John DeYoung, living in New Market, had a little son Robbie bitten by a rattlesnake about eleven o'clock Sunday morning, while walking on the Chapman place, near the Barracks. The snake hung its fangs in the boy's heel, and as the boy ran he jerked the snake several feet. An older brother witnessed the whole thing and went and killed the snake.

- Captain A. B. Jones and family have removed from Monte Sano to the city, in order to make preparations for the opening of the next session of the Huntsville Female College, of which Capt. Jones is the President.

When wearing a bikini, women reveal 90% of their bodies. Men are so polite they only look at the covered parts.



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Life's Lessons on Everything

by M.D. Smith, IV

Life is moving at "Warp Speed." Thank you, Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock. Old age has come so quickly it's been quite a shock. Certainly, life is like a roll of toilet paper. The less there is of it, the quicker it goes.

When I hear "old as dirt" expression, I take it personally. That reminds me about farmers and their plowing of fields, which is good old Scottsboro wisdom. Fields are never completely square. When a farmer begins plowing his field, he goes back and forth for an entire row. When he gets near the end of the job, and the field is not square, he finds the rows getting shorter and shorter. Thus, the expression, "We are in the short rows now," meaning that the job or life is nearly over.

The seasons are changing faster and faster. The good thing is that winter does not last nearly as long as I remembered many years ago. In those days, winter seemed endless. Now, fortunately, winter is over, and it seems like Christmas was yesterday. On the bad side, I like warm weather and summer ends with a blink of my eye.

I am sure part of this is because when you are 7 years old, a year is one 7th of your life. When you are 70, it is one 70th of your life, a much smaller increment.

Many of us have experienced health issues that limit us in some ways. It is a blessing to be healthy and in later years still be able to travel, go out to gatherings at friend's houses, etc. It's good to enjoy the grandkids and still

A man walked into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his arm. He tells the bartender, "A beer please, and one for the road."

be pretty much free to do what you wish, even if at a slower pace. Staying at a proper weight and eating healthy absolutely enhances our later years.

The one thing I particularly notice is that my recall of old songs, the artists, movie stars of years gone by, and other things stored in my memory take a longer time to recall. Coming to me sometimes several hours later or even several days later. I attribute this to the fact that there are so many events, facts and memories stored on the hard drive that access time slows. So, it is all there, just not as easy to retrieve.

I do not remember everything, because not all is memorable. We have a certain capacity limit on our hard drive. Other than that reference, let's don't

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talk about hard anymore. In my youth, I was too young to know that I did not know everything. In my middle age, I did know enough to know that I didn't know everything. Now that I do know it all, no one will listen to me. So, I write.

Think of life and aging as you might climbing a very tall mountain. Near the beginning you merely jump from step to stone and little by little as you get further up it is harder, your breathing becomes labored and you have to stop more frequently to rest. When you are finally nearing the peak, it is the most difficult, but the view is all-encompassing and stunning.

I think life is a lot like a swimming pool. The longer you stay in it, the more wrinkled you get. If you remember Carter's little liver pills and using tokens to pay tax on purchases in Alabama, then you fall into my category.

Nothing lasts forever, so it is best to enjoy each day to the fullest and crowd worries and possible future problems off the plate. No matter what your age.


I think that I am in the short rows now. A lot of friends my age already left this earth. One positive thing is that I still know some quite healthy seniors who are 15 years older than I am.

I leave you with sage wisdom from the internet and anonymous author:





*"I cannot see. I cannot pee.
My memory shrinks.
My hearing stinks.
No sense of smell. I look like hell.
My body's drooping.
I got trouble pooping.
The Golden Years Have
Come at Last.
The Golden Years Can
Kiss My Ass."*

*"A man, a miss
A car, a curve
He kissed the miss,
And missed the curve."*

*Burma Shave signs seen
along the road in the 1930s
and 40s*



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Travels Through Alabama

by Booker T. Washington



Born a slave, Booker T. Washington became the greatest leader of the Negro race in America. Trained at Hampton Institute he early became convinced that his race must achieve economic independence before he could attain political equality. Idolized by his own people, he was trusted too by the whites, and the great Kentucky editor, Henry Watterson, said of him that "no man, since the war of sections, has exercised such influence and done such real good for the country - especially to the South."

"I reached Tuskegee, as I have said, early in June, 1888. The first month I spent in handling accommodations for the school and in traveling through Alabama, examining into the actual life of the people, especially in the country districts, and in getting the school advertised among the class of people that I wanted to have attend it. The most of my traveling was done over the country roads with a mule and a cart or a mule and a buggy wagon for conveyance.

I ate and slept with the people in their little cabins. I saw their

farms, their schools, their churches. Since in the case of the most of these visits there had been no notice given in advance that a stranger was expected, I had the advantage of seeing the real, everyday life of the people.

In the plantation districts I found that as a rule the whole family slept in one room and that in addition to the immediate family there sometimes were relatives, or others not related to the family, who slept in the same room. On more than one occasion I went outside the house to get ready for bed or to wait until the family had gone to bed. They usually contrived some kind of place for me to sleep, either on the floor or in a special part of another's bed. Rarely was there any place provided in the cabin where one could bathe even the face and hands, but usually some provision was made for this outside the house, in the yard.

The common diet of the people was fat pork and corn bread. At times I have eaten in cabins

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where they had only corn bread and black-eye peas cooked in plain water. The people seemed to have no other idea than to live on this fat meat and corn bread, the meat and the meal of which the bread was made having been bought at a high price at a store in town, notwithstanding the fact that the land all about the cabin homes could easily have been made to produce nearly every kind of garden vegetable that is raised anywhere in the country. Their one object seemed to be to plant nothing but cotton, and in many cases cotton was planted up to the very door of the cabin.

In these cabin homes I often found sewing machines which had been bought, or were being bought, on installments, frequently at a cost of as much as sixty dollars, or showy clocks for which the occupants of the cabins had paid twelve or fourteen dollars. I remember that on one occasion when I went into one of these cabins for dinner, when I sat down to the table for a meal with the four members of the family, I noticed that, while there were five of us at the table, there was but one fork for the five of us to use. Naturally there was an awkward pause on my part. In the opposite corner of that same cabin was an organ for which the people told me they were paying sixty dollars in monthly installments. One fork and a sixty-dollar organ!

With a few exceptions I found that the crops were mortgaged in the counties where I went and that the most of the colored farmers were in debt. The state had not been able to build school-houses in the country districts, and as a rule the schools were taught in churches or in log cabins. More than

once while on my journeys I found that there was no provision made in the house used for school purposes for heating the building during the winter, and consequently a fire had to be built in the yard and teacher and pupils passed in and out of the house as they got cold or warm. With few exceptions I found the teachers in these country schools to be miserably poor in preparation for their work and poor in moral character.

The schools were in session from three to five months. There was practically no apparatus in the schoolhouses except that occasionally there was a rough blackboard. I recall that one day I went into a schoolhouse - or rather into an abandoned log cabin that was being used as a schoolhouse - and found five pupils who were studying a lesson from one book. Two of these, on the front seat, were using the book between them; behind these were two others peeping over the shoulders of the first two, and behind the four was a fifth little fellow who was peeping over the shoulders of all four. What I have said concerning the character of the schoolhouses and teachers will also apply quite accurately as a description of the church buildings and the ministers."



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"I've learned that if you pursue happiness it will elude you. But if you focus on your family, the needs of others, your work, meeting new people and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you."

J. D. Smithers, age 82, Arab

One Night at the Russel Erskine Hotel

by Charlie Lyle



One night at the Russel Erskine Hotel, a Senator named John Sparkman walked into the lobby. He said "Hey, Quinn, I need a room for the night and I will be back later." Well, everyone from Alabama knew John Sparkman as did many other people all over the country. Many streets were named after him, buildings etc. Many in Huntsville as well, in his honor. Jimmy Quinn was manager of the hotel.

Well the hotel was packed, in other words, there were no rooms available. So Quinn didn't want to let his good customer down. Well, Quinn and assistant

manager George Roach had a plan. There was a friend of Jimmy's who had a room in the hotel that night and always insisted that Jimmy share a little of the juice in the hotel's Red Room. Well the guest didn't really know that Quinn could drink anyone under the table. So as one might surmise that is exactly what happened. After all, he told George Roach, the assistant manager, it's just a matter of mixing business with pleasure. The man staggered back to his room and virtually passed out.

Here is where the real story begins. Quinn and a couple of bell boys slid the man on to a portable bed and rolled him down to the laundry room for the night. They made up the bed & tidied up the room. So a little bit later they greeted the Senator with a smile and said "Sir, we have your room ready."

The next morning the Senator woke up and went on his way. When the man in the laundry room woke up, he was terrified. He went up to talk to the front desk clerk and told the clerk something strange happened to him last night, but suddenly realizing that he wasn't sure what he may have done last night. He turned in his key and he went merrily on his way!!

Note: As told by George Roach who now lives in Florence, Alabama,

One would have to realize that things were definitely different back in the forties.

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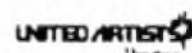
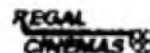
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A Musical Sensation

by Tom Carney



Probably no man in Huntsville's recent history was admired and liked by more people than Grady Reeves, a noted radio and television personality.

Grady was a storyteller. He could keep an audience enthralled for hours, spinning yarns about people he had met and things that had happened to him. And like all good storytellers, he was not above poking a little fun at himself.

In the mid-50s Grady was booking entertainment at the old Coliseum on University Drive. He was always being besieged by entertainers, all wanting a chance to perform.

One young man kept calling constantly, until finally Grady agreed to give him a chance.

On the night of the performance, the young man showed up with his band. The car had guitars tied on top, drums sticking out of the trunk, and most of their dirty laundry in the back seat.

Grady wasn't too impressed with the boy. The young man had long, greasy, black hair, a pale complexion and wore clothes that even a blind man wouldn't buy.

But Grady, being the nice guy that he was, told the boy to go ahead and get on stage. There were less than 100 people in the audience that night and Grady carefully watched their reactions to this young unknown.

The audience was restless, not at all impressed by the new singing sensation.

Meeting the young man backstage, Grady, who was always known for his honesty, had a talk with the young performer. "Son," he said, "I been watching those people out there, and your stuff ain't gonna work. You might ought to get that truck-driving job back."

The young man didn't take Grady's advice, though, and a few months later recorded his first hit - and Elvis Presley never drove another truck again.

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THE TREASURE

by *Belinda Talley*



Sarah Ann and Belinda

"Grab it before the others do!" That's exactly what we did. Little did we know, that day would be relived over and over for the rest of our lives.

We were born different years, but only a few months apart. Her daddy and my mama shared the same mom and dad; we knew them as Mama and Papa. Sarah Ann, (the only red head) and I were best buddies growing up, best-cousin-buddies.

Christmas and an occasional summer picnic were the only times that all twenty-eight grandkids were together. Most Sunday afternoons were spent at Mama and Papa's house but, not this day. Sarah Ann's house was in the country and had a long screened-in front porch. In the back was a thicket of tall lanky pine trees and a barn.

Several cousins were there and after lunch we anxiously awaited the homemade ice cream. Two faded green wooden churns, hand-cranked (by the men) were slowly turning the magic mixture that would produce our long-anticipated brain freezes. As the ice cream began to harden, the churning and turning took much more muscle. One of the uncles would call for some of us kids to help by sitting on top of the churn, to steady it. Several layers of old newspapers were doubled over and placed on top of the churn but our bottoms still got cold.

That day, Sarah Ann and I decided to let some of the younger kids help with the ice cream. Sitting on the front porch swing, we managed to be alone. It wasn't

easy with that many curious cousins around.

That's when I saw it. Had it dropped off of a truck? Did someone lose it? Could this really be happening?

Then she spotted it! Running to the edge of the road, we captured it. It probably had been cut the day before, but seemed to be okay, except for a little mud. We knew that we had happened upon a rare treasure.

"Should we tell? The right thing to do was to share. Did it belong to someone else? We knew it wasn't ours. What should we do?"

Then the sound of squealing kids echoed from the backside of the house and was getting closer. They spotted us and the chase was on. We were older, faster and much wiser, at the ripe old age of nine. Darting in-and-out of the pine trees, suddenly we slipped on the pine straw and that's when it hit us. "Cover up in pine straw, they'll never see us!" It worked.

Sarah Ann was in familiar territory and knew the best path of escape. We would sneak to the barn, then up the ladder to the loft. We would be safe there; me, Sarah Ann and our treasure.

We were raised to share and never waste, but I knew that we couldn't share, not this time, there wasn't enough. There were too many cousins, anyway they could have our share of the ice cream. She found an old rusted knife, dull as it was, it served our purpose. We had eaten sugarcane before, that's how we knew how special it was. You strip off the outer layer and only eat the inside. You actually don't eat it, just chew it. When the sweet is gone, you spit it out. It took us about an hour, but we didn't waste one bite.

Yes, siree! The two of us did what any clever 9-year

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old best-buddy-cousins would do, we ate it by ourselves, and we ate it all. Plucking pine needles from each other's hair, we casually strolled into the back yard. The rock salt and half melted ice had been tossed into the side yard while the aunts washed the dishes. The ice cream paddles had been scraped clean and that was okay, because we had our very own "secret-happy."

Two of the uncles in straight-back chairs, leaned against a big oak tree. The other men gathered around to spin their tales of younger days (as men-folk do). Some of the younger kids had fallen asleep on a quilt close to the house.

It didn't take long until one of the uncles said, "Gather up the young'uns, it's time to head to the house."

That started the process of loading the cars, finding your dishes, finding the kids, hugs good-bye and a dash to the potty. Then finding the kids again, and one car was away. I begged to spend the night with Sarah Ann, as best-buddy-cousins, we always wanted to be together.

Sometimes we shed tears and sometimes it worked, this time it did. We waved good-bye while sticking out our tongues at the other cousins. They weren't as lucky as us, our adventures were to continue and they had to go home.

Sundown came quickly and that was fine, we were ready for bed. Feeling a little yucky in our tummies, things weren't going as we had planned. In no time at all, we were both sick, heaving up our treasure and hugging the commode.

Sarah Ann's momma tried to take care of us, but the sick, wouldn't stop. She asked us, what we had we eaten that day. By that time, we didn't care about anything, we just wanted relief.

We exposed our sworn-to-silence secret. Climbing into the loft, my uncle found the remnants of our treasure. With a slight smile on his face, he presented the evidence to Aunt Martha. I remember, they both started to laugh. Oh, they tried to disguise it, but I saw them both. Here are these two sweet and innocent little girls, gagging and heaving, (thinking they were dying) and they thought it was funny!

Oh, we survived that day and still laugh about it. So do the thankful cousins that didn't share in our treasure.

Two nine-year-old best-buddy-cousins learned a valuable lesson that afternoon.

**Make sure you know what you are eating because... sugarcane and corn stalk are not the same thing!*

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The Last Survivor:

An Extract from Dorette Kersten Schlidt's Personal Diary of the Night of August 17, 1943 in Peenemunde



by Dorette Kersten Schlidt

Introduction by Steve Gierhart

Dorette Kersten Schlidt, almost 98 years young, is the last survivor of Wernher von Braun's team in Germany. She was his personal secretary from 1941-1944 in Peenemunde. On the night of August 17, 1943 Allied bombers undertook Operation Hydra, a mission to stop the development and production of the German V2 Rocket. It succeeded in only a temporary delay as Adolf Hitler moved his German rocket scientists from the Baltic coast to the almost impenetrable mountains of central Germany. This is Dorette's recollection of that night, written in the midst of World War II.

Dorette and her late husband, Rudolph, were part of the original group transferred from El Paso to Huntsville in 1950 where they made many friends and retired in 1979.

TODAY, THE 17TH OF AUGUST 1943, after many rainy days, at last the sunshine, we have all been yearning for. It isn't broilingly hot, but it is beautiful to see my beloved Baltic Sea again after a hard working day. I feel wonderful! After doing my sports on the beach, I decide to go back to the office tonight. I can work faster without interruption and everything will be ready for the Professor (Dr. Wernher von Braun) by morning.

This evening nobody else seems to be in House Four (von Braun's and the technical staff's headquarters)—absolute silence all around when I stop the typewriter. Shortly before midnight I am finished. I close the steel safe and walk out of the House.

Outside, a milky white landscape lit by the light of the full moon. How peaceful everything looks! Sunk deep in my own thoughts, I stroll slowly along, passing House Five (living quarters for managing personnel), the Officers Casino and along the short path between the pines and the shrubbery, past the tennis court and up to the Schlempp's construction office and quarters where I live.

Just at that moment the air-raid sirens sound. Without excitement I go to my room. There is no hurry, this is not the first time. It's only been a warning! My room-mate is packing her bags wildly. I laugh in her face, I only pick up a book and drape a bathrobe around my shoulders. We make our way towards the big air-raid shelter in front of House Four. Passing House Thirty (another living quarters for men), a number of men, mostly from Werk West (Air Force) are standing around, looking up at the clear sky, cracking jokes and laughing about our suitcase!

The bunker is almost empty, a few people are clustered outside. Most of them are going back to

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bed, as nothing seems to be happening. I rather stay and wait for the "all clear" signal. I find a seat on the bench and start reading my book. I become completely absorbed in it and I don't even look up when a low roar, a rumble starts way off in the distance. One hour has already past since the sirens blew.

Then all of a sudden there is a big detonation, and another one, even bigger, and another one and another one, on and on, impact after impact. I run over to the wall, the light goes off, the ventilation does not work anymore, the whole bunker swings. This goes on for one hour and 45 minutes, everybody in constant danger! Finally we hear fewer and fewer explosions. I look up, there is my friend Helmuth, he is grinning all over, glad to see me safe. "The Schlempp's buildings are on fire," he shouts. "I can't believe it, all my belongings, let's try to save them."

Standing outside, I am petrified: Fire, Fire everywhere, wherever I look it's Fire—what a horrible beauty! House Four is burning fiercely, House Five is in flames. Things are still exploding everywhere. Rafters are falling in, gables collapsing. Even the shrubbery is on fire, my shoes are burning hot—my hair singes. I am frightened back, I cannot go through a pool of blood in front of me. There is a torn-off leg from a body lying in it, still in military trouser and boot on. It is impossible to go any further, fire is everywhere.

There I hear the voice of the "Professor." "Everybody out of the bunker and come and help." I see some people slinking away. What a disgrace! "We must rescue the secret documents," he shouts. The roof of House Four has already collapsed and the gable will fall any minute. I still have the key to the steel safe with me. The office is on the second floor. Can we still risk the staircase? The professor grips my hand and we move carefully up. The building is a mass of crackling flames, a constant roaring and crashing.

Groping along the wall, we reach the second floor. All doors have burnt away, but pressing tightly to the one wall, because the other half of the hall has been swept away, we try to find the room with the steel safe: one, two, three, four, five openings, here it is. We edge up to the safe. Laden with secret papers, I run up and down the stairs several times until I can keep going no longer.

The Professor is still up there and with a few men he tries to push the safe

and some furniture out of the window. I stand by down below, throwing the papers into the safe lying in the open on it's back. I am calling for a guard to stand by the safe, rifle at the ready.

Slowly the dawn breaks. I return to the bunker to grab my book: "Das einfache Leben" von Wiechert (The Simple Life) and the bathrobe—my only belongings left! But the secret papers are safely under lock and key.

Several weeks later, for my active assistance and so on during that night, I was awarded the Kriegsverdienstkreuz II. Klasse (War Merit Cross, second Class).

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The Quilt

by Wenona Moorer



I was given this quilt about forty-five years ago and at that time was not interested in genealogy. Needless to say, I didn't ask a lot of questions about the people who had made the quilt. My Great Aunt's mother passed the quilt down to her. This is what I was told about the quilt.

The Civil War was raging in the South. My great grand-

mother's father (William Shepard) felt that his daughters would be safer in the area around Salem in Franklin County, TN. They were sent to live with a Gore family living in that area. The Franklin County Census for 1860 shows that my great grandmother was indeed living in their household.

The quilt was already quilted and taken out of the frame when the following incident occurred. All that was needed to finish the quilt was the binding around the edges.

There were Yankees that had camped in the area. A Yankee soldier has "gotten sweet" on one of the girls in the household. He would come to see her at every opportunity he had. This ill-fated day while he was there, a little colored slave girl made some remark about the soldier that he didn't like. He reached in his pocket, took out

his knife and cut off one of her pigtaails. The man of the house became very angry. He grabbed a piece of the spinning wheel, hitting the Yankee soldier over the head. Blood gushed all over the floor. They took the first thing available which was the quilt, wrapped the soldier in it and took him outside. I didn't ask if he was killed or not.

My great-grandmother's father who lived in Flintville, TN, has a Yankee soldier buried in the cemetery he started. When I visited the cemetery, I was told that he found the soldier on the side of the road. Who knows, but it all fits together? The family washed and washed the quilt but could not get the blood out. The quilt was never finished.

I have the spinning wheel. I also have a towel that was made from the thread spun on the spinning wheel.



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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Natural Disasters

If you're like me, when there is a flood, tornado, fire - any type of disaster that we hear about on the news - in addition to feeling so badly for the people involved, we think about their pets as well. Oftentimes the pets are just on their own, and many don't make it. Here are a few tips from the ASPCA.

Evacuation

NEVER leave your pets behind or outside during a disaster. If it isn't safe for you to stay, it is not safe for them either. If evacuation has been recommended, evacuate early. Sometimes, those under mandatory evacuation orders are forced to leave pets behind. When a natural disaster has been forecast, do not leave your dog at home alone, even for a short period of time, as you may be prevented from returning. During an evacuation, always keep your dog on a leash or in a carrier, as the sights, sounds, and smells of an approaching storm or fire may cause your dog to become frightened and unpredictable. In case you are separated from your dog during the evacuation, make sure that your dog is wearing an ID tag with name, phone number, and any urgent medical needs; write the same information on your dog's carrier.

Shelter In Place

Not all disasters or emergency situations require evacuation. In areas with heavy tornado activity, there is usually only enough warning to get to a basement or other safe room before disaster strikes. An essential part of your Pet Disaster Plan is to decide how you will handle your pets if you need to shelter in place.

Designate a safe room where you and your family and pets will go in the event of a natural disaster. Choose a room that has access to water, no windows, and is easy to keep clean. An interior room is best, with no walls to the outside of the house. If that's not possible, other good choices are utility rooms, laundry rooms or basements. If you have ample warning, fill up any tubs and sinks with water so you have a fresh supply available. If flooding is a consideration, go to the highest point in your house. Choose one person to be responsible for making sure the pets make it to the safe room. If you have multiple pets, assign a different pet to each family member. If you have time, leash your



dog(s).

Keep Your Dog Comfortable

Any disaster or emergency that forces you and your dog to evacuate will be stressful on everyone. If you have a senior pet, he will feel this stress even more acutely. A loud shelter buzzing with activity and hundreds of strangers and unusual smells is a far cry from the comfy sofa and warm pillows your dog may be used to. As mentioned above, when dealing with a senior dog, do whatever you can to provide as many of the comforts of home.

Also, try to keep to your dog's regular routine. Make sure you feed and walk him as close to his regular time as you can. Don't forget to try to make some time for play (but

don't overdo it!), and naps, too. Just remember, your dog is going through this scary situation with you.

The Unthinkable

As a parent, whether to a human child or an animal, one of our worst fears is having something terrible happening while we are away and not being able to get to our kids. As hard as it is to think about, it is crucial to prepare for this situation to make sure your dog is taken care of in the event of a natural disaster or emergency. In the event that something happens that prevents you from getting back home to your pets, you need to make sure someone can get there to check on them, give them food and water, take them out, or remove them completely if the situation is dangerous or drags on.

You can ask your emergency caregiver to take on this important task as well. If they agree, be sure to give them an extra key to your house. Practice how to get inside and take care of your pets, step by step. If you keep your dog(s) in a crate while you are gone, be sure to show your caregiver where in the house they are, what items you keep in the crate with them, where you keep their food, how much and how often to feed them, and where you keep their dishes, collars and leashes. You should also show them where you keep your Emergency and Disaster Kit.

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

Ghost of the Golden Ghetto



Travel down Whitesburg Drive until you come to Drake Avenue. Look over at the corner of the intersection and you will see a brick wall surrounding a group of homes. This development, with its stately antebellum home as a centerpiece, would be just another group of homes to the average passerby if it were not for the ghostly legend lurking within its walls.

Cedarhurst was built in 1825 by Stephen S. Ewing, who had become wealthy by speculating in land in the early days of Huntsville. The home became noted for its architectural beauty and the numerous social affairs held by Stephen and his wife, Mary. In 1837, Sally Carter, the sister of Mary, visited Cedarhurst with the intention of spending the summer. Within days she became sick and a short while later died. She was buried in a cemetery located only a few steps from the home. According to legend, Mary was stricken with grief over her sister's death and sent to Nashville for an appropriate marker to place at the head of the grave. The inscription on the tombstone read:

*"My flesh shall slumber in the ground,
Till the last trumpet's joyful sound.
Then burst the chains with sweet surprise,
And in my savior's image rise."*

Two years later, in 1839, the household slaves told of hearing an eerie sound late in the night. "The sound was almost musical," they said, "almost like a trumpet."

The slaves were frightened and locked themselves in their cabins, anxiously waiting for daylight to come.

The next morning, the slaves told Ewing of the strange, frightening sounds they had heard during the night. Ewing, being a practical man, quickly dismissed the slaves and sent them about their chores.

Later that morning, as he was walking by Sally's grave, he stopped and idly picked a few stray weeds that were growing around the tombstone. As he bent over to grasp the weeds, he froze, his attention riveted to a set of small, ladylike footprints in the heavy morning dew. There were only two footprints, not going anywhere and not coming from anywhere. Just two footprints in the middle of the grave...

Ewing sold the house in 1865 and moved to Mississippi. By then, there were few people left who could remember Sally Carter, but almost everyone could tell stories of her ghost. Tales were told of people walking past her

grave on a dark moonlit night and hearing the sounds of chains rattling and trumpets sounding. But, of course, any educated person in town could tell you that it was ... just tales.

In 1919, J. D. Thornton bought the house. That same year, in the fall, Mr. Thornton's nephew was visiting when a terrible storm took place one night. The next morning, when the family came down to breakfast, they discovered the nephew sitting on the front porch, pale and trembling,

"Sally appeared to me last night," he said in a quivering voice. "She said her tombstone had fallen over and asked me to put it back up."

The other members of the family tried hard to control their laughter, and, in an effort to humor him, followed him to the graveyard.

Sally's tombstone had fallen over. The nephew, with a look



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of horror on his face, turned and ran back to the house. The same morning, he packed his clothes and made arrangements to return to Dothan, his home. He never visited Huntsville again.

The rest of the family, out of shock and fear, left the tombstone where it had fallen.

About this time other strange and unexplained things began to happen in the house. Ashtrays would rise from a table and fly across the room. Overnight guests would hear the sound of footsteps in their room but upon investigating, the room would be found empty.

In the late 1970s, Cedarhurst was sold to a company that had plans to develop it as an exclusive complex. Brick walls began going up and security guards manned the gates. Lavish new homes were built and the old home was converted to a club house for the residents.

It seemed as if, finally, Sally was at rest in a home as magnificent as the one she had once known. There was just one small problem. No development company wants to buy a piece of valuable property with a grave right in the middle of it. The grave had to go.

A plot in another cemetery was bought, disinterment permits were acquired; men and machinery were hired. The first grave, that of Sally's sister, Mary, was uncovered and her remains moved with no trouble. What they discovered when Sally's grave was opened would leave everyone speechless, with no explanation.

The grave was opened and the vault was found to be intact, with no sign of damage. But when the vault was opened, Sally's body was not there. It had disappeared.

Workmen later said they dug an area of thirty to forty feet around the grave and it would have been impossible not to have found any signs of the body if it was there.

In 1985, the home was selected to be used as a Decorators Show

House. Every year in Huntsville, decorators select a home to showcase their talents, and Cedarhurst, with its prime location and rich history, seemed a logical choice.

A local interior decorating firm was selected to decorate Sally's bedroom. A color scheme of teal blue and peach was used with bright fabrics for wall coverings. Crocheted bed coverings and period antiques helped to give the room a personal touch.

It was a room that anyone would have been happy with.

Well, almost anyone.

Several weeks after the Decorators Show opened, strange, mysterious things began to happen. A vase of flowers would be overturned, a picture on the wall would be crooked. Small things, just enough to make the ladies laugh and tease one another about the ghost.

What happened next can best be described by an article that appeared in the Huntsville Times newspaper on May 19, 1985. "One

night, the house was inspected before closing and all was found to be in order for the next morning's visitors. The door was locked and a security guard was on duty. No one entered Cedarhurst that night."

"The next morning, when the house was opened, Sally Carter's bedroom looked like it had been the scene of a teenager's tantrum. The antique diary was found pitched on the floor and artificial flowers strewn about. Most apparent of the disturbances was the disarray of the bed coverings."

No explanation has ever been found. Talk of Sally's ghost has died down in the past few years. What was once her grave is now hidden from public view and strangers are discouraged from entering the gated complex.

So now, a hundred and seventy-eight years after her death, Sally Carter, her ghost hemmed in by tall brick walls, has entered Huntsville's folklore as, "The Ghost of the Golden Ghetto."

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The Tuscaloosa Boat

by Anna Lee

In 1910, when she was five years old, Elizabeth's parents took her for a boat ride on the Black Warrior River near Tuscaloosa. Every year a wealthy banker named Sam Alston used his 30 foot-long motor yacht to take boys and girls for pleasure rides on the river. The boat was called the Mary Frances, and she could hold 30 passengers.

The previous year, Elizabeth's parents had told her she had to wear Sunday-best clothes, to show respect for the banker. This year, they allowed her to wear everyday clothes so that she could play afterward for the rest of the day. The family arrived early so that Elizabeth could be in the first group of excited, happy passengers. Her father said, "Too bad there's no room for an old man like me." He liked to say things like that because it made Elizabeth giggle and say, "Oh, Daddy, you're not old!"

On that beautiful Saturday in June, Elizabeth walked the decks, inspected the inside cabin, and waved to people as the boat passed. The boat went to the point where the Black Warrior River joined the North River and turned back. Afterward, Elizabeth and her family watched as the boat left again and came back, then as it made a third trip.

Finally it was time for the fourth and final trip. As the last group of children and some of the mothers prepared to board the boat, the banker and his captain counted the waiting people and realized there were far more than the stated capacity of 30. The banker announced he would count two children as one adult, and he allowed everyone to board.

The crew cast off, heading upstream, with the banker aboard and his captain at the helm. On shore, Elizabeth

listened to the excited sounds of those on the boat. Then someone yelled, "Look over there!" People on the boat moved quickly from the far side over to the side facing the shore. Just then the captain made a quick turn, causing the crowd to be thrown onto the rail. The boat began to roll over. When the deck hit the water the boat capsized completely. People on the deck fell into the river. Those inside the cabin were trapped.

Bystanders quickly became rescuers, swimming to those who struggled, grasping at those with lifejackets, trying to reach those clinging to the hull. Small boats rushed out and then a motor boat towed the hull to shore. Men brought axes and picks, trying to chop holes to rescue the people trapped inside. One man carried a small girl the same size as Elizabeth out of the water and put her down on the ground. The girl looked at Elizabeth and cried, "My mama will be so vexed! I got my new dress all wet."

On that midsummer day, 27 passengers drowned. Most were children. Most were buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Tuscaloosa. It was said that the banker paid for all of the funerals.



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"Duct tape is like the Force. It has a light side and a dark side and it holds the universe together."

Joe Taylor, Huntsville

The Smith Family Menagerie

by Judy C. Smith

It was a nice sunny day in June, we had uncovered our pool and several friends of our younger children were coming over in the afternoon for a swim. I was six months pregnant, and the heat was just about to get to me. I had cleaned the chairs and tables, made sure the ice cream mix was ready to go in the churn, cookies, and drinks along with napkins, cups and plates to match. Everything was on trays ready to be served out by the pool. Even Martha Stewart would have been impressed. With everyone gone, I decided this would be a great time to get my Mary Higgins Clark book that I had been reading from upstairs and have a few minutes of

quiet time to myself to recline on a lounge chair on the patio, before the crowd set in.

I snatched a cookie from the tray and a cool glass of peach tea and headed for my favorite spot. The book was excellent and I enjoyed my snack. As always, I kept closing my eyes and dropping the book. I must have slept for at least thirty minutes and didn't hear Brent come home. He told me he wouldn't be home until just before the company arrived.

When I heard a noise, I got up and was in the process of walking towards the rear gate, or should I say waddling, since I had already gained quite a bit into the pregnancy. Out of nowhere, came this creature-thing, first making an unrecognizable noise.

The thing was larger than a German Shepherd, his hide covered with brown and white splotches and smelled like a

sewer. His feet made clicky-click noises as he ran toward me. I now recognized some kind of bleating sound.

Somehow I managed to jump on a table while screaming at the top of my lungs "Brent was that you that just came in? Help Me! Come here now!"

Yes, it was Brent, he was laughing so hard when I said, "What is that?" He said, "Don't you just love my new pet." I asked again what it was.

Laughing harder than ever, seeing me standing as big as I was on the table, he said, "That is Bill, my new GOAT."

"You can't be serious," I said. "Put him in the side fenced yard and help me get down from this table." By the way, we only had a few minutes before company arrived. All the kids who came loved, Billy. I will state for the record, Brent really got my GOAT that day. Billy did not live with us very long.

Journeys of Huntsville

FROM THE ERA OF COTTON to the Golden Era of Space Exploration, **Huntsville, Alabama** and its people have played a distinctive and important place in history.

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A Springtime Legend

by Ted Roberts



Springtime is coming, whispered the Forsythia to me. Even the Daffodils don't know it. That old Sycamore doesn't show it, but Springtime is coming.

Nature should never remain the same, decided the Seasonal Creation Committee headed by none other than the Lord of Creation. "Man thrives on change. He is so easily bored. So I'll segment the year into seasons. There shall be four, each with its own theme of temperature and wildlife. And my earth shall begin with autumn - restful, quiescent, a time of peaceful preparation for my miracles to come." This was the final proclamation of Creation. All was now done, including the two lovers whom He had molded the night before.

They looked around their autumn world, so dreary. Only a weak splash of sun relieved the gray gloom of leafless trees and dirt unadorned by grass or bush or creatures, who had retreated to their caves. Adam glanced

at his newlywed, then took a long look around the Garden that was called Eden. "Some garden," said Eve. "How dull. The skies are gray, the hills are gray, and the trees are gray. I'm cold," said Eve, "and there's not even an onion grass salad in sight."

The Lord watched and thought maybe He had started the human experiment at the wrong time. "What'll we eat?" wailed Adam.

But the Lord, with infinite power, showered



GREETINGS TO ALL THE BEAUTIFUL MOMS OUT THERE!

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY TO YOU MOMS AND ESPECIALLY THE HUNTSVILLE HIGH CLASS OF 1966

Oscar & Maria Llerena

"Some people try to turn back their "odometers". Not me. I want people to know why I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved."

Jed Harris, Gurley

Huntsville Area
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down on the two some of the manna and a few of the quails he was saving for the Israelite in generations to come. So they ate and lived.

And the Lord turned forward his time machine and lo, it was Winter.

Earth's pair below noticed the change immediately. Adam covered himself and his new companion with the skin of a bear who had perished from the cold. The Lord noted this was an expedient measure. They had manna for nourishment, bearskins for warmth, and they survived Winter. The Garden Master prepared to give a further crank to the time machine.

"Wow, it's cold," said the lovebirds. And I'm sick unto death of this tasteless manna." Eve only shivered a frigid response. "This is life?" chattered Adam. "This is a

Garden of Eden like dead grass is a Waldorf salad. I thought we were here to improve things. To improve this we'll need a hill full of dynamite and that big orange thing in the sky to turn up his temperature twofold."

"I know what to do," said resourceful Eve. "He'll go eat one of those apples He forbade to us. He'll evict us in a minute. We'll explore the brave new world."

No sooner had her word met the air of Eden than she ran to that apple tree. But in the meantime the Master of Gardens had turned the crank to Spring. Oh, what a transformation. Fruit of all kinds popped onto the limbs of the trees. Berries weighed down the vine. And the temperature rose to a comfortable 70 degrees. The earth sang with comfort and goodness.

"Eve! Eve!" shouted Adam, "don't touch that tree and its poisonous apples."

But it was too late. Eve had already bitten, chewed, and swallowed a chunk of apple.

You know the rest. With backward glances of regret and reluctant steps the two left a glorious Eden and Springtime behind.

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Lee Iacocca

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Time and the First Calendar

by Barry Key



TIME... .what is TIME? You can't see or touch TIME, but you know it's there. To live people must have food, water and oxygen. Life must also have TIME. If TIME should stop, then life would cease to exist.

TIME is in a forward motion and complies with the laws of Newton, "a body in motion will continue in motion until acted on by an external force". There is no mortal force that has the ability to stop TIME, so TIME will continue for eternity unless, Heaven forbid, acted on by a "Supernatural" force.

TIME follows Einstein's theory that "matter can neither be created nor destroyed". TIME can neither be "increased nor decreased"... .well except for one TIME when my wife and I were dating. We were sitting on the steps of her parent's front porch watching a full moon cross the sky, when all of a sudden Judy's dad (whom I considered a supernatural force) appeared and said for us to stop "MAKING TIME".

TIME has always fascinated mankind. When mankind first discovered how TIME affected his life he realized he could not control TIME, so he started to think of ways to use TIME to control his life....hence the calendar.

To tell you how man came up with the idea of the first calendar, I have to take you back 400,000 years to the Neanderthal period. Groog (rhymes with log) was a highly educated, intelligent man. Groog lived in Rockville, Eurasia. Groog had graduated from Rockville High School, earned his bachelor's degree from Limestone College and received his PhD from Hardrock University.

He was highly regarded by the Neanderthal's in Rockville, so he was elected mayor. This was the beginning of the first TIME man ran into a problem with

TIME. Whenever Groog would call a town hall meeting people would show up on different days. He thought to himself, I've got to come up with some way of organizing a meeting so everyone will show up on the same day and TIME.

He thought, that bright ball in the sky crossing over Rockville everyday has got to be the answer. He got out his stone tablet and chiseled a small line. He said this will be the first day of

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my tablet (just so happened it fell on January 1, 400,000 BC). For two years Groog chiseled a small line on his tablet each TIME the bright ball crossed Rockville.

Groog, being very observant, noticed that about every 91 days the weather changed. For 91 days Rockville had a white cold powder on the ground and the Neanderthal's had to wear several layers of animal skins to stay warm. They spent most of their TIME in their caves sleeping, eating and playing games.

The next 91 days there were strong winds but the Neanderthal's could get by with just one layer of animal skin. The depressing gray trees and brown grass turned to a soothing green and flowers bloomed out in many different colors. The Neanderthals cooped up in their caves for 91 days were glad to get outside and enjoy the fresh air. The young Neanderthal men, seeing the young women in the natural light, and thinking of the following 91 days, began to think of other games to play.

The third 91 days were the Neanderthal's men's favorite TIME of the year....all the Neanderthal women wore only animal skin bikinis. However, the air was hot and muggy and again the Neanderthals would spend most of their TIME in their caves, or on siesta.

The fourth 91 days the air was cool and comfortable, the trees and bushes turned to beautiful colors of red, orange and yellow. The Neanderthal men began hunting and fishing while the women collected berries, nuts and roots for the

next 91 days that they would once again spend in their caves because of the cold white powder.

Groog saw these changes in the weather and decided to divide his stone tablet into four 91 line sections. At the beginning of each 91 lines he made the lines heavier and longer. He said I need a name for these four periods of time, so he went down to Rockville's Public Library and pulled out the Merriam-Webster dictionary and began to search for words that would define the four different sections (and temperatures) scrolled on his tablet.

After several hours of research, Groog came up with the words; Cold, Windy, Hot and Mild. He inscribed the words above each section of the tablet that the word stood for. He also came across "one" generic word that was common to all four phases of his tablet... the word "season".

He categorized the four sec-

tions of his tablet as the four seasons. (400,000 years later four New Jersey boys starting a rock and roll band needed a name for the band that really sounded inviting. The boys had studied about Groog in their anthropology class and one boy, Frankie, suggested the name "The Four Seasons". If you are at least 50 years old, you know the rest of that story.)

Groog felt he had come up with a way to control TIME. But he needed a name for his stone tablet. Back to the library and dictionary for more research. After reading many word definitions, he finally found the one word that described his tablet perfectly....the word "CALENDAR".

As Paul Harvey MIGHT have once said "Now you know the FIRST of the story".

Author's Comment: Although my story is 100% fiction, I hope you have had a "FUN TIME" reading it.



Bunny

Hello, the Ark named me Bunny. I am standing on my hind legs because I am going to write a speech for you. Did you know that this is kitten season?

Last year during the months of April and May the Ark had 63 kittens and 4 new nursing mothers! A mommy cat can have 3 litters of kittens a year. I know we are so cute and lots of fun but there are just too many of us. Did you know that all shelters in the State of Alabama has to spay and neuter all their rescued animals? Do you have a male or female cat that has not been altered? Will you help to save lives by having them spayed or neutered? Did

you know we have a low cost spay/neuter clinic in Huntsville? Thank you for reading my speech. Please visit a shelter when you are ready to adopt a canine or feline family member. I love you all. Your friend, Bunny.

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Pat Riley, Huntsville

THE MAGNOLIA BLOSSOM

by Becky Johnson Richardson



Twice in my life, I wanted to give my mother a present when I had no money. The first time occurred when I was 10 (1950). Mother let my brother and I walk to a country store about a mile from our home. Our uncle operated the store. I remember it was a scary trip. Most things are scary the first time we experience them.

We walked along a busily traveled dirt road, took a shortcut through a field, waded across a small creek, and carefully sneaked through a pasture full of cattle. My mind created many possible dangers, such as, snakes, angry cattle, breaking an ankle, etc. My brother is two years younger than me; however, he tried to act braver than me, but I do not think he was. He just felt more important because Mother pinned the list and the money in his pocket.

Upon arrival, Uncle Tollie gave us sodas and moon-pies. We had one dime left after we bought the things Mother wanted. I asked Uncle Tollie what I could buy for a dime for a Mother's Day present. He showed me several things. I

chose a bar of Camay perfumed soap. I felt exhilarated but also frightened because our parents gave us whippings for very minor mistakes. I thought I might get a whipping for spending money without permission.

After the scary trip, home, I wrapped the soap bar and gave it to mother for Mother's Day. She seemed glad to get it but not overjoyed as I had imagined she would be. Again, I felt my efforts were unappreciated. I crawled back into my secret self and stopped showing my feelings. I had been whipped, verbally embarrassed and emotionally starved since the day I was born. The few times I rose above the pain and tried to show my feelings, I experienced either a negative reaction or no reaction.

For several years, I robotically went through the motions of living. Recently, I read that emotional starvation can be compared to the murder of a person's soul. It makes one feel dead inside. I know this feeling well.

To defray my tuition at a Snead Junior College {1958}, I obtained a grant-in-aid to the Dean of the English Department and sponsor of the Drama Club. This began a lifelong friendship. His compliments and continual praise were a new and exhilarating experi-

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ence to me, and I enjoyed being treated as an adult.

With his encouragement, I joined the Drama Club, and played Cicely in the play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. For the first time in my life I felt I could do anything. I felt alive.

The Drama Club sold candy to raise money for a club trip. As an incentive to sell more candy, our sponsor promised a watch to the person who sold the most candy. This began the second time I really wanted to get something for my Mother. Again, I had no money. I worked very hard to sell the most candy.

On the day we met to turn in our moneys, I thought I had won. As more people turned in their moneys, I began to doubt that I had won. A friend said she had only sold five or six bars and asked me if I wanted her money. I took her money. I desperately wanted the watch for a Mother's Day present.

Today, I know that my subconscious motivation was that I thought I could buy my mother's appreciation with the watch. I know now that it would not have made any difference in her reactions to me.

I won. Everyone in the Drama Club knew I had won. I was to be congratulated and awarded the watch in Assembly the next day. I had a few hours to think about what I had done. In me, when I have done something that is unfair, I get a tight feeling in my chest that will not leave until I do something to atone. I realized that each time I saw that watch on my mother's arm, I would remember I had cheated to get it.

I arrived early at college the next day and went immediately to see the Drama Club sponsor. I told him that I had cheated to win, and why I had done it. I told him I did not feel right about accepting the watch. I asked him to give the watch to the runner-up. He said, "OK." Then he asked me to sit with him on the first row in the auditorium.

I arrived in the auditorium before him. I sat all alone on the first row.

Everyone was in the auditorium when he made his entrance. He walked down the aisle, holding the most beautiful magnolia blossom that I have ever seen.

When he reached the first row, he bowed from the waist and with a grand motion, handed me the magnolia blossom and said, "To the most beautiful girl here!" Tears came to my eyes. I felt really loved at that moment. I also knew that I had given my mother a present grander than a watch. I was giving her a lifetime of honesty and integrity.

Much later, I learned it was a present that only I would treasure. She continued to be emotionally cold and to think I was morally corrupt. I waited 16 more years before a lifetime wish to hear my mother say, "I love you, Becky" would be fulfilled. I was 35 years old. For a second, I thought my murdered soul had been resurrected, but I was wrong. The pain did not stop.

I learned how to murder feelings also. I learned to murder expectations and hopes before they could live and hurt me. I learned to murder good feelings. I have continued to control and hide my feelings of love and expectations; that is, until I see a magnolia tree in full blossom ... and for a moment, just a moment, I feel everything is right in the world.

This is where the first version ended. However, after Mother aged, she was in a nursing home for several years. During that time, I was her main family caretaker. I made myself a promise that I would do something everyday to make her laugh since she had never had that kind of joy in her life. I also promised myself that I would not do or say the same thing twice. For 18 years, I kept that promise. We had many joyous moments for me to remember instead of the childhood ones.

Mother died July 2017 at ninety-eight and a half years old. I am filled with what those 18 years added to brighten my life because now I can remember my Mother full of love and happiness. What she didn't learn as a child, I was able to teach her as an adult.

I can still hear her voice from about three months before she died as I entered her room, she looked at me full of expectations and said, "Becky tell me a joke!"

In our house, the definitions of whippings and spankings were:

a. A whipping was administered with a switch created from a thin, long limb taken from a bush. The branches and leaves were removed, often leaving barbs. The hitting could range from the shoulders to the ankles. When contact with skin occurred, the type of punishment left whelps and broken skin,

b. A spanking was administered with a leather strap (called a "strop"), belt or wooden paddle. The hitting was usually confined to the buttocks and upper thighs or palms. This type of punishment usually left deep bruises.

The Lakewood Boys and their Legacy

by Bill Turney

I grew up in Huntsville when it was a lot like Mayberry and life was not only good but it was safe. In about 1955 my parents and I moved into a new house in Lakewood subdivision on North Memorial Parkway near Mastin Lake Road and I turned 10 years old. We had previously lived on Walker Street near the old national guard armory and I was used to riding my bike all over Huntsville but the new house was pretty far out so I had to find something else to do closer to our new house and that is where the Lakewood Boys come into play. What I call the Lakewood Legacy was born.

There was a vacant red dirt field next to the new Lakewood Elementary School and a group of us boys gathered there to play baseball. I don't know whose idea it was or how it all started but perhaps it was just that we wanted to play baseball. I was 2-3 years younger than the other boys but was in the same grade in school and age was less important than what grade we were in. The problem was that we didn't have a place to play so we decided to try the vacant lot next to the new school. It was on the corner and appeared to belong to no one, at least in the eyes of 10-12 young boys so we decided to make it our field of dreams. However, playing baseball on an uneven, rocky field with no backstop was less fun than we anticipated so we decided to do something about it.

Over a couple of summers with some building materials (piece of chain link fence, a few concrete blocks, some rope and some 2X4's) that were either "donated" or "appropriated" we managed to create a "drag net" with the chainlink fencing weighted down with a few concrete blocks and pulled on ropes by 3-4 of us at a time, we managed to somewhat level the field.

A little work with a hoe and shovel managed to create a playable field where we could field ground balls without hurting ourselves. Still no backstop but a little chicken wire and some poles gave us enough to keep every missed ball from going into the street. The outfield was manageable after a few run throughs with

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our lawn mowers (several of us cut grass for money so we had mowers).

All was fine but there were only 10-12 of us which meant at best 6 on 6 teams and we longed to be a real team. Our dreams were bigger than our assets or so it appeared. We had no coach, no equipment and no league. Then one day someone told Buttermilk Johnson, the director of the West Huntsville YMCA, about our group so we rode our bikes across town to the Y and met with Buttermilk. He listened to us and offered us two things: first he would allow us to play in the West Huntsville YMCA league as a "real team" and he offered us a pile of mismatched uniforms. Some were grey with red stripes, some had blue stripes and some had no stripes but to us there were just like our favorite major league teams so we were officially "in heaven".

We still had no coach but Buttermilk took us under his wing and gave us a schedule and a little guidance and we began to play. Each of us had our hero and mine was Willie Mays and I tried to emulate his basket catch but honestly wasn't very good at it. Other heroes were Nellie Fox, Mickey Mantle, Pee Wee Reese and others. We played our games at Optimist Park over near Rison and at Merrimack Field and later on as we got older, we got to play at the big field on the Arsenal which had major league dimensions. We were living the good life! We bummed rides, hitchhiked and rode our bikes to get to our games.

After a couple of years I think we got a coach and one of the dads started helping out. We never were really all that good but we did have a couple of good players so we could get a taste of success occasionally. Since I was younger than the other guys I was always playing above my age group and one year Buttermilk asked me if I was really only 12. When I told him yes but I was playing with the 14 year old guys, he offered me a spot on the little league all star team even though I was playing on a Pony League team. I jumped at the chance and in our first game we played an out of state team at a field in Gurley.

I was bigger than many of the other 11-12 year old kids and was used to playing against 13-14 year old boys so the pitching in Little League was much easier to hit and I hit a home run. The funny part was the coach from the other team running the bases with me scream-

ing for my birth certificate. He apparently had been told I was a "ringer"! Clearly, I was not a ringer for my awesome talent but it was fun for a moment!

We played or practiced every day for 2-3 summers and drank big Topp Colas and ate chunks of bologna and cheese with crackers which we bought from the peddler truck which came by the field around lunch time. What a time for a group of boys who just wanted to have fun! Quite a difference between today's highly organized and equipped teams.



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