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# Old Huntsville

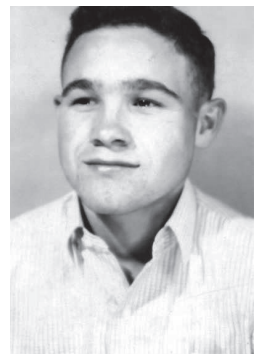
HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

## Terrors of World War II:

Experiences of a Teenage Soldier from New Hope, Alabama



John Cooper, Jr. was just seventeen when he received his induction papers. As required, Junior reported to his local induction board in Huntsville, AL on March 27, 1944. Before leaving for the war, Junior told a family friend "I don't think I will make it back."



**Also in this issue:** Harvest, AL in the '40s; Goat Island Bluff; Amazing Cat Tales; Local Memories; Front Porch Stories; Southern Recipes; Health Tips and much, much more

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## Terrors of World War II: Experiences of a Teenage Soldier from New Hope, Al.

by Karen Cooper Johnson

John Lafayette Cooper, Jr. (March 20, 1924 - January 14, 1945), known by all as "Junior" was my uncle. He was the son of John Lafayette "Fate" Cooper, Sr. (1884-1965) and Myrtle Elizabeth Wilhelm Cooper, (1890-1977), my grandparents. His hometown of New Hope, Alabama, was a small farming town and all families were well acquainted. Many of these families were descendants of early settlers to the Madison County, Alabama area in the early 1800s.

I did not have the honor of meeting Uncle Junior since he perished before my birth; however, I have always felt a bond to him. As a child I knew that my grandparents were deeply saddened by his death. Several relatives have told me that their tremendous grief almost killed them, but with faith and support from family and friends, they were able to persevere. I have always and still hurt for them and cannot imagine the grief and pain that the death of their youngest son brought.

My grandmother said that my birth, which occurred three years

after Junior's death, helped them get over their grief and gave them much needed happiness and joy. This has always made me feel good and I am thankful she shared this with me.

From several of Junior's friends and cousins, I learned that he was kind, easygoing, thoughtful, cheerful and loved by many. My grandmother would mention him from time to time, but without much detail; just small, simple, heart-felt remembrances. She told me that Junior's nickname was "June Bug." He had a pet rooster, and the baseball that I had found in the house had been his ball. He wanted a motorcycle, but she was afraid he would get hurt. In her kitchen, her milk churn sat on a little wooden stool that was made by Junior. I think Junior was her favorite child.

Other than my grandmother, I never heard other immediate family members speak of him. Neither my father, Cortice Cooper, (1918-1989) nor his sister, Ethel Cooper Darnell, (1913-2008) talked about Junior. My grandfather did not either. I believe that the memories of Junior's death were just too terribly painful for them. Looking back, I wish I had asked more questions. Most of what I know about Junior was learned from my mother, Pearl Riffle Cooper, a World War II Navy veteran, who joined the family when she married my father a year after Junior's death. Family members loved her dearly and shared their grief and heartbreak with her.

Though I never knew Junior, I feel a kinship with him and I want his descendants to know of him. Therefore, I have set out trying

**"I'm not a paranoid,  
deranged millionaire.  
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**Howard Hughes**



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(256) 534-0502

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*(in memory)*

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to find the events that led from his high school graduation to his untimely death. Regretfully, there is no one alive now who can tell me of his childhood and life as a young man in New Hope.

Junior graduated from New Hope High School in New Hope, Alabama in 1942. He wasn't especially studious but played baseball and basketball. In the early 2000s I was invited and attended his high school class reunion to represent him. After graduation, he worked as an automotive serviceman for Birmingham Slag, a company that built and paved roads.

In March 1944 he received his "Order to Report for Induction" paper. He was part of the replacement draft which was created to replace the many soldiers who had perished in the ongoing World War II against Nazi Germany's brutal occupation of Europe. World War II, the deadliest conflict in history, was in full force and all able-bodied young men out of high school were drafted into service or volunteered.

Junior's brother, my father, volunteered for the Navy. As required, Junior reported to his local induction board in Huntsville, AL on March 27, 1944. Before leaving for the war, Junior told a family

friend "I don't think I will make it back."

He was then bused to Fort McPherson in Atlanta, GA and assigned the rank of private in the United States Army. His next location was Infantry Replacement Training School in Blanding, Florida. Most in his unit were just out of high school, had led rather sheltered lives, and the constant yelling by their sergeants was quite a shock. In a letter Junior wrote to his parents on June 18, 1944, he had completed several weeks of training as a rifleman and had been in the hospital, but didn't say why. He did say, it was extremely hot and many were "falling out."

The morning wake-up call was at 5:00 A.M. and drills were performed all day in the hot Florida sun. The goals were to train these boy soldiers on weapon use and to toughen up their bodies and minds. No doubt, their training was cut short to get them quickly ready for war and ultimately on the frontline of battle.

Junior completed the Infantry Replacement Training on September 16, 1944. A letter received from Junior during this time provided the news that he was getting a furlough. His only sister

Ethel and her family lived in Sheffield, AL and he asked that they visit in New Hope while he was home. He especially wanted to see his four-year-old niece, Ann Elizabeth. Though the time home was short, the family was so happy to have him home. There are pictures of him in uniform standing beside his parents during his furlough.

Except for a very few saved letters from Junior, most of what I have written about Junior's time in the Army was learned from my reading and research of his division, infantry regiment, company, and battalion. Also, I contacted a World War II researcher and received copies of Junior's company's daily "Company-A-Morning Reports" for the time frames that Junior was in the war. The Morning Reports were prepared in the field and listed where the unit was located, soldiers who arrived or left, and unit strength. However, I cannot be certain if all locations and dates referenced below are correct.

Around the first of October 1944, the replacement soldiers



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and officers were sent by passenger train to Fort Meade, MD in preparation for being shipped overseas. By the middle of October, the soldiers were sent to Camp Shanks, located on the west shore of the Hudson River and a section of the New York Port of Embarkation. Camp Shanks was dubbed "Last Stop USA".

The contingent of some 1,200 soldiers and 30 infantry officers boarded the U.S. Army transport ship, Thomas H. Barry, knowing that this could only mean one thing - Europe and the Nazis. As the ship eased out of the dock and started down the Hudson to the Atlantic Ocean, the soldiers looked up to see the Statue of Liberty. For some on board, this was the final view of their beloved homeland.

The ship was crowded with hammocks stacked high and narrow aisles between. At sunset, all portholes were closed to prevent lights showing and being detected by the enemy. The soldiers would lean on the railings and look out over the blackness of the sea, broken only by the whitecaps of waves. With no radios or newspapers, many read books, played dominoes, dice, cards, and shared stories about their hometowns and families. They also passed time by cleaning their military weapons and equipment.

The ship reached the coast of England in the Southampton area on the first of November. Here they were organized into groups and boarded medium sized ships for the cross-channel trip to France. They arrived near Omaha Beach in the Normandy area of France. The beach was a buzz of activities as landing craft took troops to shore. They kept their eyes skyward for German planes that had been striking frequently. The equipment and cargo required several days to unload.

Around November 8 and continuing over the next several days, the replacement soldiers were moved by train and open trucks in an easterly direction toward Nancy, France. As they traveled across France, they saw the death and destruction of war for the first time in their lives. The soldiers saw forests reduced to burning embers and passed cemeteries with rows of freshly painted wood crosses. They traveled in the rain through small towns and villages where the French people waved as they passed, grateful that the Americans had come to hopefully free them from the Nazi yoke.

North of Nancy, they arrived at the Replacement Depot in the countryside located about 175 miles east of Paris and 40 miles southwest of the German border. Junior was assigned to the 26th Division, termed "Yankee Division," because most of the men in the Division were from northern and New England states. Lieutenant General Willard Stuart Paul from Massachusetts was the commander of the Division. The 26th Division was a part of General George Patton's Third Army. During the previous month, the Division had been fighting the Germans across France.

The battles, known as "The Lorraine Campaign," were named for the Lorraine Woods. Approximately 2,500 soldiers had already been killed or injured in this Campaign, and the arriving soldiers were hur-

ried in to fill the ranks and continue the fight.

Within the 26th Division, Junior was assigned to the 328th Infantry Regiment, Company A, and 1st Battalion. He was one of approximately 750 replacement soldiers assigned that day to the 328th Regiment, joined the Lorraine Campaign and then moving to the front lines.

On November 19, 1944 the name of Pvt. John L. Cooper Jr. first appeared on the Company-A-Morning-Report. On that same day, the Report showed Company A was fighting 3 miles from Morville-les-Vic, a small village in northeast France.

It's likely that Junior spent his first night in a foxhole during this time. The foxholes were cold and damp. Clothing such as shoes, socks, and gloves given to the troops was not adequate for the cold, rainy weather. When possible, blanket rolls were carried on trucks and brought to the troops at night. Fires were extinguished at night so the Germans could not detect their location.

The next morning the troops moved out on foot on a rainy, cold and muddy day. They carried rifles that weighed nine pounds and bandoleers of ammunition were carried over their shoulders. Riflemen had about 160 rounds of ammunition. A small field pack was used to carry rations and personal items such as pictures and Bibles. Around their waists, soldiers wore a cartridge belt with a first aid kit, canteen and a small shovel for digging foxholes.

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The Company-A-Morning Report through November 25th listed several battle casualties, battle injuries and non-battle injuries in the area around Morville-les-Vic. On November 26 and 27, the Company moved to Munster and Torcheville, France. Again, the Morning-Report showed casualties — 11 of 132 killed, and several lost-to-field hospitals. This was one of the worse days of the war. During this time frame, Junior wrote to his sister, Ethel, and told her that it was very muddy and that he had been through his first battle, but to not tell his mother. Also, he wrote that he had made it through safely and hoped his luck would “hold out.”

The rain grew more intense, the mud grew deeper, dampness penetrated to the bone, and foxholes filled with water as quickly as they were bailed out. The soldiers fought the weather as much as the Germans. Because of walking in the cold and damp conditions, many soldiers suffered from trench foot, a painful condition of the feet caused by exposure to dampness and cold and marked by blackening and death of surface tissue. Feet developed blisters, bled and became ulcerated. The soldiers had no opportunity for personal hygiene, and damp, foul conditions existed everywhere. If God had ever created an impossible situation, this was it.

On November 28, Junior’s 328th Infantry attacked to liberate the village of Honskirch, France. It was a bloody engagement against superior and well-entrenched enemy forces, but after many hours of fighting they reported liberation for Honskirch. Many stories of bravery came out of this engagement.

Around the first of December, Junior’s 328th crossed the Saar River and continued the attack in northeastern France and high ground beyond. On December 1, the Company-A-Morning-Report showed the location as Vittersbourg, France with the comment “near front lines”.

The Report for December 4-7 showed their location as Kirwiller, France, and listed Junior as evacuated to the medical battalion for non-battle sickness. Most illnesses related to the terrible weather conditions were colds, bad coughs, fever, frostbite, or trench foot. The next Report showed Junior as returned to duty status. The Reports through December 11 showed Witrting and Woelfling, France as their locations. They were fast approaching the German border and stubborn German resistance. The Report for December 11 showed Junior promoted from Private to Private First Class. The number of active soldiers in Company A was now

down from 132 to 108 due to losses.

Around December 12, 1944, the 26th Division was deployed to Metz, France for rest, reorganization and training. The training was especially needed for the replacement soldiers who were not properly trained in the reality of combat nor were they prepared for front line combat. The distance was 82 miles so they probably traveled by open-truck in a cold wind.


Metz, located in northeast France, was a symbol of the final liberation of France and represented the gateway to Germany. As the Division convoy reached the city of Metz, General William Paul, the Division commander, was standing on the street to salute the troops as they passed. This show of respect made the battle-weary soldiers feel honored and appreciated. Figures can never measure the suffering and hardship of the infantry soldiers; however, the Division was proud of its gallant effort in liberating parts of France.

At Metz there was an old fort where the soldiers were able to sleep in a building on straw mattresses and could finally take their boots off. They also were able to take their first showers in over a month and get clean clothes. The mail from home caught up with the soldiers and Junior most likely received letters from his mother, sister and friends at home. The troops were in high spirits and heard rumors that there might be a Christmas party. But, happy as their thoughts might have been, the worst was yet to come.

Suddenly on December 17, 1944, word came from the north that the Germans had begun a terrible attack that penetrated


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deeply into Belgium and Luxembourg, and one of the American divisions had been overrun. Junior's 26th Division at Metz stopped training exercises, got their gear together and prepared to move out. The troops were shocked because they thought they were winning the war.

The next mission was to locate the enemy and engage him. This was the start of "The Battle of Forest". It proved to be the last major German offensive campaign on the Western front. The term "Battle of the Bulge," was created by the press to describe the bulge formation for the German Army's advance that was the last dying effort to put Europe under Nazi control. This remains, today, to be the bloodiest land battle fought by the United States Army.

Not all troops moved in and out of the fighting area at the same time, and some troops were held back in reserve. All references stated that the 26th Division moved out north from Metz before Christmas, most likely December 20. The 26th Division traveled north toward Luxembourg and Belgium into the Ardennes Forest. The Ardennes was a region of extensive pine forests, rolling hills, and ridges. It was bitterly cold with frost, fog, and eventually snow. Many men would die in the forests in the next few weeks as the horror of war descended on the snows of the Ardennes.

The troops endured freezing cold, deafening artillery barrage, and the constant threat of death. According to the Company-A-Morning-Report, they traveled 52 miles to Arlon, Belgium. December 20-23, the Reports showed their locations as Aflon and Oberpallen, Belgium. The Report for December 23 stated "Company A advanced approx. 500 yards, now digging in and holding".

On December 24, it began to snow more heavily. The soldiers

walked through the snow and slush in dense woods from Belgium to the western border of Luxembourg where the people of the towns welcomed them and cheered them on. One reference said the people greeted the soldiers with coffee, cookies, and apples; the soldiers gratefully accepted and ate as they marched on. The Company-A-Morning-Report for that date listed their location as Rambrough, Luxembourg.

In Junior's letter sent home during this time, he said, "We had a white Christmas and had a nice Christmas dinner." Perhaps Junior was trying to reassure family that all was well and did not want them to worry. We can only imagine the heavy heart of a homesick boy on a cold and frightening battlefield so far away from home. I'm sure he was thinking to himself, "I wonder what they are doing at home this Christmas". His letters were all positive and all ended with "Lots of Love, Jr."

This area dominated the approach to the twisting gorge of the Sure River. Here Company A began to receive gunfire indicating that they had met up with the Germans. The Sure River was only ten to twenty yards wide and the current was not swift; however, finding a passage through the steep side with an average elevation of 1,200 feet was a problem. On the river bank there were numerous mines.

Particularly feared were whistling artillery which scattered hundreds of small steel balls or metal shrapnel in all directions at a very high speed. Junior's Division probably crossed the river at Bonnal or Esch-sur-sure, Luxembourg on December 27. By crossing the Sure River, the Division advanced well into the enemy's position and forward movement was brought to a slow stall.

The Germans' relentless attacks stalled their movement and slowly the days and nights passed at their pinned-down location. At any moment, a mortar round would drop or an 88 mm shell would arrive followed by a full barrage. Dense smoke would follow along with periods of silence, while big white flakes of snow

piled up. The soldiers had time to think and time to pray and did both. For a full satisfying moment, their souls slipped home to loved ones, only to be harshly torn back to reality by their wounded companions moaning in the darkness.

Any effort to crawl forward and offer help was met by gun fire. It was gut-wrenching and the men felt agonizingly helpless.

It was bitterly cold now and the Americans were not accustomed to the subzero temperatures nor well equipped for winter combat. The average temperature hung around zero and would plunge lower at night. The ground was frozen and cold and hands in unlined wet gloves made it difficult to dig foxholes, though the foxholes did provide some warmth. The soldiers were dirty, ragged, cold, frozen, hungry and exhausted. Morale was at its lowest ebb.

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**Rodney Dangerfield**

As the shelling increased, there were more cases of combat fatigue and battle shock, and many soldiers were not able to control their fear and nerves,

After crossing the Sure River and during the almost unbearable cold of January, soldiers of the 26th Division engaged in a series of attacks in the dense woods toward the Wiltz River with little success in breaking up the German attack. Here the troops were pounded by German artillery. The trees increased the hazard as rounds struck the branches, exploded in the air, and showered jagged shrapnel downward.

Communication at all levels was difficult due to the terrain and line-of-sight communication was nearly impossible.

Company-A-Morning-Report December 30 - January 3 stated, Company A was fighting in the village of Bavigne and then traveled 4 miles by foot over rugged terrain to Kaundorf, Luxembourg. Kaundorf was a hillside farming village with the highest ground in the area. Here Junior's battalion repelled a violent counterattack during the night. The Germans fought to save this area since it provided high ground visibility.

In spite of increased shelling and casualties, Junior's company moved forward. Their next major objective was to reach Wiltz, Luxembourg, near the German border. From January 6-13, Junior's Company was halted by stiff resistance at Nothum in northwest Luxembourg near a crossroads called Mon Schumann which led to the main road to Wiltz. Here several roads met that were used by the Germans as supply routes and to retreat back to Germany.

The Germans were willing to pay any price to deny the Americans access and employed tanks, artillery and mortars. Here at Mon Schumann, Company A received heavy fire from concealed

enemy positions and reports suggest some direct combat with the Germans. Shelling continued over several days and there were many casualties.

The Morning Reports for this time frame showed more killed or seriously injured than at any other time. Wind-driven snow, dense fog and low hanging clouds reduced visibility to 10 yards. Because of this, the rifle infantry, like Junior's, was called on more than the armored tank units or air support. Therefore, the infantry units sustained the most casualties.

The Reports of January 14, 1945 showed their location as Berle, Luxembourg, a small town about 1.5 miles from Nothum. The Report included the comment, "Company in defensive position". They were again halted by the stiff German resistance. Company A was now down to 75 soldiers

and 2 officers.

Four days later on January 18, the Report showed their location as still Berle. Also, and sadly, this Morning Report listed PFC John L. Cooper, Jr., three other privates, and one sergeant as missing-in-action near Berle. Often, in the heat of battle and as troops were moving, casualties were reported as missing in action and later reported as casualties. This was the case for these five soldiers as all were later reported as casualties with dates of death as January 14, 1945.

Junior lost his life on Sunday, January 14, 1945 near Berle, Luxembourg at the age of 20. He had been in action in the war for only two months. He was one of thousands of young men who gave their lives, dreams and hopes to save our country during World War II.



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**Jerry Butler, Maysville**



After Junior's death, Charles Hester, a buddy who was with him that day, wrote Junior's parents to tell them of their son's last day. He said that Junior died quickly of shrapnel wounds in the neck and shoulder and did not suffer. He said, "Junior and I were in the States together, went across and fought together. We stayed in the foxholes several nights together and prayed together. You should be thankful for that because he believed in the Lord, and I'm sure he had been reared in a Christian home. I can assure you that he was a good soldier. I know it's hard to lose a son like that. You have my deepest sympathy. PFC Charles Hester."

When Charles Hester returned home, he visited the Cooper family in New Hope. After January 18, 1945, the 26th Division moved up the valley toward Wiltz, Luxembourg unopposed as the Germans had finally started to lose their initiative and the tide had begun to turn in favor of the Americans.

The Germans were slowly pushed out of Luxembourg and

Europe and back into Germany. On January 20, six days after Junior's death, the 26th Division crossed the Wiltz River, the Germans withdrew, and the "Battle of the Bulge" came to an end. Junior had almost survived the war.

In "The History of the 26th Yankee Division", the names of the casualties are listed. Under the 328th Infantry Regiment, Junior is listed: "Cooper, PFC John L. Jr.". He is interred at Luxembourg American Cemetery in Hamm, Luxembourg, plot H-15-57. ([www.findagrave.com/memorial/56060825/john-l-cooper](http://www.findagrave.com/memorial/56060825/john-l-cooper)).

His memorial plaque is beside the graves of his parents in Bethel Cemetery in New Hope, Alabama. The 48-Star American flag given to his parents was donated to a historical museum in New Hope.

I plan to pass his New Testament Bible, Purple Heart and letters to the younger generation of our family.

Junior was a courageous soldier, a good man and was deeply loved. I pray that his proud story will live on through future generations of our family. Hopefully, one day we will meet Junior in Heaven.



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# FRONT PORCHES AND DROPPING IN

by Tommy Towerly

With all the fuss about Social Media in this modern world, I started remembering a couple of the "social" things we did when I was growing up in Huntsville in the Fifties. Of course they did not involve smart phones or Facebook postings, but involved real physical contact with each other. Life was simpler then.

My home today is one of the very few houses in my neighborhood which actually has a front porch big enough for someone to sit on. Back when I was growing up on East Clinton Street, all the houses on the street had front porches and even on the hottest summer days you could always find at least one of them occupied by the residents of the house. I knew of no one who had a patio in the back yard for socializing, or air conditioning for their house.


I remember many of my neighbors having "gliders" on their porches on which to sit or rock away the afternoon.

Even though there are a few other porches on my current street, my wife, Sue, and I seem to be the only couple who actually sit out on ours late in the afternoon. I hope that is not because we are getting old, and that is what old people are

expected to do. We have a nice bench on it and enjoy the shade of the porch while watching the setting sun in the West. We sit there and watch the cars go by and give the evil eye to those drivers who fail to understand the concept of a stop sign or a speed limit in a populated neighborhood. We wave at the neighbors who pass, either as a part of their physically healthy routine or to assist their dogs on their required trips to fertilize someone's green lawns or stop to check out a fire hydrant or lamp post.

People still seem surprised and look at us like we are aliens from Mars when they see us sitting outside on a warm summer evening instead of being glued to an air conditioned living room curled up with our favorite iPad. So far we have not become the victims of a drive-by shooting either.


But I grew up with the idea of sitting on a porch. Back then we would all wave and shout greetings to one another and often passers-by would stop for a quick chat or to share a tall glass of ice water, iced tea,



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or lemonade. With our house back then being so close to downtown Huntsville we were on a main thoroughfare for those who still walked to town to do their business and many folks did so.

I hate to call sitting out on a front porch a lost "art," but I would certainly call it a lost "social custom." We have neighbors a few houses down from us who I am sure we have never really seen in person. I jokingly tell Sue they are part of a witness protection program and are afraid to show their faces outdoors for fear of being bumped off by a mob boss or drug lord. They hire people to cut their grass; they drive into the driveway and open their automatic garage doors and drive into their garages without getting out of their cars, and they do their shopping online and have their packages delivered to their front door to be hurriedly snatched up and drug inside their houses without coming outside. I honestly would not be able to recognize them if they sat down in the pew next to us in church.

The other social interaction which I miss today is having someone "drop in" to visit us. While growing up we had as many unexpected visitors "drop in" on us as we had those who scheduled their visits with the family. Maybe that was because people did not drive around with cell phones and the ability to call and give someone a warning they were coming over. The country relatives would come to town and while they were in the neighborhood they would just drop in for a spell. We thought nothing of it and welcomed their visits with open arms. Sometimes they stayed for lunch or supper, eating anything we could throw together at a moment's notice.

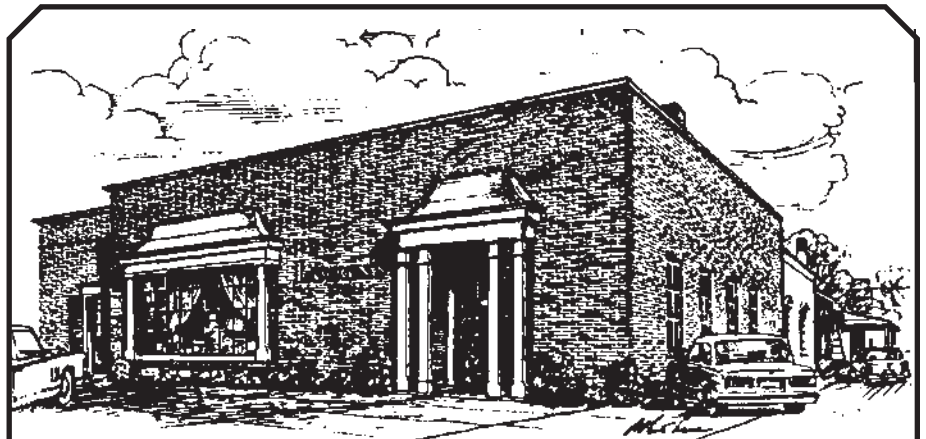
It was not until I was in the Air Force and moving around the country when I found such an ideal for visiting was not a normal custom for everyone. My ex-wife, who also grew up in the Deep South, and I thought nothing of being out driving around the area and deciding "while we're in the neighborhood, lets drop in on xxxx." To both of us, it was not only a normal custom, but also a show of friendship to do so. "We cared enough about you and are good enough friends, we thought we'd just stop by and say hello." We could care less what your rooms look like.

Looking back I am sure many of our friends who experienced our no-notice visits thought we were rude or inconsiderate to come by with-

out prior notice, but we were unaware such things were not common with everyone who did not grow up in the South. It never seemed to dawn on us that even though we dropped in on others, no one seemed to ever drop in on us. The innocence of youth is to blame.

Tying these two things together, the last time we did have someone drop in on us, it was a schoolmate of Sue's who was driving by and saw us sitting on the front porch and so he and his wife stopped to say hello. I doubt he would have thought about doing so had he not seen us sitting there. Or, maybe he would; he grew up in the South as well.

Maybe things would be more social if more people had a front porch... and used it.



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I just got in from the store. I was wondering if by chance I won the bet with my husband as to which store would put out their Halloween items first. He thought Walmart would be first and I said the Dollar Store.

Well, guess what? It's still July, and there in the Dollar Store I saw Halloween items. I suppose they must think I need to believe October is in July. I won the bet with him.

And speaking of Halloween coming soon, parents please get costumes that fit your children, because next year they will want to be something else. Don't worry about them outgrowing it. An excellent place to buy costumes is the Thrift Store as they would have only been worn a few hours. All that I have seen were reasonably priced.

Most stores stock the cute little pumpkin head flashlight that any small child would love to light their path. They are more likely to use them than a regular one and so well worth a dollar or two to alert motorists as well as avoiding a skinned knee walking up sidewalks in the dark.

Easy to manage "goodie bags" are also available and if one is so inclined,

they aren't hard to make, and children could draw pumpkins, bats and ghosts on them. Some costumes are rather easy to make. Use your imagination and ask input from your child once you have an idea. It puts them on a track of what you can make, but they will feel like the idea is theirs. Could be your child wrapped head to toe, arms, legs, and head in bathroom tissue paper for a mummy. An old sheet for a ghost. If it's old, wrap completely and secure a loose band around the neck area and cut two holes for eyes. You can just pin it together in the front and leave an opening for their face.

A pink jogging suit and hood that would be reuseable with some sock ears for a bunny, or a pig-nose and go as the "Swine Flu."

For treats to give away, wholly wrapped individual candy pieces go over well. Some people in our neighborhood give out quarters, canned or boxed drinks and maybe even small bottles of water. Treaters get thirsty with all the sampling of sweets.

It is always wise for parents to go along with the children and have them only go to houses they know and in small groups.

One thing my children have enjoyed was the "Trunk or Treat" that a lot of the churches have. Mayfair Church has one starting Sunday afternoon Oct. 27th from 3-5 p.m. Most of the church events are light on candy and heavier on games and other treats.

Most of all, be safe and remind the kids not to try to eat all the candy in the goodie bag in one night. After pouring it all out on a table or floor, put a lot of it up and let it be a dessert pick for nights to come.

It may even last until Christmas.

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## Goat Island Bluff (Guntersville Lake)

by Barry Key

*NOTE: Hesitate after commas and periods longer than normal and read each phrase as if it were a stand-alone sentence.*

Over the years I've constantly found, the call of Goat Island Bluff is an "UNENDING SOUND". As kids we had no fear, looking up from the bottom, the top was near. But looking down, you often found, the increase in height was extremely profound.

When someone left the top, and you heard that dreaded pop, you remembered the sting, but we were doing our thing, and continued to jump over and over again.

Standing on top, the adrenalin would flow, but you were no chicken, you had to go. Coming down, your heart would pound, with unknown emotions, hysterically spellbound.

As a kid I sensed no danger, the Bluff at Goat Island was no stranger, but when I became a Pa...I would watch my kids in awe. As I grew older, I would climb with them to the

top, but my instincts would make me stop. Although there was only water below, I could not convince myself to go.

Sitting below, all safe and sound, I would watch my kids as they dropped down. I experienced their excitement as if it were me, and for an instance, my memories would set me free.

Although I feared their split second trip, I had to remain calm, I had to get a grip, and realize while looking in their eyes....they have no fear of the danger that lies.

Now as a grandpa, I again watch in awe, as the third generation does the fall. I wanted to say no, but as my grand-kids' friend, I couldn't keep them from going, where I had been.

The fourth generation has come along, will this be my great grandson's song, "I'm Goat Island bound, the Bluff is renown, I want to experience that amazing trip down".

At the Bluff, we jump and swim, I'm constantly concerned for life and limb, but I can't deny, their opportunity to freely fly, from a top that Bluff as I.

In my mind I have no doubt, sooner or later our luck may run out. The Bluff could eventually collect its fee, if a life it must be, I silently pray it will be me. Then, and only then you see, from that "UNENDING SOUND" will I be free!

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# The Moonshiner

by Betty Hallmark  
Atkinson



My Daddy made moonshine whiskey, and one day Daddy was in the woods with the still running full blast; when he heard a voice that said, "Don't nobody move, this is the law, put down your weapons, we got y'all surrounded!"

Well instead of surrendering, my Daddy took off running. He said he ran through those woods, crossing through

creeks, bushes and briars, until he finally gave out, and just sat down, on a log, and thought to himself, they will just have to get me, cause he couldn't run any more. I can just picture my Daddy running, as he was a tall man, with long skinny legs, that must have been a sight to see.

Well, he got lucky that day, they didn't catch him, and as far as I know, they never did, as he later gave up making moonshine and became a Constable, working with the law.

One day, this Lawman my Daddy was working with came up to him, and said, "Hop, I knew that was you I was chasing back in the day."

I never saw my Daddy take a drink of whiskey. My Mother said that he stopped drinking after us twins got born. I would have thought that would have been a reason to drink!

Daddy always said that my twin and I were so mean, that we could rob a bank without a gun!

*(Ed. Note - the man in the picture is NOT Betty's dad)*

**"What's the difference between a man and a catfish? One is a bottom feeding scum sucker, and the other is a fish."**

*Janie R., divorced*

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# Old Huntsville Memories

by Lee W. Burkett

I'm one of those rare individuals who was born here in Huntsville even before it was called the Rocket City. Watercross Capitol of the World maybe. Since I have been battling Head and Neck Cancer for the last few years, I have been reminiscing more and talking less. No voice box. The following are some memories that I have wondered if others can duplicate.

In no certain order, here goes. Ever take mail or packages to the Federal Building/Post Office on Holmes? Ever walk downtown and smell the old Nehi Plant? Ever remember crossing the street diagonally when the lights changed? Ever go to the old Carnegie Library on Washington much less the Library on Fountain Circle prior to Fort Book? Watch the World Championship Horseshoe Tournament at Braham Springs? Walk up to the cross on Monte Sano before it got so overgrown. Ever ride on the city bus from down on Whitesburg Drive to downtown or visa versa? Ever watch or drag race on Martin Road back in the day? Ever go see the Allison's and Red Farmer race down Huntsville Speedway?

Remember go carts racing in the parking lot at what is now Parkway City Mall? Remember playing Goofy and Carpet Golf on Leeman Ferry and over by the Heart of Huntsville Mall and North Parkway a few years ago? Stood in line or saw the lines when everyone had to buy their textbooks at the Book Shop, T. T. Terry's, or later School Supply? Remember when the Airport was at the end of Airport Road and even took off or landed there? Remember when the Botanical Garden started with one small building and now it is a world class facility? Remember Coca Cola Plant tours and the vehicle museum on Holmes? Remember getting your papers and magazines at the news stand at the Yarbrough Hotel?

Remember getting your hair cut at the Russel Erskine and sometimes seeing von Braun there? Ever hike down to the Bottomless Well on Monte Sano? Remember when Butler was at Governor's Drive/Clinton Avenue before it was Stone Middle School and now Campus 805? Ever take the kids or go to Seratoma Park and ride the train and rides? Remember when

we had the Medical Center before Women's and Children's? Ever shop at Harrison Brothers when a brother was there? As a side note, I opened an account there with a brother and came back to use it and was told I couldn't charge that as we had a "cash account".

Remember when soccer started and no one had even heard of AYSO? Remember the crowds for the rivalry games at Milton Frank Stadium and even having season tickets? Remember the horses on Monte Sano that you rented for a long ride or ride around in a circle? My son's favorite was Peanut. Remember the ditch down the middle of Drake? Remember the bridge at the bottom of Green Mountain connecting up with Todd Mill Road? Remember the hump on the old, long gone, Whitesburg Bridge on the Huntsville side? Your car would almost go airborne at about 115. Remember Elvis coming to the Civic Center? Remember the old Court House or it being demolished before the current one on the square? Remember the Stars opening night? Remember going out to Lake Lady Ann and seeing the Space City remnants?

Remember shopping at Dunnivant's downtown and seeing the pneumatic tube system for transactions or even the foot x-ray machine in the shoe department? Ever bought a car at the Woody Anderson before the State made the ridiculous exit from 565 E and purchased his dealership property? Remember the wooden floors in the five and ten (Elmore's?) on Washington by the theaters? Remember Big Spring Park when it had ball fields, train, and swimming pool? Remember driving up the mountain to the overlook on the backside where it later caved in and has never reopened? Remember why Shoney Drive has its name?

Remember turning off Big Cove Road onto Governor's Drive near Covenant? So much for these memories. I love this town and I hope you do as well.

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# Alabama State Trooper Willis Moore

by Scott Nixon

I did not know Willis. I had never met him. Thank God, one day in " 1995 " I met him. My wife and I went to an Alabama football game. Our car was not reliable so we borrowed her daddy's car for the trip. Alabama won and we had a blast. The Atlanta Braves also won the World Series that night. Who would have thought the next day a State trooper would leave a more lasting impression?

The morning I took the car back to my wife's daddy, man, his car was fast! I did not realize just how fast. All of the sudden, I saw blue lights in my mirror. My father-in-law's car drove so well that I did not realize how fast I was going. I knew that I did something wrong, although I wasn't sure what. The trooper approached the car. I'm not sure how tall he was but he seemed very tall to me. I let the window down and he said "Sir, I pulled you over for speeding. " I said, "I'm sorry, I wasn't looking at the speedometer. I know if you say I did it, I'm guilty."

He said "You were doing 95 in a 55 zone." Oh my God, I thought! He took my license and said, "I'll be right back." He came back to my window and said "Scott, I wrote you a ticket but I want to tell you something. It should be for reckless driving." I apologized over and over.

I will never forget his smile. He said, "This is a regular speeding ticket. I do believe you did not know how fast you were going." He gave me a break. I laughed with Trooper Moore as I signed the ticket. He was so nice. It is now 2019 and I have not had a ticket to this day.

Shortly thereafter, I had a refrigerator in the back of my truck headed down Highway 72 East. It was strapped tight! All of a sudden, I heard a loud Boom. It fell down in the bed of my truck and I pulled over. I decided to leave it laying down. Out of nowhere, there he was! He pulled beside my truck and said, " Sir, do you need some help?" He recognized me and we were both laughing. "No thanks!" I said. He smiled and said "O.K." I never saw Trooper Moore again. I

knew his name, his smile, his face and his heart. You very rarely find that these days.

When I heard the news the day he passed tears ran down my face. Why? I did not know him personally but I wish that I did. I think of him from time to time. I am his unknown friend. Somehow, I believe he knows that. Keep carrying that badge with honor, Trooper Moore. I will see you again someday. Until then, keep smiling. I will never forget you. Not because you were a Trooper but because you were an example of how we all should be kind to one another. No matter what circumstance.

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at themselves leave the  
job to others.**

# Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



OK I would have bet money that NO ONE would find my hidden flagpole in the September issue but we had a winner. It was on p. 11 on the Berryhill Funeral Home ad, left bottom border. Do you see it now? **Sylvia Grant** of Gardendale, Al was the sharp-eyed lady who was first to call, and believe me I had tons of calls but no winners, til Sylvia. She lived in Huntsville as a toddler and promises to send a story about being Huntsville's first "streaker." Congratulations to you.

Then, the photo of the month was a bit easier - it was beautiful **Jane Barr** who with her husband **Tom** could tell you all about Monte Sano history. My winner was **Pamela Tippet Henderson** of Huntsville, who knows Jane and was able to ID her right away. Pam works for United Fire and

said her family wants to thank Jane Barr for all the research she did in getting The Historic Lowry House listed on the National Register of Historic places.

Happy 87th Birthday to **Dot Parton** who had an Oct. 1st Birthday!

I wanted to let you know that the latest Walmart to carry Old Huntsville magazine is the new one on Winchester Road. You'll see racks at each entrance, and they're selling fast! While there last week I met the nicest guy - **George Alexander**. He told me their family was having the First Alexander Family reunion here and he was really excited about getting all the family together. He looked way too young to be a grandpa of 7 and a great-grandpa of 1! I hope the reunion was a huge success, George!

**Charles Petty** got into a hornet's nest recently and they swarmed his neck and face. You can imagine how that felt. He told me what he did to help the stinging was to make a paste of baking soda and water and just smear it on. He covered it with a bandage. He said it helped almost immediately!

Belated August 30th Happy Birthday to our sweet friend **Judy C. Smith** who also writes for the magazine. Her family gave her some really meaningful and nostalgic gifts. Here's to many more, Judy!

**Jan Williams** wants to remind us that the Huntsville High Class of 1959 is having its reunion early

in October. Check Facebook for more info.

Happy Birthday to dear friend **Barb Eyestone** on Sep. 17. We know you and **Ron** will go someplace special to eat! And **Sherri Williams** had a birthday Sep. 18 - she and her sweetheart Steve always think of something to do that's even more fun than last year! We sure miss you in Huntsville!

We were so sorry to hear that the annual **Trade Day around the Square** wasn't going to be held this past September. It's been going on for more than 30 years, but there just weren't enough vendors. Maybe next year we can look forward to it.

I tested this spray myself the other day and it worked. When I water my plants late afternoon I get eaten up by mosquitoes. So I had some good Patchouli spray that I got at Publix and it's not meant for bug spray but the bugs hate it. I sprayed it on my arms & exposed areas and I would watch mosquitoes land on me and get right off! So I love this because that regular bug spray makes your skin feel weird and you can't wait to shower it off. I will tell

## Photo of The Month

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

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This little guy is one of the Ryland writers who readers love.



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you that it is at downtown Publix around the soap department but you'll just have to ask them exactly where cause I don't want them to sell out!

**Ianthia Bridges** is the beautiful lady who works with you when you bank at BB&T on Church Street. Recently she told me her family has several October events: her niece **Carla (Cee-Cee)** of Camden, Al will be celebrating her birthday; cousin **Bridgette** also of Camden, has a birthday; and most importantly, on Oct. 7th **Ianthia** celebrates being a 22-year breast cancer survivor. A strong AND beautiful lady.

Many love the historic walking tours of our districts: **Jan Williams** will be the host for the 5 Points Walking Tour and last year there were over 200 people there. It's on Oct. 5, Saturday, starting at 10am. Meet a little before then at the northwest corner of the cemetery, Wells Avenue and Maple Hill Drive. You'll see the crowd. Bring plenty of water, kids, strollers and pets. Lots of fun.

So proud of the history of Hospice Family Care. It will be celebrating its 40th anniversary this year and has a new name, **Caring for Life**. They have a new 15 bed facility for in-house hospice care, at Redstone Village on South Parkway and it is beautiful there.

**Bob Overall**, our Golden K Kiwanian, was there with his family and the staff there took such good care of him.

OK if you've read this far, I have hidden a **tiny apple core** somewhere in the pages of the October issue. Not a whole apple, but apple core. Tiny. IF you find it be the first caller and you will win a year's subscription to the magazine. But no way are your eyes good enough for this one!

Our UPS driver for Old Town is on the mend and he has been taking care of this area now for over 40 years. We want to send love out to **Orlando** and hope to see you soon!

Our hearts are breaking for the people who live in the Bahamas and Abaco Island who were just devastated by the slow moving Hurricane Dorian. Many are sending help and Huntsville always sends emergency personnel.

**Jim Regan** has been recuperating after a medical procedure and we just want to send best wishes to you and we're thinking about you. We know you're getting great care from sweet wife **Martha Ann**.

This is the month to go to Bennett's Nursery on North Parkway to pick up your gorgeous healthy chrysanthemums. I always remember taking my Mom, when

she could no longer drive, to Bennetts each October so she could pick out the colors for her balcony at Redstone Village. It was our tradition, and I miss her every day. But I'll go and check out the flowers this year again because they seem to get prettier every year.

Have a good October and watch out for the kids walking on the streets on Halloween!



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# RECIPES

## From the Kitchen of Vera Tippett

*Vera Tippett was Louie Tippett's Mom and he remembers how she loved being in the kitchen, cooking for her family. These recipes are some of her favorites, and from her friends at the American Red Cross Volunteers*

### FRIED PORK CHOPS AND CABBAGE DINNER

- 4 pork chops, cut 1" thick
- 1 T. oil
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1/2 c. dry white wine
- 1/4 c. packed brown sugar
- 1 T. white wine vinegar
- 1 t. salt & pepper to taste
- 4 c. shredded cabbage
- 2 apples, cored & thinly sliced

In a 12" ovenproof skillet, cook pork chops in hot oil til brown on both sides. Remove chops to warm plate, add onions to skillet & cook til tender.

Stir in wine, brown sugar, vinegar, salt and pepper. Stir in cabbage and apples. Bring mixture to boiling and top with chops.

Cover and bake in a 350 degree oven for 40 minutes and pork chops are tender.

Vera Tippett

### JEZEBEL SAUCE

- 1 - 18 oz. jar apple jelly
  - 1 - 18 oz. jar pineapple preserves
  - 1 - 5 oz. jar horseradish
  - 2 T. dry mustard
- Mix thoroughly and store in airtight container in the refrigerator. This is VERY HOT, but delicious on pork, ham or turkey.

Lois Bruce

### MICHIGAN CHICKEN

- 1 pkg. Pepperidge Farm stuffing (not cubes)
  - 3 T. butter
  - 1 c. chicken stock or broth
- Mix above ingredients and press into 10" pan for crust.
- 1-3 pounds chicken breast, cooked, boned and cut into chunks
  - 1 can mushroom soup
  - 1/2 pint sour cream

Spoon the chunks of chicken over the crust, top with the soup and sour cream, mixed. Bake at 325 degrees for an hour.

Karen Voelker

### MARINATED CARROTS

- 2 lbs. carrots
  - 1 med. onion, thinly sliced
- Slice carrots and cook in boiling salted water til tender. After cooking arrange carrots and onions in layers in a bowl and pour the following marinade over them;

- 1 can tomato soup
- 1/2 c. vegetable oil
- 1 c. sugar
- 3/4 c. vinegar
- 1 t. mustard
- 1 t. Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and pepper

Beat well in mixer and pour over carrots /onions. Let stand in refrigerator for at least 24 hours before serving.

Margaret Esslinger

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### YUM YUM CAKES

- 2 eggs
- 2 c. sugar
- 2 c. self rising flour
- 2 c. crushed pineapple

Beat eggs & sugar together, add flour and pineapple. Stir up well. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes.

- Topping:
- 1 c. sugar
  - 1 stick butter
  - 1/2 t. vanilla flavor
  - 3/4 c. milk
  - 1 c. coconut

Let butter, sugar and milk boil for 2 minutes, then add the coconut. Pour over cake while it's still hot. So Good!

Vera Tippett

### BAKED PINEAPPLE

- 1- 20 oz. can chunk pineapple, drained & juice reserved
- 1 c. grated Velveeta Cheese
- 2 T. plain flour
- 1 c. sugar
- 2 T. butter
- 1 c. bread crumbs

Mix pineapple & cheese. Set aside. Mix flour and sugar, add the juice. Heat til melted and mix well. Pour over pineapple and cheese. Melt butter

and mix with crumbs. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Lorraine Ennis (Mrs. John M.)

### EGG CUSTARD

- 1-1/4 c. sugar mixed with 4 T. flour and pinch salt
- 5 eggs

Add eggs one at a time Beat well after each one.

- Add:
- 2-1/2 c. milk
  - 2 t. . vanilla

Butter pie plate heavily, add custard ingredients and bake at 375 degrees for about 45 minutes.

Jessie Wikle

### FUDGE PIE

- 2 eggs
- 1/2 c. flour
- 1/4 c. cocoa
- 1 stick butter
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 c. sugar

Blend all ingredients together thoroughly and bake in unbaked pie shell for 30-40 minutes at 325 degrees.

This is so simple to make and your family will say it's their favorite for any event.

Julie Presson

### BON BONS

- 1 can Eagle Brand milk
- 1/2 c. butter, softened
- 2 boxes powdered sugar
- 1/2 Ib. coconut shredded
- 2 c. nuts, chopped fine

Mix all together, put in refrigerator one hour, roll into balls. Freeze balls, then dip in melted chocolate.

Vera Tippett

### COCONUT MOUNDS

- 1 - 14 oz. pkg. coconut
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1/4 c. melted butter
- 1 can Eagle brand milk

Mix, chill, make balls & freeze. This can be dipped in melted dark chocolate or just leave as is!

Vera Tippett

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# REMEMBERING HARVEST, AL IN THE 1940S

by Jean Brewer McCrady



If the place where I grew up had been several times larger, it could have been called a small town. Instead, it was just a community with a handful of people and a name, three country stores, two cotton gins, two churches, an elementary school and a Post Office. The Post Office was housed in three different locations during my growing-up years and is now in a fourth. This community of country folks was called Harvest.

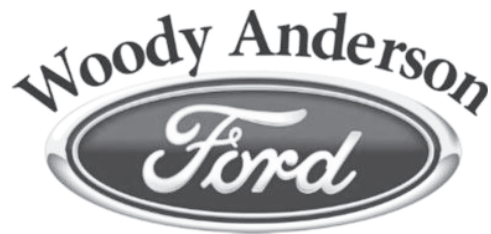
That was home during my elementary, middle school and high school years. I remember sitting on the front porch one Sunday afternoon, with paper and pencil taking a census of Harvest. There were no road signs marking the "city limits," so I mentally made my own. I listed by name the 67 residents living within my borders. Our family accounted for 6 of them. Back then, people didn't do work on Sundays (the Lord's Day), so my census taking qualified as an acceptable activity for a Sunday afternoon.

I was about 16 then, and 70 years later I can still name 65 members of that population without pausing. I just now consulted the web for a current census of Harvest, and it tells me that in 2010, the number was 5,182. It did not show me the boundaries used.

Back then, going to town, Huntsville, on Saturday was a major trip, which was a family affair once every few months. Today, Harvest is a bedroom community for Huntsville and thousands of people make the daily commute to Research Park, to down town businesses, and to NASA, which my generation still calls "the Arsenal." That's what it was when the locals left the cotton fields and got their first "real jobs" which were usually at the Arsenal.

While Harvest has gained in population and subdivisions, where the cotton fields used to be, it has lost its two cotton gins and three country stores. A Dollar General has replaced the stores; and the gins, well, they can never be replaced. The Dollar General stands on one of the gin sites. One of the three country store buildings can still be seen, struggling to stand under the weight of decades of untrimmed vegetation. It is recognizable to those who knew it then only by its location on the southeast corner of the intersection which was Harvest. That was Tuck's store and this is how it looks now.

The post office had its second home in one of the country stores, because the then store owner, Charles Ennis, became the postmaster when Ms. Cull retired. While she was Post Mistress, the Post Office was in a small room at the end of the Cull's front porch. From Charles' store it got its first purpose-built location. Years later it moved to its pres-



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ent home up the road where it, a Mapco station, Dollar General and a few other small enterprises form the current day "Harvest Metroplex."

This is at the intersection called 5 Points, where Harvest Road, which leaves Hwy. 53 and slices through Harvest territory on its way to Limestone County, crosses the Old Railroad Bed and Wall Triana Highway at the same spot where they cross each other. When it was named 5 Points, Harvest Road terminated here, actually forming 5 Points. Harvest Road was later extended through the woods and across cotton fields to join what shows on the map as Harvest Road Alternate a mile or so west of then downtown Harvest.

This road extension converted 5 Points to a 6-point intersection, but the name didn't change. Anyway, for people who don't know any better, 5 Points is the center of Harvest. For the rest of us, it's where the Old Railroad Bed and Harvest Road Alternate intersect. The store relic was the Walker Tuck store. Across the road to the north was Crutcher's store. Now gone. Across to the west was Charles Ennis's store, owned and previously run by Mr. Lawrence Cobb. Now gone. Mr. Walker Tuck owned one of the two cotton gins and it was located behind the store.

The picture shows what remains of the gin complex. This was the seed house where farmers could pay to have their cotton seed stored. It was constructed such that seeds could be dumped into truck beds through trap doors in the floor. The other cotton gin was owned by Mr. Lawrence and was located up the road, between the Railroad Bed and Wall-Triana, near the previously referenced current "town center."

The community of farmers was divided into two camps, identified by who ginned their cotton. You were either a Walker Tuck man or a Lawrence Cobb man, and that also determined which country store you patronized. Sort of like the Ford and Chevrolet camps, or the Farmall vs. John Deere die-hards. Allegiances were strong and they meant something.

Daddy was a Lawrence Cobb man. When Mr. Lawrence's people went to him to buy fertilizer for their crops, he'd tell them, the door is unlocked, go get what you need and mark it down. You can pay me later. After the crop was gathered and the cotton baled (at his gin of course) they

would go to settle up and he'd ask, how much do you owe me? I'd venture to say, Mr. Lawrence was never cheated out of a dime by the Harvest farmers, though opportunity abounded. Cheating would disgrace one's name and a good name in those days was a man's treasure. It too meant something. Actually, it meant everything.

This style of doing business must have worked for Mr. Lawrence, because he was viewed by us common folk as being rich. His was the second family in Harvest to live in a brick house. The first was his gin rival Mr. Tuck and his school teacher wife Ms. Grace (who was my 4th grade teacher). Makes you think cotton ginning was the business to be in at that time and place. One would not survive a minute in the ginning business in Harvest today.

As the cotton fields gave way to subdivisions, the cotton gins were silenced, and then under the weight of time they crumbled.

Only the memories remain of how central those gins were to the lives of the cotton families for miles around. We, the Brewers, at the corner of Wall Triana Highway and the now named Brewer Lane, were one of those cotton pickin' families, and that's another story waiting to be told.





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## The Pulitzer Prize Winning Drama Critic of Huntsville

*by Steve Gierhart*

It would not be surprising to say very few in Alabama are attuned to what goes on with Broadway. Theatre is an important element of Huntsville and its history. Huntsville is, after all, the birthplace of the brash Tallulah Bankhead, a star of both the theatre and film in the early to mid-1900s, but Hollywood took Broadway's place in the hearts of most entertainment addicts. The younger generation, especially, pays scant attention to the current events on Broadway unless it is a

successful musical such as Hamilton or Phantom of the Opera. However, what if I told you that the most influential drama critic in Broadway's storied past, Brooks Atkinson, lived in Huntsville in his final years, in fact died at Crestwood Hospital on January 14, 1984?

Brooks was the drama critic for the New York Times who started in 1922 as the editor of their "Book Review" and then took over for Percy Hammond as drama critic in 1925. He held that post until 1960 (except for his time as a journalist during WWII), a tenure at the Times for almost 40 years. His reviews were reputed to have the power to make or break a new stage production, sometimes doing just that, even if a successful writer or producer was in charge of the production. He was the "Conscience of Broadway" they say. Brooks was famous, so influential, so...good, not just as a drama critic, but as a journalist and writer, that he won the 1947 Pulitzer Prize for Correspondence for his work in WWII in

Moscow. He won a lifetime special achievement award, Broadway's Tony Award in 1962. He wrote numerous books, the more famous being histories of Broadway. He was close friends with other famous people, such as Arthur Miller, the playwright, and his wife at the time, Marilyn Monroe, who came to his retirement party along with Sir Laurence Olivier and Thornton Wilder.

Brooks and Oriana were close friends with the beloved and prominent illustrator, Al Hirschfeld, with whom he worked at the Times, often going to the same plays together on opening night, with Brooks' review and Al's associated illustration coming out the next day in the same article. Brooks is given much credit for the growth of Off-Broadway into a major theatrical force in the 1950s, and has been cited by many influential people in the theatre as crucial to their careers. Importantly, a theater (still in existence) was named after him, the Brooks Atkinson Theatre on 47th Street in the heart of the theatre district. On his 80th birthday The Players, a famous actors club, gave him a surprise birthday party which numerous dignitaries and stars attended, and in 1980, upon notice of his move to Huntsville, a bus of dignitaries from the Theatre Committee of Eugene O'Neill surprised him at his farm and gave him a medal.

Brooks' importance to Huntsville is directly related to the relationship with his wife, Oriana, whom

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he married in 1926 and who also had a successful career as a humorous journalist and writer. She wrote several best-sellers, including memoirs *Over at Uncle Joe's: Moscow and Me* (about her time in Moscow with Brooks in 1946); and *Manhattan and Me* (an homage to her home city as she was born in Greenwich Village); and *Big Eyes: My Life to Live* which used the illustrations of famous pin-up artist, Earle K. Bergey, for a scene from the novel.

Oriana's son, Bruce Torrey MacIlveen (from her first marriage), was a business manager for NASA at Marshall Space Flight Center and with the Army Corps of Engineers, even working for Wernher von Braun's team for awhile. He was posted here in the 1950s and stayed for the rest of his life. When Brooks and Oriana could no longer care for their retirement farm in Durham, New York in the Catskills, they elected to move to Huntsville to be close to family. They lived in southeast Huntsville with neighbors not realizing the importance of those near-by. The Huntsville Times knew about Brooks and his Huntsville connection, running a 1965 article on Brooks and Oriana that featured Bruce, his wife Dorothy, and the family.

Bruce and Dorothy have passed away as well as some of the grandkids. However, one grandson, Jim MacIlveen, and his wife, Margaret, live in Decatur while another grandchild, Heather, lives in New Jersey. Brooks and Oriana often had the grandkids come and visit at their farm in Durham. It was a quiet haven that featured walks in the evenings with Brooks to highlight nature in the area, pointing out things that they would have otherwise taken for granted. Brooks was also a well-known conservationist who wrote an eco-friendly book, "This Bright Land" (1910), that brought attention to the need for conservation of our natural resources in the United States, both fauna and flora. Oriana wrote in her memoir, *Not Only*

Ours, of some of the humorous family adventures on the farm such as bathroom snakes, the trials of growing roses, hiding in hay stacks, or ghosts in the attic. It's clear the kids had a grand time, whether dinner time and Brooks' literal passing of the biscuits (a throw across the table) or swimming in the family pond. Today, Jim is a naturalist himself, a well-known beekeeper who credits his grandfather with giving him that love of nature.

Jim had this to say about his grandfather, "Brooks was a stoic and somber gentleman, I never saw him smile or laugh, even when he did funny things. He was very proper for a man of his time and environment.... He smoked a pipe and always wore a bow tie which I do on occasion. We always had conversation after dinner (how many families do that today?) and always two, just two and no more, drinks with conversation after dinner. The one memorable occasion for me is that as, a child, fresh horseradish was made from roots dug up at the cottage. I had never had horseradish and stood up in my chair at the dinner table and leaned over and took a big whiff of the horseradish and my diaphragm froze and was not able to exhale. Oriana came over and grabbed me and pumped my arms up and down, trying to get me to breath. I passed out but regained consciousness...."

Brooks died in 1984 and Oriana in 1989, both receiving notice in the Obituary column of not only the Huntsville Times but across the world, including the New York Times. Oriana is buried at Valhalla Cemetery but a certain mystery surrounds the placement of Brooks' remains. For whatever reason, Bruce, his stepson, is rumored by the family to have taken a trip to New York with Brooks' cremated remains. He went to both New York City and to Durham but he never said what he did with Brooks' ashes. For all we know a small dot of ash sits buried on his beloved Broadway, and another group may be scattered in the Catskills, and maybe....just maybe, a bit of him is in North Alabama, in a place of memory only the dead can answer. Regardless, his legacy and Oriana's will forever be marked on the stage, and in the annals of newspapers and books loved the world over.

*By Steve Gierhart, Publisher of the Brooks Atkinson Series and the Women War Correspondents Series, including Oriana Atkinson, with the Ardent Writer Press*



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# THE MARBLE PALACE



by *Bob Cochran*

*Originally Published in  
Old Huntsville magazine  
May 1996*

I stopped by my bank's ATM the other day on the way home from work, remembering that I'd need some cash for a business trip the next day. As I waited for the "machine" to process my withdrawal and for the cash to pop out of the little slot, I was reminded of my very first "banking transaction." that took place about 39 years ago this summer, when I made my way to the magnificent old building housing The First National Bank of Huntsville.

My family moved to Huntsville in September of 1956, when I was 10 years old. Those were the "boom" years for Huntsville, and we lived nearly the next 4 years in a second floor apartment on Harrison Avenue.

A friend of mine at the (then) new Blossomwood School had a paper route for The Huntsville Times. and in the summer of 1957 he asked me if I would deliver his

papers for three weeks while he was on vacation with his family. I like to think he chose me because he knew I would do a good job as his substitute; in retrospect, however, I may have been the LAST person he asked, or it may have been because I was the only other kid he knew with a big basket on my bicycle! I was more than eager to do it, since all I had to do was deliver the papers - he would collect payment from his customers when he got back.

I didn't have any problems,

and after my friend had collected his money, he paid me - a crisp, new \$10 bill. I was quite pleased, since this represented the first money that I had ever earned by myself. My parents figured that I would probably "blow" it quickly on baseball cards or something else of no value, so my father suggested that I take my \$10 to the bank and open a savings account.

He told me where The First National Bank of Huntsville was, and the next Saturday morning I set out on my mission.

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**Joe Taylor, Huntsville**

I walked downtown, clutching my money in my pocket. When I walked into the lobby of The First National Bank (through the largest doors I had ever seen in my life), I came to a screeching halt. It seemed to me that EVERYTHING in the building was shiny, gleaming MARBLE - the walls, the floors, the ceiling, even the tellers' cages! There were several tall (MARBLE) desks, at least a foot taller than I was, against the right wall; people were standing at them, writing.

I obviously looked lost and a lady sitting at a desk on the left, just inside the big doors, motioned me over to her. She asked how they could help me and I told her that I wanted to open a savings account. She told me to go to one of the tellers, whose counter (GREEN MARBLE) was along the left side of the lobby. This counter wasn't quite as tall as the writing stands, so the lady teller saw part of my head sticking up over the top as I stood on my tiptoes.

I told her that I had \$10 and wanted to open a savings account. She looked at me with a big smile said, "Yes, sir. just a moment." Then she disappeared from my view. A few moments later I saw her coming around the far corner of the long, green counter, pushing a chair toward me. She asked me if I was a new customer, and I eagerly nodded my head. "Well, this will take a few minutes, so let's at least make you comfortable. Stand up on this chair."

I did and she positioned me in front of her spot. She then walked back around behind the counter, and began the process of helping me become a depositor. She was obviously enjoying herself and several other people behind the counter smiled and waved at me.

She filled out some forms with the information I gave her, had me sign a couple of them, and finally gave me a deposit ticket and my very own "passbook." She firmly reminded me to take

good care of my book, since I would need it every time I came into the bank to "conduct my business,"

I thanked her, climbed down out of the chair, and left. So went my first visit to "The Marble Palace."



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# La Cucaracha

by M.D. Smith, IV

The old man was visiting his son in a distant town to spend one night with him before a meeting the next day. Since it was nearing Father's Day, the son said he'd treat his father to dinner anywhere he wanted. The old man had a favorite place in mind where the seafood was excellent.

At dinner, the first thing to catch the son's eye was oysters on the half shell. They promptly decided to split a dozen for an appetizer. The waiter, a most friendly Jamaican looking lad, jovially took their order, a Maine Lobster for the son and a whole grilled Sea Bass for the old man.

The food began arriving and with special sauce each made up in his own dish, they enjoyed the oysters that were fresh, firm and mouth-watering good.

The main course came. The son raved about how large and also good all of the lobster with the giant claws tasted.

The old man, said, "I have never even seen a whole, large fish cooked this way", and upon peeling the spice-sprinkled skin away, there was moist, juicy Sea Bass, the best tasting he could remember.

The son spoke, "I have never had lobster any better, Pops. This is a great meal, and with the great vegetables you got, and my loaded baked potato, I don't see how I could enjoy it any more."

Time for the check and the son was holding his credit card in his hand, so the attentive waiter could take it for the charge. When the pleasant waiter came with the ticket, he slipped it in the slot of the tray, and the waiter was off.

Both the old man and his son were patting their tummies, agreeing there was no room for dessert, nor did they need the calories.

Then, the waiter returned with the card and tickets, and once again the old man started to say, "This has been..." The son was also saying that it was a great meal, and during that slight pause, the old man noticed something moving by his right pocket and glanced down. At that moment he saw a king size cockroach jump from his pant leg to the edge of the table cloth and run under the lip of his plate with the fish skeleton on it.

A few things flashed through the old man's mind, then he looked up at the waiter as the son had finished speaking and continued.

"As I was saying this has been a wonderful meal, best I have tasted in recent memory, perfect in every way, except for just a small but important thing." As he said those words and everyone was focused on him and the exception he had mentioned, he slid his plate to the left.

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Out ran the giant cockroach continuing across the table towards the son sitting on the other side. Both the waiter and son's eyes enlarged to half-dollar size and the son sprung to his feet shouting, "Oh my God, it's a huge cockroach."

The son jumped back as the roach fell to the floor, and the son backed further away while stomping his foot on the floor. The waiter immediately jumped into the open area and started stomping the floor, attempting to step on the roach.

The old man just sat there, amused at this flurry of activity, and over the hollering, he loudly said, "I hope you haven't killed my pet cockroach. I carry him in his own wooden matchbox. He's a pet," trying to restrain his laughter further.

After all the commotion and the old man assumed they had stomped the roach flat, he was still laughing at the entire scene.

The son, however, was not laughing. He had just taken the little black tray with his card and tickets in his hand when the roach appeared, and he looked at the waiter, tapped on the ticket in his hand and said, "Let's go talk to the manager about this."

The old man, still amused at the entire scene, begged him not to, saying their meal was over and was great, and not to make an issue of it.

His son replied, "No problem? I got a big problem," as he and the waiter started down the aisle and towards the back. The old man never got up from his chair, and while still amused over the entire happening, wondered what was going on, since it was taking a long time. Meeting with the manager of the restaurant, the son nodded to the waiter by his side, said, "You tell him," pointing to the manager, "what you just saw at our table."

"Oh yeah, boss, it was bad, it was real bad. As I was handing him the check, a big ole cockroach ran across the food they had just eaten. It was a big old sucker with wings and antenna and everything. It was gross,"

"How do we fix this?" the manager asked.

"You comp it," was the reply.

"I can't comp a 100 dollar ticket."

"Either you comp it or I'll Yelp-it," the son said.

The manager spoke, "Hold on a second, let me make a phone call." He went to call the owner.

When the manager came back, he said, "The owner said to comp it, but you're probably going to Yelp it anyway."

"No, I won't Yelp it, and I'm a man of my word," the son said, and he meant it.


On the way back to the table the son told the waiter, "Don't worry, I don't even know how to Yelp, I just knew it was big in the restaurant business."

Meanwhile, the old man had been sitting at the table and saw them returning. The son told him the meal was free but needed a \$20 bill to tip the waiter since he had no cash, and the manager reversed the charge.

The old man gave him the bill as he stood to leave, the son took it and was about to hand it to the waiter, when just behind the old man where a young couple had just taken a seat had jumped to their feet.





All focus was on them, as the man and woman were hopping and stomping their feet, and the waiter started to run over to his other table.

The son handed him the folded twenty dollar bill and said, "Here's a twenty, appreciate your help, but you have bigger problems," and the couple behind them continued to do the Mexican Hat Dance, trying to step on La Cucaracha.



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# How Arab Got Its Name

by C. Lee Stewart

The first time I heard of Arab was in the fall of 1947. I was a freshman at St. Bernard, a Catholic boy's boarding school near Cullman. The year before I was enrolled St. Bernard and Arab faced off in football. Before the game, critics and sports reporters had the St. Bernard Saints as an 18 point underdog. But on November 9, 1946, St. Bernard upset Arab 13-0.

There was a large homecoming crowd as well as a large crowd from Arab. But, suddenly after the game, a big donnybrook broke out. Even some of the priests took off their collars and got into the brawl. That ended the Arab-St. Bernard series.

The next year we were told to go in groups when we went into town because those Arab boys would be in Cullman looking to get revenge on the St.. Bernard boys.

In 1947 I was on the St. Bernard Crusaders Junior football team and played left half back in the Notre Dame Boy Formation. We had a tough schedule and only scored a total of 7 points. when we finally scored a touchdown, we had no player who could kick the extra point. We had a pass play and I ran to the left as a decoy and when I turned my head to the right, the football hit me in the face and dropped into my arms. That made our extra point. When that season ended, so did my football career.

In the mid 1970s my family and I moved to Pine Lake near Arab. I had always thought Arab was an odd name for a town and I finally got the answer to the mystery of how Arab got its name from the Arab library.

Arab, atop Brindley Mountain, is approximately 25 miles

south of the Tennessee River near Huntsville and is about 14 miles west of the lakes of the Tennessee River in Guntersville.

Stephen Tuttle Thompson moved from Rhea County, Tennessee, with his parents in 1840 to what would become Arab. "By 1858 the community around the Thompson Farm was known as Thompson's Village.

There are really two versions of how Arab got its name. In the early days the mail was carried by stage coaches across the mountain. The Postal Department in Washington requested that towns in the area select short names so they could sort out the mail. "The Bible was the source of inspiration and accounts for local community names as Ruth, Joppa, Egypt, etc. Stephen Thompson, founder of what would become Arab, attempted to name the town after his son, Rawson Arad Riley Thompson who was thirteen years old. However the name Arad, due to a misreading of letters at the Washington Post Office, returned the name of Arab and thus has been Arab ever since."

The second version of the name has "Stephen Tuttle Thompson applying to the Federal Government to open a Post Office in the community and submitted 3 names: Ink, Bluebird and Arad. The committee chose the latter but misspelled it as Arab. The Post Office was approved and Thompson became the towns first Postmaster, Tax Assessor and later served as County Commissioner. His son, John Thompson served as first mayor when the town was incorporated in 1892."

"The first telephone line reached Arab in 1908 and the Bank of Arab was established in 1909. The first high school opened in 1922 and electricity came to the town in 1928. Arab was a rural community dependent on surrounding farms for its source of income. There has been a significant increase in growth in Arab after Redstone Arsenal and Marshall Space Flight Center began in Huntsville."

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The other day a man and woman came to a sudden halt on Clinton Street, and the woman dropped a basket she was carrying and called out, "I will, I will, I will not live with you another day!"

"You'll leave me, will you?" he calmly asked.

"Yes, I will."

"When?"

"Now, right off, this minute!" she yelled.

"You'll go away?"

"Yes, Sir!"

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," he calmly stated.

"But I will, and I defy you to prevent me. I have suffered at your hands as long as I can to put up with it."

"Oh, I shan't try to stop you," he quietly replied. "I shall simply report to the police that my wife has mysteriously disappeared. They will then want your description and I shall give it. You wear number 9 shoes, you have an extra large mouth, you walk stiff in your knees, your nose turns up at the end, hair the color of brick terra cotta, the newest in fashion, eyes rather on the squint, you can't cook, your voice partakes of...."

"Wretch! You wouldn't dare do that!" she screamed.

"I certainly will, and the description will go into all the papers." They glared at each other for a minute like cats.

Then he continued to walk up the street. She looked up and down the street, then gritted her teeth together, picked up her basket and followed on after.

He had what they call the "goods" on her.

"When one engine fails on a twin engine airplane, you always have enough power left to get you to the scene of the crash."

*From the Military Manual*



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# What Time Changes

by Ernestine Moody

My father was born in Syracuse, Italy in 1893. He came to the United States at the age of fifteen on the ship San Giovanni. He often spoke of how his mom, with his thirteen month old baby brother in arms, endured the hardship of traveling in the lower deck of the packed ship. Many people were seasick and of course, the heat was almost unbearable.

Fast forwarding, upon arrival, he begged for work and sat each day outside of the entrance of a cotton mill. Finally, his request for employment was granted. After diligently saving his money, he opened a small grocery store. Around 1937, he was the entrepreneur of the largest grocery store in Savannah, GA. However, there can be no comparison with our small family store and today's giants, like Walmart, Target, Sam's, etc.

Dad married my sixteen year old mom. Together they raised my brother and myself.

Now, to my dad, the most important asset a father needed from his family was respect. It was instilled in us that "Kids were seen and not heard!" Never were we allowed to even hint that we were considering interrupting an adult conversation.

We were to address all adults with the prefix Mr., Mrs., or Miss. Never were we to address them by their first name.

The adults at a big family dinner, were seated at the BIG table, and the youngsters were placed at a smaller table, usually in another room.

If dad came home tired, we were told to be quiet as dad had had a stressful day. Mom often supplied him with his request for water or food. She would travel from the kitchen to his side without one harsh word.

**"A friend never defends a husband who gets his wife a lawn mower for her birthday."**

**Erma Bombeck**

We were told to never, never question an adult decision. However, I have to admit on this rule we sometimes failed (after all we were human)!

Today our papa would no longer be the chief maker of our household rules. Adults often cease their conversation to hear what a little one is thinking. Small kids address us by our first or nickname. Some kids receive their food first and are often the primary speaker at the family dinner table.

If a dad has experienced a "hard day," many fathers will try and hide it from their families so they will not feel as badly as perhaps he might be feeling. There is usually not a great deal of worry if dad might be needing water, or food and as for accepting decisions, I think the word, "Why" is very much in a kid's vocabulary.

Perhaps on rereading this article I realize that there was some merit to a dad being a strict disciplinarian, but there is also benefit in today's dad being more understanding, and a listener of his little one's wants and needs.

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# Bless the School Teachers

by Hugh Michaels

"Reading, writing and arithmetic - hitched to the tune of a hickory stick." School teaching has changed in many ways. Teachers have been a part of our lives for so many years. I gave school teaching a try several years ago and quickly realized that it wasn't my calling. I taught for 2 years and six weeks.

A good teacher needs a lot of patience, understanding and compassion. Sometimes I would ask a question and realize I had forgotten the answer. I would call on the smartest student to "bail" me out.

These days teachers and students alike are faced with violence. You read about students being killed, all the media reporting the bad news. Good news is rarely reported.

While I taught, I experienced some problems but nothing like teachers do today. It is a very honorable profession and teachers feel good when they find out about one of their students becoming a success.

I will forever remember a student who made life miserable for me. He was only waiting it out in school until he could drop out at 16, which he did. It seems that I tried everything possible to help this child but I failed. I finally decided to invite his dad to our next PTA meeting. The dad did arrive, with his child. The parent wanted to know what the problem was with his child. I explained that we were learning about the patriots who had signed the Declaration of Independence and his son just didn't want to learn. His dad became very angry, grabbed the boy by the neck and said, "Who signed it?" I instructed the son to tell him.

The father said, "Did you sign the damn thing? If you did you better tell Mr. Michaels, we have to get along with him."

Evidently the parent missed

out on some teaching as well.

It seems like classrooms are war zones now. Teachers can't teach with the threat of guns.

Years ago I remember a problem in school. I was a single guy back then, and girls would write me notes and drop them on the playground or in the hallway. I would read them and throw them away. Whenever I needed help with a student the Principal was not helpful - he'd say take this paddle and do it yourself.

An English teacher put words on the blackboard and the class was supposed to make sentences from them. The words were "Detail, Defense and Deduct."

One student wrote "The head of deduct went over defense before detail".

Years ago women were teachers and very few men, the men were expected to be out in the field or farm. Hopefully something can be done that will turn this situation around. It's a selfless profession and kids need good teachers.

May God Bless all our school teachers.



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# SEC Football Promises Surprises in 2019-2020 Season

by John Carriker

The slight chill of an early Fall breeze was hardly noticeable as the little boy squirmed to loosen the grip his father had on his hand. There was an awe in his young eyes as he tried to take in all the surrounding festivities: cars, RVs and other types of vehicles as far as the eyes could see with smoking grills filled with ribs, hamburgers, chicken and all types of "real man's" food. Even the smoke that watered his eyes and the blaring radio music that rang in his ears could not keep out the smell of an SEC football opener's tailgate festivity ... a tradition that initiated every game on the schedule.

This was his first game "live", and he hadn't been able to sleep for almost a week after his dad broke the news to him. Now he was here! What he had watched on television didn't do justice to this spectacle, he thought, and he still hadn't entered the stadium which loomed "almost to Heaven" in front of him.

"Now, hold on tight," he dad sternly told him, realizing the crowds were heavy and the atmosphere was primed for excitement. The tickets were taken and torn, the turnstile allowed them through, and they headed toward the short tunnels and into the "belly of the beast".

"Wow!" the pre-teen exclaimed as he exited the corridor into the bright sunshine of the stadium. He stopped as if mesmerized by the sight of the greenest grass he had ever seen, surrounded by thousands of seats on bleachers surrounding the field. People were starting to arrive looking like ants swarming toward their assigned seats, carrying portable cushions and chairs as well as blankets, programs and comfort food.

Soon, the players from two schools would enter the field to warm-up for the forthcoming contest. The bands from both schools would do the same from their places in the stands. In just a few moments, the electricity of harnessed energy would be released as cheerleaders will lead the two charged teams onto the field, the bands will be playing, and the American flag will be honored.

Then, comes the kickoff.

On any given Saturday there

will be a majority of the fourteen teams of the SEC competing on those gridirons, proving their supremacy as a conference while drawing record crowds of fans, foes and possibly future opponents. In a fantasy tale about football, it would read: "Once upon a time in the land of SEC football, there lived 14 fearful giants: Alabama, Arkansas, Auburn, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, LSU, Mississippi State, Missouri, Ole Miss, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas A&M and Vanderbilt. And they were feared throughout the land by those wannabes who desired to wrest the titles and crowns they accumulate each year."

And there are enviable SEC facts to be coveted by the rest of the country: the fourth largest football stadium belongs to Tennessee in Knoxville (102,455 seats); the Volunteers have one of the oldest stadiums (1921) while Ole Miss was constructed in 1915. Three of the four loudest stadiums in college football come from the SEC: Kyle Field (Texas A&M), Ben Hill Griffin Sta-

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dium (Florida Gators) and Neyland (Tennessee).

Several other facts: It wasn't until 1959 that LSU's Tiger Stadium was first called Death Valley. Previously known as "Deaf Valley" because of the crowd noise, the name appropriately changed after the 1959 Sugar Bowl in which LSU beat Clemson.

When it comes to naming the stadium for an active coach, Auburn beat Alabama to the punch (that is, in naming its stadium for an active coach). Ralph "Shug" Jordan was still coaching when the stadium added his name in 1973. Florida's popular nickname "The Swamp" was a new label by coach Steve Spurrier in 1992. Kentucky is where corporate stadium naming invaded SEC football. On May 1, 2017, the school announced that Commonwealth Stadium was being re-named Kroger.

But probably the most interesting stadium stories and the one that reflects the fervor and tenacity of SEC football is the Texas A&M anecdote regarding Kyle Field as it was written: "In 1904, Texas A&M alumnus and horticulture professor Edwin Jackson Kyle served as the school's President of the General Athletics Association. When he went to the school for funds to build a football stadium, he was denied. So, he fenced off a piece of land in the southwest corner of campus that had been assigned to him for agriculture use. He used \$650 of his own to purchase a grandstand from local fairgrounds and built a wooden bleacher to give the venue a capacity of 500. The venue became known as Kyle Field, a name which carried over once a stadium was built in 1921. It is the largest stadium in the SEC, by {about 250 seats}."

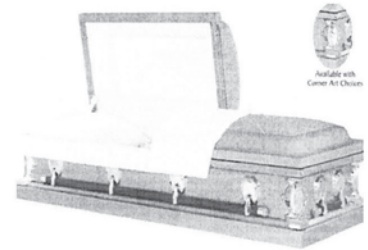
But football wouldn't be football without players who have dedicated their lives to it. We never know what the future will hold for these teams, but we know what the past has produced: the conference has been blessed by young men who have excelled in areas of athleticism and character that will long be remembered. Bo Jackson of Auburn is arguably the best player for the Tigers. A three-sport sensation, Bo still holds the SEC record for most yards per carry at 6.6. Florida's Tim Tebow has the most TDs (145) and single season touchdowns (55) in the conference. And Herschel Walker of Georgia will not be forgotten — he holds the two highest

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averages for rushing attempts in a season (35 and 30.4, respectively) in 1981 and 1982.

What about LSU's Billy Cannon, a first team SEC in 1958 and 1959 before winning the Heisman Trophy! George Rogers, South Carolina's prolific runner, not only won the Heisman but was the overall number 1 pick in the NFL draft. And how about the Manning brothers, Eli of Mississippi fame, and Peyton who may be the best quarterback up to that time to ever play in the SEC. A&M's quarterback Johnny Manziel lit up the gridiron with an unimaginable 393.5 yards per game! Over his two years of playing he averaged 384.2 total yards, 100 yards more than his closest rival.



Vanderbilt's Commodores featured quarterback Bill Spears; Missouri's Kellen Winslow redefined the meaning of "tight end" and went on to the NFL to break records in that position. In three seasons the Razorbacks' Darren McFadden played only three seasons but amassed 5,881 career all-purpose yards. Mississippi State still believes that they had the best player in their program's history as Dak Prescott {now of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys} set 38 school records. Good argument? Yes! He was one of only four players to throw for at least 70 TDs and rush for 40 plus.

Prior to becoming a national powerhouse, Alabama had a familiar connection with Ken-

tucky: under Bear Bryant's tutelage (who would go on to legendary fame as coach of the Tide), the Wildcats quarterback Babe Parilli led the school to its first ever SEC title in 1950.

But the integrity of the SEC is reflected by individuals, not teams. Nowhere is this exemplified better than last season's Crimson Tide Jalen Hurts, the former quarterback who in two years as a starter saw only two losses on his record. In the 2018 SEC Championship Game, he relieved an injured Tagovailoa and led the team to a comeback victory. Alabama moved to 13-0 and secured a spot in the Playoff.

Jalen willingly took the backseat to Tua and sat on the sidelines throughout the season until he was called upon to work an-

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other spectacular win and place the team in position to once more play for the national title. Fans never heard any bitterness from this young man who put his team above himself. When asked about these setbacks after the season, he replied, "I understand that God put those obstacles and challenges in my life for a reason. He wanted me to feel the pain I felt for a reason. He wanted me to understand the importance of never losing faith — and of always staying true to myself. He had NOT brought me this far just to leave me there. 'This isn't something you're stuck in,' I'd tell myself. This is something you're going through.' And one thing I can promise you is that I'm better off for having gone through it. Everything I dealt with at Bama: I'm stronger for it. I'm wiser. I'm a better man."

What a mixture! Power, personality and performance for a conference known for its integrity and strength of character. Get ready, SEC fans, for an exciting, exhilarating 2019-2020 season.

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# MY LIFE IN HUNTSVILLE

by Marcella Thompson Hargrove

I grew up in Huntsville, lived on Vanderbilt Circle off of Governors Drive. I went to Fifth Avenue School grades one through five in the 50s. We moved to the Redstone Park Housing Project, there I attended Farley School, fifth through seventh.

I was reading in the August issue of old Huntsville Magazine, written by Louie Tippet, about Redstone Park. It made me remember the good memories we made while living there. We rode our bikes to school and played under the street lights with our neighbors. My daddy's family were pil-

lars of the Farley community. He and his family started the Redstone Baptist Church across from the housing park. Granddaddy Thompson (Ed) farmed the land and was well thought of and a part of the community. A road is named for him which is Chaney Thompson Road which is now in the Bailey Cove Area.

I was very sad when we moved to Huntsville on Lee Highway, later Hwy 72 Chapman Mountain. My sister Gale and brother Dale grew up on that street.

Times were so simple and you didn't have to be rich or poor to be a part of the neighborhood and have friends. We knew all our neighbors and everyone loved and helped each other when needed. We watched Lee High School being built, but went to Rison School till it was finished. The high school was not completely finished when I started eighth grade and went on to Huntsville High, graduating in

1961.

Gale and Dale graduated from Lee High School. It would take lots of paper to tell you the prominent people we grew up with and you would know some of them today in public office and other functions.

Big Spring Park was another beautiful area and a memory of Huntsville. We went there weekly to swim, picnic and just socialize with friends. That was the place to go then.

I love this magazine and always know something in each issue about the people, areas and memories of other natives of Huntsville.

I have since moved to Buford, GA near Atlanta but Huntsville is my home. My parents, Mildred and Aubrey Thompson, are gone as well as my sister Gale. My brother Dale still lives there. I'm 75 now and life lived in Huntsville comes to mind very often!



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# PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

## Amazing Cat Tales



- A man who fell out of his wheelchair says his cat apparently called 911 for help. Roberts said he got the cat 3 years ago and tried to train him to call 911, but was unsure if the training ever stuck. When police arrived, Tommy the cat was lying on the floor next to the phone.

- Cats helped to search for survivors in the World Trade Center destruction.

- A suspected burglar was caught in Egypt after stepping on the tail of a pet cat as he sneaked away. The cat's screech awoke his owner, who went after the burglar. The home owner was stabbed in the chest, but was able to phone the police, and the burglar was eventually arrested.

- A 10-week-old kitten survived 17 days without food or water after stowing away in a lorry travelling from Israel, a 2,000-mile trip.

- A cat called Schimmy refuses to eat anything but Chinese take-out. His owner, who eats Chinese take-out 5 days a week, had started giving Schimmy a small bowl of leftover shrimp or chicken chow mein each night, and Schimmy now refuses to eat anything else. Dr. Freda Scott-Park of the British Veterinary Association told The Sun: "It is strange but not at all harmful to him".

- A cat survived a 120-mile drive through Belgium stuck under the hood of a car. The cat had crawled underneath the hood and got stuck in the engine compartment.

- A tortoiseshell kitten, named Flowerpot after the contents of the crate she was trapped in, survived for more than a month inside the crate on a ship traveling from Malaysia to the UK.

- A Canadian cat that was lost was found by a woman 4,000 miles from home. The woman who found the cat was able to call his owners from the information on the cat's id tag.

- Boris, a cat, almost managed to order 450 cans of its favorite food on an internet shopping site while its owner wasn't looking. His owner had ordered 6 cans - apparently Boris didn't think that was enough.

- A Siamese cat named Musya took over the mothering of two 2-week-old wolf cubs from a Russian zoo after their own mother failed to produce enough milk.

- Bonnie the cat, upon discovering that two men were stealing pet food from her owner's Derbyshire warehouse, attacked them. The burglars were scared off after loading just a few bags of food.

- A cat, named Felix by his rescuers, survived a several-week journey from the Middle East to Britain inside a shipping crate by lapping condensation from the walls.

- A pet cat in Wisconsin survived being tumble dried for 10 minutes. The cat's tail needed to be amputated, sustained badly burned ears and fluid on his lungs. He had crept into the dryer unseen.

- In Gulfport, Mississippi, a cat was blown onto the roof of a shop, then fell 60 feet into an oak tree during Hurricane George in 1998. In an interview Big Boy's caretaker said Big Boy has never left the tree - he eats, sleeps and eliminates in the tree. He climbs from limb to limb for exercise.

- Cats and dogs did the digging at a ground breaking ceremony to start improvements at The Humane Society's Boulder, Colorado animal shelter.

- An intruder was forced to flee a house in Malaysia after the owner was alerted to his presence by her cat. The cat had seen the man crouching on wooden roof beams, and raised the alarm by staring at her owner, then the roof, three times.

- A starving cat survived on water for a month after being locked in an empty house. It had survived by drinking water from a leaking tap. He was rescued by an RSPCA inspector who broke into the boarded-up house.

- A Canadian cat which hitched a lift on a truck ended up 600 miles from home. The driver turned Petey over to animal humane society members who managed to track down his owners and later flew him home.

- A motorist in the United States found a cat frozen inside a block of ice. Roberta Johnson was driving by a large ice chunk on a road in Minnesota when she spotted a feline face inside. Thinking it was dead, she was startled to hear a meow. She apparently took the cat to a vet, and the only damage the cat suffered was frostbitten ears. She named him Car Cat, and took him home with her to live.

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## *From the Desk of Tom Carney*

### The Witchcraft Trial

The courtrooms in early Alabama history normally dealt with horse thieves, murderers and bushwhackers, but in the late fall of 1822 our courts of law were forced to deal with something totally different. The courts had to render a decision about a woman accused of witchcraft.

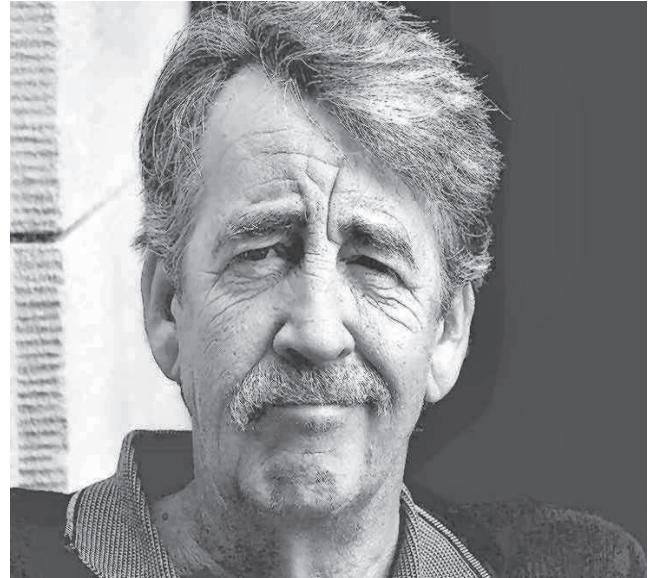
History has forgotten the old woman's name. All we know about her is that she lived on the banks of the Flint River. A friendless old crone who had strange ways and was rather aloof, the woman was the talk of the local area. At first, she was spoken of only in whispers, then more boldly until she was publicly accused of being a witch. It culminated in a warrant for her arrest signed by one of the landed gentry of the community.

The day of the trial was fixed. Excitement ran high and people came from far and near to witness the unusual event. The trial proceeded on time and a great number of witnesses were called to testify, but nothing positive resulted from any of their testimony. Then a young woman was called to the stand. Her testimony went as follows: One day she was washing down at the creek and became extremely tired. She sat down at the foot of a beech tree to rest. Soon, the old accused woman came down the tree in the form of a squirrel, with its tail curled over its back, snarled at her and put a spell on her.

The sickly girl testified that she had been ill ever since and couldn't sleep due to pain in her stomach that started the day she saw the old woman in the form of the squirrel.

The presiding judge, who seemed to have been in deep study, now, seemed quite relieved upon hearing the young lady's testimony. He straightened in his chair and announced that the young woman's testimony was proof positive of the old woman's guilt. His opinion was that he should immediately send her to jail and began writing the order to put her behind bars.

Shock and dumb amazement settled on the faces of every sensible person in the room except that of a young Irishman named John Gallagher. Gallagher seemed calm and self-possessed. He rose

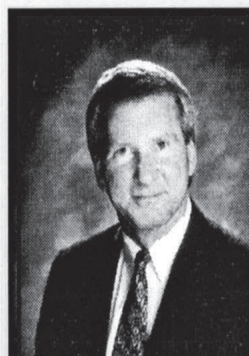


and modestly asked permission of the court to make a single remark, whereupon he was told by the judge that he could make as many remarks as he wished.

"Then, Sir," began Gallagher, "allow me to remind you that it would be useless to send this woman to jail, for if she really is a witch she could escape through the keyhole; and if she should be innocent, it would be a great pity for her to be sent to prison."

The old judge was now more perplexed than ever for he was in a dilemma as to what to do with the old woman and asked young Gallagher his opinion. At this, the sensible young man suggested that the case rest where it was until the Grand Jury met at which time it could be laid before them.

That course of action was accepted, but for one reason or another the case was never taken before the Grand Jury and was never brought up again. It is assumed that the poor old lady lived out her days in peace, left alone, by the banks of the Flint River. So ended the only witch trial that was ever held in Alabama's colorful history.



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## MY FIRST HALLOWEEN IN HUNTSVILLE

by *Monita Soni*

I moved into my new house in Madison County on October 31st 2008, Halloween day. It's been several years but I distinctly remember that evening.

I was excited to celebrate this mysterious American holiday. Must have gone to the grocery store several times to get chocolates, toffees butter fingers, sour-patch treats, beanies and all the rigamarole of Halloween. I turned around and went back to get a few spooks, scarecrows and cobwebs. I debated if I should buy any bats? My neighbors had some on their windows but I am a bit suspicious of our nocturnal mammalian cousins so I decided to leave them at the counter in Walmart.

The autumnal dusk was upon us and I hurriedly donned my Alice in Wonderland costume. Those days, I still had my girlish figure and as I tied a ribbon on my braids, I was pleased with the apparition in the looking glass. I turned most of the house lights off to create a spooky atmosphere and lit up my jack o'lantern. It sat on the steps leering into the street with a wicked orange grin. Now for the magic, I thought and grinned myself.

I poured myself a tall glass of cider and waited for my first visitor. I did not have to wait long. The door bell chimed. I opened the door. Three pairs of eyes looked up at me. They were three ducklings, with a bunny on their heels, then came a spider infant in arms.

Then came Shrek, by and by a giraffe and a penguin trickled in. Trick or treat! Candy and laughter exchanged hands. Parents hovered at the shoulders of these marching band of children, their bags getting heavy with goodies, their eyes acquiring an imagined sugar haze. Their little minds counting candy in their heads. What a wonderful method for teaching math. I was worried that they were up for disappointment later because I am sure all parents would make them dump their baskets on the kitchen table and go through everything to make sure that it was safe to consume. I

know of a few parents (myself included) who were born with an over-indulgent sweet tooth especially for a certain type of Reese's pieces and strawberry Starburst.

I was having a good time, I had received thirty children and the candy stash was running low. In fact for my next person at the door, I might hand out shiny quarters or granola bars. I hoped they would understand. The hallway clock struck ten. It was late, I thought I might just turn my pumpkin light off and turn in. When the door bell rang again. Three long bells, as though someone was leaning on it. I opened the door a chink and looked out. There was no one there. A trickster, I thought. It's okay, I could handle a cheeky child. I thought: All good children must be in bed by now.

I put the safety latch on and turned towards my bedroom. The doorbell rang again, followed by quick sharp knocks. Now I was a bit anxious. It was safe those days in neighborhoods. Holidays and festivals, religious or otherwise, were treated with a spirit of healthy acceptance.

I braced myself and opened the door a chink, a laughing sooty teenager held out his hand. A raspy voice-over gasped: Trick or treat.. I handed a box of Cheerios through the chink and slammed the door. Inside, I flipped on the flood lights and called my neighbor. Michele answered: Hello... "Hey there are a couple of hoodlums at my door." The kid looks like he crawled out of Oliver Twist and his Dad is in a long overcoat from the movie Godfather. "

"Don't open your door. I am calling the cops." Silence. I hung up on my neighbor and with clammy fingers began to dial 9.. There was raucous laughter at the door. "Monita! Please don't call the police. It's your neighbor Mike!"

I was livid with rage but I opened the door and grabbed my treat back from Mike's hand. Thanks neighbor. You did give me a scare. The end was not so Happy on that Halloween.

*From the book "Flow Through My Heart" written by Monita Soni and available for \$13 on Barnes and Noble, and Amazon.com.*

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# Maple Hill Cemetery Comes to Life

by *Cindy Taylor Burger*

One of Huntsville's most colorful Autumn Venues is the Annual Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll which is sponsored by the Huntsville Pilgrimage Association. The Stroll takes place the third Sunday in October, which this year is Oct. 20th (rain date Oct.27th). It's our 31st stroll and we are excited that it takes place during Alabama's Bi-centennial!

The beautiful grounds and pedestrian friendly avenues are sure to offer an entertaining and educational afternoon for your whole family, however all pets are prohibited in the City Cemetery.

The festivities begin at 1:30 with the Grand Stroll Parade of Characters on the main avenue of the cemetery. From 2:00 until 4:30 the characters will be sharing their graveside stories in the historical part of the cemetery.

This educational event has grown to be one of the largest living history strolls in the nation. There will there be over 70 costumed characters participating. The actors have done much research of their character to make their presentation as authentic as possible. There will also be period automobiles, special exhibits, several tradi-

tional music groups and student scavenger hunts. At 4:30 the Graveyard Sexton will ring a bell to end the stroll.

Water and rest room facilities will be provided. There will be free parking in the City Parking Decks and free shuttle service which loops continuously from the courthouse to the cemetery and back.

The Stroll is a donation driven event for continued preservation of Maple Hill Cemetery.

Maple Hill Cemetery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

For more information please visit [Huntsvillepilgrimage.org](http://Huntsvillepilgrimage.org)

*Jan Williams, Huntsville Pilgrimage Association President*

*Mary Pat Riley, 2019 Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll Chairman*  
*Cindy Taylor Burger, Publicity*

## Aunt Matt's Favorite Peanut Butter Cookies

- 1 c. butter
- 3/4 c. sugar
- 3/4 c. brown sugar
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1 c. chunky peanut butter
- 2 beaten eggs
- 1-1/4 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 c. bran
- 3/4 c. rolled oats
- 2 t. baking soda

Melt the butter in a pan, beat together with sugars, vanilla, peanut butter and eggs.

In a separate bowl combine flour, bran, oats and baking soda. Stir the dry mixture into the butter mixture.

Drop by teaspoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 18 minutes. Don't over cook. Cool on wire rack.

## Ebony



Hello, the Ark named me Ebony. I am a Labrador retriever mix puppy. I am handsome black puppy with a pretty white spot on my chest. The person that had me decided a puppy was too much work. I am glad the Ark took me in. I think having a pet does involve extra work. You have to spend the time to take care of a pet. Guess what? It is worth it because I will provide you with lots of unconditional love. I will be your best friend, your companion, your watch doggie (that means I will alert you when I need to), and I will watch the Dog Whisperer on TV with you too! Maybe we can even watch football. Think about how much fun we can

have during my lifetime. When you come to the Ark, will you ask to see Ebony? That's me.

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*Joan Rivers*

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# THE KIDDIE CLUB AND MORE....

by Anna (Gene) Clift Chesnut

I was inspired to write my own article about the Kiddie Club after reading "The Friendly-Teers Club" article by Betty Miller Lewis in the August issue of OHM. I do not know Betty (since I have lived in the West for fifty-six years, two of those years in San Francisco and fifty-four in Seattle) but I did appreciate her memories of the Kiddie Club, some of which I had forgotten.

I had racked my brain over the name of the piano player so I was thrilled to see her memory of Donald Patrick. I had also forgotten that Mrs. Timmons was in charge of that wonderful variety show at the Lyric Theater for children (performances, also, by some of those same children) every Saturday morning. It preceded, usually a "short" and then a cowboy movie. (Roy Rogers with, of course, Dale Evans, and Gene Autry were my favorites.)

Mrs. Timmons had a deep voice that could mimic many voices so she was the reader of children's stories at the library several days a week for many years. I loved to go to the library on days that I did not have after-school activities. I cannot remember exactly which days she read but I always looked forward to hearing her portray each character in the book. She also read the "funnies" in the newspaper on Sunday mornings on the radio, again, portraying each character in a voice that might have been their own.

As I remember, Martha Fleming's family owned the Lyric The-

ater and Mrs. Fleming could be seen occasionally at the Kiddie Club with one or two of her seven children in tow. I think, often, about what a wonderful thing the Kiddie Club was for the whole community.

As for my participation in the Kiddie Club, I, along with two other friends, sang the Andrew sisters' version of "Stars Are the Windows of Heaven" and another time I did a tap dance on roller skates. I imagine that Dee Cummings probably sang "Sweet Georgia Brown" as she would "bring the house down" when she sang it in Mrs. Hazel Robinson's recitals. I did not go every Saturday so I probably missed some notable performances.

When my husband told me we were moving to Seattle in 1966 my first question was, "Where is that?" My second was (from my Kiddie Club knowledge of the West) "Are there cowboys and Indians there?" Yes, east of the Cascade Mountains as I later learned.

I was, also, interested to read from Betty's article that WBHP broadcast the performances of the Kiddie Club on the radio. I had forgotten that. Buster Pollard, whose family owned WBHP, was my third grade "boyfriend". We would hold hands across our desks in Mrs. Bradford's third grade class at West Clinton School. On some Saturdays we would meet at the Kiddie Club and hold hands while watching the performances and the movie. One Saturday we walked

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to my house from the Kiddie Club, Buster on his way to WBHP, which was at the far end of the block where I lived. We stopped at my house and sat on the front porch swing where I suddenly said "Kiss me!" He threw his hands up to his face and yelled "Noooo" and that was the end of our "puppy love".

The next day he told Margaret Anne Goldsmith that he liked her and "he would lie down in the middle of the street and let a car run over him if she didn't like him". Not sure how that went! On April 16, 1999 an article appeared in the Wall Street Journal about Buster Pollard from Huntsville, Alabama building a lodge on Gunterville Lake in the old Adirondack style.

My husband, an avid WSJ reader, asked me who Buster Pollard was and I told him my third grade "boyfriend" story. As we learned, later, a friend of my husband from boarding school, who had grown up in Lake Forest, IL, was familiar with Buster because of their common interest in old boat-houses.

Many years later the Sym-

phony had a gala at the Art Museum and Margaret Anne and I were sitting with friends at the same table. Buster was there with his wife at another table. Margaret Anne and I went up to the bandleader and asked him to call Buster up to the stage and when he came we told him he "had" to dance with both of us at the same time while the orchestra played a jitterbug song.

What a dancer he was, twirling both of us in sequence as if he had been planning for that dance all his life! People cleared the floor for our "exhibition".

What a joy for the three of us to have that last dance, as Buster died the next year.

Memories of the Kiddie Club both wonderful and bittersweet,,,,,

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# "THE WAY IT WAS"

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BY TOM CARNEY

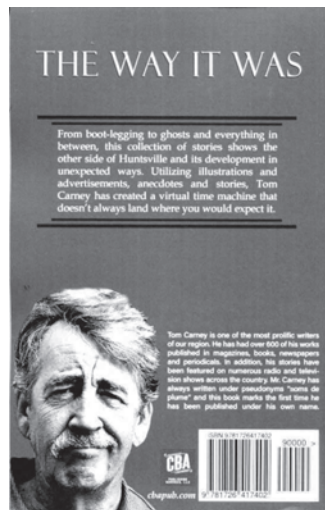
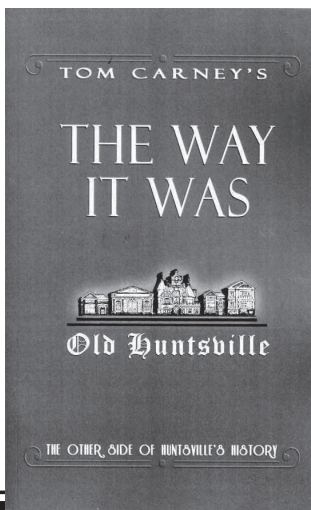
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# My Only Child

by Charita Smith Avery

My husband James (Buddy), and I were married in September 1961. I grew up in Lincoln Village and Buddy in West Huntsville and we met through mutual friends. During our first ten years of marriage, we both worked and made our lives together in our home in Harvest. As a new wife, I dreamed of having a baby and, as a young girl, I had already picked out baby names for my dolls — Brian Keith for a boy and Sheri Denise for a girl.

After five years of marriage, Buddy was drafted into the U.S. Army. He was 26 years old at the time and had we had a child, he would have escaped the draft. This was during the Viet Nam War but, thankfully, Buddy spent most of his two years service in Baumholder, Germany, while, at the same time, his brother, Bobby, was serving in Viet Nam.

After Buddy's return home from Germany, we continued with our lives, making improvements to our home in Harvest. Then, surprise, surprise, we discovered we were finally expecting a baby. My prayers had been answered; and on April 16, 1971, we were blessed with a beautiful blond-haired, blue-eyed boy, whom we named Denis James. A good friend I worked with at IBM had already used the boy name I had chosen as a child; as a result, Denis was named after his dad.

Denis was a very obedient, loving child, quiet and good-natured like his dad. He attended Westminster Christian Academy, graduating with

honors in 1989. His dream was to attend Auburn University. We always said Denis was an Auburn fan from the cradle — so much so that, as a boy of 5 or 6 years old, he refused to wear an Alabama jacket given to him by my nephew, Phil. When he watched an Auburn game on TV, he was always decked out in his Auburn sweats, headband, socks, shoe strings, etc.

Well, when it came time for college, somehow we convinced Denis to begin by attending the University of Alabama at Huntsville. In May 1990, Denis had just completed his first year at UAH and was working at Oaktree (a men's apparel shop) in the former Madison Square Mall. I was always concerned when he got off work on weekend nights because he most always went to meet some of his WCA friends after work.

I don't know if I worried more because he was my only child or because of the "abnormal" premonition I had felt for the last ten years of his life that I was going

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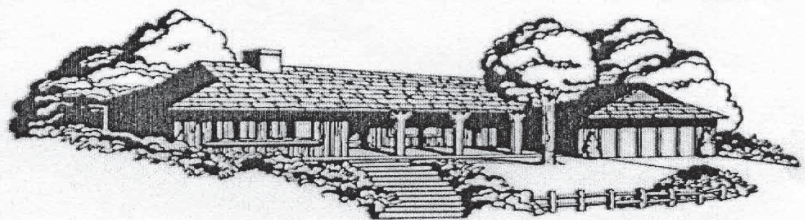
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to lose him. I had tried very hard not to be over-protective of Denis, but it was very difficult since he was my only child and I had waited so long for him. I had even learned to lie down at night and sleep after praying for the Lord to watch over him and bring him home safely.

On this particular night, Buddy and I had been out with family and returned home on some very slippery streets, since it had been raining in Huntsville all evening. We went to bed around 11:30 pm but were awakened in the early morning hours of Saturday, May 5, by two policemen informing us that our only child, Denis, had died in a car accident approximately three miles from our home. My first reaction was disbelief. This could not be happening to us – not our only child, the child we had waited for so long.

Some may not understand this, but there was also a sense of relief because I had carried this dread of losing Denis for over ten years, with the thought never leaving my mind. This was what I had dreaded, never dreaming it would be so devastating. I had already buried my dad, mother, brother and 8-year-old great niece, with my mother and great niece's death occurring only ten months prior and both their deaths occurring in the same week of July. As a matter of fact, my great niece, Shelby's, death was also the result of a car accident on the same street, Sparkman Drive, just a few blocks from Denis' accident. All of these deaths were hard, but none compared to the loss of my only child. His death was not normal – my child wasn't supposed to go before me.

He was a part of me, my heart, my future, my only child! But, it had happened, and I knew I had to accept it, and, with the Lord's help, I could. Things happen in life over which we have no control; and, we just have to make the best of them. I can tell you there were some almost unbearable days and nights, but I survived; and, I am a better person for what I've experienced. Four years ago, I buried my husband, Buddy, as a result of colon cancer. I am now doing something I've never done before and felt I could not do – live independently and alone.

As a result of Denis' death and in his memory, I started the HOPE (Helping Other Parents Endure) Group for people who have lost children to death. I chaired it for nine years and, the last time I heard, it was still active under Hospice, I always

told those who attended that they had a choice to make – to either become bitter or better – it was up to them. I chose to become better because I did not want to live a miserable life the rest of my days, I had to forgive the one who was responsible for my son's death because not forgiving would have hurt me more than it would have him.

I am a stronger person as a result of what I've been through and I hope I'm an inspiration to others who are facing trials such as this. With God's help, I am happy, enjoying activities with friends, teaching a ladies' Bible class and content with my life as it is today.

One thing that helped me was the realization that I am not the only mother who has suffered the loss of a child. I don't know why things have happened as they have, but they are things I cannot change, so I have learned to accept them and make the best of my life without my only child.



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# 2019 MAPLE HILL CEMETERY STROLL

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(RAIN DATE OCT. 27, 2019)

Since the 1980's we have been celebrating our community's heritage and history in one of Huntsville's most beautiful autumn venues. The Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll is currently the largest character-driven cemetery stroll in the country. Over 75 costumed actors portray in first person historical characters important to this area. This "living history" part of the stroll makes it so much more entertaining.

Additionally, traditional music, special exhibits, a student scavenger hunt and an antique auto show augments this family friendly event. The Cemetery Stroll enthusiastically accepts any and all donations in order to continue to make repairs and restorations to our beautiful cemetery.

\* At 1:00 pm there will be a dedication of 3 signers of the 1819 Alabama Constitution by the Twickenham Chapter of the DAR

\* At 1:30 Opening Ceremonies begin followed by the Grand Stroll Parade

\* From 2-4:30 there will be stories and traditional music throughout the historic areas of Maple Hill

\* The Stroll will conclude with the playing of "TAPS" at 4:30 on the Main Avenue

*Maple Hill Cemetery is located approximately 0.75 miles east of Huntsville's downtown square at 203 Maple Hill Drive off California Street.*

*Free parking will be available in city garages downtown with continuous shuttles running to and from Maple Hill from noon til five.*

*Rain date for the Stroll will be Sunday, October 27 from 1:30-4:30 pm*



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