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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

LAST SURVIVOR WORKING WITH WERNHER VON BRAUN



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Last Survivor: Working with Wernher von Braun

by Steve Gierhart

LITTLE IN STATURE can still mean big in personality and sheer determination. That accurately describes Dorette Kersten Schlidt. Born in 1921 in Stargard, Pomerania, (then in Germany but now part of Poland). The small but articulate 97 year old lady is clearly not only a survivor, but a lifer, meaning she luxuriates in it, wraps her arms around it and relishes every moment. Truly a remarkable woman with a remarkable life who calls Huntsville, Alabama her home.

What makes Dorette especially noteworthy for Huntsvillians is her World War II connection with Dr. Wernher von Braun at Peenemunde as well as the fact that her late husband Rudolf Schlidt was a member of the "Paperclip" (Operation Paperclip) group of von Braun's German scientists. These intrepid, intelligent and hopeful men were brought to the United States in 1945 to enable our fledgling military and civilian space aspirations. As we all know, they succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. In

no small role, Dorette was part of that adventure. And today in 2019 she is the sole survivor of the von Braun group who worked in Peenemunde.

As World War II broke out in Europe, young Dorette Kersten was vivacious and athletic. Born to Gustav and Berta Kersten, Dorette, the youngest of three children, was a track and field star who despite her diminutive size was fast, agile, and quite a jumper, excelling in high jumping as the champion of Pomerania. She also ran the 100 meter race, participated in the long jump, the discus and the shot put and excelled at gymnastics whether on the rings, pommel horse or balance beam. She loved the track, continuing to use it for fun as well as conditioning until she moved to Huntsville as an adult mother, eventually of four children. It is no wonder that this young woman wanted more out of life, and she pushed her parents for such.

The war drained Germany of its young men, and like the United States, the women had to step up. Dorette, who was working for a prestigious law firm in Stargard, saw a directive from the German government to provide names of women employees to support the research activities at near-by Peenemunde. Peenemunde was the location of German research and development of what would later become known as the V-2 Rocket.

Middle age is when you still believe you'll feel better in the morning.



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(in memory)

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Dorette saw this order as an opportunity and asked her parents for permission to apply as she was not yet 21. However, her prestigious law office where she worked after business school did not want to submit her name. They wanted to give the government the name of another less useful employee. As fate would have it, the other woman's parents refused to give permission and Dorette's name was submitted. She arrived at Peenemunde in early 1941 and was assigned to a German engineer (first name unknown) de Vries (title: Diplom-Ingenieur). She worked with Mr. de Vries for six weeks before receiving that fateful call to visit Dr. von Braun in his office.

Dorette admits to being frightened at receiving this request. Though she brought in "essays" or technical material from Mr. de Vries to Dr. von Braun, she had never met him. However, at the time of the call, de Vries was on a business trip. Nonetheless, she dutifully went to Wernher von Braun's office in the complex, the build-

ing referred to as "House Four."

Dr. von Braun was a man of strong charisma, handsome and a socially and scientifically gifted German who, without trying, was naturally attractive to the many women in the complex. Dorette did not know what to expect and her shyness increased her worry, but von Braun made her comfortable from the start. He said "Fraulein Kersten (he always called her "Fraulein"), my secretary is getting married. I need a replacement. Do you think you could do the job?"

Dorette had been at Peenemunde only a short time but already had a reputation as a hard worker whose dependability, intelligence and work ethic would be valuable to any manager. And certainly, her beauty and social skills were also noticed. When Dorette expressed concern about accepting the job without first talking to Mr. de Vries, von Braun said it was alright, that he was certain that Mr. de Vries would understand and accept her reassignment. However, he bluntly asked whether

she could work late as he could not focus on some of his duties unless the office was quiet. Too often during the day his concentration had to shift from one technical issue to planning, then to management or even entertaining some high-ranking military guest.

Dorette said she could stay as late as necessary (she never thought for a moment that she would not) but that she was only concerned about the time to get back to her dormitory and come back again early the next morning.

She had to take a train to get onto Usedom Island and Peenemunde, so Dr. von Braun made arrangements for her to live in the single women's barracks at nearby Karlshagen Camp which was a short walk to House Four.

From that moment until 1944 when, due to Allied bombing, the complex had to be moved south to Nordhausen in the

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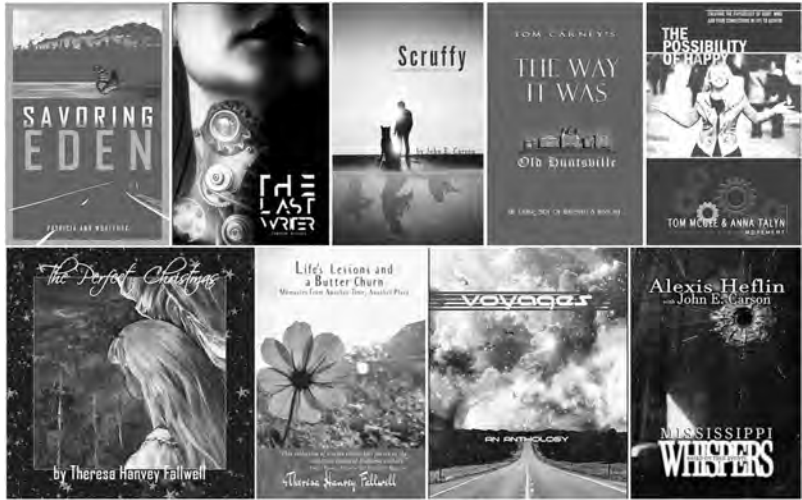
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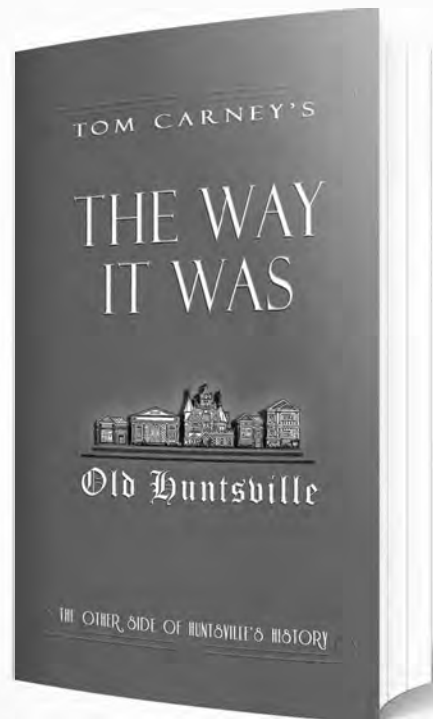
From CBA Publishing Services

Tom Carney's - The Way It Was

The Other Side of Huntsville's History

Genre: History / Local / Alabama / Huntsville

From bootlegging to ghosts and everything in between, this collection of stories shows the other side of Huntsville and its development in unexpected ways. Utilizing illustrations and advertisements, anecdotes and stories, Tom Carney has created a virtual time machine that doesn't always land where you would expect it.



Harz Mountains, Dorette was Dr. von Braun's personal secretary. However, her duties went far beyond those of a normal receptionist. Not only did she have to work long hours, taking shorthand (an especially pesky duty with all of the scientific jargon for which she was unfamiliar), or typing his communications and directions while maintaining his calendar, but she had to understand the intricacies of the complex and its personnel. Know when to keep people away and when to let them see the "Director" or as she called him, the "Professor." When he was busy but visited by high-ranking military and civilian personnel, she sometimes had to escort the visitors to dinner, parties or a tour of the facility.

But what endears von Braun to Dorette was his kindness. She said that the "Professor" went out of his way to make everyone comfortable, despite the background of war. If a test failure occurred, the men responsible knew that von Braun had their back. He emphasized the error was a team respon-

sibility and no stigma was attached to such, provided they worked to fix it. He was approachable and kindly no matter who you were; engineer or janitor.

It is easy to understand that their long term and routine exposure allowed them to relax around each other, and they both had a love of the sea and the water. Dorette loved to swim in the Baltic and so did von Braun. It was not uncommon for them to take a weekend sailing venture in the Baltic with a friend or co-worker. On one occasion Dorette broke her leg on the sailboat, but that did not mean she did not go to work on the next workday. She lived up to her reputation, and devoted her time to the charming and equally hardworking scientist whose only other escape from the office was music. Dorette sometimes heard him play cello, often with two other engineers who played the violin and the piano. Even in war, music and exercise make us feel normal.

One of her other traits helped her in her job. Her shy-



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ness meant she talked little unless it was necessary. She never brought a personal problem to Dr. von Braun. She managed it all herself and was able to escape in naturally easy ways, including not only swimming, but also maintaining a presence in the track and field through membership in local sports clubs. She thoroughly enjoyed her job despite the dark presence of war. She even met her future husband, Rudolph Schildt, at Peenemunde.

However, the war would ultimately change her fate and her future husband's. It was on August 17th of 1943 that a routine day turned into a nightmare for the people at Peenemunde. Operation Hydra had been planned by the Allied Forces for the past few weeks because an April photo reconnaissance had discovered several ongoing construction sites in northern France for German secret weapons, including six for the V-2 rocket. Knowing the full capabilities of the Peenemunde men (and women) who developed the weapon, they hoped to decapitate the German endeavor before it started (the actual use of the V-2 did not start until September 1944 but test flights had already started in 1943 from Peenemunde).

Dorette remembers how beautiful that night was, especially with the full moon and clear summer air. After it was all over, it took awhile to assess the frightful damage to their program, including the loss of two scientists and nearly 700 people in the area. Though the technical information was saved through the efforts of von Braun and Dorette (much of the information was in a safe in his office on the second floor of House 4, the technical directorate), it was clear that Peenemunde was compromised and a safer place had to be selected. By September some of the key personnel were in Nordhau-

sen, the area in the Harz Mountains selected for the final design and start of underground production.

Dorette was evacuated in 1944 and sent to Ilfeld to work for Hans Lindenberg and other quality control managers. She no longer worked for the "Professor." Ilfeld was north of Nordhausen about 10 kms. Between Ilfeld and Nordhausen lay the Mittelwerk V-2 production factory built underground in the Kohnstein (mountain) to avoid Allied bombing. Ultimately, over 5200 V-2 rockets were built there.

Dorette and the others knew the end was near. She remembers thinking that Hitler was using the V-2 to bolster morale in Germany. He assumed his "wonder weapon" might turn the war, but the V-2 community of workers and engineers knew Germany was clearly losing the war. It was propaganda.

The "propaganda" campaign, however, did not save von Braun from suspicion and danger. He was under surveillance by the German secret police after the raid on Peenemunde. Heinrich Himmler, head of the feared Schutzstaffel (SS), made false claims that von Braun was a communist sympathizer and was sabotaging the V-2 program when in fact it was technical issues that were causing problems in test flights.

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In March 1944 von Braun was arrested and brought to Gestapo headquarters where he was held for two weeks before his boss, MG Dornberger, secured his release through Albert Speer's personal influence with Adolf Hitler.

Life went on despite the uncertainty. By 1945 it was simply a waiting game, but uncertainty did not stop Dorette and Rudolph who married in May at war's end, just as von Braun, his brother Magnus, MG Dornberger and a few others were surrendering to the American Army, instead of the dreaded Russians. Dorette and Rudolph had no choice. A new life awaited them.

And it soon came.

Rudolph Schlidt was on the first list of the men of Operation Paperclip. Wernher von Braun and his men were shipped to the United States and El Paso, Texas in September 1945. Others would follow. Dorette had to stay behind with other family members of the Paperclip group in Landshut, Germany. Dorette was not one of the first Landshut families reunited with their husbands in El Paso. That was bestowed on the families with children.

Dorette's chance arrived in early 1947 when she boarded a troop ship for America, one of 220 "Limited Capacity" Liberty ship conversions during the war. She and other civilians were separated from the troops on board but first saw the United States in New York City. She arrived in the heat of El Paso in April 1947, a far cry



from the German countryside she loved, but a welcome sight nonetheless.

The freedom Dorette felt, despite the necessity of having soldiers escort them around (technically, the Paperclippers and their families were not legally in the country), was a tremendous relief. It was not long before the dangers of the war were forgotten and normality came. Dorette and Rudolph acclimated well with the German community in El Paso, even enjoying the American soldiers who escorted them into town for dinner or shopping. Dorette, though no longer officially employed by Wernher von Braun, still *maintained close contact with the "Professor" who was now married to

Maria von Quistorp.

During this time Dorette would volunteer to help him with files at home or with special activities. She grew an intimacy with the von Brauns that she did not have during the war. The trials of war had already bonded von Braun and Dorette, and now the unburdening of war bonded their families. Dorette and Rudolph's first child, Sabina, was born in El Paso in 1948 but so was Maria and Wernher's first child, Iris. Sabina and Iris were the best of friends in El Paso and continued their close relationship in Huntsville. Maria von Braun also became the godmother of another Schlidt child, Gwendolyn.

One could say, however,

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that her full release from the memories of WWII came in Huntsville, Alabama where the El Paso group transferred in 1950. Huntsville was similar in topography to Germany with low mountains surrounding the city. The people of Huntsville bonded well with their new German citizens. In fact, Dorette says that in many ways her relationships in her early days in Huntsville were closer with the local Americans than with the German community here.

She and Rudolph later enjoyed a rental home on Hermitage Avenue near Maple Hill Cemetery though they later built a house on Monte Sano. Rudolph maintained a central position with the Paperclippers on Redstone Arsenal and the Army Ballistic Missile Agency but for most of his career was with General Dynamics as Director for European Marketing, a four year job that turned into

a twenty year career in Europe.

And so Dorette Kersten Schlidt embraced her resting place of Huntsville, Alabama and with it brings a fascinating life full of adventure, one only a feisty woman with determination could make while surviving a world war full of destruction. Dorette may have been "a little lady" but she made a family and steadfast friends, such as the von Brauns, on her personal journey. If only we all could have such excitement!

This article was drawn from an interview with Dorette Schlidt at her home on Panorama Drive, Huntsville, Steve Gierhart and John Allen attending.

Other information was added from online sources and the Huntsville Historical Review. Photo in this issue from Dorette Schlidt with her permission.





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Loveday Hollow

by Malcolm Miller

Traveling east on Highway 72 over Chapman Mountain, then a few miles down Old Gurley Road there is a country lane winding its way all the way back to the edge of the mountain and ending in what I believe has been known since before the Civil War as Loveday Hollow.

As a small boy I remember quite vividly my family's trips to visit the Lovedays of Loveday Hollow. Daddy would load all our family in the two horse wagon early on a Sunday morning and head out for an all day visit with his nephew Bill Loveday and family. It was a very exciting time for me and I can still remember all the good food and fun we had.

Sam Loveday's family lived down in the flat before the climb up to where Bill Loveday lived. I still remember the house where we spent those summer days long ago. It was probably a pre-Civil War house with the kitchen built separate from the rest of the house. The women would cook the food and then bring all that good food steaming into the dining room in the house.

Unfortunately this house burned down in nineteen fifty-

nine and Bill Loveday was severely burned in the fire and died from his burns. Another house or two were built and the remaining family stayed on in the hollow. Several years prior to Bill and his wife Dovey's death slowly one by one the kids left the home place leaving only John and Neal, (known as "Butch") in the hollow.

In the mean time John had met and married a pretty young lady named Mildred League, then Mildred's sister Jinny came visiting I guess, and she and Neal were married. I say she came there because, knowing Neal as I did, I am quite sure he didn't leave the hollow to go courting her. Neal was one of the quietest and kindest people I have ever known but he just wasn't one



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That's right - shake hands.**

to venture out of the hollow for any reason.

My older brothers told stories about Neal throwing his books off the school bus and when the driver stopped he would jump off and head back to the mountain. I recall on one occasion when we pulled up at the foot of the mountain in the wagon I saw Neal heading into the mountain running.

Later that day I got real thirsty and their water was awful because it had sulphur in it. Then one of the girls told me there was a spring of good water up the mountain so I went up the mountain a short distance and found the spring along with Neal. I guess he wasn't retreating any further, trouble was there was a hound dog laying in the spring, but I was so hot and thirsty I ran the dog out, found a rusty tin can and got a drink.

I guess Neal got his love for the hollow naturally from some of his ancestors. Court documents show that before the Civil War the owner of what was then a huge plantation, a man named David Moore made an agreement that George Loveday was granted permanent tenant rights to live on the plantation, George Loveday was Bill Lovedays uncle.

My older brother James "Gib" Miller who passed away earlier this year at age ninety-four knew George Loveday's three sons well and he related that two of the three sons of George Loveday never once ventured out of the hollow.

The other brother looked after them and gave each of them a new pocket knife each year.

The owner of the property where Loveday Hollow is located is, or was owned, by the prominent Rhett family and they decided to turn the place into a dairy farm. John and Neal and their wives ran the dairy for many years until John got disabled. He and Mildred left the hollow leaving Neal and Jinny to run the dairy. Finally the dairy shut down but the land owners let Neal and Jinny live on until Neal passed away. Bill Loveday, Neal's nephew, a Baptist minister, told me at Neal's funeral that Neal had told him many times if he ever left the hollow he would be carried out. He said he stood and watched them carry him out and as they did this marked the end of an era.

The Lovedays are forever gone from Loveday Hollow but my memories of the trips there as a boy will remain with me as long as I live.

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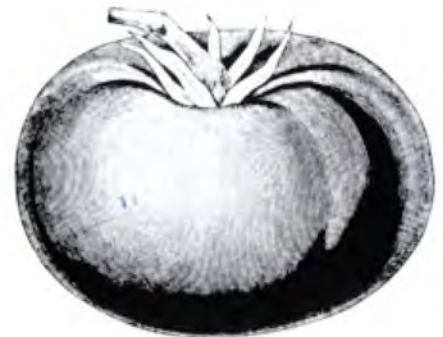
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The dog to the cat



A friend of mine came over this afternoon and we were sitting on my patio drinking our sweet mint tea and reminiscing. She reminded me of her grandchild jumping into their pool not knowing how to swim. Adults were all around talking, but no one was specifically watching the pool. Luckily someone noticed the child and pulled her out.

I want to encourage parents to never take their eyes off their children when they are in the water, it doesn't take but a few seconds for a child to get into big trouble.

Have you ever heard of a dry drowning? It is when a child inhales water into his lungs, gets out of the pool and may seem fine, but really isn't. They feel sleepy and then they go to sleep and die.

"I did what I could to inflate the rumor I was on my way to stardom. What I was on my way to, by any mathematical standards known to man, was oblivion, by way of obscurity."

Tallulah Bankhead

Swim lessons are available at most pools. Parents please check these out, it could save your child one day.

With the fourth of July just around the corner parents must be aware of the danger of fireworks. Children love them but parents should be the ones setting them off. Sparklers are easily attractive to smaller children, but can cause many accidents each year when your children fall on them.

My friend works in the ER and each year she tells me of the horror stories due to fireworks, some to name a few are:


1. A little boy losing a finger
2. Damage to an eye
3. All kinds of burns

Parents you are the boss, you be in charge. A word to the wise should be sufficient.

Now one last reminder. I was at a local school one afternoon recently. The father had taken his son to the playground so he could practice riding his bike. After riding around for about fifteen minutes, his son got distracted and fell off, hitting his head. Luckily for the boy, he was not hurt too bad, but my question to the father would have been why wasn't his son wearing a helmet? Parents, this is a must. Many children go to the ER each year with concussions. Helmets can eliminate almost all of them. Just make sure before your child gets on a bike, he or she is wearing a helmet strapped on.

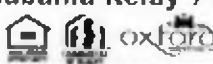
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Thankful Thomas

by John Michael Hampton



As John Robert looked out the window of the mini van, he could not believe what he was seeing hiding in the swamp. It was indeed a small orange kitten peeping out above the tall grass at the shoulder of the highway. So, what could he do to help the poor, homeless animal?

On a sunny evening in September 2018, my wife Charlotte took my twelve year old son, John Robert, riding in the van between Ryland and Gurley. With his ADHD, if he goes riding in the van in the afternoon, it seems to make him sleep better that night. On this particular day, they were traveling U.S. Highway 72 as they were planning to pick up supper at the new Burger King in Gurley.

As my wife passed the swampy area between Stone Drive and Salty Bottom Road, she saw a flash of orange in the bushes. "Look at the fox," she stated to John Robert. She took another glance at the

swamp, and exclaimed, "That's not a fox! That is a baby kitty!"

She turned around at the next crossover, and went back to where she saw the kitten in the grass along the edge of the swamp. Sure enough, it was a tiny little kitten standing along the edge of the road, shaking as if it was scared. John Robert got out of the minivan and made his way over to where the kitten was standing. It acted as if it wanted to run at first, but after a few steps, stopped and let John Robert pick it up. He brought it back to the minivan, got in, and the family pulled back onto the road.

My wife, Charlotte, drove down U.S. Highway 72 to the Gurley Veterinary Clinic, which was about 30 minutes away from closing for the night. She took the little boy kitten in her arms, and took him in to the receptionist. She asked, "Do you know who the owner of this cat is, or if someone has reported a kitten missing?" The receptionist stated that she did not know of any kittens missing, and had not seen this kitten before the time that my wife brought him in there.

My wife then asked if they had a place they could keep him until someone adopted him. The reception-

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"I think more about running away now than I did as a kid. But by the time I put in my hearing aids, put my teeth in, find my glasses and keys - I forget why I'm running away."

J.B. Nelson, Arab

ist stated that she did not have any extra space. So, my wife made the decision to bring him home.

When I got home that night, she brought the little boy kitten out of her bedroom for a minute so that I could see him. I immediately fell in love with the dark orange tabby, and knew right away that he had found a forever home.

We discussed a name for the little kitten. My wife and son suggested, since he was thankful for a family to call his own, and was found near a railroad track, we could name him Thankful Thomas. (The suggestion of Thomas came from years of my son watching Thomas and Friends on television, a series featuring animated stories of train engines.)

When we carried the baby to the vet for his first visit, we found out that he was only about 2-3 months old. He was checked for all major issues and found to have no medical problems. We took him to have all his surgeries and shots, and registered him as our own. There was another kitten

around the same age found at the Burger King in Gurley less than 24 hours after we found Thankful Thomas. We believe the two kittens to be from the same litter, possibly dropped off by a person that was traveling. The other kitten was named Whiskey and was adopted by a family in the Gurley area.

Thankful Thomas has made an excellent addition to our family. The other two indoor cats get along with him most of the time and even play together. My son loves the cats because they are the "purrfect" therapy to help him be calm and relaxed. My wife loves the way that the cats keep her company at night, especially Thankful Thomas, since he will sleep right next to her when she is not feeling good.

As for me, I love all God's creatures and have no idea why people would be cruel to animals or drop them off in a swamp, a forest, or along a busy road. Thankful Thomas may not be huge, but he has taken a huge spot inside all of our hearts.

"I don't want to brag, but I finished up my 14 day diet in 3 hours and 20 minutes."

Jenny Arthur, Gurley

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Just a Cold Glass of Water

by John H. Tate

May 2004 was unusually warm, and to John H. Tate the heat was compounded by the fact that he and his teenage daughter shared an apartment with his older sister; his seven year old son lived with his ex-wife. One day while visiting his mother her doorbell rang. It was some man with a handful of pamphlets. The man introduced himself and said he was running for some office. John was not in the mood for a door-to-door salesman, or worst yet some politician, so he sent him away.

After a little while John went outside and sat on the front steps of the Oakwood Road home. As he looked at the houses across the street he recalled when his family moved into Highlands Estate in the sixties. It was so different then, there were no houses in the field across from them. Now there are houses, Sparkman Drive was extended all the way to Jordan Lane, Woody Anderson built his Ford dealership there; and Ed White Junior High School is on Sparkman Drive. While sitting there, he saw that man coming back up the other side of the street, going house to house. John felt sorry for him because it was so hot, and his spirit would not let him rest. He yelled for the man to come over.

The man was sweating like someone poured water on him. "Would you like a glass of cold water?" John asked, and the man nodded and said, "Yes I would, I did not know it would be this hot today." John brought him a large teaglass full of ice water. Inviting him to sit on the steps with him, John asked "Who are your people?" It was the Southern way of saying, "Tell me about yourself, and let's see if I know your stock." He introduced himself, "My name is Randy Hinshaw, I am running in Democratic Primaries to be the Democratic Nominee for State Representative of District 21 ." Randy went on to tell about his family and how they are from one of the old Mill communities, and about his education and his current family.

John realized that he liked Randy and wanted to help him. "Look, I don't have any money, but I would like to help you if I can." Randy said that volunteers were meeting at his home in Hazel Green, AL, and he would love to have him to come out that Saturday and help assemble signs. John said he would and got Randy another big glass of water before he left.

That Saturday morning John headed to the address Randy gave him. The house was a modest well-kept home. John entered through the garage and knocked on the kitchen door as he was instructed. Randy opened the door, with a warm welcome, and introduced John around. One of the people John was teamed with was Clay Wilkinson. Through conversation John learned that Clay is Randy's ex brother-in-law, and that he, and his wife Lisa, owned a mortgage company in Huntsville. John thought to himself, "How can he own a mortgage company?"

After they completed assembling signs, John took a few with him to put out himself. Randy asked John to help on June 1, 2004, Democratic Primary day. He wanted John to stand outside of the Highlands Elementary School voting place, at the spot allowed by law and hand out sample ballots. John said he would. Randy won the race and became the Democratic Nominee for Alabama State Representative, District 21, At the victory party John got a big surprise. As he and his date were leaving the party, Clay Wilkinson stopped him and offered him a job in his mortgage company as an Originator. Since the position was 100% commission, he

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prayed with his Pastor, James Robison at Liberty Christian Faith Center. His spirit was at peace, so he took the position.

John was with Clay and Lisa at New South Mortgage Alliance, on Pool Drive in Huntsville for nearly two years. After leaving there he worked as an independent Originator and he went back to college for his B.S. in Business. He also worked third shift as a Security Guard with a local security firm, to help pay for college. John graduated from Athens State College in December 1997, in attendance were his sixteen year old daughter, ten year old son, Bertha his fiancée, brother and sisters, and Pastor James Robinson.

After college John re-entered the Mortgage industry, he worked for companies such as GMAC Mortgage, Platinum Mortgage and Security One Lending. In October 2003 John opened his own mortgage company, a Net-branch of Security One Lending, switching to Southwest Funding in 2009. After weathering the Financial crises of 2007/2008, John had to close his company in 2010; and he returned to the corporate world, working with Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Met Life Bank, and imortgage - name changed later to loanDepot.

Over the last 24 years John H. Tate has helped thousands of people to buy their own homes or refinance their current one. He and his wife were able to buy a modest home in the country. The Huntsville Times featured him in six articles, in 2004 Channel 48 News did a feature segment on him, and he was featured in Broker Magazine, a national magazine.

And to think all of this started with A Cold Glass of Water.

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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



As I write this column, I'm thinking about people who have lost loved ones. It doesn't matter if it's 10 years ago or 1, it still hurts. **Tom Carney** died 8 years ago June 16, I miss him every day. This magazine is a labor of love for sure, because he put his heart into each story that he wrote. I think he'd be proud of the magazine now, but I sure wish he was here writing his stories. My heart hurts for all of our readers who have lost people they love.

The 2nd thing I wanted to say is that we have been having problems in getting the magazine to our subscribers. The problems are being resolved but I know there are people who look forward to each issue and I wanted to let you know that it will get better, and that

I'm sorry this has happened. The magazines are getting to you very late in the month. This has not happened before and we're making changes so that it doesn't happen again. We're more professional than that.

Back to the business at hand. Until the subscription problem is resolved, there won't be anything hidden.

The Photo of the Month for June was a sweet **Johnny Johnston**. He worked for years at the old airport and if you know Johnny, you know how much history he remembers. The first correct caller was **Ted Johnson** of Huntsville who had seen Johnny a year ago but said the tip gave it away.

Sparkman High School Junior ROTC participated in a leadership camp June 3-7 and 10-14. Congratulations to all 15 cadets that were chosen from a field of 300. Camp was held at the Space and Rocket Center. **Elizabeth Wharry's** son **Jacob Wharry** was one of these cadets and she's so proud of him.

If you met **Tom Lackey** you would remember him. Tall, handsome, funny - a story teller. A great father and a kind man, a Navy Veteran. Tom passed away at 75 on June 4. He owned and operated his Chimney Service since 1975 and opened Huntsville's first art gallery. He is survived by his children **Rachel Lackey** and

Steve Lackey, with grandsons **River** and **Trent**. The memorial held at Monte Sano Lodge was amazing. I've never seen so much food, over 400 people, friend after friend standing up and telling stories about Tom. He was one of the good ones, and will be so missed.

Phyllis Lawrence wanted to call to tell us that her sweet husband **Billy** will be celebrating his 75th birthday on Aug. 26. She knows it's a bit early but she doesn't care! They celebrated 45 years of marriage on April 27. Billy graduated from Butler High School in 1962 and wants to send best wishes to all his classmates.

A young lady who we're very proud of is celebrating her 50th birthday on July 15th. **Felicia Sutherlin Meshke** of Marietta, GA is a great mom to daughter **Faith**. Felicia's Mom is **Cheryl Tribble**, who's our premier editor. **Thomas Meshke** is the lucky man married to Felicia and we hope you all celebrate in style!

Ianthia Bridges is part of that great customer care group at BB&T bank on Church Street

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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near downtown. She told us that her daughter **Brooke Bridges** will be 23 years old on July 10, and her niece **Cariana Ramsey** has a July 3rd birthday.

Ken Owens insists that no one else can celebrate a birthday during his month which is July - he has a July 31st birthday. Not sure if we can keep others from celebrating but Happy Birthday to my handsome brother!

Many of us who have cats know that no matter how much we spend on fancy toys for them their favorite is usually a piece of yarn or a good cardboard box that they can squeeze into. My cat **Pumpkin** discovered something the other day I wanted to pass along to you cat lovers - one of those rubberized welcome mats that happened to be on the floor of the back porch - I had it flipped over and he started scratching that and loves it. He no longer uses the couch to sharpen his nails. Inexpensive and lasts forever.

Marcella House wanted to pass along some sage advice - Don't worry about old age, it won't last long!

Jewell Wallace from Flor-

ence wrote us a note recently to tell us that **Joe Louis**, the boxer we featured in a recent story, was actually born in Lafayette, AL not Lexington, AL. Thank you for the sharp eye Jewell!

Dorothy (Dot) Durham was 96 when she passed away May 13. She married her sweetheart **Tom** and she worked for the U.S. Army for many years. She is survived by sons **Tom Durham III** and wife **Tamara**; **Steve Durham** and wife **Kim**; **Philip Durham** and wife **Jennifer**; many grandchildren, great grandchildren and nieces and nephews. She was a caring, lovely lady who cherished her family and her city.

The Old Town Hidden Garden Tour was a great success and hundred of visitors toured our historic areas. There were 14 gardens and even some back alley hidden gardens. The colors and variety of styles and plants were just amazing and got lots of great comments from our visitors. Many worked on getting the details ironed out but so much work done by **Dwight Wright** and **Mike Self** as well as the garden owners - thank you!

Rosemary Leatherwood wants to wish her grandson

Chase Woods a wonderful birthday on July 10th. And she sends love to **Chris Rousseau** who has a birthday on the 4th of July!

The city came through on one of its promises - as I write this **Clinton Avenue East** is being repaved - all the way from California Street to Governors Drive. It's interesting how they do it - they completely scrape half the right side of the road then fill it with asphalt. Then they do the other half. It'll be heavenly to drive on such a smooth, new road.

There are lots of summer events taking place in the next couple of months and here are a few: Celebrating the 60s at the Huntsville Museum of Art, Jul. 4; Friday night Art Walk on July 12 starting at 5pm around the downtown square; **Burritt** on the Mountain sponsors "Step Back in Time" Jul. 20 at 1:30-2:30; the Huntsville Depot and Roundhouse has "Isaiah 41:10 Foundation Carnival of Giving", July 18 from 6-9pm. Go to www.ourvalleyevents.com for more information.

Have a safe and and fun July and remember to try to help those who need you. When you help, you feel better too!



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- 1 lb. med. shrimp, cleaned, cooked and chopped
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 c. onion, chopped fine
- 1/4 c. celery, chopped fine
- 1 t. minced garlic
- 1 T. fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 t. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 c. mayonnaise

Combine all ingredients and mix well, serve with crackers, bread or vegetables.

Chicken Parisian

- 6 chicken breasts, boneless and skinless
- 3 t. paprika
- Salt and Pepper
- 1 t. garlic powder
- 1/2 c. dry white wine or Vermouth
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 4-oz. jar mushrooms
- 1 c. sour cream
- 1/4 c. flour

Coat the chicken breasts heavily with a mixture of the

paprika, garlic & salt/pepper. Place in crock pot.

Mix remaining ingredients and pour over the chicken. Sprinkle paprika on top. Cook on medium crock pot heat for about 6 hours. This is good with a big salad and fresh bread. Leftovers are good too.

Savory Catfish

- 1 lb. boneless catfish filets
- 3 T. garlic powder
- 3 T. cajun powder
- 2 t. salt
- 2 t. black pepper
- 4 T. olive oil

Mix all the spices and coat catfish filets thoroughly. In a large frying pan heat the oil. When hot add the filets and cook til fish is done, on medium high for about 8 minutes a side.

Chuck's Baked Chicken

- 4 chicken breasts, with skin
- 5 T. melted butter
- 1 t. onion powder
- 1 t. garlic powder
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Wash chicken well, pat dry with paper towels. Mix spices in with the melted butter and coat the chicken using a basting brush. Bake in pre-heated oven at 325 degrees for an hour and skin is browned.

Mashed Cauliflower

- 1 head cauliflower, cooked
- 1/2 stick butter
- 4 oz. cream cheese
- Garlic powder, salt & pepper

Mix hot cauliflower with the butter, cream cheese & spices, til of a mashed consistency. This has a really good taste and you can use it in place of carb-filled mashed potatoes. A healthy choice with more fiber!

Zesty Cole Slaw

- 1 c. vegetable oil
- 1 T. chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 T. roasted sesame oil
- 2 T. chopped garlic
- 1-2 t. crushed red pepper
- 1 bag shredded cole slaw
- Chopped cucumber
- Grated carrots

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Chopped red pepper

Mix first 5 ingredients well in a covered bowl - shake to make sure it's mixed well. In a large bowl pour the cole slaw, then add carrots, cucumber and red pepper chopped to taste. Mix dressing into the cole slaw mix, refrigerate an hour before serving.

Low Carb Fudge

16 oz. cream cheese
 2 oz. unsweetened chocolate, melted and cooled
 1/2 c. Splenda sweetener
 1 t. vanilla
 1 t. instant coffee
 1/2 c. chopped nuts

Line an 8-inch square baking pan with waxed or parchment paper. In a small mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese, the melted and cooled chocolate, sweetener and vanilla til smooth. Stir in the nuts and pour into pan. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Strawberry Delight

Washed fresh strawberries
 Heavy cream
 Splenda sugar substitute
 Toasted, slivered almonds

Slice strawberries into a small serving bowl. Pour in whipping cream to taste. Top with sprinkling of Splenda and

toasted almonds. Blueberries are good too but the strawberries are best.

Warning - You WILL become addicted to this.

Baked Almond Custard

1/2 c. heavy cream
 2 eggs
 1 T. Splenda sweetener
 1/2 t. almond extract
 Pinch nutmeg

In a small bowl beat the eggs til light yellow in color, pour in the Splenda and cream and mix well. Sprinkle on nutmeg and place in microwave.

Cook on 50% power for about 6-7 minutes. A knife should come out clean when inserted near center of custard. Serve chilled with sliced strawberries or cantaloupe on the side if desired.

Jello BonBons

2 c. heavy cream
 2 small pkg. sugar-free Jello powder, any flavor

Chopped toasted almonds

Combine all ingredients with electric mixer on low speed til blended. Beat til stiff. Drop in tablespoon-sized mounds on wax paper covered cookie sheet. Freeze til firm. Store lightly covered in the freezer.

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This is NOT a Sales Call

by Al Dean



Alexander Graham Bell, on March 10th, 1876 was awarded a patent for the telephone. The first words spoken on this amazing instrument were to his assistant, Thomas Watson: "Watson, come here! I want to see you."

The direct dial system came to Huntsville in the early 1950's, and dial-less phones, party lines, and switchboard operators would soon be relegated to the past. Josiah Childers's first words to his wife were: "What good is it if we can't listen in on our neighbors' conversations?"

I remember the antenna of my first car phone dangling from what remained of the rear window of my Dodge. I sat frozen in darkness and fear at the traffic light on Airport Road and the Parkway beside the Turtle Car Wash watching the November '89 tornado destroy everything in its path. I was still able to use it to call my wife. My first words were: "I was in the tornado, but I'm okay."

If I answer an incoming call today, after "Hello," my first word is "No." Why, you ask.

In the past month I have been selected to receive a security system for our home, free of charge; relief for my outstanding credit card debt by transferring to an interest free credit card with a low transfer fee; freedom from the burden of my non-existent student debt; renewal of my Microsoft computer software license which was about to expire; the blessing of providing financial aid to a grandson named Mike who had encountered travel problems in Minnetonka, Minnesota during severe flooding; the opportunity to avoid harsh penalties or perhaps incarceration due to delinquent I.R.S. remittances; the distinction of becoming a sustaining member to aid the Venetian blind, all simply by saying "yes" to the Pakistani marketer on the other end of the line. I once answered "yes" when a caller asked me if I could hear him; the call immediately went dead. I received a free back brace through the mail; the bill went to Medicare. Just because I answered Yes.

Smart phones are available that rival mid-range desktop computers in power; yet, we can't totally eliminate robocalls. I recognize I am not nearly as smart as a smart phone, or even a flip phone, and while many of today's high-tech products are capable of much good, they can also be



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"Application forms always ask who should be called in an emergency. I think you should write, 'An ambulance.'"

Ricky Stutts, Woodville

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a pain in the part of our anatomy that gets over the fence last; so what can we do about it?

My dad had a friend with a stuttering problem, who, yearning for a cure, answered a magazine ad that unconditionally guaranteed an end to his dilemma. It was expensive, but it was his last option. The cure arrived in an 8 by 11 manila envelope containing a single sheet of paper upon which was written: Keep your mouth shut. Impossible to do, but certainly effective.

It appears that with the exception of eliminating phone service - effective, but an existential impossibility - our only option for managing annoying robocalls is also to keep our mouths shut. Don't answer! Phones are equipped with an automatic caller or number identifier that gives us the option of not answering, but we often have good reasons to answer unfamiliar numbers, especially if the caller ID flashes an exchange from our hometown 700 miles away and a loved one is ill - could be a doctor or a hospital or a cousin with bad news.

Complicating our conundrum, our wonderful technology has devised a way for our Pakistani's call to appear as a local number on our caller ID and who won't pick up a local call?

"Hello."

Momentary delay. Here's a clue. Hangup!

"Can you hear me? "

"Yes."

Click.

"Hello. Hello."

Too late; a back brace is on the

"Your food stamps will stop, effective Aug. 1, because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances."

Dept. of Social Serv., Georgia

way. It only takes one "yes" at any point in the conversation for a deal to be closed; and the caller has our commitment recorded.

Some callers will give us the opportunity to hang up by requesting that we to press 1 to speak to a representative for more information. Don't press 1. If our curiosity leads us to learn more about this incredible offer and we press 1 to transfer the call, a popup on their web browser will give them our name, address, phone number, and other important details and we are forever in their data base, which will be e-mailed or otherwise distributed to anyone on the planet anxious to get us into theirs.

Apps are available to catch some robocalls, but won't eliminate them. We might not be able to stop them all, but we can get revenge with an app that provides a simulated conversation so we don't have to talk to them, and enough oohs and aahs are included to keep the caller engaged until their frustration reaches the peak that ours often does.

The Federal Trade Commission's advice for handling illegal robocalls is to:

1. Hang up.
2. Use call blocking devices.
3. Report the call to ftc.gov/complaint.

"Oops. I've got a phone call. Let me check the caller ID. It's my own number! Ain't technology grand?"



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My Personal Trainer Wife

by Ted Roberts

She's the love of my life. She's my personal trainer wife

Don't go to the gym today, instead go grocery shopping with your wife. You'll get more exercise. Students of wife-directed grocery tours say you are sure to burn at least a thousand calories. Maybe more if the wife is hunting the exotic ingredients for a festive meal. My fat friend Rob lost 10 pounds in a single month, with only 3 grocery tours. They call him Skinnyrob now, in fact some health organization has forsaken their facilities full of equipment and sponsored multiple grocery store tours.

I know it has helped me, like we're on aisle 2 and she sends me to fetch garlic powder - she thinks maybe on aisle 12. But she has no idea where it is. So you have to prowl the aisles 2 through 12: the distance of 10 or so football fields. You're lucky she didn't need a 50 pound sack of potatoes only 500 yards away on 7. Or maybe you are not so lucky since 1000 yards with a 50-pound sack of taters equals 2 hours on a stationary bike or 20 reps with an 80-pound bar bell. There are many forms of healthy exercise. Why not a 5-pound sack of sugar on the next aisle. Or an 8-ounce box of cereal from the aisle we are on. No, she needs that 50-pound sack of potatoes that's a half-mile away: she's my personal trainer wife you know.

But that's not the end of your workout. The potatoes or other exercise equipment (groceries) have to be stowed in the car and eventually brought into the house (you can postpone it until tomorrow and stretch your workout to a 2-day muscle maker. That doesn't hurt a bit.

Once in a while she pressures me to accompany her to Marshalls or Target. But I, the wily workout devotee know such a workout is not near as healthy as

my grocery program. What kind of exercise is it to lug a half-pound sweater from the store to car and then to car to house. Big Deal!

My lovely wife never ignores me when its time for a grocery marathon. But sometimes she "forgets" to mention the purpose of the trip: "Come on hon, take a ride with me." I jump in the passenger seat and soon realize, by the route, that we're headed to that gym where they sell sacks of potatoes as well as 2 ounce bottles of garlic powder. Too late (and I went to a real gym yesterday) what am I going to do? Bail out?

Sometimes I develop a headache (that usual ally of unresponsive wives) and must be taken home immediately. Of course, my personal trainer, when she gets home won't excuse me from the car to kitchen segment of the workout. But I do ask her: "Why do we need 50 pounds of taters?" Why not a couple bags of chips? I get a stare in return and a speech on the benefits of weight lifting.

Once I jumped in the car around lunch time for a "juicy hamburger smothered in lettuce, tomato and mayo" and ended up wrestling a 100 pound coffee table into the trunk - then dragging it into the living room. Better than a destination-free ride on a stationary bike says my personal trainer wife. She knows what is best for me. That's why she takes me grocery shopping. I'm a lucky man.

Enjoy These Hot Summer Days with Friends and Loved Ones!



With Special Greetings to the Huntsville High Class of 1966

From Oscar and Maria Llerena

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

Jessie, age 6, in a Madison church

The Joseph J. Bradley, Jr. Band

by Butch Crabtree

In the summer of 1925, a group of musicians in the Merrimack community met at the home of George Davis for the purpose of forming a band. Mr. John Hay, a noted band director of the time, was enlisted to direct the new band.

Most of the band members worked in the mill and many of them did not own the instrument they were to play. Band instruments were expensive, especially the larger ones, and they were not able to afford them and asked the Merrimack Manufacturing Company for help with the purchase of the needed instruments.

Mr. Joseph J. Bradley, Jr.,

agent of the Mill at this time, was extremely excited about the project and gave the needed financial help to get the band organized. In acknowledgement of his assistance, the group called itself the "Joseph J. Bradley, Jr. Band."

Over the next nine years the band gained the reputation of being one of the finest bands in the area. U.S. Senator Almon, upon hearing the group, compared it favorably with many of the great musical organizations he had heard.

J. Emory Pierce, editor of "The Huntsville Daily Times", tagged the group "The Million Dollar Band" and the name

stuck.

The group played all over the state and performed on radio station WSM in Nashville. It was called on to perform at most important ceremonies and played for the dedication of three area bridges - Decatur, Whitesburg and Scottsboro.

The band disbanded in 1934, having distinguished itself for the nine years of its existence.

**"Don't stick your elbow
Out so far.
It may go home
In another car."**

In the 30s and 40s before interstates, Burma Shave signs would be posted on the 2-lane roads, small red signs with white letters. It was meant to protect drivers.

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A Favor Returned

by Bill Wright

It was 1966 when I moved my family to Huntsville to accept a new job. Huntsville at that time was a small town with few activities for a family. Our main enjoyment was to visit Brahan Springs Park on Sunday afternoons and allow the children to play on the playground equipment. Also, they would ride the small train that would circle the pond. We also visited the Super Slide, located on the current site of Parkway Place Mall.

On Saturday nights we would go to The Mall (now site of Home Depot). Usually on Saturday nights at "The Fountain," located in center of The Mall, would be some entertainment.

One Saturday night we were visiting The Mall and as we approached the main entrance my wife was carrying our one-year old son; I was holding hands of the six-year old daughter and the four-year old son. The main entrance had about eight doors and in the middle was a plate glass window about four feet wide and twenty feet high. The plate glass window had no markings and, therefore, gave the appearance of an opening.

When we reached the entrance doors I released the hand of the four year old son to open the door. Once I did

the four-year old son, thinking the plate glass window was an opening, darted to it. He crashed through about the bottom four feet of glass. After that my mind went blank, but my wife told me later that I immediately ran through the small glass opening, picked up the four-year old son, took perhaps one step away and the remaining 16 feet of glass dropped like a guillotine to the spot we just vacated.

Mr. Mason, owner of Mason Jewelry located near the entrance, took us in his store and administered first aid to the minor facial cuts. I remember Mr. Mason telling us that when The Mall was under construction, the Construction Manager had walked through the same plate glass window, thinking it was an opening. Mr. Mason was impressed that a four year old child could knock out a 20 foot plate glass window and remarked, "He should play football for Coach Bear Bryant at the University of Alabama".

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Steamboats carried both people and animals. Since pigs smelled so bad, they would be washed off before being put on board. The mud and other filth that was washed off was considered useless "hog wash".

Fast forward in time by 17 years. The 4-year old son is now 21 years old and a college student. At this time a co-worker is organizing a canoeing trip. I grew up on the Gulf Coast but I never was a water sports person and only a fair swimmer. I asked what were the dangers and he replied "You can drown or get bitten by a snake."

Knowing the oldest son was home for the weekend I agreed to the canoeing trip. He would be the ideal canoeing partner because he was big, strong, athletic and had lifeguard certification.

It was a nice Saturday morning when about twelve of us loaded into canoes. My son and I were in the lead canoe. Everything was fine and I was thinking canoeing was easy and lot of fun. However, looming ahead was a low hanging tree branch which was too low to duck under. I was in the front of the canoe so I reached to lift the small branch and when I did the canoe turned over, dumping us into the water. Although we had water life preservers on, I was wearing sneaker shoes which filled with water and prevented me from getting on top of the water.


My son, realizing I was in trouble quickly swam over, picked me up, and threw me several feet to the canoe, which I grasped. The canoe was half-filled with water. While in deep water, we turned the canoe over and dumped the water. We got back into the canoe and continued our trip down the Flint River.

In later years I have often thought of the coincidence of the two events; particularly my son's quick reaction in the canoeing incident. Perhaps it was "A Favor Returned".

Don't educate your children to be rich. Educate them to be happy so when they grow up they will know the value of things, not the price.


"Today, after I watched my dog get hit by a car, I sat on the side of the road holding him and cried. And just before he died, he licked my face."

Todd Philips, Arab



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Early Cars that I Loved

by Don Royston



My first car was bought in 1945 shortly after I turned 16. The car was a 1937 Willys that I got from a one-armed farmer, who worked in the same greenhouse that I did. I paid him \$100 for it and in retrospect it may have been worth \$20. It had a mashed in right front fender, a weak bendix spring which made starting it somewhat iffy, and cable brakes with only the rear wheel cables working. The interior upholstery was shot, as if it had been used to transport farm animals. It used a quart of oil about every 30 miles and laid a heavy smoke screen behind it. The car also had a leaky differential and when the grease got too low, it would freeze and the car would not move until more grease was added. But, it was a car and it was mine!

Gasoline was rationed and most people had an "A" sticker, which was good for up to four gallons a week. If you had a business, you might be qualified for a "B" sticker, which was good for up to eight gallons per week. Professionals, such as doctors, ministers, etc., might qualify for a "C" sticker which was good for more than eight gallons per week. In addition to my "A" sticker, I also had a kerosene ration book so I did mix a little kerosene in with my gasoline. I was able to stretch my gasoline a bit more by going to a station where my friend, Vernon Wood, worked at draining the remnants from the hoses after other people bought gas.

I did not have the Willys very long as I was able to sell it to a guy who worked in a station. He wanted to rebuild the car and he offered me \$150 for it, which I gladly accepted. He completely restored the car and painted it a Buick maroon color. It was then a very beautiful car. Unfortunately for him, after having the restored car for a few months, someone T-boned him and totaled the car.

I bought my second car, a 1938 Chevrolet 2-door in the summer of 1946. The car had

knee action shock absorbers which were designed to give a softer ride than leaf springs. When new they worked fairly well, but later they leaked fluid and had a rather bouncy ride. The engine had a little knock in it, but I drove it about a year before I had to replace the engine. It ran good then for the rest of the time I owned it.

After I went into the Army in 1952, Naomi and I loaded all our belongings in the Chevy and we drove it to El Paso, Texas. We also made a trip back to Kansas City, while I was still in the Army. I traded the Chevy while in El Paso for a 1950 Ford Tudor, 6-cylinder with a 3-speed manual transmission and overdrive. We got good service out of the Ford and when discharged from the Army, we again loaded everything we owned into the car for a move to Kansas City. In 1955 we again loaded almost everything we owned for a move to Huntsville, AL.

In 1960 we bought our first brand new car - a 4-door Rambler Station Wagon with a 3-speed manual transmission and overdrive. It was not air conditioned when we bought it, but we did have one installed after about a year. We did have some problems with leaks in the system, but managed to get by. This car really gave us good service and it also provided enough room for our growing family on our several trips back to Missouri to visit our families.

One of the most fun and enjoyable cars I had was a 1940 Ford Deluxe Sedan which I bought in 1961 from a Mississippi State student who worked in Huntsville for the summer. He had his eyes on a 1947 Mercury Convertible. I paid him \$500 for the car, which was in excellent condition. I did use the car in my carpool to Thio-kol on occasion, but not on a regular basis. Naomi used it to drive kids to school. They thought it was gross, so they would duck down in the back seat where they could

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not be seen. I took the car out for occasional drives up until about June 2014, when I gave it to my son in Trussville for use in grandson Ben's wedding. It was also used in Emory's wedding here in Huntsville in 2013.

Our second new car was bought in 1970. It was a light green Galaxie 500 Ford station wagon. It had a two-way tailgate door which did involve some water leakage problems over the years. It would open as a door and as a tail gate. It had a couple of jump seats which folded to make a flat floor behind the second seats. The jump seats faced each other and were good for only short distances.

Not too long after we bought the Ford Station Wagon, I found a very good buy for a used 1968 Rambler American 2-door sedan. The Rambler was a basic 3-speed manual shift and cost around \$1,200 new. I don't remember what I paid for it, but it was a lot less than \$1,200. We, thus, became a two-car family; except I still had the '40 Ford. All four of our children learned to drive this car, which they called the "bugger." The driving lessons were exciting at times, since it required learning the clutch, shifting gears and starting up on hills, which was the most difficult.


Sometime during this two car phase, Naomi was doing a chore in the Ford wagon. She was on Pulaski Pike when a horse walked into the car putting a good dent in the left front fender. Of course, I fussed about that wondering how in the world could a horse walk into a car and dent the fender. Naomi got the last laugh on me when, a while later, I was backing the rambler out of a parking lot which had concrete pillars. I hit one of the pillars making a dent in the Rambler and the pillar was not moving! I found a used fender for the Ford wagon and installed it. The color did not match, but a friend of mine (Jeff Harris) at Thiokol knew how to spray paint and he really did a great job, because you could not even tell that the fender had been replaced. As for the "bugger", I repaired it with bondo. I then sanded the entire car, primed it, and then had it painted.

The next new car we had was a 1980 Mazda 626. A fellow worker at Thiokol had a 1979 Mazda 626 and he highly recommended it as a good car. This was about the time the American automobile manufacturers were struggling with quality problems and the Japanese cars had a good reputation. By this time, both Donna and Denise had left home and were married. I felt we no longer needed a station wagon and I was glad to be past that phase. The Mazda was a great car.

I also bought a used 1972 Ford Courier


pickup about this time. The truck had belonged to a banker here. It had low mileage and was in good shape. Both Lois and Robert drove it to Lee High School. Robert was driving it when he went to UAH for his first year of college. Unknown to me when I bought the truck, the banker had been cooking the books and most of his assets were tied up in bankruptcy proceedings. Fortunately for us the truck was not involved, but the problem became too much for the banker as he committed suicide.

Somewhere about this time, 1982-1984, I purchased a used 1974 Ford Pinto 3-door station wagon. The wagon looked good, but it was a terrible car. The Pinto caught Ralph Nader's attention, who was noted for his involvement in consumer protection. The Pinto became well known for catching fire when hit from the rear. This was due to the design and placement of the gas tank. With the exception of my first car (1937 Willys) this car ranked at the bottom of my list.



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REMEMBERING A SIMPLER TIME

by Jan Williams

Let us step back a few years to a simpler time – not twenty, not thirty, but forty years ago to the 1950s. When the Bop was the rage in dancing and the Friday night sock hop were the big event of the weekend. When "smooching" was our favorite past time and when we dressed up, we wore a white sport coat and a pink carnation. There were the white socks – bobbie socks for the girls and crew socks for the boys. Poodle skirts were in

And although Wild Bill Haley and his Comets were singing "Rock Around the Clock," we still had to be in by eleven o'clock.

The girls wore sack dresses and "making out" at the drive-in movies in the back seat of our '57 Chevy with fogged-up windows was all the talk... but the fact was not many of us had a '57 Chevy and as for the making out, well, there probably wasn't near as much as we talked about.

Malts and milk shakes were the favorites along with cherry and vanilla Cokes.

And there were blue suede shoes and Fats Domino sang about "Blueberry Hill."

And there were songs with depth and meaning, like: "Bee Bop A Lula, She's My Baby, Bee Bop A Lula, I Don't Mean Maybe."

Of course we all watched our TV sets, snow and all, in black and white, and we saw our version of "Dirty Dancing" as Ed Sullivan introduced us to Elvis "The Pelvis" Presley, shaking his way to fame and fortune ---- and he would surely corrupt us all!

There was the "Lucky Strike Hit Parade," "Mickey Mouse and the Mouseketeers". All of us guys remember Annette! The Platters sang of "Twilight Time" and going steady was "in". On the western front was: Roy Rodgers, Gene Autrey, the Lone Ranger and his faithful companion, "Tonto."

For the family: Robert Young taught us "Father Knows Best" and there was "Ozzie and Harriet."

And for the more simple-minded of us there was "Howdy Doody" and "American Bandstand."

On the space frontier was "Super Man," "Mighty Mouse" and "Buck Rodgers."

In "Animal Kingdom" there was Mickey and Minnie Mouse; Donald Duck; Hewie, Lewie and Dewie; Lassie; and, of course, Goofy.

3-D movies with the cardboard glasses.

On a more serious note, there was the Korean War and two prominent generals—one,

the more popular and well-known, fired by the President— General Douglas McArthur. The other less well-known, became President of the United States--- Dwight David Eisenhower.

Our "high tech car" was the "Batmobile" as our caped crusader roamed the streets of Gotham City combating crime.

There were the football players—the team captains—basketball players, cheerleaders, and homecoming queens.....and then there were the rest of us, the somewhat silent majority who were not labeled for our rightful place in history until many years later—the slightly unusual, somewhat weird and often clumsy----THE NERDS----always the wierdo. Now they're the Hipsters!

Return with us now to those thrilling days of yester year when out of the past came the thundering sounds of ROCK & ROLL!



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Kids Don't Know What an Apron Is

by Betty Hallmark Atkinson



The principal use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath, but along with that, it served as a pot holder for removing hot pans from the oven.

It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids. And when the weather was cold, Grandma wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot stove. Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron too.

From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls, and in the fall the apron was used to bring in the apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that "Old-Time Apron", that served so many purposes.

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THE SMITH MENAGERIE - HAMSTER DEBACLE

by M.D. Smith, IV



Raising eight children, we have been through many types of pets. I can think of at least forty different kinds that passed through the Smith household over four decades of kids at home. This story is another that comes to mind being memorable.

Among gerbils, white mice, parakeets, tarantulas, fish, ducks, chickens, and even a ferret, a number of hamsters came and went over the years. While a number of children in our household had hamsters as children, I believe it was Allison's breeding pair that was the most memorable.

We had owned a single hamster in years earlier, but this time we wanted our kids to experience a small warm blooded animal having babies and them growing up. We had planned to give them away when they got large as I did not want to repeat what happened fifteen years earlier with rabbits. But that is another story.

The pair enjoyed their new accommodations complete with a hamster wheel to go 'squeak-squeak' at various times during the night. A spot of oil on the axle helped a bit, but not much.

The mother hamster appeared to be growing larger and we suspected she might be about to deliver little ones. Sure enough, one morning we were called in Allison's room as she had discovered a tiny, hairless little thing over in the nest material we had put in the cage.

We knew to get the daddy hamster out of the cage as we'd been told he often would kill them. I was not sure of the reason, maybe he didn't like the female's attention on something other than him. He was removed to a temporary cage.

The female continued to have babies until she had six of the little things about half the size and length of your little finger.

The rest of our kids, younger and older were thrilled and spent time watching and sometime tapping on the cage. Just a day or two later, as we got up for school, Allison was screaming for us to come in the room. The pointed at the cage. There were several dead babies on the cage floor and the mother was holding one up, like a chipmunk might hold a peanut between its paws, and killing it.

We did not know what to do. If we removed the mother, they would surely die. So we left her in the cage hoping she would stop. She killed them all. We removed the tiny bodies and discarded them.

We called the pet store to tell them what happened, and they said hamster mothers will sometimes do that for several reasons. She may kill a few, if instincts tell

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her there is not enough milk to keep them healthy. "But there were only six," we said.

The reply was, "Other reasons are if there is too much activity and the mother gets stressed, or if the babies have been handled and human scent is on them. Never touch one of the babies. A mother with babies should be left alone in a quiet place and only checked on once a day to add water and plenty of food."

"Oh," we said, and hung up.

Well, I guess we have all the strikes against us. Between the other family members, neighborhood kids, photo taking with flash cameras, and handling one or two of the babies, we did all the wrong things. The parting with the pair of hamsters came shortly after that, when Allison awoke hollering one morning with red bite marks on much of her body. Upon very close inspection, we saw teeny bugs that we later found out were mites. The live on the hamsters, but can get on humans also.

The hamsters went back to the pet store people who said they could properly get rid of the mites, but we didn't want them back.

We fumigated the room with a type of 'bug bomb' like you would do if it had been fleas and keep it tightly shut for 24 hours, before Allison could get back in again. Everything had to be washed down and sanitized and clothing in the closet also just for good measure.

Today, I can almost smile about that "pet adventure" and just shake my head. What a debacle that was.

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Black Week

*by Reginald Paige II
Student at Alabama A&M
(Psychology major and
criminal justice minor)*

The Second Boer war was fought at the end of the 19th century, culminating a century of conflict and mistrust between Dutch (Boer) settlers and British colonialists in South Africa. The British had seized the Dutch Cape colony in 1806 and hoped to expand deeper into Boer territory in search of diamonds. Additionally, the British banned slavery and were generally more empathetic of the indigenous population the Boers. Tensions came to a head several times during the 19th century and ultimately been resolved, but by 1899 the status quo between the British and Boers could not last any longer. For the British military, many expected this would be a quick and decisive war, similar to the ones recently fought in Sudan. However, during Black Week in the winter of 1899, the British would be proven wrong as they underestimated the Boers, the advent of modern technology and overestimated their own military prowess.

Black week was the name given to the week of 10-17 December 1899, when the British Army was defeated on three separate occasions by Boer Forces. The three defeats at Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso cost the British over 2700 Soldiers and had a significant political and psychological effect on the British Government and military as many realized that they were ill-prepared to fight a war with modern technology against an entrenched and determined enemy.

The Battle of Stormberg was the first British defeat of Black Week, in which three successive British forces were de-

feated by Boer irregulars in the Second Boer War. In the event, many of the division's troops had to be diverted to Natal after disasters there, and Gatacre's reduced force arrived late. By the time they were ready to take the field, Boers from the Orange Free State had already seized the important railway junction of Stormberg. Furthermore, the next battle was the Battle of Magersfontein which was near Kimberley, South Africa, on the borders of Cape Colony and the independent republic of the Orange Free State.

The Highland Brigade suffered the worst casualties, while on the Boer side, the Scandinavian Corps was destroyed. The Boers attained a tactical victory and succeeded in holding the British in their advance on Kimberley. The battle was the second of three battles during what became

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Jim McDonald, Scottsboro

known as the Black Week of the Second Boer War.

The final battle fought during Black Week, the Battle of Colenso, was fought in the Northern Natal, South Africa, near the small railway town of Colenso. General Louis Botha, was commander of the Boer Forces, who were entrenched in the hills on the northern side of the Tugela River. British commander Redvers Buller, launched an attack on the morning of 15 December. However, due a series of miscommunications that are still debated to this day, Col. Charles Long of the 14th field artillery battery advanced his artillery within small arms range of the Boer positions. The exposed artilleryman, who were unsupported by Infantry, made easy targets for the Boer riflemen. From there the attack continued to falter as British failed to cross the river. By late afternoon General Buller was compelled to issue the order to retreat.

Despite these setbacks, the British learned from their experiences during Black Week and went on to win the Second Boer War. In 1902, the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed, ending the war. The treaty ended hostilities and the forced the surrender of all Boer forces and their arms to the British. The peace treaty ultimately brought an end to hostilities and the Boers were forced to assimilate into a British occupied South Africa.

The legacy of the Second Boer War is still with us today. It was only 30 years ago that South Africa overcame its legacy of apartheid to become a nation where everyone is free. All around the world today African Americans are still enslaved, dying and being taken advantage of. We are being defeated on the battlefield every day and but are finding new ways to overcome our struggles and win the war.

Just like the British went through a week of defeat and ultimately emerged victorious in the conflict, we are going through those same defeats but we will come back stronger and more resilient than ever. Just like the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed in 1902, one day we as a people will also get our peace treaty.



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THE DAILY HUNTSVILLE CONFEDERATE PRINTED IN MARIETTA, GA BY THE EDITOR, J. WITHERS CLAY



The following is taken from a recently discovered issue of The Daily Huntsville Confederate newspaper dated September 1, 1863. This issue was purchased at the Civil War Show in Nashville, Tennessee, December 1, 2007. J. Withers Clay, editor, had moved the newspaper from Huntsville when it was occupied by the Yankees to Chattanooga. This article was written by Clay just after retreating from Chattanooga to Marietta because of enemy forces pushing towards Chattanooga.

Thursday, Sept. 1, 1863

From Huntsville:

A citizen of Huntsville, who left there last Thursday, says, no Yankees were there. Several citizens, who left there on the 22nd, represented no Yankees nearer than the vicinity of Brownsboro Station, on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, where a regiment or two were posted on the Deposit Road, which leads to a point on the Tennessee River, known as Fort Deposit, about five miles below Guntersville.

When preparing to move from Chattanooga, we learned that squads of the enemy, varying in number from five to thirty, were stationed every few miles on the dirt roads leading from New Market towards Guntersville, as well as on the railroad. They were supposed to be placed at courier stands on the dirt roads. We hear that the cars have run down from Stevenson as far as Brownsboro, but that

the bridge at Brownsboro, which the Yankee's destroyed on their first occupation of Huntsville, had not been rebuilt.

Before leaving Chattanooga, we announced the reported killing of Pres. Dodson, of Jackson county, by a band of traitors under the lead of one Capt. Latham, of Jackson county, who had been a Lieutenant in Col. Coltart's (50th. Ala.) regiment, and deserted after the battle of Murfreesboro', and wrote to Col. Coltart that he had concluded to join the Yankee's. Since then, we have been informed by Capt. Gurley, who had just returned from Madison County, that the person killed was not Pres. Dodson, but Kibble



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The Golden K Kiwanis are looking for additional locations for sales of "Old Huntsville" magazine.

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T. Daniel, a respectable citizen of Madison.

He was at his plantation on Paint Rock River, in Jackson county, and hearing that a column of the enemy was moving down the valley, he rode up with a friend to ascertain the truth of the report, was shot in the breast by one of two traitors in ambush. He attempted to pursue and return the fire, but fell, with pistol in hand, and soon expired. He was a true and staunch Southerner, and his death is deeply to be lamented.

Capt. Gurley also informed us that the Yankees discovered John B. Hancock who lived near Maysville, Madison County, in his melon patch, with a shot gun, arrested him and charged him with bushwhacking. He assured them he was only guarding his melons from the depredations of thieving boys in his neighborhood, and that his gun was loaded with squirrel shot. Notwithstanding after they drew the charge and ascertained that it contained none but squirrel shot they took him off 4 miles from home and shot him several times, murdering him. He was a quiet, inoffensive citizen who didn't deserve to die.

The Yankees have made three trips to Huntsville, July 13th and 24th, and August 11th.

The first time, with two or three brigades of all arms; the second, with two or three hundred cavalry, and the third, with three to seven thousand mounted infantry. They took few sick men on their second and third trips, and they were confined to able-bodied men. Numbers of women and children flocked to them on their 2nd visit, but they were rejected.

On their third trip, they carried off Houston Lumpkin, George W. Kennard, John Spence, and Thurber of Huntsville, and Archie Carey, son of A. A. Carey, a dentist, residing in Madison county, but they released all but Kennard, before getting to Winchester. The last four had been in our army, we believe. Lumpkin is said to have offered a Yankee five dollars to tell him who had taken the oath, which brought about a dispute, when Lumpkin remarked: "I know why you d—d Yankees have been stealing our men. It is to improve the breed of Yanks." He was arrested and made to drive a wagon to Winchester.

Robert W. Coltart, the mayor, was put

in the guard house with a long list of charges preferred against him. Among them was the charge that he had been very cruel to the Yankee sick left in Huntsville, when it was evacuated last year.

Coltart showed them the card published by the Yankee Surgeon, Goodwin, in the Huntsville papers, acknowledging the kindness of the people to his sick. They released Coltart, telling him he might stay with his family that night but must report himself the next morning.

The next morning, they had left with the other inmates of the guardhouse, above mentioned, and he, thus, escaped.



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PATENT MEDICINE

From 1902 Newspaper

"Dr." Charles Donaldson, a patent medicine doctor by profession, and who claims to be a painter by trade, is in jail here charged with the murder of the wife of J. D. Key. Last Thursday, he gave Mrs. Key a dose of medicine and in less than two hours the lady was dead. It is said she went into seizures and never recovered. Color is given to this case by the fact that previously he gave it to a child, who at once sank into a stupor and it took the combination of physicians and a nurse to revive it.

Donaldson claims the

medicine administered is made from herbs and he has been making it and selling it for twenty years, having disposed of much of it in east Alabama and northern Tennessee. A quantity of his medicine has been sent to the state chemist and the "herb doctor" will remain in jail awaiting developments.

Donaldson is about 50 years of age and is accompanied by a lady of about 18 years of age, whom he claims is his wife. He says he married the former Miss Miller about eight months ago in Goodwater, Ala., and that she has a father who is a carpenter and has a brother who is a painter living there.

"Dr." Donaldson had visited Goodwater in March,

1897. He was engaged in painting and peddling a liniment and smelling bottle of his own manufacture. No one knew from where he came, and, while possessing of mystery, he was, while in Goodwater, quiet and law abiding. He never made any trouble.

When the pair first arrived here, they had spent a night in a thicket on the edge of town and said they were en route to Florence. Residents remembered that it was raining quite hard that night but they refused any offers of temporary boarding.

The universal verdict is that something strange is connected with the couple and now a lady is dead.



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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Summer Safety



We all love spending the long, sunny days of summer outdoors with our furry companions, but hot weather can spell danger. To prevent your pet from overheating, take these simple precautions provided by ASPCA experts:

- * Visit the vet for an early-summer checkup. Make sure your pets get tested for heartworm if they aren't on year-round preventative medication.

- * Pets can get dehydrated quickly, so give them plenty of fresh, clean water when it's hot or humid outdoors. Make sure your pets have a shady place to get out of the sun. Be careful not to over-exercise them and keep them indoors when it's extremely hot.

- * Know the symptoms of overheating in pets, which include excessive panting or difficulty breathing, increased heart and respiratory rate, drooling, mild weakness, stupor or even collapse. Symptoms can also include seizures, bloody diarrhea and vomit along with an elevated body temperature of over 104 degrees.

- * Animals with flat faces are more susceptible to heat stroke since they cannot pant as effectively. These pets, along with the elderly, the overweight and those with heart or lung diseases, should be kept in cool rooms as much as possible.

- * Never leave your animals alone in a parked vehicle. Not only can it lead to fatal heat stroke, it is illegal in several states!

- * Do not leave pets unsupervised around a pool—not all dogs are good swimmers. Introduce your pets to water gradually and make sure they wear flotation devices when on boats. Rinse your dog off after swimming to remove chlorine or salt from his fur, and try to keep your dog from drinking pool water, which contains chlorine and other chemicals.

- * Open, unscreened windows pose a real danger to pets, who often fall out of them. Keep windows screened.

- * Never shave your dog: The layers of dogs' coats protect them from overheating and sunburn. Brushing cats more often

than usual can prevent problems caused by excessive heat. Be sure that any sunscreen or insect repellent product you use on your pets is labeled specifically for use on animals.

- * When the temperature is very high, don't let your dog linger on hot asphalt. Being so close to the ground, your pooch's body can heat up quickly, and sensitive paw pads can burn.

- * Commonly used rat poisons and lawn and garden insecticides can be harmful to cats and dogs if ingested, so keep them out of reach. Keep citronella candles, tiki torch products and insect coils out of pets' reach as well.

- * Keep your pet lean! Start by feeding quality food and portion it correctly. Lean pets live a long time! Pets stay this way by eating high quality food - that is portioned correctly.

- * Walking your dog everyday can do wonders for your dog and for you. Encouraging your cat to play, chase a laser pointer, follow you around the house or simply chase a crumpled up piece of paper gives a cat a good amount of activity.

- * If you do not use flea and tick preventatives your dog WILL get a tick borne disease. It is a guarantee. There are many flea and tick preventatives, please talk to your veterinarian to find out which one fits your pet the best.

- * See your veterinarian on at least a once yearly basis. Our pets hide disease, they are not complainers like us—if we don't feel well, we tell someone! Our pets do not. Often-times they do not show they are sick until they are really ill. Establishing a good relationship with your veterinarian and having the health checked on your pet at least once yearly is very important.

- * Lastly, BE SOCIAL! And we don't mean Facebook. Interact with your pet daily and spend quality time playing with them. Our pets need us as much as we need them. Be sure to give them the love and attention they deserve by walking daily, brushing, practice tricks, play ball, or simply chill on the couch together; you will both benefit.

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

Watercress Capital of the World

Almost lost and forgotten in our city's history is the fact that Huntsville at one time claimed the crown as "The Watercress Capital of the World."

Watercress cultivation began in New Market in 1907 when Foster DeWitt visited the area and became intrigued by the "wild" watercress growing along the banks of streams. This was one of the few places in the country where an abundance of fresh spring-water and limestone, combined with moderate winter temperatures, caused watercress to grow wild. DeWitt had spent much of his early life in Great Britain and while there was exposed to the plant.

Green vegetables in Great Britain were hard to come by in the winter months and watercress was one of the few plants available year-round. According to legend, an English officer started the custom of having watercress served in salads and within a few years it became a staple in every household. New York and Baltimore restaurants began serving watercress in salads in the early 1800s, but the cost of importing it from Great Britain was too prohibitive for it to become a widely used commodity in this

country.

Foster hired local labor to dam a small stream on the land he had rented, creating a series of shallow ponds, much like rice paddies. By experimenting with water levels he found that a level of six inches was the most favorable for cultivation. In cold weather the water would be raised, with the constant temperature of the water protecting the plants from damage.

Where at first the local populace had been skeptical about the whole idea, they soon became enthusiastic supporters as orders for the watercress began pouring in from Northern restaurants. Within a few short years Madison County became the major supplier to the world's markets.

An interesting sidelight to watercress cultivation is that as the plants flourished, so did the snakes. Some of the ponds

became so infested with water moccasins that laborers refused to work around them. John Derrick earned the dubious distinction of being the only "bounty hunter" of snakes in Alabama's history when he was hired by the landowners.

Colder winters and the expense of shipping were cited as the two primary reasons the business declined here in Huntsville. With the advent of air freight the railroads discontinued most of their express freight trains. Watercress became too expensive to ship by air and too perishable to ship by regular freight train.

As late as 1960, one could still see a sign at the edge of the city limits proclaiming: "Welcome to Huntsville, Watercress Capital of the World."



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"If I'd known how much fun grandkids would be, I would have had them first!"

Betsy Duke, Huntsville

REMEMBERING MY GRANDFATHER

by Adam Stolz

My Grandfather was the type of man that commanded the attention of whatever room he was in. He just attracted people to him. He had a special way of making you feel like you were the most important person in the world while you were talking to him. From the first conversation I remember having with him, he made me feel like I was successful.

When you have a man like Tom Carney tell you that you will be successful you have to believe him. It was almost a super power he had.

I remember being about fourteen years old running errands with him and eating lunch at Mullins'. Every business we went to we passed someone who knew Tom Carney and was extremely happy just to see him.

I was sitting in one of the booths at Mullins' thinking about how proud I was that this man was my grandfather. Someone who was so respected by everyone we

came across.

My Grandfather was one of the biggest supporters of my interest in joining the United States Military. His support is a large part of the reason I decided to join the military. He had a vast understanding of military history and that was one of his favorite topics.

We had many conversations about historical moments in history and key figures.

Although I didn't go the route that we had planned for my military career because I decided to enlist rather than commission, I know that he would be proud of the decisions I've made and my career in the Army.

Coconut Cookies

- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 1 stick butter
- 20 large marshmallows
- 1/2 c. or 1 sml. can coconut
- 1 c. chopped nuts
- 2 c. finely crushed graham crackers

Combine sugar, milk and butter and boil for 3 minutes while stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Add marshmallows and stir til dissolved. Add coconut, nuts and crumbs. Stir well and drop from spoon on waxed paper. Set aside to cool. Can be frozen.

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Johnny Cash, Grady Reeves, Elvis and Me

by Billy Joe Cooley

I was on my way home from the Korean War, my soldiering days far behind, when I stopped off in Huntsville to visit my old radio pal Grady Reeves. It was the summer of 1954 and I was anxious to get back to familiar ground.

Grady had always called me "Boondocks," a reflection on my rural raising, so I called him the Cincinnati Flash, a throwback to his hometown. I stopped by WBHP where he was a record spinner and a part time show promoter. They told me that he had gone out to the Madison County coliseum on Holmes Avenue. I went out there.

"Come on, Billy Joe, you can help me with the show I've booked in here," he greeted.

The coliseum in those days had no end walls, since it was primarily used for cattle shows and such.

"What kind of show have you got promoted here?" I asked.

Grady explained that a Nashville agent had called and said he had a large bunch of traveling musicians who needed a night's work while passing through here on their way to Tuscaloosa.

"The whole bunch will perform and it's only costing me \$600," he said. "I ought to make a good profit." I helped unfold and set up chairs.

At about 5 p.m. a long Cadillac limousine pulled up and about a dozen people got out. A rack on top of the car contained suitcases, guitars and amplifiers. It looked like a band of gypsies. The car was old, half covered with mud and resembled something that had traveled across a lot of plowed fields in recent days.

The musicians and singers were about my age, so we sat around and gossiped for a couple of hours. They were fascinated with Grady's tales about his days as a sportscaster.

About an hour before showtime the audience started trickling in. Most were older people. They paid \$2 a person, which was the going rate for a concert in those days.

A few people showed up. Very few.

Grady lost about \$200 on the show. It was the first time I had seen a grown man whimper. That was a lot to lose in those days.

The show was excellent and it was a shame that so few people saw it.

When the show was over I helped the gang get the stuff repacked atop that old limousine and bade farewell to Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Elvis Presley.

Little did we know that each was to become a super star.

"THE WAY IT WAS"

THE OTHER SIDE OF HUNTSVILLE'S HISTORY

BY TOM CARNEY



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DOTS DAIRY DEN IN NEW HOPE, ALABAMA – A CONTINUING SAGA

by Barry Key

June of 1944, my dad joined the Navy. My mom and I moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee and lived there until my dad was discharged from service. After the war we moved back to New Hope. My mother leased a service station that had a living area in the back. We lived there for a couple of years until the station burned. After our house burned, my mother leased the "Old City Cafe" right in the heart of down town New Hope.

My dad was working at Redstone Arsenal so we moved to Redstone Park at Farley just south of Huntsville. My mother had to give up the cafe and started to work at Redstone Arsenal also. She worked on an ammunition line. While working at Redstone she attended a business school in Huntsville learning "short hand" writing. After completing school she became a secretary for a manager at Redstone.

After about a year and a half at Redstone Park, mother and dad bought a house back at New Hope at the corner of Highway 431 and Old Gurley Pike. Although their house faced Old Gurley Pike, an off-set area of their yard actually lay right in the intersection of Highway 431 and Old Gurley Pike.

My mother, the entrepreneur in the family, had an excellent government job at the Arsenal, but just didn't like working for someone else. She had liked running the Old City Cafe so she started thinking about opening another restaurant there in New Hope. There wasn't an existing facility available suitable for a restaurant so she

sketched out a building plan for the vacant part of our yard that lay in the corner of 431 and Gurley Pike.

I think she started to work on my dad sometime in 1953 to build a restaurant. He just couldn't imagine giving up the job she had at Redstone to risk opening a restaurant. Besides, the lot was too small for a restaurant and parking.

Sometime in 1954 he finally gave in and agreed to a small "mom & pop" ice cream shop if mom could fit it on the lot.

Mom went to some type of restaurant supply place in Huntsville with the dimensions and layout of the lot. I think, to the surprise of my dad, the design they drew not only would support an ice cream and milkshake fountain, but there was adequate room for a sandwich area... plus parking. In late 1954 the plan went into action.

Sometime around April of 1955 the ice cream/sandwich shop was com-



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pleted just in time for the summer. The completed job included a large neon sign right in the corner of 431 and Gurley Pike that read "DOT'S DAIRY DIP". Not long after they opened for business, mother received a letter from a lawyer stating the name "Dairy Dip" was copyrighted and she would have to change the name, or face legal action. The sign manufacturer added a non-functional leg to the "P" making it "DOT'S DAIRY DIR". The new leg didn't light up so, when lit, the sign still read "Dot's Dairy Dip".

Sometime in the mid-eighties, the neon sign was destroyed by a severe wind storm.. ..hence, the present name "DOT'S DAIRY DEN" was born.

Until the mid-sixties, Highway 431 was the main route between Huntsville and Guntersville Lake. Mom only opened from April through September, but 7 days a week, 10:00 AM until 9:00 PM. Dad, still working at Redstone, worked evenings and weekends.

Due to the support of the local people, and the summer traffic from Huntsville to Guntersville Lake, the business was even more successful than originally expected. Also, the restaurant became an immediate hangout for school kids after school (which was only a block away).

Mom had a "ROCK-OLA" jukebox installed with all the latest rock & roll songs. Songs

were 10 cents each, or three for a quarter. There was a secret button on the back of the jukebox you could push, and play records without inserting money. The secret button was known only by mom, dad, me, and half the school kids in New Hope.

7 days a week, 10:00 AM until 9:00 PM, plus a couple of hours cleaning up, was really strenuous on my mom and dad, so (I think it was around September 1958), they leased the business to another family, the Shirley's.

Over the past 64 years, the Dairy Den has been leased by the following: Shirley, Smith (mother's sister), Paseur (mother's brother), Spivey, Key (mom's grandson), mom & dad (again), Walls (dad's pastor), and the last 25 years, Jan Key (a daughter).

Around 35 years ago, the

owners started opening for breakfast and expanded the menu to many items other than ice cream, milkshakes and sandwiches. Now, in addition to the lunch and dinner times, in the mornings you could sit at the "liar's" table and catch up on all the latest local who-did-what gossip, present condition of the farm crops, where the fish were biting, and the big 10 point deer that got away.

It's amazing how the idea of my mom, 66 years ago, has survived the ups and downs of the New Hope economy when so many other businesses have come and gone. Several new restaurants have opened in New Hope, but there is just something about the Dairy Den that continues to draw the local New Hopeians....could be the personality of the good-natured (local) employees and great food.

Bows



Hello, the Ark named me Bows. I came to the Ark with my sister, Buttons. We were stray puppies. That means we were loose with no supervision. We were very lucky a kind gentleman rescued us. I am a very sweet puppy. The Ark can tell us apart by the white on Buttons face. I was born in March.

The doggie doctor thinks we are Hound and Beagle. We make great pets for kids. Parents should always supervise children with any pet. I want a family that will

raise me to be a good dog. A family that will love and care for me my lifetime. Do you think you are that family?

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Seen in local "Items for Sale"

A Nation Divided

by David Chamberlain

The Civil War divided our nation—literally pitting brother against brother, a description synonymous with this era.

In its most famous "First Family", a rift existed. Mary Todd Lincoln's brother, Captain David Humphreys Todd, served in the Confederate Army,

This Confederate connection proved a problem for the Lincoln administration, leading to questions about her loyalty. The White House was truly, a house divided against itself.

Todd also had ties to Huntsville, living here after the war. When he died, he was buried in Maple Hill Cemetery.

For an unknown reason, no marker denoted his grave. This was corrected in 2003, with a new headstone dedication of, during the annual Cemetery Stroll. This ceremony highlight took place at the end of the day. Todd's story was made public; a wreath was placed on his grave.

As author of "Storied Ground", a book about Maple Hill Cemetery, containing a special section about its Civil War history, I felt compelled to attend. I was gifted with the following experience...

A re-enactor that day portrayed President Abraham Lincoln; with an uncanny resemblance, including Lincoln's trademark commanding height, beard, black stovepipe hat and suit. He expertly portrayed the great man's presence, also proving as proficient at impromptu oratory.

Of all the devastating fusillades un-

leashed in the war, a single derringer bullet proved most damaging. Assassinating Abraham Lincoln irrevocably altered the course of American and Southern history. This senseless act of one deluded individual ended chances of peaceful reunion. Today, the injury to the American psyche remains open, needing closure. If only that fateful April evening could be erased.

I stood next to "Father Abraham", as those to whom he was beloved, especially slaves freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, knew him. I looked around at re-enactors in period costume, standing alongside modern-attired onlookers in a time warp, a mirage-collage of present and past.

The ceremony featured period tunes performed by the Olde Towne Brass, an ensemble playing Civil War era vintage instruments.

A few songs, then, a pause. Bandleader Robert Bacchus introduced the next number: "This one is for you, Mr. President." The band, dressed that day in Confederate gray, broke into "Hail to the Chief". As its notes ended to cheers and applause, I turned to "President Lincoln". "I would bet anything, that's the first time that has ever happened!" With Lincoln-esque eloquence, he replied: "Yes, sir, but the states are now united..." On Maple Hill, through remembrance, and the inspiration of period martial music, people from all over America gathered to honor those who served and sacrificed on both sides, transcending time, achieving a feeling of healing... Capped with a simple, meaningful... Reconciliation Proclamation..

Robert "Bob" Bacchus, the most successful, influential band director in Lee High history, led his bands to various achievements... Appearances at professional football games, the grand opening of The Space and Rocket Center, and awards in regional competitions for the marching, concert and jazz bands. His percussion sections were always among Alabama's best. Numerous students won All-State and other honors; with many going further, achieving successful careers in the music field.

Major moments? Winning "The Greatest Band in Dixie" contest...leading to participating in President Carter's Inaugural Parade.

July 27th, a reunion at Lee High School will celebrate this storied career...

The law presumes a man innocent until he is found guilty. Then if he has any money left, his lawyer continues that presumption.



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"I Can't Believe It!"

by Judy C. Smith

"I just can't believe it."
That's all I could scream last Wednesday. As I was packing to go on my dream 58th anniversary trip to Secrets, an all-inclusive resort in Jamaica for a week, I was getting clothes, beach items, etc. together, enough for several weeks. There is always so much to take care of before going out of town for any length of time. Someone has to come in twice a day and feed the animals, walk the dog, feed the chickens and water all the plants.

Sampson, our white Turkish Angora cat, is totally deaf. My husband has taught him sign language. He knows when it's time to eat, when its bed time, and heaven forbid vet appointments. The other two cats do not have special needs like Sampson. I saved Sampson at a dog show in a booth for adoption for cats with no home. That was nine and a half years ago and even though I fed him his favorite food and made sure his litter box was always clean, he prefers M.D., my husband. He sits only in his lap on the heated blanket if M.D. has it on.

When it's bed time, just a stomp on the floor, he can feel the vibrations, and sees the lights out, he has a way of beating the two of us to bed. It seems lately as if he wants my side of the bed to himself. He will perch partly on my husband's shoulder and appears to be reading along with him.

One of his favorite pastimes is the laser dot light. He can jump as high as I am tall trying to catch it on the wall. He never gets tired of the challenge. His purring is only second to the snoring coming from his master.

You can't make a cat 'like' you, thus, if one chooses you, it's a real honor. Sampson's snow white silky fur coat is like no other I have ever felt. Almost as soft as a rabbit.

Our other two cats being five and eighteen years old have entirely different personalities. I just wish cloning them was in my reach so I could pursue this avenue, but at this point it is unheard of. Last week when I walked in the kitchen and saw Sampson stretched out on the



floor, as I had seen him do many times before. I told my husband, who was in the kitchen, "Sampson is so still, he almost looks like he is dead."

With that my husband walked over to his beloved cat and touched him and he was truly deceased. That is when all I could do was scream, "I can't believe it." Our beautiful white Turkish Angora cat had suffered a heart attack. He weighed twenty pounds and we knew he had a small heart for such a large cat. He was not fat, all muscle.

Four of our children came over immediately and helped dig a grave before it got dark, and to bury him.

We left the next morning for our special trip, but there will be a sadness when we walk into our house tomorrow and the white leopard doesn't come to welcome us home.

We will miss you, our special companion that we had for almost ten years.

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NEWS FROM 1920

Scandal Hits Baseball

Major league baseball has been shaken to its foundations by the indictment of eight Chicago White Sox players on charges that they had conspired with gamblers to fix the 1919 World Series.

Those indicted were "Shoeless" Joe Jackson, left fielder; Eddie Cicotte, star pitcher; Hap Felsch, center fielder; Swede Risberg, shortstop; Buck Weaver, third baseman; Arnold Gandil, former first baseman; Lefty Williams, pitcher and Fred McMullin, utility player.

The indictments were based on evidence obtained for the Cook County grand jury by Charles A. Comiskey, owner of the White Sox, who immediately suspended the seven players still with the team. If convicted, they face up to five years in prison. Grand jury officials reveal that Cicotte and Jackson have confessed to their part in the fix. Cicotte admits receiving \$10,000 for throwing two games and Jackson says he received \$3,000 of \$20,000 promised by the gamblers. On his way out of court recently, Jackson met up with a young fan with tears in his eyes, who cried, "Say it ain't so, Joe." But it is.

Babe Ruth Sold To Yankees

George Herman "Babe" Ruth, a pitcher who is the best home-run hitter in baseball, has been sold by the Red Sox to the New York Yankees for \$125,000, the largest sum ever paid for a player. Ruth, who hit 29 home runs last season, had asked for a \$10,000 salary increase to \$20,000 a year.

Maple Hill gets Stone Fence

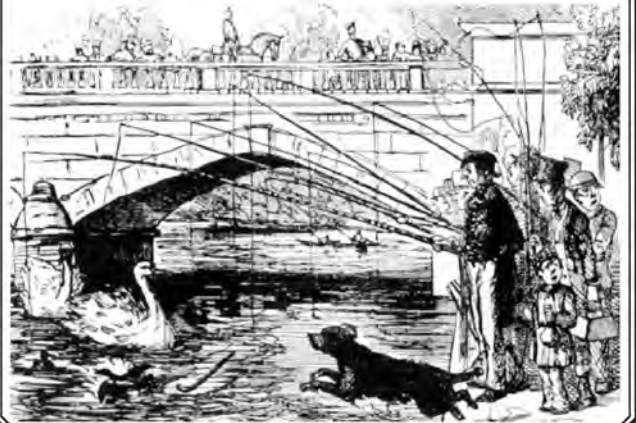
At long last Maple Hill Cemetery has been enclosed. Donations from the public amounting to over \$1,250 were raised to pay the cost of the stone wall surrounding the cemetery. City and County officials provided labor for the project as well as the truck used to haul the stones from the base of Monte Sano.

Prohibition is the Law

As of today beer, wine and liquor have been officially banned by the 18th Amendment. It will be enforced by the National Prohibition or Volstead Act and is nothing new to those 25 states which have already passed their own Prohibition laws. By tomorrow persons who have stored liquor "for personal use only" in warehouses elsewhere must have it moved to their own residence. New York Alderman LaGuardia is skeptical about the law saying that it will take 250,000 police to enforce it in that city alone.

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JOHN CLAN GRAYSON, MY GREAT GRANDFATHER

by Wenona Moorer

Alabama joined the union as the 22nd state on December 14, 1819, making it 200 years old. Many people helped in the beginning. One of these men was a 5th great grandfather of mine, John Clan Grayson.

John C. Grayson, son of John and Barbara, was born in what was then Fincastle County, now Montgomery, Virginia, 9th. of August 1770. He married Sarah (Sally) Carter, daughter of George and Mary Carter.

The United States was adding new lands, including the Louisiana Purchase which almost doubled the size of the United States. Those lands, known as territories, had not met requirement for statehood.

One such area was the Mississippi Territory was ceded to the United States in 1802. Treaties were made with the Chickasaw in 1805 and the Cherokees in 1807. Congress passed an act on March 3, 1807, making appropriations to carry out the treaties with the Indians into effect and authorized the surveying of the area. The Grayson's lived near the future President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson, was President from 1801-1809.

In 1807 John Clan Grayson was a young man, only 37 years old, but was schooled in the skill of land surveying.

Seth Pease, surveyor was in charge of arrangements for the survey. Thomas Freeman, government surveyor, and John Grayson, his assistant were authorized to lay out the original boundary lines, of what is now Madison County.

At the time John Clan Grayson accepted the job, he and

Sarah already had a large family. John moved his family to Cook County, Tennessee to be close to where Sarah's father and brother, Francis Jackson Carter, lived. John left his family in Tennessee, packed his horses with surveying equipment and headed south to joining up with Freemans surveying group.

When the surveyors, Thomas Freeman and John Grayson, came in 1807 to run the original boundary lines of Madison County, they came to John Hunt's cabin and employed him to guide them.

The Huntsville Baseline (east-west) was established at the Tennessee state line and the Huntsville Meridian (north-south) became the longitudinal line from which all lands in northern Alabama were to be surveyed. This concept allowed subdivision of 36 one-mile-square section (36 square miles) 640 acres each with town-range coordinates.

All land was measured relative to the base Meridian. As a result, Madison County has two ranges west of the Meridian and two full ranges east, plus portions of a third. The Meridian is now Meridian Street. Most settlers could afford the most common division, 1/4 section or 160 acres.

They came to the present day Big Cove community and constructed a bunk house near

what is now the Grayson Family Cemetery on Old Big Cove Road. Working from their base camp close to the Flint River, they detailed field notes that included rivers, creeks, springs, cleared lands, types of soil, wooded acres.

Thomas Freeman and John Grayson, walking with their surveying chains, encountered pioneers, known as "squatters".

According to the Indian treaties, commissioners from the U.S. government and rep-

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representatives from both tribes were required to attend the running of the boundary lines for the Indians lands, to prevent misunderstandings. Thomas Freeman and his crew and the witnesses gathered at Chickasaw Island (Hobbs Island) and the lines were surveyed and marked by blazes on the trees. The Indians had control over their land and a passport was required to enter their territory.

Writing to his family in east Tennessee, John told of surveying a large valley which he called "The Big Cove". That name stuck and today is over two-hundred years old.

After most of the surveying work was done, John returned to Tennessee to get his wife Sarah, their seven children, a governess, his slaves and the reminder of his surveying tools, supplies and equipment and materials for building bridges.

In helping survey Madison County, John picked the land he named Big Cove for his home. John Clan Grayson and David Cobb were the first to settle in the Big Cove area southeast of Huntsville. John was first to be granted land there. He had first choice of land, so he chose the most fertile land. He built his home and started farming. His house was still standing in the late 1970s.

In 1810 John was commissioned as Justice of the Peace for Madison County and performed numerous marriages of Big Cove earliest settlers. On 25 November 1812 the Mississippi Territorial Legislature granted a charter to establish Green Academy for boys in Madison County, John was one of the board members.

It was described in the "Huntsville Democrat", 11 November 1813 as "Green Academy, is in a handsome grove about a quarter of a mile east of Huntsville almost environed with mountain." After confrontations with various Indian tribes, the Madison County's unit of the Mississippi Territorial Militia was established. John Grayson was one of the Community leaders in forming the units. John was commissioned a Major in the regiment in July 1813. Alabama continued as Alabama Territory until it was made a state in 1819.

The Flint River Navigation Company was established in 1820. The farmers had to find a way to get their cotton from their farms to the Tennessee River. This company was comprised of a number of men who had a plan to haul cotton on flatboats

from Captain Scott's Mills to the Tennessee River via Flint River. Among those members of the company was John Grayson.

In 1823, a committee was appointed to mark out a route from Big Cove to the Huntsville area by way of Webster's Gap. John served on that committee. I haven't found where Webster's Gap is, but I think it was what now Cecil Ashburn road is?

John, put up two mills and cotton gins that I know of. One was near Bethel Church. That mill and cotton gin ran on the waters of the Falling Spring. Judge Taylor in "History of Madison County" said the falling spring forms a romantic and beautiful little waterfall in the heart of the mountain above Bethel. On July 29, 1826 at 5:00 P.M. John died. He was only 56 years old. Big Cove was saddened by the loss of a man so full of energy and enterprise. Mrs. Grayson his wife of 34 years died at 9:00 P.M., Sept 13, 1838 at the age of 62. Both are buried in the Grayson Family Cemetery on the Grayson's Plantation.

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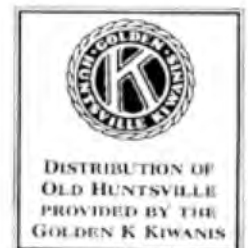


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Memories of My Visit to the Monte Sano Hotel

by Newman Ward



My wife Bess and I were out riding one early Sunday morning many, many years ago and decided to go out Pratt Avenue, across Monte Sano and back by Governor's Way. This was probably back in the '30s. While on Monte Sano, we made our way to the Monte Sano Hotel - we had heard so much about it and were very curious about what it actually looked like.

After much railing we aroused the caretaker, who was not too crazy about showing unannounced visitors through the hotel. But after much cajoling and a bribe of 25 cents, he let us look around.

He showed us "Memphis Row," and told us that so many people came from Memphis every year that they occupied an entire wing. This must have been before 1937 because after that I worked Sundays at the Post Office. Of

course, the Hotel had been closed for some time by then, but was still standing, vacant, with only the caretaker to keep it company. It was sort of sad, actually, such a beautiful building.

I don't remember it's being open during my lifetime. It was situated on the edge of the mountain with a breathtaking view of Huntsville. We mostly looked through the windows at the empty rooms.

I remember that Charlie Crute, the owner of the Lyric and Grand Theaters, had a house near the hotel and his daughter (Martha Fleming) might know more about the hotel. My mother's sister married Carlyle Patterson, and Charlie Crute married Carlyle's sister, all deceased now.

I can't think of anyone else who lived up there back then, except Dr. Burritt of course, and Ernest Coe who had a hollowed-out tree log that he usually slept in.

I remember the Times had written a story about Ernest Coe that was really interesting.

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July Memories

by Elizabeth Wharry



Previously, I have written about growing up as a first generation American and how we celebrated July 4 . Unfortunately, not all of them were idyllic.

July 4, 1969 stands out as rather...different.

The adults in their wisdom cancelled the usual celebration. The weather was moody that day. Forecasters were calling for severe thunderstorms. On Lake Erie, storms can develop quickly and become severe in short order. This particular year, area fireworks were cancelled due to the weather.

My dad decided he and I should go to Thompson, Ohio, about 40 minutes south and east of Cleveland. The town was having an old fashioned celebration with games, parades, bands, food and fireworks. Somewhere around 5 pm, it started to thunder and lightening. The town officials called a halt to the festivities, and advised people to either seek shelter or head for home.

My father decided to make a run for home. We were driving west when we saw a large funnel cloud. It looked like it was coming straight towards us! We jumped out of the car, and into the ditch ahead of the car.

We hung onto a tree's roots that were hanging over the edge. Instead of keeping our heads down, we watched as it made its way past us. Both of us were too fascinated by it to be afraid. It felt like my body was going to be turned inside out from the intense pressure.

That tornado was less than a quarter mile from us, and sounded like a freight train was nearby. What really amazed me was the stench, though.

Fifty years have passed since then. I think that will be the most memorable July 4th ever!

Palpitations

If you have palpitations (and who hasn't at one time or another), take a holistic approach to find the cause. Was it the MSG in the Chinese food you had for lunch? Or the caffeine in the chocolate you pigged out on? Pressure at the office? A new vitamin you took? Sugar? Work at figuring it out so that you learn what not to have next time.

Meanwhile, here's a natural sedative to subdue the thumping. Steep 2 camomile tea bags in 2 cups of just-boiled water. Steam a few shredded leaves of cabbage. Then, in a soup bowl, combine the steamed leaves with the camomile tea. This tea-soup may not taste good, but it can help overcome those skipped heartbeats.



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