



No. 318  
August 2019



# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

## Moonshine Wars



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and much more



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# Moonshine Wars

by Tom Carney

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

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

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

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

"We had this groundhog still out next to the Flint River," he says. A groundhog was a still built into the side of a hill or cliff. Such distilleries were hard to detect.

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

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

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

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

Not long after that, the Brasemores got to noticing that someone was stealing from them. Some culprit would sneak into their "holding areas" in the woods, where they stashed their whiskey until it could be picked up by the haulers. The whiskey started disappearing, a couple of gallons at a time.

**What's the most important thing to learn in Chemistry? Don't lick the spoon.**



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They put together a plan to catch the thieves.

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

"On up in the morning, here comes old man Ricketts, just lumbering along like some old fat hog. We watched and sure enough, he goes straight to the whiskey and helps himself to a couple gallons."

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

"Fortunately, the gun was loaded with saltpeter and the shot wasn't very dangerous, although Ricketts had to eat his

meals standing up for a few weeks."

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

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

"We tied the wagon in front of the courthouse and just sat there all day, selling whis-

key. Everybody knew what Mama was doing, so a lot of people who didn't even drink would stop and buy some. "For medicine," they would say."

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

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

"No ma'am," the deputy replied sheepishly, "but I reckon I'll take a gallon if you got any left, my croup has been acting up lately." They got their dad out of jail that day, but he didn't stay free long. When his trial came up, he was sentenced to 12 months on the county farm. "Pickin' peas," he called it.

"I was a pretty good size boy by then and with Daddy in jail it was up to me to run the business," the younger Brasemore



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recalls. "Before he got caught, Daddy had hid the worm (copper condensation coil) and I got a neighbor to build me a pot."

"It wasn't but just a couple of weeks 'til I was back in business. When I run off my first batch they said the sheriff thought my father had escaped."

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

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

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

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

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

"You and Giles are under arrest for making whiskey," the sheriff said.

Seems as if someone had sent the sheriff a note.

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

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

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

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

Young Jim got married in the fall of 1925 to a city girl who wouldn't have anything

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to do with making whiskey. One of her uncles got him a job in Merrimac Cotton Mill.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Anyway, we got Mickey, my second cousin who owned a Ford coupe, to start hauling for us. That went real good. Then George, another cousin, decided to come in the busi-

ness. He was driving a milk truck and had a regular route at the time. Once a week we would load him up with whiskey and he would make home deliveries all over town."

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

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

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

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

"The law knew something was going on and they started to really crack down on whiskey making. This hurt us bad, as we couldn't keep a still run-

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ning more than a month without it getting raided."

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

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

"I knew exactly what was fixing to happen when I saw that car window roll down and I started to reach for my pistol. I never had a chance."

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

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

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

When questioned about this, Brasmore's only comment was, "I reckon that's what you call bygones." Things weren't the same after that. There had been too much trouble and the law was now watching every move the moonshiners made.

"I remember one time when Cousins, a boy we had driving for us, was stopped downtown. He was hauling a load of whiskey and was right in front of the movie theater when the law spotted him. Traffic was backed up for a red light and Cousins knew he couldn't get

the car away, so he just jumped out and took off running."

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

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

"Was the law honest back then? Let me ask you a question. How many policemen do you know that never took a drink? All of them knew what was going on, but you got to remember back then, most ev-

eryone was kin to one another. We never worried too much about the city or county police unless there was an election coming up, and even then they tried not to bother us too much. They never came right out and asked you for money, but you knew you had to give."

"I remember one election back in the late 30s when the judge was making speeches. He'd be up there talking about getting rid of the bootleggers and I would be outside passing out free drinks to everyone who would vote for him."

"One time the judge's car broke down up around New Market, so he hitched a ride with us. All day long, we drove him around while he was spitting hell and brimstone about



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whiskey and the whole time he was sipping the white whiskey that we were giving him. When we got back to town that night, he was so drunk his wife made him sleep on the front porch."

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

A hardware store owner manufactured various-size stills in the basement. For an extra twenty-five dollars a nearby furniture store would deliver the distillery to its intended site.

When sugar became rationed during the war, a downtown grocery wholesale house sold sugar under the counter. Often, when they would receive a large shipment, the wholesaler would sell it off to moonshiners at a private auction to the highest bidder. One

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

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

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

"Now look at this," he said, pointing to a recent society page from The Huntsville Times. "That girl used to sleep on the back seat of a Ford coupe, sucking a lollipop while her daddy delivered whiskey for me."

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# Around the Bend

by Al Dean

Tramp, Red Man and I have had some thrilling adventures, the distorted details of which have tainted our reputations and called into question our ability to separate reality from fantasy. This unwarranted distinction had its origin in a harrowing childhood fishing trip, repeated from time to time by those predisposed to disparage us. It is time to set the record straight.

Tramp Trammel owns the Winton Sporting Goods store on the square in downtown Winton, a stone's throw across the river from Huntsville. Clarence Childers, nicknamed Red Man - you know, like the chewing tobacco, is the proprietor of the Junque Shoppe next door to Tramp's. My name is Lee Roy Keesucker. Yeah, I know, but that's my name. I teach Biblical Studies to undergraduates at a local college.

Aldridge Creek empties into the Tennessee River on the southern edge of Huntsville. It had honey holes that produce catcher's mitt size croppy, hog size bass, hippo size catfish and a water moccasin or two. Mr. Homer Ruark, the previous owner of the sporting goods store, took me with him occasionally, but I'd never been by myself. The day arrived when I decided I didn't need him for protection. The more I thought about it however, the more dangerous the expedition became, so I invited Tramp and Clarence to go with me. Clarence had chores.

We filled a soup can with

worms and off we went, our hand-me-down tackle hanging over our shoulders. From Tramp's parents' home on Hobbs Island Road, it didn't take long to reach two deep holes in the "S" curve the creek made before wending its way through the woods to the Tennessee River. We cut through Mr. Cobb's pastures, Mr. Kent's cornfield and Mr. Prescott's hog lot, and there we were.

We fished the first hole and landed a couple of shell crackers, but the anticipation of what awaited around the bend spurred us on to greater adventure. I've come to realize that part of the allure of the outdoors is the thrill of what may be discovered in the next still pool, the next brushy fencerow or the next stand of pines.

We followed the gurgling water to the next hole, put fresh worms on our hooks and dropped them into the pool. Retrieving



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**Billy Travis, Gurley**



slack line, we watched our bobbers drift slowly toward where we sat in the shade of a huge Sycamore tree, its gnarled roots jutting into the water.

Tramp saw it first.

"A water moccasin!" he yelled.

"Where?" I shrieked.

"There!" He screamed, pointing toward the roots.

Wound around the roots was the biggest snake I'd ever seen. Our shouting and screaming, and fishing poles flogging the water as we scrambled up the bank agitated the lounging reptile, but instead of slinking into the protective cover of the roots, it uncoiled and slithered toward us.

We took off running, bobbers in the breeze, tearing through the tall grass that separated the two holes in the "S" curve. Tramp was faster than me. All I could see in the grass ahead of me was the top of his head and one hand clutching his rod. The worm on the hook and the red and white bobber flagged behind the horizontal fishing pole like the regimental colors of the light cavalry. I looked over my shoulder and saw the snake's head above the grass. It was gaining on us.

"Get across the creek!" I yelled, heading for the water. I hoped space between us might give us a fighting chance. Tramp reached the far bank first. "Hurry!" he shouted. He's gonna bite ya!"

Water moccasins chew on you. I imagined the serpent gnawing on my ankle as I wallowed out of the water arid clawed up the bank, my fishing rod clenched in a death grip. Not leaping high enough to clear the top strand of the barbed wire fence, a rusty spike ripped a gash in my belly. I lay puffing and bleeding where I landed.

The giant snake, having rid his domain of noisy, screaming boys, opted not to follow. It watched, head above the grass, tongue flicking, as we tip-toed away.

Ever mindful of the danger behind us we trekked upstream, stumbled upon some shallow riffles, waded across, and raced to

share our near death experience with Clarence.

After swearing Clarence to secrecy, I got home and discovered that any confidence shared with him would find its way into more homes than the Huntsville Times. His mom had called my mom and she was waiting for me on the front porch brandishing a hefty forsythia switch. It wasn't until high school that Clarence's nickname became Red Man; to me, he's still Rat-fink.

Tramp doesn't remember the details as vividly as I do. In his account the man eater is a python released into the wild by pet owners convinced that they had become tastier fare than the rats they were feeding it. However, it was just inches from my flying feet, so I know it was a cottonmouth as big as my leg. I can still see poisonous drool slathering from its gaping white gullet, fangs like dagger blades poised to puncture my flesh and inject its toxic venom.

Thinking about it though, it seems I recall Clarence saying an alligator ate one of Mr. Prescott's hogs. The behemoth that chased us was awfully big for a snake, and alligator sightings have become commonplace in all of north Alabama.



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Grandma was asked by a mother of a five-year-old what she should do about her son still wetting the bed at night. She was at her wit's end saying she had tried most everything.

I advised her to calm down and think about the situation for a few minutes. First, nothing to drink after seven o'clock at night, have a scheduled bedtime close to eight o'clock, being sure to have a potty break before bed. Some parents use night pull-ups and even use plastic or rubbery/silk covering to keep from having to change sheets in the middle of the night should an accident happen.

Some parents have been known to wake their child up before they go to bed later that night and taking them to the bathroom. Sometimes this works, and sometimes it doesn't, but it's worth a try. Some catalogs have quilted pads that are water proof on one side; this is a great help as they can be changed out in no time if the accident occurs in the middle of the night.

If the child still wets the bed after starting school, seeing a Urologist could be helpful. No child enjoys wetting the

bed and having to get up in the middle of the night and having to change pajamas and bed linings. When a child is old enough to spend the night with friends, it could become an issue.

My child's friend brought night pants and his blanket with him to keep from soiling the sheets at our house. Believe it or not, patience and perseverance paid off. By the time he was out of grade school, he no longer had the problem. This too shall pass, I told his mother, and in later years to come, you can laugh about that trying time.

Now Grandma has a few words concerning cell phones.

1. What age should a child be given one?
2. How many minutes or hours a day can they play with it?

Those are two important questions. Personally, I hate to see small children playing with them, hurts their eyes and neck always looking down. I saw on TV the other morning a doctor showing a small bone growing out of his patient's neck because the person was looking down so long and not taking breaks, also more children are having eye problems. Therefore, parents beware. No cell phones at the dinner table, encourage your children to talk about what they saw and did during that day.

3. Having a cell phone cubby for the child's phone where the phone is placed before bedtime, so the child doesn't use it until late at night, and on weekends have out of door activities and leave phones at home. Remember we grew up without them and we did quite well.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pork Sandwich</b></li> <li>• <b>Chicken Sandwich</b></li> <li>• <b>Turkey Sandwich</b></li> <li>• <b>Grilled Ham &amp; Cheese</b></li> <li>• <b>Grilled Turkey &amp; Cheese</b></li> <li>• <b>BLT</b></li> <li>• <b>Rib Sandwich</b></li> <li>• <b>Chicken Fingers</b></li> <li>• <b>Hamburgers</b> - Made Fresh Daily</li> <li>• <b>Cheeseburgers</b> - Made Fresh Daily</li> <li>• <b>Hot Dogs</b></li> <li>• <b>Slaw Dogs</b> - Red or White</li> <li>• <b>Chili Dogs</b></li> <li>• <b>Ribs (Slab &amp; 1/2 Slab)</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Plate Dinners</b><br/>                     Rib, Pork, Turkey, Chicken, Chicken Fingers</li> <li>• <b>Whole Chicken</b></li> <li>• <b>Pies</b></li> <li>• <b>Banana Pudding</b> - Made Fresh Daily</li> <li>• <b>French Fries</b></li> <li>• <b>Potato Salad</b></li> <li>• <b>Baked Beans</b></li> <li>• <b>Green Beans</b></li> <li>• <b>Homemade Hushpuppies</b></li> <li>• <b>Slaw</b> - Mayonnaise or Vinegar</li> <li>• <b>Salads</b> - With or Without Meat</li> <li>• <b>Kid's Menu Available</b><br/>                     &amp; Much More!!!</li> </ul> |
|--|---|



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# Tips from Liz

*(These tips are presented for your enjoyment only - always check with your doctor for any medical problems.)*

- When putting dirty silverware in your dishwasher, group your dirty spoons, forks and knives together in the silverware bin - it'll be faster to unload.

- If you use a meat baster to squeeze out your pancake batter onto the hot griddle, you'll have perfect pancakes every time.

- If you spray your Tupperware with nonstick cooking spray before pouring in tomato-based sauces like spaghetti, there will be no stains.

- A mousetrap placed on top of your alarm clock will discourage you from hitting the "snooze" button when you really should be getting up.

- Wrap celery in aluminum foil when putting it in the fridge and it'll keep for weeks.

- Use latex gloves for opening jars - gives you more leverage for those hard-to-open jars.

- Chalk lines work with ants - they won't cross it! Try it - not sure why this one works.

- You really only need two tools at home - WD-40 and duct tape. If it doesn't move and should, use the WD-40. If it moves and shouldn't, use the duct tape.

- Using air-freshener to clean your mirrors does a good job and leaves a great scent.

- When you're done with your cereal, keep that waxed bag that it came in. It's perfect for storing fresh vegetables and keeps them good for a long time.

- DON'T throw away your left-over wine - freeze into cubes for future use in casseroles, soups and sauces.

- Calm down an angry child by whispering to her - she'll have to stop crying to listen to you. This

works on husbands, too.

- Toast your oatmeal for better-tasting oatmeal cookies.

- To remove tar, rub with lard or butter, then rinse with warm soap.

- If you accidentally over-salt a dish while it's cooking, simply drop in a peeled potato and it will absorb the excess salt.

- To stop itch from a mosquito bite, apply plain soap to the area for instant relief.

- When you get a splinter, reach for the Scotch tape. Place it over the splinter, then pull. This will work for small splinters most of the time.

- A "reacher" is not just for old folks anymore. You can find them in all medical supply stores and they allow you to retrieve most items without having to bend over.

- By turning a cauliflower head upside down in boiling water it cooks more quickly and retains more flavor.

- If paint fumes bother you, add 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract to each quart of paint.

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**"If we're not supposed to eat at night, why is there a light in my refrigerator?"**

**Bobbie Peterson, Madison**



# Famous Bluegrass Men

by Betty Hallmark Atkinson



In 1955, when I was 14 years old, we lived in a small community outside of Florence, Alabama, called "Oakland". My Granddaddy "Papa Sewell" would never miss a chance to watch or listen to Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs.

Papa Sewell lived in a trailer on my parent's property and every Saturday night he would come to watch them at our house on television.

When he found out that they were coming to our school in Oakland, that was just a few houses down from us to perform, he was so excited.

But sadly, a few weeks before the event, Papa Sewell had a stroke, and was not able to attend the show.

During the show, I told the Principal of Oakland School how Papa Sewell loved Mr. Lester. The Principal introduced them to me after the show, and the next thing I knew, I was walking down the road to our house with Mr. Lester Flatt and Mr. Earl Scruggs to meet my Granddaddy.

Oh the look and surprise on his face when they walked in the room. They sang and played a few songs for him.

I will never forget the kindness, appreciation and compassion shown for a fan and that old man whom I loved dearly.

There was an article written and published in the Florence newspaper about the meeting between my Granddaddy and Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, but I knew that they did not do it for the publicity.

**"Sometimes I wish I was an octopus so I could slap eight people at once."**

*Betty Frank, Athens*

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# JOHN DENVER - HUNTSVILLE'S STORY

by M.D. Smith, IV

This is a story you won't read anywhere else. It involves President Ronald Reagan, John Denver, the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster of January 28, 1986 and WAAY 31 TV.

Everyone remembers the Challenger disaster the morning of January 28, 1986. You are certain to remember President Ronald Reagan's speech on TV that night, which should have been a State of the Union address, was instead, a eulogy to the crew killed that day.

Here's the part you may not know. John Jenkins of WMJJ Radio in Birmingham took a John Denver song not many knew, and he edited in the audio of the President's speech that night between the lyrics of John Denver's song, "On the Wings of a Dream" from a little known album he released called "It's About Time". Jenkins took a powerful speech by Reagan and the song and lyrics of Denver and merged the two audio tracks together.

We heard about the song clamoring for replay by listeners and asked the station to send us an audio copy. They did. Upon receiving the audio track, Cliff Windham, News Director for WAAY-TV, took the music, then the video of the Reagan speech, and video released by NASA of the seven Astronauts, boarding the shuttle that morning. It showed lift-off and much of the video that matched the words of the song, and what

President Reagan was saying in his speech. Lip-syncing the video to the already recorded music was a masterful job by Windham.

All that, once produced, ran a number of times on our station. As General Manager, I was pleased to get all the complimentary phone calls. The opening lines of Denver's song are:

*Yesterday I had a dream about dying  
About laying to rest and then flying  
How the moment at hand  
Is the only thing we really own  
And I lay in my bed and I wonder  
After all has been said and is done for  
Why is it thus we are here  
And so soon we are gone*

(More of Reagan's speech, then from Denver)

*And if so I sing for my father  
And in truth you must know I would rather  
He were here by my side  
We could fly on the wings of a dream  
To a place where the spirit could find us  
And joy and surrender would bind us  
We are one anyway  
Anyway we are more than we seem*

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Then there is more of the song in the video and more snips from Reagan's speech.

Then the end of the speech came with a paraphrase of the very popular Poem "High Flight" by John Gillespie Magee, Jr. where Reagan said, "The crew of the space shuttle Challenger honored us by the manner in which they lived their lives. We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved goodbye and slipped the surly bonds of earth to touch the face of God".

Lastly, Denver's lyrics:

*Though the body in passing must leave us  
There is one who remains to receive us  
There are those in this life  
Who are friends from our heavenly home  
So I listen to the voices inside me  
For I know they are there just to guide me  
And my faith will proclaim it is so  
We are never alone*

Now, as Paul Harvey would say, here is the rest of the story.

We had been playing the video for several days, repeated often later in the evenings. A few days later, I was in my office and my phone rang. I picked it up, "Hello, this is M.D. Smith," I said.

"Mr. Smith, please hold for John Denver if you would," the voice on the other end said. At first I thought it might be a joke, but within ten seconds, John Denver came on the phone. Here is my best recollection of that conversation.

"Mr. Smith, I hear that you are playing my song in an edited video on your station."

I trembled thinking, Oh, my God, I'm in a pot full of trouble. I am going to get sued or worse for using his song without permission. Everyone in town was seeing it. I couldn't lie about "Yes, that is true, we added video to an edited version of your song on audio, done by a radio station in Birmingham."

"Well, I hear it's pretty good and I wonder if I could get a copy of that video?"

The complexion of the conversation changed considerably. He went on to say, "That song of mine, "On the Wings of a Dream", was written in honor of my father. I released that album in 1983 and I knew it would not be a big seller, but it was one I did for ME. There are other songs related to my father who was a test pilot and later flew with me."

I knew about John Denver, his father flying with him, often piloting his Lear Jet if John himself was not flying it. Having flown with my father from 1965 until his death in 1985 from lung cancer, I could surely relate.

"I also flew with my father for twenty years and so I really identify with your song and when I saw it so skillfully interwoven with the President's

words, and later we put video to match it, tears came to my eyes."

"That's exactly the way I feel about my father who is not with me anymore," Denver said.

I further said as my mind was whirring, "And the part that President Reagan added at the end of his tribute from the poem of High Flight produced by the U.S. Air Force, we run every single night at sign off, because both my father and I loved it so much."

"That's my favorite poem also, I like the ending that President Reagan quoted from:

*And while with silent, lifting mind I've trod*

*The high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand,  
And touched the face of God."*

By then, over fifteen minutes had passed, and he allowed as how he had to go, and I swore I'd have a copy of the video tape in the mail that afternoon. He gave me the address to send and we mailed him a VHS copy that same day.

AND NOW YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE STORY.

If you want to watch the video for yourself here's how to see it - go to <https://youtube/HxzEGR6sGtw>.

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# Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Our winner for the Photo of the Month free subscription in July was **Philip Hancock** of Huntsville. He guessed the sweet photo of the month which was **Lynda Hall**, our Madison County Tax Collector. Philip loves Alabama football and you'll hear Roll Tide all fall and winter at his home. He and his mom **Ann Hancock** can't wait for football season and love watching the games together.

Mark your calendar for the **Annual Trade Day on the Square** - the Von Braun Lion's Club sponsors it and are now taking calls for vendors. It's on Saturday, Sep. 17 from 8am - 5pm and parking is free. That's the day you'll find old copies of Old Huntsville and lots of other treasures from vendors. Call (256) 852-5378 for info.

**Missy Leatherwood** is having a birthday August 5 and her mother-in-law **Rosemary Leatherwood** loves her to pieces.

We've run many stories in the

past 30 years but one area we haven't gotten alot of information on is Redstone Park. **Louie Tippet** has contributed a story in this issue about growing up there. **James Cornelius** was just a baby when he lived there but he and wife **Ann** would love to see more stories about Redstone Park. If you have memories of growing up there Please send them in to the Old Huntsville address and we will publish them. 1-2 pages.

A special hello to two of our regular readers all the way from Illinois. **Gary** and **Martha Watkins** are not from here but their friends are. They want to send greetings to all our readers!

**Candy Burnett** is retiring. She has been Huntsville Hospital Foundation's President for the past 22 years. During this time more than \$71 million has been raised to fund lifesaving equipment and to start programs that otherwise would not have been possible. Key purchases and programs founded during her tenure include: two Kids Care pediatric critical care ambulances, the **Healing Garden at Madison Hospital**, the creation of the **Liz Hurley Ribbon Run** and the **Miracle Bash & Swim for Melissa** events, the **Arts in Medicine** and **Music Therapy** programs, the **ICU Waiting Area**, the **Mobile Medical Unit**, the **Millennium Society**, the **SPEAK program**, and funding of the inpatient hospice facility and **Caring House**. What a legacy - we join many in saying Thank You to Candy and wish you a new set of adventures in your retirement!

**Drew Lockhart** is the lucky husband of **Leslie Lockhart**, who is an amazing artist. Drew turned 60 years old on July 13 and Leslie planned a huge event to help him celebrate. The food was catered by **Narvel** whom many people know, and was so good. Lots of people came to celebrate with Drew and found out that Leslie had had her birthday the day before, on Jul 12. Lots of great people and fun and food all make super memories.

**Friends of Rescue (FOR)** does an amazing job in saving lives of dogs and cats who normally might not make it. They just announced they have opened their Thrift store at 2244 Hwy. 72 East and are open Wed/Fri/Sat from 9-3. They accept all donations during business hours and you can contact them at (256) 213-1963.

Many of us are plagued with arthritis pain. I know there are pain pills out there but I was trying to find more natural ways of decreasing the inflammation. **Uric acid** in your system is what causes the inflammation and then, the pain. So to decrease the Uric acid I read that drinking tart cherry juice a few times a day helps, going easy on sugar and alcohol, and drinking as much water as

## Photo of The Month

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you can during the day are helpful. I've also heard that Tumeric capsules (like vitamins) and Ginger capsules can help also. When the inflammation decreases, so does your pain.

**Ianthia Bridges** is that beautiful smiling lady you always see at BB&T Bank on Church Street and her family is having some birthdays in August. Her husband, **Frazer**, has an Aug. 26 birthday, her brother **Carl** celebrates on Aug. 4 and sis-in-law **Missy** has an Aug. 25th birthday. There'll be lots of celebration in Ianthia's house!

For those of you who love the classic cars, there will be a good car and truck show held at **Sharon Johnston Park** on Aug. 17 from 9am to 2pm. It's \$20 to register but there will be lots of door prizes. Call (256) 379-2868 for info.

Did you know that if your key is stuck in a door lock that you may be able to get it out by applying ice? My grandson **Evan** suggested that recently when his mom could not remove a stuck key, just putting ice cubes on it, and the key came out in a minute or so. Seems that metal contracts with cold! Who knew?

**Rufus Rutledge** just turned 90 on July 8. He loves reading about all our history and it's the ONLY periodical he reads. His son **John Rutledge** is so proud of his dad

and wanted to send love through our column. So Old Huntsville sends a big hug to Rufus too - hope you have a great summer!

Shower with Patchouli soap to keep the mosquitoes away! You heard it here first.

We've had calls recently asking where readers can pick up Old Huntsville magazines. In Fayetteville you'll find them at Honey's Restaurant, in Hazel Green they're at Ole Dads and Walmart, on Winchester Road we have a new box at Cafe 302. Hampton Cove has the Mandarin House, Dollar General, Mapco and Exxon. In Meridianville they're outside of Star Market and in New Hope you can go to Dot's Dairy Den or Grandmothers House. Hobbs Island Road is Jiffy Food Mart. We are adding locations so let us know if you know of a restaurant or store that would like to carry them. A friend told me he was really bored the other day so he started doing everything normally done with the right hand, with his left hand. I know this tip will not impress everyone but try it yourself - it's actually kind of fun.

Well we haven't hidden anything in a couple of months so to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11, I have hidden a **micro-tiny rocket** somewhere within the pages of this magazine. IF you find it, which I doubt,

you win a free year's subscription which is worth \$28. You may call anytime 8am - 5pm. But there will be no calls, it'll be too hard to find.

**Belinda Talley** is really full of it - good tips, that is. She called to tell us that when you're preparing a meal and handling onions, garlic or fish there is a simple way of getting rid of that smell on your hands. All her life she would rub salt on her hands then rinse with water but that is so 1990. What she is doing now is very simple - just touch your stainless steel sink. The molecules in the steel transfer the smell to the metal. No more fishy, garlic or onion smell. She's even tried a stainless steel spoon. I'm a little skeptical but will give it a try.

She also told us that when you buy the salad mixes in the bag, always choose the bag that is flattest. They are the freshest. When the bagged produce gets old it builds up gasses and that expands the bag. Then she told us that when you get a bee sting, put bleach on it and the pain goes away. I'm thinking we need to get Belinda to do a monthly column.

Stay cool if you can, this humidity is making all the doors stick and lots of bugs. Thank you to all the utility workers and road crews and UPS/FEDEX/mail carriers and people who have to work out in the hot sun. Stay hydrated!



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# Southern Heirlooms

## Senate Bean Soup

2 lbs. navy (pea) beans  
1-1/2 lbs. smoked ham hocks

1 onion, chopped  
Salt and pepper to taste

Wash beans and run through hot water. Add beans to a kettle with 4 quarts hot water and the ham hocks.

Boil slowly for 4 hours, covered. Braise chopped onion in butter and when light brown add to soup.

When beans are tender, season with salt and pepper and serve. Really good with fresh cooked greens.

## Cheesy Hash Browns

2 lbs. hash brown potatoes  
1/2 c. melted butter  
1 onion, chopped  
1 c. cheddar cheese, grated  
1 can cream of chicken soup  
1/2 pint sour cream

Mix together all ingredients, saving part of the cheese

for topping. Salt and pepper to taste. Grease a 9x13" pan, put the mixture into the pan and bake 1 hour at 325 degrees. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top the last 30 minutes.

## Zucchini Casserole

2 lbs. (6 c.) sliced zucchini  
1 can cream of chicken soup  
1 stick melted butter  
1 c. sour cream OR sm. curd cottage cheese  
1 c. shredded carrots  
1/2 c. chopped onion  
1/2 pkg. Pepperidge Farm stuffing mix

Salt and pepper, as needed  
Slice zucchini and cook in boiling salted water for 5 minutes. Drain well and combine with soup, sour cream or cottage cheese, carrots and chopped onion. Add melted butter to stuffing mix and place half of the crumbs into bottom of 12 x 1/2" pan. Place squash over dressing before topping with the rest of the crumbs. Bake for 30 minutes at 350°.

## Chicken with Almond Sauce

4 chicken breasts, skinless and bone in  
1 T. Crisco  
1 T. flour  
2 c. heavy cream  
1 T. fresh parsley, chopped  
1 c. almonds, chopped

Heat Crisco in skillet and fry chicken til golden brown and done. Put it on hot platter while you make the sauce. Thicken the grease in the skillet with the flour, stir til smooth. Add the cream and parsley, add salt and pepper. Stir well, add the almonds. Let boil for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Add liquid if it gets too thick. Pour the sauce over the chicken and serve.

## Mother's Meat Loaf

1 lb. ground beef  
1/4 lb. ground sausage  
1 t. Worcestershire sauce  
1/2 onion, chopped  
1/4 c. milk

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1 c. bread crumbs  
 1 egg, beaten  
 Mix all ingredients well in large bowl. Salt & pepper to taste. Form into loaf and place in baking pan with small amount of water. Spread cat-sup on top, bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

### Sugared Grapes

1 egg white, beaten  
 1 c. sugar  
 1 lb. seedless green or red grapes  
 Separate grapes into small bunches. Wash and drain. Place sugar on a flat dish. Dip the grapes into egg white and roll in sugar. Place grapes on the sugared plate to dry before chilling. Use as a decorative, edible garnish.

### Vinegar Pie

1-1/2 c. sugar  
 2 eggs, beaten  
 4 T. vinegar  
 2 T. flour  
 1 T. butter  
 1 c. hot water  
 Nutmeg to taste  
 Mix together all ingredients and pour in a fresh open pie crust. Bake in moderate oven (325 degrees) til the center is done. Very old recipe.

### Fried Apples

5 tart cooking apples  
 2 T. butter  
 1 c. sugar  
 Red hots  
 Cut the apples into 1/4 inch slices, do not peel. Melt the butter in a skillet and add the apples. Sprinkle sugar over the apples and add 3/4 cup of water.  
 Cover and cook for a few minutes until the sugar is dissolved. Remove lid and cook til done. Stir only enough to keep apples from burning. Add more water if necessary to keep them from becoming dry. Add a few red hots for even more flavor.

### Chocolate Truffles

2 packages chocolate chips  
 1 Eagle Brand Condensed milk, 15 oz.  
 1 t. vanilla  
 1 c. chopped nuts  
 Melt chips over hot water in double boiler, when melted remove from heat and add remaining ingredients. If you're good at melting the chocolate chips in the microwave do that instead of the double boiler.  
 Chill until firm on a buttered plate. Shape into balls and roll in nuts, cocoa or coconut. These will go fast!

### Apple Pandawdy

1/2 loaf stale brown bread  
 2 T. butter  
 8 tart apples  
 Sugar  
 1/2 t. cinnamon  
 Dash Salt  
 Cut the bread in thin slices and pare off crusts. Butter each slice. Lay them in a buttered baking dish so that it is neatly lined. Top with the pared and sliced apples. Sprinkle with a thick layer of sugar. Add the cinnamon and a dusting of salt. Pour 1 cup cold water over all.  
 Top with buttered bread crumbs. Bake slowly at 325 degrees for an hour. Serve hot with hard sauce if desired.



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## Don't Take Your Dog to Town

by Jerry Keel

Many years ago when there were many nightclubs in Huntsville there were always two or three that stood out to a certain group of people. Those who liked rock and roll had their favorite places as did the ones who liked modern or contemporary music. Country music fans had their favorites too.

The folks who liked country music had a tendency to be a little more vocal which sometimes led to disagreements between different groups who were in attendance at a particular club.

**We could learn alot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names and all are different colors, but they all live in the same box.**

My adventure took place at one of the country music places. My wife and I along with Bob and Mary Adkins decided to stop there for a while. The time was the middle of winter and it was really cold. Everyone had on their heavy coats to ward off the chill from the cold wind. One particular old gentleman had a large coat which was unbuttoned at the collar. As he came in I wondered why his coat was unbuttoned. Well, I found out! He had a small Chihuahua dog tucked into his coat. How nice of that old man, protecting his little dog from the cold.

There were two men sitting at a table who were obviously intoxicated. The loudest of the two noticed the man and his dog and pointed them out to his friend. They did not like the fact that the dog was tucked into the old man's coat and proceeded to tell the entire club about it. The two drunk guys were in their 40s and the old man appeared to be at least 65 or 70 years old.

As the men proceeded to tell the old man what they were going to do to him he began to beg them not to hurt him or his little dog. The more he begged the worse the two treated the old man. I had already consumed enough alcohol to make me a little brave and a whole lot stupid. So I got up and went to their table



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to try to reason with them.

They became a little less hostile because a few more patrons joined me in asking them not to hurt the old guy. They were not quite through harassing the old man though because when he got up to leave they followed him outside. I told my friend Bob that we needed to go outside and make sure nothing happened to the man or his dog.

By the time we (at least I thought it was WE) got outside they had the old guy backed up against a car and were spelling out in graphic detail just what he had coming. Big old brave me (or the brave alcohol I had consumed) began to tell the two to leave the guy alone.

I said if they insisted on hurting the old man someone else was going to get hurt too.

Seeking confirmation from my brave friend Bob I said "Ain't that right Bob?" When I didn't hear an answer from Bob I said, a little louder this time, "Ain't that right Bob?" Still receiving no answer I peeked behind me to see what Bob was doing.

I saw Bob alright. He was still at the door of the club, peeping out. I thought I was going to get it but I managed to talk my way out of a possible whipping. They said they would not hurt the old guy but he better not bring that dog back to the club. I assured them he would not and then I got out of there.

Moral of the story: If you ever intend to confront two drunk men at a country music nightclub make sure you can depend on the person you are with. Either that or wear a pair of fast running shoes.

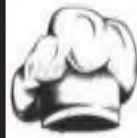
**"If you can't beat them,  
join them. Then beat  
them."**

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## Gumpisms - A Perspective from the Edge

### Mickey Spillane and The Duke's Gift

by John Carriker

The waves crashed upon the beach as the sun lit the crest with incomparable brightness. A slight breeze gently rustled the sea oats, creating a melodic synthesis with this perfect setting of a trip down Ocean Boulevard in a 1956 white Jaguar. Sitting beside me was the driver, dressed in his trademark white beachcomber jeans and short-sleeve navy pullover. Even in his late-fifties, crew-cut haircut and chiseled jaw, author Mickey Spillane reflected his alter ego, detective Mike Hammer. More than 225 million copies of his books have sold internationally.

The first product Motorola started to develop was a record player for automobiles. At that time the most known player on the market was Victrola, so they called themselves "Motorola".

Spillane portrayed himself as a detective in Ring of Fear (1954), and rewrote the film without credit for John Wayne's and Robert Fellows' Wayne-Fellows Productions. The film was directed by screenwriter James Edward Grant. Several Hammer novels were made into movies, including Kiss Me Deadly (1955). In The Girt Hunters (1963) filmed in England, Spillane himself appeared as Hammer, one of the few occasions in film history in which an author of a popular literary hero has portrayed his own character. He appeared in Miller Lite beer commercials and performed in the movie "The Ring of Fear" with John Wayne (who later gifted Spillane a 1956 Jaguar for his help with a last-minute rewrite).

And here I was riding in that "Jag" as the wind blew through my thinning hair and "Mick" (as he told me to call him) chauffeured this journalist up the coastline of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Ironically, the renowned writer very rarely drove the Duke's (John Wayne) highly-regarded present, but he was the one who asked me if I would like to see the car. (Spillane once said that for his personal use, he drove his "Carolina Cadillac" – a Ford Pick-Up truck.)

His invitation came innocently enough at a dinner where he had been chosen as an honorary member of the Grand Strand Press Association: He was the Association's first celebrity from Murrells Inlet, about 10 miles south. Fortunately for me, we were seated next to one another at the meal. Being a writer and a John Wayne fan opened up some interesting dialogue and a pleasant relationship developed.

"Would you like to see the Jag?" he asked. He had shared an anecdote on how he received the car when he accepted his

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*From Oscar and Maria Llerena*



plaque earlier. Of course, I did.

But then he made it somewhat more enticing: "Tell you what... let me know where you live and I'll pick you up. We'll drive up Ocean Boulevard. That okay with you?" Well, yes! Who would turn down that invitation? Have you ever had one of those moments where you got excited just knowing that you're going to meet someone that had been a part of your bucket list?

A few days later, he came by around 6:30 a.m. I was waiting with anticipation. The tourist season had ended and the streets were not busy as we roared out from the front of the house and drove to the Strand's most popular boulevard. We didn't say much as we both enjoyed the beach scenery. He was a quiet man; I respected that.

But then, the engine began coughing and the car stalled until it finally lurched to a stop.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "We're out of gas."

I laugh now, even as I did then, when I hitched a ride back to the house, retrieved a gas can and took it back to where Mickey was standing on a low sand dune, looking at the ocean. We put some gas in the Jag, he started the engine, we waved and drove back to separate destinations. Never saw him again.

Spillane died 12 years ago — July 17, 2006 — at his home in Murrells Inlet, of pancreatic carcinoma. His 1956 Jaguar remained in his garage ... low miles, excellent condition.

And ... out of gas.

It's kinda ironic that after all these years the main thing I remember is not meeting the famous author or the honor of riding in the car John Wayne gave to him. It wasn't even the conversation we had at the dinner. It was, of course, running

out of gas.

But the irony of this is that I remember it with joy. Even now, as I recall the incident, I sense a slight smile on my face. I remember only what the Lord allowed me: an early fall day, waves crashing on a beach, Mick's smile of pleasure as he drove ... and, once more, running out of gas.

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. 1 Timothy 6:17-19



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# The Friendly-Teers Club

by Betty Miller Lewis

Anyone growing up in the Big Cove community during the 30s, 40s and early 50s would tell you that it was the greatest place on earth to grow up.

We attended Big Cove Junior High school for the first nine years of our education and on to Madison County High in Gurley for the last three years. The school bus would drop off the kids at Big Cove school and then go on to Madison County High school to deliver the ones attending there. The parents of some children owned their farms and others "sharecropped" which meant that at the end of the growing season the sharecropper was required to pay a portion of their harvest to the landlord.

My sister Shirley and I grew up on my maternal grandmother, Nin Hucks' farm and I remember her having sharecroppers who rented two houses from her.

All of us who were old enough were required to help in the fields; chopping cotton, picking cotton, picking up potatoes that had been plowed, hoeing in the garden, bringing in wood for the fireplace, and later, coal for the coal-burning stove.

Even with all of the work, we still had time to play and have good times. Shirley and I played with the Roy Medley children who lived behind a wooded area from us. I remember Roy, Jr., Doris Jean, Peggy, Shirley, Yvonne, Betty Fay, Johnny, Roger Dale, and Rayford. Rayford passed away at an early age of rheumatic fever.

I think that it was 6 on a Sunday afternoon during the late 1940s when Doris Jean, Peggy, Shirley, and Yvonne were visiting at our house and we decided to form a club. The first thing that we had to do was to decide on a name and I don't remember how we came up with "Friendly-Teers," but we did.

We then asked around the

neighborhood if others wanted to join us. We elected officers: president, vice-president, reporter, song leader, and social leader. Those that I remember being in the club were Doris Jean Medley Lanier, Peggy Medley Allen, Shirley Medley Seagroves, Yvonne Medley Stone Simmons, Idella Crim, Joan Beddingfield Terrell, Bobbie Jean Phillips Thompson, Vivian Phillips Hollingsworth, Norine Mills, Delores Mills Frost, Zela Mae Mills, Laura Mills Edwards, Edna Mills Payton, Earlene Hucks Belcher, Dorothy Anderson Hill, Gladys Anderson Hill, Lois Anderson Hilliard, Betty Sue Robinson, Shirley Miller Prince and Lucy Miller.

We would meet regularly at each others' homes where refreshments would be served after the meeting. I don't remember what we discussed, but I remember having a devotional and singing. After the club was organized, money was needed for operating expenses. The decision was made that chances would be sold for five cents each on a live chicken,

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provided by my grandmother Hucks. My dad, Pete Miller, won the chicken, but did not take it and it continued to live at my grandmother's.

The Lyric movie theater was located off the square in downtown Huntsville during this time. Every Saturday morning, prior to the movies being shown, there was a variety show that was called the "Kiddie Club." It was directed by a Mrs. Timmons, and it included children performing various acts on the stage - maybe singing, tap dancing and skits. These performances were broadcast over radio station WBHP. The singing and dancing were accompanied by Donald Patrick on the piano.

Some members of the Friendly-Teers club decided that they would like to perform on the "Kiddie Club." Contact was made with Mrs Timmons and we were scheduled to perform one Saturday morning. However, we had to decide how we would get to the theater, since there were several of us to perform. So we asked a local bachelor, Mr. Harvey Jett, if he would take us in the back of his farm truck. He did and dropped us off at the old courthouse where there was a basement with bathrooms and sitting rooms so we could change into our various costumes. I don't remember everyone who performed; however, I do remember the Mills girls doing a skit about citizens in Big Cove; my sister Shirley sang "Sioux City Sue," and I sang "You are my Sunshine." Then we all sang "Columbus Stockade Blues" accompanied by G.W. Robinson on his guitar. We won a box of candy to be divided among us.

William Sibley asked Shirley in later years if she was nervous when she sang and she told him that her "knees were knocking."

The last time that I remember our club meeting together was at Joan Beddingfield's house. A BIG snow was on the ground, and we walked to her house.

All of the club members are now deceased with the exception of Doris Jean Medley Lanier, Joan Beddingfield Terrell, Laura Mills Edwards, Gladys Anderson Hill, and myself.

**"I had plenty of pimples as a kid. One day I fell asleep in the library and when I woke up, a blind man was reading my face."**

**Rodney Dangerfield**



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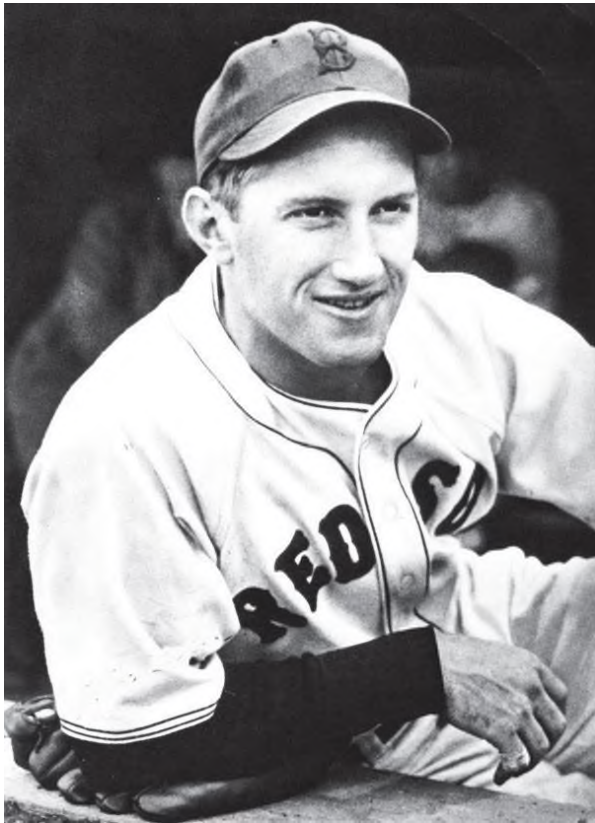
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## It Happened on the Fourth of July

by Jim Tabor as told to John Pruett

It was the Fourth of July in the year 1939.

It was 50 years ago yesterday.

At Yankee Stadium in New York, more than 60,000 gathered to honor Lou Gehrig, who was dying of a terrible disease that would one day bear his name.

Gehrig stood behind the microphone at home plate, his voice breaking. "Today," he said, "I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth." There wasn't a dry eye in the house.

On the same afternoon, a hundred miles to the south at Shibe Park in Philadelphia, a story of another kind was unfolding in the unending tapestry of baseball lore. James Tabor, the third baseman of the Boston Red Sox, went 3-for-5 and hit a home run in the first game of a doubleheader between the Red Sox and the Philadelphia A's. Boston won, 17-7. In Boston's 18-12 victory in the second game, Tabor went 3-for-4 and hit three home runs — including two grand slams.

Tabor's 11 RBI in the doubleheader tied a record set by Earl Averill of Cleveland in 1930; it was later equaled by John Powell of Baltimore (1966) and then broken by Nate Colbert of San Diego, who had 13 in 1972.

Until Tabor's stunning performance on that memorable Independence Day half a century ago, only one other player in baseball history had ever hit two grand slam homers in one game: Tony Lazzeri of the Yankees in 1936. Since then, five other major league players have done it: Rudy York of the Red Sox in 1946, Jim Gentile of Baltimore in 1961, pitcher Tony Cloninger of the Atlanta Braves in 1966, Jim Northrup of Detroit in 1968 and Frank Robinson of Baltimore in 1970.

But nobody except Jim Tabor of Owens Cross Roads, Ala., ever hit two grand slam homers in the same game on the Fourth of July. Somehow, what Tabor did stands above what the others did, maybe because it coincided with the tribute to the Iron Horse, or maybe because it came on the Fourth, maybe both.

Jim Tabor was a 22-year-old rookie in that summer of '39, playing in the majors after just one full year in the minors and a year of college ball at the University of Alabama following his graduation from New Hope High School.

Two years before, Tabor had made national headlines when, in his first professional game at Little Rock, Ark., he crushed a grand slam homer off a teen-age pitching phenom named Bob Felter. A young Nashville sports writer named Will Grimsley happened to cover the game. Grimsley wrote, "Tabor's feat will be spoken about years from now by his children and by their children." He was right.

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From their Minneapolis farm club, the Red Sox called up Tabor and a tall, brash, left-handed hitter named Ted Williams at the same time. Anybody could see Williams was a can't-miss prospect. Boston manager Joe Cronin felt the same way about Tabor.

"The only player I ever saw who could knock down balls hit over third base and throw the runner out at first was Pie Traynor of the Pirates," said Cronin in 1939. "But this kid (Tabor) knocks 'em down and throws 'em out just like Pie."

No other player of his time, and few of any era, had a stronger throwing arm than Tabor, whose nickname was "Ol' Rawhide." Any questions about whether he would be able to hit big league pitching were quickly dispelled in the 1939 season — even before the two grand slams.

Tabor was Boston's regular third baseman from 1939 until 1944. After a hitch in the Army, Tabor was traded to the Philadelphia Phillies, where he played in 1946-47.

After that, Tabor's skills began to diminish. He finished his major league career with a .270 batting average, almost 200 home runs and nearly 600 RBI. Many of his contemporaries believe he would have lasted longer than nine years in the majors had it not been for his fondness for the good life.

Tabor ended his career by playing five years in the minor leagues of Sacramento Solons of the Pacific Coast League. He retired in 1952 after injuring his arm in a sliding mishap.

Jim Tabor went to work for a Sacramento contractor selling cigarette vending machines. On Aug. 22, 1953, he died of congestive heart failure.

They brought Ol' Rawhide back to Madison County and he was buried in a family plot near New Hope. At the time of his death, the man who once hit two grand slams on the Fourth of July was only 36 years old.

**The teacher sends little Johnny to the map at the front of the classroom, and tells him to find North America.**

**He finds it.**

**Teacher: Very good. Now class, who discovered North America?**

**Class: Little Johnny!**

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| 2 T. reduced calorie margarine, melted | 1 lemon                            |
| 1/2 c. boiling water                   | 16 oz. light sour cream            |
| 2 oz. sugar-free lemon gelatin         | 8 oz. light whipped topping        |

Mix graham cracker crumbs with margarine. Press crumb mixture into bottom of 9" springform pan. Mix boiling water and gelatin until gelatin is dissolved. Cut cream cheese into small cubes. Add to hot gelatin. Whisk until dissolved. Zest 1 t. lemon rind, set aside. Juice lemon to make 3 T. lemon juice. Combine lemon mixture, lemon zest, lemon juice and sour cream with a whisk. Fold in whipped topping. Pour over crust. Chill until set, approximately 30 minutes.



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# WHO'S KEEPING THE FISH?

by Barry Key



Right in the heart of the Tennessee Valley is the little town of New Hope, Alabama. New Hope is well located for fishing. You have the New Hope Spring that originates right under the town and runs to the Paint Rock River. Paint Rock River is less than two miles south of New Hope on Old Highway 431. The Paint Rock River originates in Jackson County by the confluence of Estill Fork Creek and Hurricane Creek.

Fifteen minutes away is the Tennessee River (Wheeler Reservoir) below Guntersville Dam and Guntersville Lake above the dam. My Uncle, O'Neal Passeur (mother's brother), was an avid sportsman. He truly loved fishing and small game hunting. He grew up in Pumpkin Hollow between Bishop and Lewis Mountains. Pumpkin Hollow is at the confluence of Honeycomb Creek and the Tennessee River. Their house was torn down when Guntersville Dam was built because it would have been below the water level of Guntersville Lake.

After returning from service in Europe during WWII, Uncle O'Neal was offered a government job in Washington D. C. Although he had an excellent job, he didn't care for the big city life and eventually moved back to New Hope, Alabama, and worked at Redstone Arsenal.

He was very glad to be back home in the Tennessee Valley, just a few minutes from the mountains and rivers where he grew up.

Uncle O'Neal would take me fishing at the lake or dam from time to time. One trip I will never forget, and neither did my Uncle O'Neal. We had caught several fish below Guntersville Dam. We put the fish and our tackle in the trunk of his 1940 black Chevrolet.

When we got to my house, as I was getting my tackle out of the trunk, my uncle told me to take the fish. While I was bent

over in the trunk, I told him I didn't want them and left the fish in his trunk.

Neither my uncle nor my two cousins heard me and when they got home they left their tackle (and fish) in the trunk. In the 90 degree summer weather, those fish turned to a liquid mush. I don't know if you have ever smelled decomposing fish, but it would make a skunk's scent smell like a wedding bouquet.

I believe the liquid portion of the rancid fish seeped into every joint and tiny open space in the trunk. He was finally able to get "most" of the smell out of the passenger compartment, but after several years you still had to hold your nose when you opened the trunk.

Yes, he still took me fishing after that, but we always made sure "Who's keeping the fish"?



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# The Huntsville Depot

by Buddy Moon

During the mid 1980s, the Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Colonel Egbert J. Jones Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans held their monthly meetings in the Huntsville Depot Museum. These two historical societies had guest speakers on Civil War battles and the life of Civil War soldiers. They also planned activities for 125th Civil War anniversary commemorations that were taking place around the country.

After these meetings, members would gather their things, turn off all but two lights on the third floor of the Depot, and meet someone from the Depot, who would then lock the doors while members headed to their cars.

These groups met in the same rooms of the Depot that, 125 years earlier, housed Confederate prisoners of war, guarded by Union troops. Each night, the groups focused on what life must have been like during the war. For several months these meetings were held without anything abnormal taking place.

Then, one evening, following the usual after-meeting routine, Bonnie, the president of the UDC, felt compelled to glance back toward the Depot. Whether she was double-checking the lights, or just had a strange feeling, she never said. When she looked back, she clearly saw a man in a Civil War uniform looking down at them from the third floor where they had all left. She knew no one had been left behind in the building. The two lights that were always left on clearly outlined the figure.

Bonnie whispered to the others to turn around. When they did, the figure walked away from the window and disappeared into the darkness of the room.

Shocked, everyone discussed what they had just witnessed before they slowly headed home. As she reached her car, Bonnie looked back to the now empty window wondering, "Was the spirit glad to have his privacy again, or sad to see the living disappear and return him to his solitude?"

"If we got one-tenth of what was promised to us in these State of the Union speeches, there wouldn't be any inducement to go to heaven."

Will Rogers



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# Built From the Roof Down

*by John H. Tate*

Sunday, April 19, 1992 the Shoney's at the corner of University Drive and North Memorial Parkway served its last meal in the old Shoney's Big Boy building. It closed for demolition to make room for a more modern building, and to set it back further on the lot, making room for more frontal parking. At that time Shoney's was no longer part of the Big Boy concept, but some people still referred to it as Shoney's Big Boy.

Whorton and Julia Burgreen opened the Shoney's Big Boy at that location on December 7, 1958. Not only were the Burgreens the first franchisers for the Shoney's Big Boy, they also had the distinction of building a strange building; the first of its kind in this part of the country. "Hyperbolic Parabola" is the architectural style and after the foundation and supports were in place, the building was built from the roof down.

There is an undocumented story that there was only one man in Huntsville who could hang the special tile in the unique building, and he was paid a couple of fifths of whisky to get it done. In 1958 the Shoney's Big Boy restaurant was the largest drive-in in the area, with 50 drive-in stalls. In 1978 the Burgreens sold their franchise and moved to Brevard County, FL and

opened a Captain D's Seafood Restaurant.

The building was designed by Joe Milberger, a young architect with Northern, Smith and Krarnert. Later in 1962 he opened his own firm, Milberger and Associates Architects. His firm designed notable buildings in the community, including the original Jones Valley Elementary School, buildings for Intergraph, SCI, Phoenix Industries, The Huntsville Natatorium, The Municipal Ice Complex, the gymnasium and field house for JO Johnson High School. Mr. Milberger passed December 21, 2012.

The Shoney's Big Boy Restaurant at the corner of University Drive and North Memorial Parkway is also known for the managers who came through and went on to establish their own restaurants. Vernon and Peggy Jackson were the first managers in the building, Vernon was the Restaurant Manager and Peggy was the Dining Room Manager.

The Jacksons went on to found Jackson Family Restaurant in Madison. Other managers included Rayford Walker who became the owner of Five Points Restaurant, and Don Landrews, owner of the Hazel Green Family Restaurant.

That building holds a warm spot in this writer's heart, because back in the early nineties I was in restaurant management. I was an Assistant Manager at the that Shoney's before accepting the position as Executive Manager at the Shoney's at Haysland Square, South Huntsville. While I was working in the iconic building, a local Publisher came in, and invited me to send him some of my writings; and that is how my first writings outside of college came to be published.

Yes long gone are the days when you would say, "Meet me at Big Boys," but if you are in a crowd of Huntsvillians, and want to see the biggest smiles, and start a great conversation, just say "Hey, do you remember Shoney's Big Boy?"

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# Blue Jeans in Boogertown

by Judy Hallman, as  
told to John E. Carson

During World War II, Great Britain imposed rationing on clothing to conserve materials needed for military uniforms. This had a major impact on the fashion industry and changed the styles of both men and women's dress.

While the United States did not go as far as rationing clothes, on March 8, 1942, the U.S. War Production Board issued order L-85 with the goal of a 15% reduction in the amount of textiles used in women's wear.

Eleven million men and women served in the U.S. military during the war and they all needed uniforms, putting a great strain on the country's supply of fabric, particularly wool. And, since Japan produced most of the world's silk, the war cut off the supply

completely. Nylons became very scarce.

Civilians were encouraged to purchase or make clothing from cotton, rayon or rayon/wool blends. Metal zippers were unavailable and wrap-around dresses and skirts were introduced.

Posters encouraged the population to "Use it up - Wear it out - Make it do!" It was a patriotic duty!

With millions of women entering the workforce, the "Rosie the Riveter" look became popular and slacks became stylish.

But the things the more affluent members of society were being asked to do, the residents of Boogertown had always done.

Most of us wore hand-me-downs already and clothes for children were often made from cut down adult clothes. The one lady in Boogertown who owned a sewing machine was always kept busy helping out the other residents with their clothing needs.

World War II brought opportunity for many of the women in

Boogertown who were offered work at the Redstone Ordnance Plant, renamed Redstone Arsenal in 1943.

When we lived in Boogertown in the 1950s, my mother worked for Sarah Preston, who owned the General Store. Mrs. Preston would allow people to charge what they needed by keeping a tab or an I.O.U. My mother worked for her to pay off ours.

After the war, the government allocated a certain number of dungarees to Mrs. Preston's General Store. Before the war, most of the ladies wore dresses, but with the allocation of the dungarees and the changing styles, women started wearing what we now call Blue Jeans. A few years back, I visited Mrs. Preston. She had been ill for a long time and has since passed away. She still held some of the tabs from the residents of that long-ago time.

But she gave me a history lesson that day about World War II and how blue jeans came to Boogertown.

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# WHERE WAS CEDAR GROVE CHURCH?

by William Sibley

I have found references to Cedar Grove Church, which was apparently located in the area of Gurley, but I have never been able to find the actual location of the church.

My brother Bob found the following story about a school in Madison County that was named Cedar Grove School House. In the late 1800s and early 1900s it was a common practice for a church and public school to share the same building. That is possibly what happened with Cedar Grove Church.

An article called "Burned a School House" appeared in the Marion County News, Marion County, Alabama, on Dec. 2, 1897.

"The public school house at Cedar Grove in Madison County was burned by incendiaries Saturday night. The precinct school board had some trouble selecting a teacher for the school. Miss Sue Johnson was the young lady selected, but for some reason she is not popular with some and they evidently were determined that she should not teach the school."

Since the newspaper story is dated Dec. 2, 1897, it can be assumed that Miss Johnson was "selected" at the end of summer or during early fall and the people were dissatisfied and felt that burning the school was the only way to fire her.

Rev. Milus E. Johnston, late Lt. Col., CSA, apparently kept a diary of his activities. His memoirs were printed in installments in The Guntersville

Democrat. Johnston's book, "The Sword Of Bushwhacker Johnston", Huntsville, AL, Flint River Press, copyrighted by Flint River Press, 1992.

Seventeen year old Patrick Davis had completed a week's work and had gone to the Flint River to wash off his mule and to take a bath. While he was at the river, the blue coats came along and arrested the teenager, accusing him of being a spy and a bushwhacker. He was innocent of both accusations but the blue coats would not listen to his pleas of innocence and took him to their colonel who also ignored the boy's pleas. The colonel sentenced that innocent boy to be shot.

The sentence was carried out and "they lashed him hard and fast to a tree and literally riddled his body with bullets."

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*Thoreau*



After Bushwhacker Johnston had surrendered at Trough Springs, he was called upon to preach the funeral of Patrick Davis. Trough Springs are located about halfway up the southeastern side of Monte Sano Mountain in front of the Wedding Chapel. The springs are hardly visible from Highway 431 since the road has been built up. In the past, people who were traveling to and from Huntsville would stop at the springs to water their horses and mules and give them a rest.

Funeral services were held for Patrick at Cedar Grove Church, located "just below where Gurley now stands." The church was crowded and about one third of the congregation consisted of Federal Soldiers who were stationed at the bridge across Hurricane Creek.

Col. Johnston said to the Federal Soldiers, "Come in, friends and stack your arms in the corner there. When I was in the Army, I fought you with all my might, but now I am in the pulpit and will preach to you with all my ability."

Several years ago, a lady from Gurley, now deceased, called me to say that her ancestors were members of Cedar Grove Church, which she said was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South denomination. Sadly the lady did not know the location of the church.

An article in a Huntsville newspaper in the 1820s tells about Elijah Donnel "Don" Drake of Haden (Big Cove) visiting Cedar Grove Church "near Gurleysville" (Gurley) in a night service, and someone stole his horse. Mr. Drake offered a handsome reward for the return of his horse and the horse's accessories.

Mr. Drake was the son of Rev. John Henry Drake, minister of Big Cove's Mt. Pleasant Cumberland Presbyterian Church. It is my guess that "Don" Drake and his father rode two horses to the church service but rode only one horse back home.

I have ancestors who were buried in Potts Cemetery in Little Cove. To make more room for the development of McMullen Cove, the graves at Potts Cemetery were moved to nearby Jenkins Cemetery and placed in a single grave.

**"Wouldn't Take Her to a Dog Fight 'cause I'm Scared She'd Win."**

*Suggested title for a country song*

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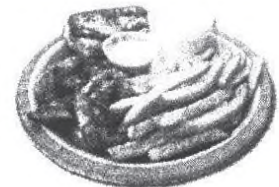
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# Officer Nelson to the Rescue

by Judith C. Smith

Today started off like most Wednesdays for me with morning chores and a rush to exercise class. When my phone rang, it was my daughter calling to remind me that my red '57 T-Bird had a photo shoot at 11:00. I told her I knew that and it wasn't until the 8th of August. Her response was, "Mother do you know that today is August 8th? Be there at 11:00." How could I have forgotten that? I don't know.

I hung up on her and ran to uncover the car and start to wax it. It is so shiny one can see their face in it. Now to get it started, nothing happened tried again, ran inside called Champ to come to my rescue and jump it off. When Champ arrives, I get back into the car, remember M.D. had told me to jiggle the gear shift lever in neutral and low and behold it started right up. I had remembered the magic touch.

I zip down Governors Drive and I'm sitting at the light to turn left onto California when I notice a man in the car next to me waving. So, I let down the passenger window, we talk and he tells me what a beautiful car I have. When the light changes and I press on the gas pedal and to my horror nothing happens, the car is dead. Not only that, but jiggling the stick in neutral won't let it start again. What am I going to do? I have to get another car and get to the photo shoot.

I dial 911 and when I talked to the 911 operator she said to me, "Honey, just turn your flashers on and an officer will be there shortly." I didn't know whether to laugh or cry when I answered her and just said, "I'm in a 1957 T-Bird and there are no FLASHERS on '57 T-Birds." To my rescue out of nowhere, Officer Nelson of the Huntsville Police Department knocks on my window. In the meantime, I have called M.D. and Scott and they are on the way too.

Officer Nelson was so understanding. He was already parked behind me and had his

blue lights flashing. I was stranded in a very busy intersection. He called "Lappdog Towing," and Scott stayed with the car while M.D. drove me home to get the Red Bentley convertible. Secretly I'm hoping the photographer will be happy with a red Bentley instead of a red T-Bird.

As I'm going down Governors again, I see the wrecker just starting to load the T-Bird and Officer Nelson waves to me. I roll down the window and tell him my special wax and towel are in the T-Bird. He gets Scott to find the trunk key, gets my wax and towel out and puts them in the Bentley for me.

I arrive at the photo shoot fifteen minutes early having time to let the top down and wax it. They loved the car and didn't seem to mind that I didn't get there in the red '57 T-Bird. Afterwards, I headed home, arriving just in time to get it covered and in the carport before a down pour came.

Also, I said a prayer for Officer Nelson for all his help and kindness that he gave an old lady today in her red '57 T-Bird.



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# A Letter from Mom

*Anonymous*

My Child,

When I get old, I hope you understand and have patience with me. In case I break a plate, or spill soup on the table because I'm losing my eyesight, I hope you don't yell at me. Old people are sensitive...always having self-pity when you yell.

When my hearing gets worse and I can't hear what you're saying, I hope you don't call me "Deaf." Please repeat what you said or write it down. I'm sorry, my child. I'm getting older. When my knees get weaker, I hope you have the patience to help me get up, like how I used to help you while you were little, learning how to walk.

Please bear with me, when I keep repeating myself like a broken record. I hope you just keep listening to me. Please don't make fun of me or get sick of listening to me. Do you remember when you were little and you wanted a balloon? You repeated yourself over and over until you got what you wanted.

Please also pardon my smell, I know I smell like an old person. Please don't force me to shower, my body is weak. Old people get sick easily when they're cold. I hope I don't gross you out. Do you remember when you were little? I used to chase you around because you didn't want to take a shower.

I hope you can be patient with me when I get cranky, it's all part of getting old. You'll understand when you're older.

And if you have some spare time I hope we can talk, even if it's just for a few minutes. I'm by myself all the time, and have no one to talk to. I know you're busy with work. Even if you're not interested in my stories, please have time for me. Do you remember when you were little? I used to listen to your stories about your teddy bear, no matter how many times you wanted to tell it.

When the time comes and I get ill

and bedridden, I hope you have the patience to take care of me. I'm sorry, if I accidentally wet the bed or make a mess. I hope you have patience to take care of me during the last few moments of my life.

When the time of my death comes, I hope you hold my hand and give me the strength to face death.

And don't worry, when I finally meet our Creator, I will whisper in His ear to Bless you, because you loved your Mom and Dad. Thank you so much for your care.

With much love,  
Mom

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# Fun at the Madison Senior Center

by Elizabeth Wharry

Are you over 60? Looking for a place that offers good food, fun and comraderie? Come visit the Senior Center on Hughes Road in Madison.

Director Miss Vicki Parker has a wonderful staff. Miss Margaret is the secretary and the first person one sees. Miss LaWanda keeps things moving with fun games, bingo and trips. Ceramics are led by Miss Dee Dee. Many are on display in the hallway and are reasonably priced. The display changes periodically. What a great and inexpensive gift idea!

The kitchen staff serves tasty meals.

A huge thank you to Kenny who can be found cleaning the center. He does a great job, too! Miss LaWanda and Richard pick up and take home many of the center's attendees, as well as driving during the trips.

There are a variety of activities available. Does your computer cringe when you sit down near it? Take a computer class! Interested in learning a foreign language? Try Spanish classes!

For those who enjoy line dancing, three levels of it are offered. Beginner, intermediate and advanced classes have wonderful instructors.

Like to play cards? Hand and foot Canasta, Pinochle, Bridge and Rook are played daily. Bunco is offered on a monthly basis, and bingo is offered twice a week.

Once a month, a detective from the Madison police depart-

ment gives a talk on the latest scams and how to spot them and protect yourself.

Earlier, I touched on the meals. A wide variety of food is available. The center currently makes sure 24 home bound seniors are fed on a daily basis, Monday through Friday. Eating at the center sure beats eating alone or at a fast food place!

Come, check it out. You will find a warm welcome and friendly faces. For more information, call 256-772-6242. Typically, meals include juice, milk, dessert. My personal favorites are the hamburgers, tacos, chicken thighs and the barbecue sandwiches.

*(Editors Note: Huntsville has a good senior center also and most cities do - check out the centers where you live and get ready for some fun!)*



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# PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

## Summer Cats



### 1. Make sure your cat has plenty of water

It's common sense but you should check your cat's water bowl regularly and fill it up whenever it's low. Cats can't survive for long without it.

### 2. Ensure there's a shaded garden spot

If you have an outdoor cat and there are no naturally occurring shady spots in your garden, create one by placing some cloth or cardboard over an area to keep the sun out. Also, make sure you check outdoor buildings like sheds and greenhouses before shutting them as cats often get locked in accidentally overnight.

### 3. Brush your cat daily

Most cats begin shedding in the spring but continue through the summer and a brushing feels really good. If you make it a regular event you and your cat could look forward to it. Matted hair traps heat so give them a thorough groom if possible. This is especially important for long-haired cats.

### 4. Keep them out of conservatories and greenhouses

These areas can get dangerously hot even when the weather just feels warm. Bear in mind that they both exclude cooling breezes and magnify the heat. Cats are also prone to getting accidentally trapped in conservatories and greenhouses.

### 5. Use damp towels to cool down your cat

The warmest parts of a cat's body is their tummies, the pads of their paws, their armpits, under their chin and on the outside of their ears. Although most cats hate getting wet, try dampening a cloth with cold water and gently stroking your cat with it from their head and down their back.

### 6. Keep your cat calm

A very active cat that is running around on a hot day will quickly become exhausted and dehydrated. Encourage your cat to relax when outside temperatures are soaring.

### 7. Create a retreat

Cats are clever when it comes to comfort and they will seek out places such as the bath or sink as these often stay cool

even when it's hot outside. You could also try creating a cool and darkened indoor retreat for them to sleep in and feel safe. A good tip is to place a cardboard box on its side and position it somewhere cool and quiet in the house, such as behind a chair or on a cool surface like a wooden floor. Line it with a breathable natural fabric such as a cotton towel.

### 8. Keep outdoors cats indoors

If temperatures really soar, then it's worth considering keeping your cat inside during the hottest hours of the day.

### 9. Encourage cool play

Ice cubes are a great way for cats to play and keep cool at the same time. Put a few on the floor so they can chase them as they scatter around the floor. Perhaps even consider flavouring the ice with a hint of chicken stock to encourage their interest. Throw cubes in their water bowl.

### 10. Close the curtains

Things that keep you cool will also benefit your cat – keeping curtains or blinds closed will keep the sun out.

### 11. Watch out for signs of heat stroke

Although this generally only occurs on really hot days, it's worth being aware of. Symptoms of heat stroke can include agitation, stretching out and breathing rapidly, extreme distress, skin hot to the touch, glazed eyes, vomiting and drooling. If you're at all worried about your cat, contact your vet immediately.

### 12. Circulate cool air

Open the windows, turn on a box fan or keep air conditioning at a reasonable temperature. Your cat will appreciate having a cool place to relax indoors if it's scorching outside.

### 13. Cats and hot weather could mean sunburn

Don't forget cats are susceptible to sunburn, particularly those with white ears and noses. This can lead to painful blistering and sores, and long-term exposure can lead to skin cancers. It is possible to buy pet sunscreen to apply to the hairless areas on the end of the ears and nose. It's also advisable to keep white-faced cats indoors during the heat of the afternoon.

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## *From the Desk of Tom Carney*

### **A Letter Home - 1862**

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

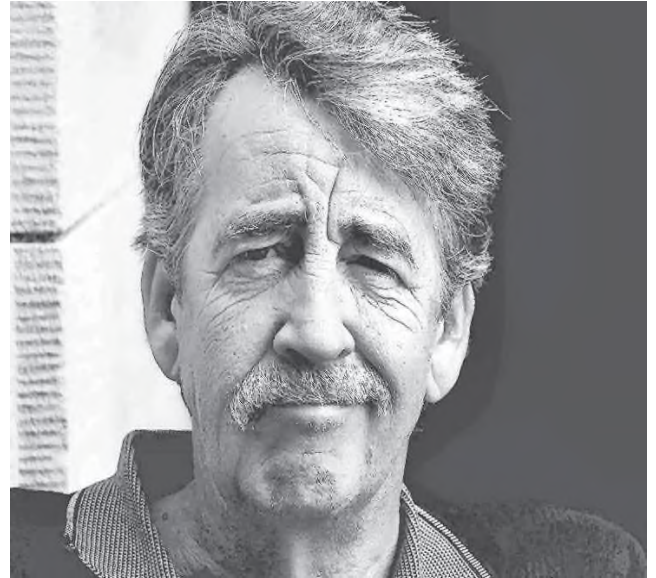
Wills could be surprisingly sympathetic towards the Southern civilians and was frequently critical of his soldier comrades. While on the march in Mississippi, for example, he described the Union soldiers' conduct to his sister:

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

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

Stationed at Tuscumbia shortly thereafter in August of 1862, Wills again expressed his dismay with what he saw, though he tried to persuade himself that it was proper. "Orders have been given us to put every woman and child (imprison the men) across the line that speaks or acts secesh, burn down their property, destroy all their crops, cut down the corn growing and burn the cribs. That is something like war."

"Tis devilish hard for one like me to assist in such work, but I believe it is necessary to our course...



I'd hate like the devil to burn the houses of some secesh I know here, but at the same time, I don't doubt the justice of the thing. One of them has lent us his cook, or rather his wife did; and they don't talk their secessionism to you unless you ask them to."

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

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

"Every thing you can think of found in the districts we have foraged. This was all witnessed first hand, from taking \$2,700 in gold, to snatching a brass ring off the finger of the woman who handed a drink of water. From taking the last old mare the widow had to carry her grist to the mill, to robbing the bed of its cords for halters, and taking the clothes line with the clothes and bedding to boot."

"I'll venture that before we were dismounted, not a well rope, trace chain, or a piece of cord of any kind strong enough to hold a horse could be found."

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

**Rita Rudner**



# Just Little Bits of Huntsville History

by Johnny Johnston

- Lee Highway came down from Chapman Mountain with a vengeance. Oakwood Avenue was the first cross street. Without stop signs or lights, auto drivers did not slow down and often wound up on the Northwest corner of Oakwood where a large tree stood. Automobiles did not stop well before the 1960s so many of those auto's ran into that tree. I remember scars from the ground to eight or ten feet up with damage from those wrecks. Quite a few deaths occurred at this scene.

- Beautiful homes now are located in the area of Saddle-tree on Highway 72 East. For many years this area, down to Oakwood Ave, was one of Alabama's largest dairies with many, many milk cows.

- You would not believe it by looking now but a few years ago Huntsville was quite a collection of areas needing improvement. Now we know, Huntsville did it. The area from Big Spring all the way to the Huntsville Hospital was called Baxter's Bottoms. In 1952-3 most of it was turned into Council Courts which was a Government Housing Project. My paper route for the Huntsville Times. In 2010 plans were made to turn most of that area into beautiful commercial, hospital and residential areas. Thank you, Huntsville government. There was Honey Hole, in the 1950s that was converted into auto dealerships then in 1980s Interstate 565. It is still being improved today with construction on Church Street and Pratt Avenue.

- At one time Huntsville was the home of 12 cotton mills.

Well, the Mills called Huntsville home, however each of them sat on a tax island (there may have been a couple of exceptions), which indicates they were not actually paying taxes or in the city of Huntsville. They were all outside the city limits when built anyway. Not much remains of the buildings. Lincoln Mills still has a large building standing on Oakwood and Meridian and West Huntsville Spinning has one building left at the corner of 8th Street and 9th Ave., which is being used as a day care.

- Huntsville was very early with the beginning of daylight saving time. That's right! It was a bust! During the summer of 1956 or 1957, Dr. Von Braun wanted NASA to be on the same time as Washington, D.C. The results, not good. Imagine Redstone Arsenal, the city of Huntsville, not the County of Madison, went on DST alone. In those locations it was an hour ahead of the rest of Madison County and the rest of the south for that matter. I worked at the Huntsville/Madison County Airport, so you can imagine the number of people from the county or other towns in North Alabama arriving one hour late for their flight.

- Auto racing has been popular for many years. After WWII ended, a race track was built on Highway 72 West. It was very popular in the 1940s and early 1950s and was located about where Cars 'R Us is now located. Across the highway in the same area was located a restaurant called The Green Lantern, name taken from a famous radio and later TV show of the same name. McMurtries owned a majority of the land on the south side of Highway 72, the McCutchen's owned the land on the north side of the highway. They were descendants of a settler of Monrovia who was my Great, Great Grandfather W. T. Oakes.

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# City Law in 1860

- Bathing in the Big Spring branch within less than 300 yards below the dam, between the hours of 4 a.m. and 10 p.m., constituted another misdemeanor. A person was permitted to burn out a stove pipe or chimney flue only when the roof was wet from rain or covered with snow.

- A fine of from \$5 to \$10 was assessed upon any individual who carried an unguarded candle or lamp into a stable, or who kept ashes in barrels, boxes or wooden vessels of any kind.

- All persons attending a fire, and not a member of any company, were required to assist the firemen, if called upon, or pay a fine of \$10.

-The community bell, a vital factor in the life of the community back in those days, was rung by the police every two hours. This was one of their standing duties, and could not be overlooked under penalty.

- Sunday was the day of rest in Huntsville of 1860. To insure

this, an ordinance was inserted in the code to notify residents that "no person shall in this city do or exercise any worldly labor on that day under a penalty of \$5 for each offense."

- All businesses except hotels, boarding houses and apothecaries were required to close on Sundays. Barbers could keep their shop open until noon.

- A fine of \$1 was assessed upon any person who bought goods or commodities of any sort on Sunday. An exception was made in the case of sickness or necessity.

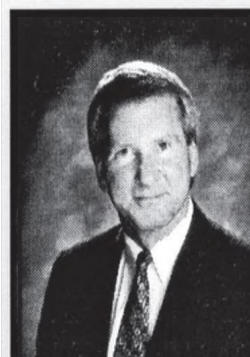
- "Bawdy houses or houses of ill fame" were banned. The ordinance further read that "all pub-

lic prostitutes, or such persons as lead a notoriously lewd and lascivious course of life, and all persons not being lawfully married, who shall cohabit, or live together as man and wife, shall pay a fine of not less than \$25."

- Billiard saloons, Jenny Linds, bagatelles and other table devices were required to be closed at midnight under \$20 penalty. So were saloons and ten pin alleys.

- Whoever galloped or ran a horse or any other animal used for the saddle or gear within the city limits, except in case of emergency judged by the mayor, had to forfeit \$ 1 for each offense.

- A tax of .50 cents per head was levied annually on dogs.



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## "THE WAY IT WAS" THE OTHER SIDE OF HUNTSVILLE'S HISTORY

BY TOM CARNEY

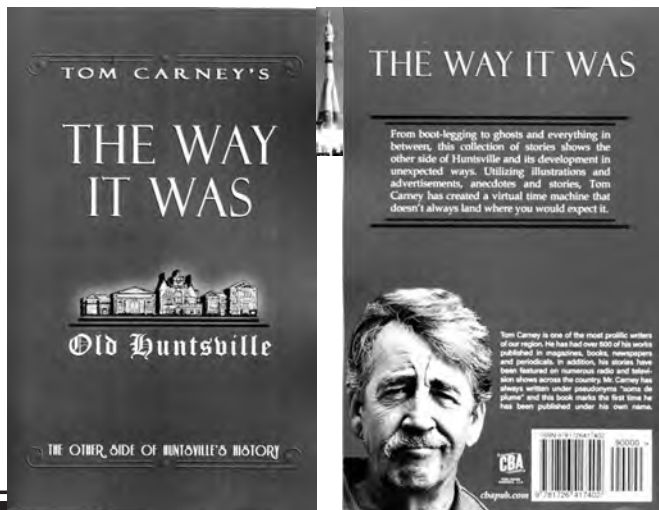
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# A LITTLE BOY'S MEMORY OF REDSTONE PARK

by Louie Tippett

The Army established the Huntsville Arsenal plant in Huntsville in 1941, which manufactured colored smoke munitions, tear and mustard gas and other chemical warfare agents. It also produced grenades, bombs and ammunition. In 1943 the facility was renamed as we now know it as Redstone Arsenal.

At the war's peak almost 20,000 personnel worked at the Arsenal. Due to deployment, women comprised the majority of the workforce. Safety was priority number one. Housing for the employees that worked at the plant was limited. Therefore; Redstone Park, also known as the War Housing Project, was constructed to house plant employees. It was located at Farley, less than 2 miles from the south entrance to the reserve. (Located in an area near Buxton Road and Farley Elementary School of South Memorial Parkway).

As a youngster, I vaguely remember Redstone Park and the memories created there by me and my family. My family consisted of myself, my mom and dad, two sisters; one older and one younger than me. My mother and Aunt Gladys, my mother's sister, worked at the arsenal making bullets during the war.

My dad and Uncle Artie, Gladys' husband, were both soldiers and stationed with different companies of troops while in the Army during World War II. Uncle Artie was deployed and drove an ambulance.

Later in life, he wrote a book named "AMBULANCE #11." Ambulance #11 was the one that he drove ashore during the assault on Normandy. He drove it during the liberation of Paris, and also accompanied the Allied Forces in the penetration and collapse of Nazi Germany.

My dad was in the infantry division basic training at Fort McClellan. Fort McClellan trained soldiers in chemical warfare from 1919 to 1999. Due to an injury while at Fort McClellan in 1945, my dad became unable to pursue his military duty and received an honorable medical discharge from the Army in October of 1945. He had served for 9 months.

Well, that's enough history, let's get on to my personal little story I wanted to tell you. My uncle Artie had lots of Army memorabilia since he had been so many places during the war. I was so proud the day he gave me a gun that shot blanks. One day while moseying around our home, I found a real bullet on the dresser in the bedroom. I thought to myself that I could take the bullet to play with. Since I was bored sitting in the house, I went outside to play.

After a while, I got tired of just playing with the blank gun with caps in it, so I decided to replace the blank with the real bullet. After I loaded it, I pulled the trigger. The next thing I knew was I thought I had really done it this time and shot myself. I ran in the house yelling and looking for my mother. "I shot myself, I shot myself mother, I shot myself!"

My mother was always busy cleaning, cooking and of course washing clothes by hand on a scrub board or ironing clothes for the family when not at her job at the arsenal. She looked up from what she was doing in surprise, rushed over to me and was so thankful when she saw only black powder all over my face. She cleaned my face and hands with soap and water, hugged me and told me to never play with guns again. Well, I never tried that again!

Another day after that incident, I was so proud that mother would entrust me to go to the Redstone office to get a push lawnmower for her to cut the grass since I was too young for the job.

These incidents do not sound like much, but we all have certain memories of our childhood that stand out in our minds and we never forget.

Perhaps we can all learn some good lessons of respect from our own little corners of life that give us complete assurance that the best is yet to come.



# Monster Trucks in Athens, Alabama

by John Michael Hampton

The monster truck made loud noises as it revved its engine. I was enjoying the free show with my family, who were standing less than 100 yards from the monster trucks.

In the summer of 1988, our family went to Athens on vacation like we had done for several years to visit family members living there. The trip down from Nashville was uneventful, and I had even dozed off to sleep for a while in the back seat of my grandparents' 1968 Bonneville Pontiac, while my grandfather drove and my grandmother sat in the front seat.

Once we arrived at Aunt Sue's home in the Dogwood Subdivision on the banks of the Tennessee River, she advised us that the next day, there was going to be a free monster truck show in Athens to celebrate the grand opening of the OK Tires store on U.S. Highway 72. It didn't take long for the family to decide to go to the show.

The next morning dawned bright and sunny. It was perfect weather for an outdoor monster truck show. So, we all loaded into two vehicles to head into Athens for the show. I was riding in the back of Uncle Doug's pickup truck, along with my cousins.

There was already a crowd beginning to gather by the time we pulled up to the location of the show. They had spectators standing at the edge of the concrete driveway for the tire store, with a rope separating them from the vacant lot next door. On that lot, ten junk cars had been assembled, sitting next to each other. The monster truck that was at the show was Thumper II, and it was huge!

WAAY TOO EARLY anchors Gary Dobbs and Toni Lowery were there covering the event, and as the camera panned the audience, my cousin and I remembered to put up a three and a one for the camera. The video featuring us was aired on the following Monday's WAAY TOO EARLY program on WAAY-TV 31. The monster truck show started at exactly ten o'clock. The driver started the truck and sat there letting it run for about five minutes before even revving the engine. After that, he revved the engine for about a minute or so, while sitting in the same spot. He then put the truck in drive, and made a couple loops around the vacant lot, waving to the crowd.

He then backed up, lining the truck up so it would be in line with the row of junk cars that were on the lot. He revved the engine, put the

truck in drive, and accelerated, driving over all the cars. He then looped back around, lining up with the cars from the opposite end of the lot, and drove over them again.

He made one more pass of driving over the cars before the show finale. As a finale, he popped a wheelie, looped around, and then stopped the truck alongside the fans. A loud cheer rose from the crowd as a show of appreciation for the show they had just witnessed.

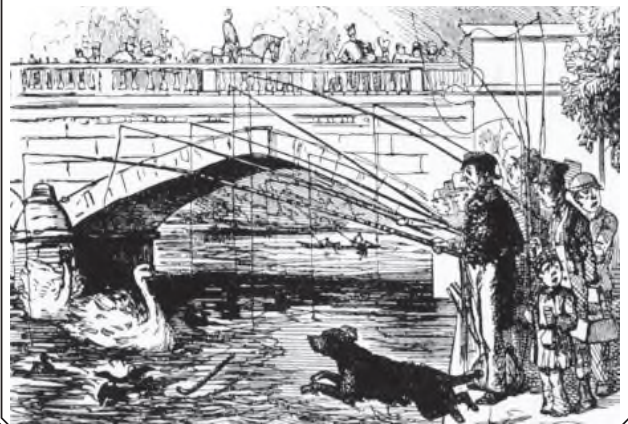
After the show, the driver went inside the tire store and sat down at a table. He signed autographed pictures for everyone who stood in line to get one, at no cost. He was very happy to be in Athens, and was very nice to everyone in line.

Many years have passed since this monster truck show in Athens. Monster truck shows are now in arenas, where multiple trucks compete, and people buy tickets to see the show. WAAY TOO EARLY no longer is on television, and Gary Dobbs and Toni Lowery no longer work at WAAY TV 31.

However, I still have those memories, and every time I pass that still-vacant field east of Athens on U.S. Highway 72, I still can see the monster truck show in my mind. I still hear the far distant sounds of engines revving and a crowd cheering. And, just for a moment, I am a kid again, enjoying the show.

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## Growing up in Langston, Alabama

by Hugh Michaels

A person will witness many things in his lifetime. If God would grant me the power to call back the pages of time - I would be a good listener.

If you grew up in Langston, Alabama, you were bound to witness funny and sometimes not-so-funny things.

It seems that I had my share.

People would gather at my parents' home on Saturday nights and share ghost stories. Sometimes their stories would be earth-shaking. One story that will live forever was told at one of these meetings. This is a true story - a man before his death told a group of people when he died lightning would strike his grave if there was a Hell. Lightning did strike his grave and shattered his tombstone. Would you believe this story? Today a tombstone still stands erect.

One of the embarrassing times in my life happened at Langston. It was a practice, that when a girl came to church on Sunday nights, some young man would escort her home by foot. Well, this pretty young lady came to church. I was the one who would escort her home. It was also a practice that sometimes a group of boys would "rock" the escort on his way back home. I had a bad ankle which I had hurt playing basketball. I could hardly walk. A group of boys decided to "rock" me. They were ready when I started home. They were supposed to throw at the feet, but sometimes they missed. Cotton boles were the "bullets" if they were in season.

Bullets began to fly. I was the victim. I could hardly walk. I yelled at the rock throwers - "Please don't throw at me,

I can hardly walk!" The reply was "Run, you damn fool or get hurt!" I ran for my life.

Suddenly, I saw a car coming my way. I quickly developed a plan - get in front of this car. I did. The driver began to blow his horn. I finally decided to let him pass. The bullets stopped.

The next morning at school, I met the girl whom I had escorted the night before. She was really upset. She yelled at me, "That was my dad who was driving the car. He thought you were a fool!" People began to laugh at me. I was embarrassed and shocked. I was humiliated.

The next story proved to the world just how brave I was.


My dad, years ago, found a man who was dead. His body was lying beside the road. The place where his body laid was a "thicket". Tree limbs stretched across the road. It was a bad place for me. We had a huge German Shepherd dog. The dog never strayed far from home.

I was walking home from

church on a Sunday night when I go to the place where the body of Uncle Johnny laid. Something jumped upon me. I was frightened. I was scared. I thought the dead man had jumped back alive. I began to run. I ran like a bullet shot out of a cannon. I would have broken an Olympic record, I was so scared. The culprit began chasing me. I did not realize that the thing chasing me was my dog. I finally got to my home, and I fell to the porch. The dog was on top of me. I woke the family. Fido was barking. It was a time that I will never forget. Growing up in Langston would make a man out of you.

Very few old-timers are left in Langston. The Methodist Church still operates. Only a few people attend. It is one of the oldest churches in North Alabama. I hope this church will forever operate.

I love Langston. It meant so much to me as a youth. It was fun growing up in Langston. Full of adventure.



# Kipper

Hello, the Ark named me Kipper. I came to the Ark with my brother Kip and my sister Katy. I do not look anything like my brother or sister. I am called a tuxedo cat. That is because I have a white bib, white spats on my feet, beautiful white whiskers and guess what? I went so far as to have a white bow tie under my nose. Because of the wonderful care I get at the Ark my once dirty coat is now a beautiful silky coat. I have great litter pan habits, and love to play. What more could you ask for in a handsome fellow? I was not so handsome when I came to the Ark. I was in really bad condition. See what love and care will do for your beloved pet. I am a teenager and I want a loving family that will keep me safe inside. I will be a good boy, respectful, keep my fur clean and never ask for the keys to the car. When you come to the Ark, will you ask to see the Kipper? That's me.

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# Making Taffy

by Wenona Moorer



My mother always worked, so I stayed with Grandmother Craft. My grandparents had a farm and there were tenants that lived on the farm with children. There were always kids to play with, but if the weather was too cool to play outside, we had grandmother's kitchen table. We would play board games and cards. Sometime grandmother would make taffy for us to pull.

Making taffy was exciting for us children, especially on cold days.

Grandmother would measure the molasses into a large pan, place the pan on the stove and bring it to a rolling boil. Grandmother had an electric stove, but the kitchen was warmed with a wood stove.

The sweet aroma filled the entire house. We smaller children stood wide-eyed watching the bubbles roll to the top, burst and bubble up again, wondering when the taffy would be done. But the molasses had to cook until it reached the hardball stage. It was tested frequently while we waited impatiently.

The testing was done by pouring a spoonful of boiling molasses into a cup of cold water, after a few seconds, it was scooped up and rolled in the fingers to see if it formed a hard ball. If not, then the sweet, soft ball was popped in to the tester mouth and she announced, "It is not ready yet".

Then a fresh cup of cold water was set aside ready for the next test, while the boiling and stirring continued. Meanwhile, we waited.

When a good hard ball finally formed the taffy was ready to pour into greased pans to cool. To cool it more quickly, some of us would take the pan outside in the frosty air. While waiting for the taffy to cool, we had to scrub our hand, so we could handle the taffy. When the taffy was still warm to the touch, we would butter our hands. Grandmother would make the taffy into small rolls. We would take the rolls; pull, stretch and twist it into long strands, laughing and giggling as it took shape. We laughed and make a fun game of it.

As the taffy began to harden, we made a long roll like a small rope about a half inch in diameter and laid it on the buttered pan. Before the candy hardened completely, we used a buttered scissors to cut it into bite-size pieces.

Making taffy is one of the precious memories of childhood and remembering being with my grandmother.

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will ever find it.**



## HEARD ON THE STREET, AUGUST 2004

It was good to meet Chuck Whittenberg the other night, sitting at one of the sidewalk tables outside the Kaffeeklatsch downtown. He is visiting here from Dayton, OH and works with MTC Technologies. He was traveling with his dog Jazz.

Well, we thought it would never happen but Joanne Randolph turned 50 at a huge bash at the Monte Sano Tavern. The pink and lime green was carried out in the "It's all about ME" theme and many of her friends had a great time.

Some of the lucky attendees at this event were Loretta Spencer, Vicky Loomis, Mary Jane Caylor, Danny Banks, and Brenda and Mike Fancy. We saw Carol and Jerry Arszman having a good time there, as well as Glenn & Sheila Brooks and Ron & Barb Eystone.

We were so sorry to hear that Louie Tippet's mom died in July. Vera Tippet was a dear lady who meant so much to so many. We send our love to Louie and his wife Jane.

It was good to see Tom Antoniel and David and Renee Nunn at the Furniture Factory last week. Tom's looking great for being such an old guy!

Our dear friend Anny Rausch died in July, at age 94. She was a feisty German lady who loved to cook and entertain. Our condolences to her sons Felix and Ekkehart and granddaughter Steffi as well as other family members.

A special hello to the sweet guy I met at Walmart's on South Parkway recently. James Rusniak works in the garden shop there and says it's the best part of the store to work in!

We had a good breakfast recently at Little Farm Grill on Whitesburg and talked with Jo Ellen (Jodie) Adkins. She's a really sweet lady. There's even a Liar's table there, like Aunt Eunice used to have!

Susie Nolen and John Bennett will be saying "I do" at their Weeden House wedding in October. Susie is a sweetie as well as a terrific singer, and we wish her and John the best.

We really appreciate Sue Orme, of Verizon, who recently did an outstanding job in working through some phone changes.

We ran into Tommy and Cathy Bagwell recently and it was good to see them again. Also gorgeous Annette LeBrecque with her friend Joel. She is a past Miss Canada and now teaches music at UNA. Gay Money was having fun at the Paris event - she is the sister of Trice Hinds, who is a recognized artist in Huntsville.

Our friend Bill Collier gave us some great advice the other day - to get rid of those fire ants, wet the mound, then cover with grits. He says this really works!

A special hello to Walter Tripp, a retired cabinetmaker who grew up in Fayetteville. His daughter is our good friend Linda Hamlin, of Linda's Printing. She tells us that her dad used to be in the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) many years ago.

We had a good time recently visiting with Charlotte Fariss, Bob Bridges, Gor-

don Cox and Robert Martin who all live at the Morningside Assisted Living in Madison. Also there was the handsome Willard Rogers, who has written a book titled "Looking Back at WWIL".

Have a good month and remember we love you!

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