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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Moonshine War in Madison County



Also in this issue: The Day “Big Jim” Borrowed my Tie; General Patrick’s Grave; A Solution for the Garbage Problem; Southern Belle; A Ghastly Discovery Found at Bird’s Spring; Cat Trivia; Recipes and Much More!

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Moonshine War in Madison County

by Billy Joe Cooley

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

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

"We had this 'groundhog still' out next to Flint River," he says.

A groundhog was a still built into the side of a hill or cliff. Such distilleries were hard to detect.

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

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

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

"Of course before he sold it,

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

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

They put together a plan to catch the thieves.

"One morning just after sun-up, daddy comes and wakes me up. We were ready to put our plan into action. We headed for the stash place and took along this old shotgun, a rabbit-ears Parker. After we got to the stash we made us a hideout under some brush. On up in the morning, here comes old man Ricketts, just lumbering along like some ol' fat hog. We watched and sure enough, he goes straight to the whiskey and helps himself to a couple gallons."

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

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

"If you think health care is expensive now, just wait until you see how much it costs when it's free."

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(in memory)

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

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

"We tied the wagon in front of the courthouse and just sat there all day, selling whiskey. Everybody knew what mama was doing so a lot of people who didn't even drink would stop and buy some. For medicine, they would say..."

"On up in the morning a dep-

uty came by and asked her what she thought she was doing."

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

"No mam," the deputy replied sheepishly, "but I reckon I'll take a gallon if you got any left, my croup has been acting up lately."

They got their dad out of jail that day, but he didn't stay free long. When his trial came up he was sentenced to 12 months on the county farm. Pickin' peas he called it.

"I was a pretty good size boy by then and with daddy in jail it was up to me to run the business," the younger Brasemore recalls. "Before he got caught daddy had hid the worm (copper condensation coil) and I got a neighbor to build me a pot. It wasn't just a couple of weeks 'til I was back in business. When I run off my first batch they said the sheriff thought my father had escaped. "Nobody makes whiskey that good," the sheriff said, "except for old man Brasemore!"

"I hadn't forgotten about the cur dog that had informed on daddy though. Giles was his name. Him and the deputy that

arrested daddy were big drinking buddies. This deputy lived out next to Chase Nursery and every Sunday like clockwork, those two would pitch a big drunk."

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

"You gotta know one thing about a drunk, when he's drinking he ain't gonna turn down a free drink."

"Well here we are, me and my cousins are hiding in the brush, and the deputy and Giles are stretched out in front of the still

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sipping free whiskey and acting like they are in hog heaven."

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

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

"Seems as if someone had sent the sheriff a note."

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

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

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

Young Jim got married in the fall of 1925 to a city girl who wouldn't have anything to do with making whiskey. One of her uncles got her man a job in Merrimac Cotton Mill.

Jim tried to quit the whiskey business, but the effort was futile. He would come home at night spitting up lint and cotton dust. His wife, Laurie, could tell by his look that he wasn't happy.

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

"Kenneth Abbott and I set up a still down next to Byrd's Spring where there was this hunting club. We ran it most of one year and then we put another one down next to the bridge at Whitesburg. That was the biggest one I ever run, a 2500-gallon groundhog."

"By this time we had two stills running and plenty of whiskey to sell, so we figured we would ex-

pand our business. Normally we would sell the whiskey to a 'tripper' or 'hauler' who would distribute it to the bootleggers. We figured that instead of paying the middle man we would take the money ourselves."

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

"Anyway we got Mickey, my second cousin who owned a Ford coupe, to start hauling for us. That went real good. Then George, another cousin, decided to come in the business. He was driving a milk truck and had a regular route at the time. Once a week we would load him up with whiskey and he would make deliveries all over town."

It appeared that the Brasemore crowd was

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making all the money in the world and that's what caused the trouble.

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

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

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

"The law knew something was going on and they started to really crack down on whiskey-making. This hurt us bad, as we couldn't keep a still running more than a month without it getting raided. I don't think it bothered that Cloud's Cove bunch though. There was only one way in there and one way out. If you weren't kin you didn't get in!"

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

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

"Claude Murphy had been shooting dice inside and when he heard the gun shots he ran outside. When he saw me laying there he said he thought I was dead." After I got shot we pretty well shut the business down. We laid low and just decided to let by-gones be by-gones."

Three months later two of the assailants were ambushed near Meridianville and severely wounded. When questioned about this, Brasemore's only comment was, "I reckon that's what you call by-gones."

Things just weren't the same after that. There had been too much trouble and the law was now watching every time a moonshiner turned around.

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

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

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

"Was the law honest back then? Let me ask you a question. How many policemen did you know that never took a drink? All of them knew what was going on, but you got to remember, back then most every one was kin to one another. We never worried too much about the city or county police unless there was an election coming up, and even then they tried not to bother us too much. They never came right out and asked you for money but you knew you had to give."

"I remember one election back in the late 30s

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when I followed a judge all over the county while he was making speeches. He'd be up there talking about getting rid of the bootleggers and I would be outside passing out free drinks to everyone that would vote for him.

One time the judge's car broke down up around New Market so he hitched a ride with us. All day long we drove him around while he was spitting hell and brimstone about whiskey and the whole time he was sipping the white whiskey that we were giving away. When we got him back to town that night he was so drunk his wife made him sleep on the front porch."

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

A hardware store owner downtown manufactured various-size stills in the basement. For an extra twenty-five dollars a nearby furniture store would deliver the distillery to its intended site. When sugar became rationed during the war, a downtown grocery wholesale house sold sugar under the counter. Often when they would receive a large shipment the wholesaler would sell it off to moonshiners at a private auction

to the highest bidder. One prominent family in Huntsville even financed moonshine operations ... at a high interest rate, of course.

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

Brasemore named numerous present-day businesses that were established in that manner.

"They didn't have sense enough to come in out of the rain back when their grand-daddies was making whiskey, now they got fine houses and put on airs like they are blue-bloods!"

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

Jim Brasemore "retired" from the whiskey business in the 1950s after an encounter with the law. "Pickin' peas" he called it.

"Religion is just like a pair of shoes.....find one that fits you, but don't make me wear your shoes."

George Carlin



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My Warts were No Match for Grandpa

by Tom (Ray) Brewer

I was about 10 years old when warts started growing on the back of my right hand. They continued to spread and grow into various sizes over a few months time. They were especially large at the base of my index finger and covered the back of my hand all the way to my wrist. Some were so big that when I put my hand in my pocket they would scrape and bleed. And they were so rough and dry, I could break pieces off of the larger ones.

On a visit to Grandpa and Grandma Swafford during that time, Grandpa noticed the warts and said he could get rid of them, but I would have to count them and let him know how many I had before he started. I took a few minutes and carefully counted each one. The total was 179. Then I sat by him while he held my hand and lightly rubbed each one, for what seemed like hours. I could hear him quietly mumbling something. Occasionally he would interrupt the mumbling and speak with other adult family members while continuing the rubbing and then resume the quiet mumbling. That was a terrific feeling and I didn't want it to stop. Yet today, 65 plus years later, I still get that feeling when I'm thinking about it, such as now.

When he finished the rubbing and mumbling session, he told me to forget about the warts and someday before long I'd notice they were gone. I don't remember the span of time before one day while I was playing I looked at my hand, and there were no warts. It was maybe a few weeks at most. That hand has been as slick as a baby's butt until this day.



The last time I saw Grandpa I was about 14 or 15. Several family members were in town (Huntsville) on a Saturday afternoon, and I saw him standing on the east side of the Square in front of J.C. Penny's.

I had always been curious (as were many other folks) about how he did his healing or used his gifts. I had asked him several times after my wart healing, and his answer was always the same—"If I told you, I couldn't do it anymore". I thought on this chance meeting in Huntsville I'd ask again, and this time I got a different answer. He said the answer is in the Bible between ***** and *****. I thought sure I would remember those two books or chapters so I could finally learn the answer to this mystery. But sadly I could not recall them after that day. Perhaps Grandpa knew that would be the case, so his secret was still safe. I have thought many times about being hypnotized to see if I could recall his words. Some day I may yet do that.

Even more important than the wart experience, Grandpa has

helped me several times over the decades since he's been gone. I have severe sleep apnea and he has awakened me at night when I would be struggling for breath. During one episode, I really believe he saved me just as I was at the point of death. In a dream, I was starting to float upward, and when several feet into the air, Grandpa grabbed my right arm and pulled me back down to the ground. It gave me a startling awakening, and I was gasping for air.

I'm not asking anyone to believe what I just relayed here. I know it happened. My Grandpa was real to me, both in life and in death, and my experience tells me he is still practicing his gifts of saving lives, even if through dreams. Like my sister Jean said in her article, Grandpa Swafford was, and is, truly a mysterious man.

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Ghastly Discovery Found at Bird's Spring During Full Moon!

Human Skeleton Found just Fifteen Feet from Entrance, Arousing Much Interest in the Late War!

from 1888 Huntsville Newspaper

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

The moon was full which afforded plenty of light to the adventurers.

One of the shocking discoveries of the cave trip was the sight of a skeleton near the

main entrance of the cave - the skull and several bones are now on display at the office of Mr. Harris on Eustis Street.

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

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

Mr. Lippincott informs us that there are two apertures leading right and left after en-

tering the cave, and he is determined to find out where they lead to, or at least satisfy himself as to the probable dimensions of the cave.

Time

Time is fleeting as you know

When you're young it goes so slow

I flew like the wind back then

Oh my! how long has it been?

Alas I'm old as anyone can see

Content to sip a glass of tea

Walking slow bent with a creaky knee

Now time is in a hurry, you see

When you're young it goes so slow

Time is fleeting as you know

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Thanks for the Memories

by Al Dean

It was not unusual for the Conservator of Precious Memories to spontaneously confound me with the details of events from the past expunged from my memory by the passing of time, such as: "Forty-two years ago today your mom gave me the cure for Tony's colic - Carnation milk and Karo syrup. Carnation milk was ten cents a can; or, Thirty eight years ago today, at 7:15, I was at the bus stop waiting - and crying. It was Vicki's first day of school. She was wearing her little yellow dress with a matching hair bow. You wore that awful red tie to work that day."

The Conservator and I were huddled by the fire, sipping hot cocoa with marshmallows floating on top, staring at the flames, and listening to the wood crackle. Not having heeded my advice - which may have had something to do with too many fire department visits resulting from my attempts to prepare the cold hearth for a cozy interlude - she had finally gotten the fire to the point we could relax and enjoy its warmth. Given her ability to recall details and images from every day of her life, for no apparent reason, we would inevitably engage in her favorite diversion: Do you remember?

I forget the Alamo, and can't remember what I did yesterday. The Conservator was thoughtful enough to jot the dates for her birthday and our anniversary on a piece of paper about the size of a business card and had it laminated in plastic. I think it's tucked safely somewhere in my wallet. I wiped at the marshmallows on my mustache and struggled to remember what the string tied around my finger was supposed to help me recall, when she asked, "Do you remember the Christmas day chimney fire you started? Our first year in Huntsville?"

I closed my eyes and furrowed my brow as if the ugly memory was difficult to recall. "You mean the one the kids started? Uh..yeah," I mumbled. "I told them to put the wrapping paper in the trash bag. It was the year we bought that green Jeep Wagoneer - 1979."

"No. It was 1978. You didn't buy the Jeep until 1980. And it was brown."

I should mention that beyond the basic colors: black, white and yellow, I'm lost.

The conservator was still in reminisce mode. "Do you know what tomorrow is?"

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from 1893 Huntsville newspaper



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"Uh... Saturday?"

"Don't be silly. I mean the significance of tomorrow."

Hmm, I thought. Tomorrow is what - the 29th? My birthday has passed. Our anniversary and her birthday were several months away. Maybe it has something to do with the string around my finger.

She cocked her head and squinted one eye, a strategy she employed to inspire a response. If she were standing her arms would be crossed and her foot tapping.

"Humph," I snuffled. "Of course I do. But your memory isn't as keen as it once was."

"Oh yeah!" she said. "It concerns insects." She got up, went to her desk, rooted through drawers until she found her diary for 1986, flipped the pages to the day in question, and returned shoving it into my face. It was my turn to squint. The entry was blurry. "I would tell you to get your reading glasses, she said. "But you probably don't know where they are, and even if you did you couldn't see any better with them."

I had gotten the newspaper off the porch that morning and in the search for my glasses I noticed the trash cans needed to be emptied. I took the cans out to the big bin in the garage and saw a bulb had burned out, and while replacing it, I stumbled over the new filter the Conservator had purchased for our HVAC system, so I replaced it. I forgot I had started out looking for my glasses. "Just read it to me," I said.

She read: "Allen " (the Conservator knew me before everyone began calling me Al) "got

his first pair of glasses today. He asked me if I thought they made him look intellectual. I told him no. More on the order of Jiminy Cricket. "

"Yeah. Insects," I said. "That's what I was going to say." "You remembered, huh? Why's that string wound around your finger?" I studied the string. "Oh, that. It's to remind me to.. .uh...make an appointment with the ophthalmologist next week." "Really?"

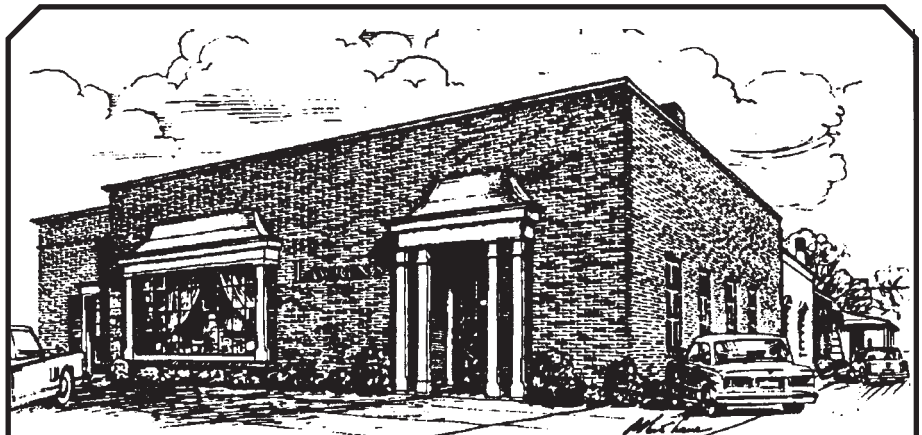
"Uh...sure...yes...of course." "You don't remember, do you?" she said, and smiled the smile that still quakes my knees. With Solomon-like wisdom I slurped my hot chocolate and said nothing.



Easy Cheesy Potatoes

- 20 oz. bag frozen hash browns
- 1 pt. sour cream
- 10 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- 2 cans Cream of Potato soup
- 1/4 c. minced onion
- 1/2 t. garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Parmesan Cheese

Mix all of the above, pour into a 9" x 13" baking pan. Top with 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese. Cover and bake 30 minutes at 350 degrees. Uncover and continue baking for 30 minutes.



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A woman from Gurley says she's wearing her wedding ring on the wrong finger because she married the wrong man.



I am constantly asked how do you manage to do all the things you keep doing at an age when most people your age are slowing down.

Over the years, I have collected a decent amount of wisdom that delays 'old age' or whatever 'they' call it, until much later. It is also a state of mind that keeps one younger, both inside and out.

Here are a few things that come to my mind. Only boring people get bored.

1. No matter how old you are, it is never too late to pursue a new passion.

2. The Senior Citizen's Facility offers a variety of classes for you to take.

3. Make the decision to choose JOY. Eat nutritional meals, starting with breakfast.
4. Surround yourself with uplifting people.
5. Do something extra for someone every day.
6. Take a walk, enjoy the landscape and all the different things to see along the way.
7. If you don't have a pet, enjoy a friend or neighbors'. They lower your blood pressure.
8. Don't forget to have a yearly checkup. Doctors want to keep you out of the hospital, not in one.
9. Volunteer for a charity or some worthy cause.
10. Be kind to everyone you come in contact with - smile and say hello. Everyone loves a joyous person.
11. Stay alive and thrive.
12. Treat your body like a car. If it needs repair, you will take it to get repaired. You should treat their body with the same attitude.
13. Try to eliminate as much as possible. Stress will lead to many ailments.
14. Appreciate the happiness in small things.
15. Say at least ten sincere, kind and complimentary things to people you talk with today.
16. Last but not least, be grateful and thankful for everything that comes your way.

Spring is a beautiful time of the year, enjoy the flowers, I will.

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a day or two, after it stayed in our fenced yard, we'd let it go again. The kind you often see are ordinary box turtles. They are shy and close to harmless.

The day we picked up the new turtle to transport home in the back floor-seat, I said, "This doesn't look like the others we've caught." When we picked it up, it not only retracted into its shell but opened its mouth. The shell and legs appeared rougher than we'd seen.

Turtles Are Different

by M.D. Smith, IV

A lesson learned the hard way, and I learned a lesson too.

Just like poisonous and non-poisonous snakes, there are significant differences in turtles also. My son Brent was eight in 1986 and he loved creatures as much as any of my seven boys growing up. He liked strange creatures of all sorts. The same son who brought home a goat for a backyard pet two years after this story. Another time on that story.

Turtles. They come in all types and sizes. Do you remember the little green turtles sold at pet stores from the 50s well into the 80s? You'd buy the small plastic bowl with an island in the center with some pebbles in the center container at the end of the ramp. That was so the turtles could climb out to dry their shells since, while mostly aquatic, they still needed to be out of the water sometimes. Fun for little children to handle and play with for amusement.

Living near woods, a variety of creatures wandered into our yard from time to time. We often saw turtles creeping across the road, and Brent would shout to stop the car and pick it up. We often did, and in

Brent had a way back then, to want to irritate pets that seemed unfriendly, like this new turtle behaved. He noticed tapping his nose, right where the two nostrils emerged, would prompt a hiss from the turtle and it opened its mouth as if to bite. I was inside the house when I heard my wife shouting to me downstairs, "M.D., come quick, that turtle has Brent's finger in its mouth and won't let go."

I hurried outside on the patio. Brent was howling and holding the shell of the turtle with his left hand while his right index finger was lodged firmly in the pointed beak of the turtle's mouth. Brent must have tried pulling and shaking his

"As soon as you sit down to a nice hot cup of coffee, your boss will ask you to do something that lasts until the coffee is cold."

The Law of Coffee

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hand and all that did was make his finger hurt worse. He was as calm and as terrified a young boy could be under the circumstances.

I got a small stick to pry the mouth open, but damn, that mouth was strong. A Popsicle stick wouldn't do either. It broke. I needed something broader than the partially opened mouth of the turtle locked on his finger and STRONG. I retrieved my largest flat-head screwdriver with a blade 1/2 inch wide and a large handle on the other end of the shaft.

I pried, as Brent whimpered, "Oh, oh...that hurts," and I could finally wedge the vice-grip jaws of the turtle apart wide enough to extract his finger. Much relieved, it had not pierced the skin and we bandaged his finger.

We let that turtle go back to the woods from whence it came with an admonishment to Brent. "Don't aggravate the creatures and animals, you never know when one is quicker than you are, and will bite you...and maybe not even let go."

"I offer my opponents a bargain: If they will stop telling lies about me, I will stop telling the truth about them."

Adlai Stevenson, 1952 campaign speech

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THE OLD DEPOT

by Lee Burkett



I started my career in construction in 1971 after being hired by Pearce DeMoss and King, when I returned from Vietnam. I worked for them and their companies until 1979 when three of us left and started our own company. After about two years we bid on the second phase of remodeling of the Train Depot. It was built at a cost of \$10,000 and finished in 1860. Our bid was around \$330,000, best I can remember.

When the City Council was discussing it, someone mentioned that we were an out of town contractor being based in Decatur. My uncle Thomas spoke up for us telling them I was born in Huntsville and lived here. We did a great deal of work on the building. We installed an elevator and put in heating and cooling hidden in the bowels of the building.

The architects at Jones and Herrin did a masterful job. Harvie Jones came down to the project a good bit. One time early on he stopped by and seeing the painter rolling a wall on the first floor, got very upset saying all of the paint had to be brushed on. Can you imagine what it would cost to brush paint a large three story building? He consulted the specifications and he realized that this had been removed from the requirements.

Another time he stopped by, we asked how he he wanted the fireplaces blackened. This was to make them appear to have been recently used. He took our

number one carpenter Frank and they got a torch set and lit it with the acetylene cranked up and did their thing. I asked if he wanted to go do others and he said no Frank had it covered. The trim around the main doors is unbelievable. It is gigantic. The margins on the overlapping pieces varies from top to bottom to give the appearance that it is straight. I think this was an Egyptian technique like the columns on the old Library at Auburn. They had a large pile of bits and pieces of wood and trim we could use or we could replicate it.

Our millwork supplier Kenneth Noel fabricated new trim in his shop in Madison. One day Frank was trimming out a new door on the second floor and I was checking on him and looked out the windows to the South. Most all of the windows had very old wavy glass which was very expensive and hard to obtain. I noticed one of the windows was scratched and complained to Frank. Upon looking more closely, I noticed a name and after the name are initials.

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Jeb Isley, age 85

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The initials are MCRR. I knew enough to realize that this was Memphis Charleston Railroad and called the architect Ralph who came down and verified it and got the window removed for safe-keeping and later display. The theory is that the president of the RR signed his name with a diamond ring.

The architects picked out a reproduction window lock that I installed on all the windows after cleaning them with vinegar and newspapers per their instructions.

About this time, I learned to never climb up a forty foot wooden extension ladder. Cleaning windows on an upper floor I looked down from the top and noticed the the ladder was not only sagging but bowing too. I went out to the side several feet. We reworked the window at the ticket office and opened up the side pockets and replaced the weights and got it working. We put a neat access panel in the floor there that is removed by using a recessed finger ring. The Depot is right across the street from where Dilworth Lumber was located and I walked over there to pick up small items on a regular basis.

I dealt with all three Dilworths and Tubber too. Mostly Penn waited on me. I noticed grandpa Dilworth out in the side yard on several occasions, so I asked what he was doing. He was counting boxcars when the freight trains came by and said he could tell the state of the national economy by the count.

Our senior partner Johnny is a great carpenter and he did most of the floor repairs using the scraps from out back or from our removals. The third partner Dewey worked on the third floor with Frank's brother-in-law Larry and they removed the plaster ceiling with wood lath by pushing it down with their feet from up in the attic. The black soot was covering the top of the ceiling and so they were black by the end of those days. Dewey's wife made him strip down at the back door when he came home in the evenings.

The building has many endearing features. Some are the vaults on the second floor, the door trim, the windows, the chimneys and fireplaces, the stairs, the canopy around it, its historical nature with the graffiti and canon ball "wound" on the exterior.

I would highly recommend you visiting it and checking it out. There are not that many buildings like this remaining and it is right here in Huntsville on Church Street at the railroad.




Excuse Me?

A couple was having a romantic dinner in a restaurant when their waitress, standing a few tables away, saw the man slide all the way down in his chair and out of sight. The woman, sitting across from him, appeared not to notice.

The waitress walked over and said, "Excuse me, Ma'am, but I think your husband just slid under the table."

The woman said, "No, he didn't, he just walked in the door."

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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Our winner for the Photo of the Month for February was **Sarah Broadway** of Decatur. Sarah was first to call and identify the photo as **Joanne Randolph** who started BizTech many years ago, a small business "incubator" to help many small businesses get started. Then my first out of town winner to find the little hidden heart was **Mary Jane Miller** of Grand Prairie, Texas - she found it on page 20, in the Recipe graphics. Do you see it now? Mary Jane and sweet husband **Wayne** have not been to Huntsville but think it sounds beautiful!

I had two local other winners for the hidden heart - first was **Mildred Whitlock** of Huntsville, who is 89 and retired. The 2nd was **Lisa Bunn** of Ryland Pike who works at Tyson foods (near Bridge Street). She's been in Huntsville since 1978. Congratulations to all

the winners!

Don't forget that March 8th is the morning that Daylight Savings Time starts - love to have longer drier days!

As many know, BB&T bank has merged with SunTrust Bank and the new name is Truist. The folks who work there and take care of customers are some of the nicest people you'll meet. **Ianthia Bridges** is one, she told me that her neice **Kaneshia Ramsey** has a March 5th birthday. Also her cousin with a March birthday - **Calvin Ramsey** on March 15th. Calvin lives in Camden, AL.

Many know **Susan Coulter**, Branch Banker IV at BB&T on Church St. (Truist). **Ashley Santos** is daughter of Susan and has a March 11th birthday. Ashley's son is **Jack** and he will be 5 on March 19th. Ashley's handsome husband **David Santos** has a March 6th birthday and they live in Charleston, SC. Lots of partying in March!

Then **Jane Eller**, who is also at Truist at the Church Street location, wants to wish a Happy Mar. 3rd birthday to her granddaughter **Callie Davis** and a happy Mar. 4th birthday to Jane's daughter (and mom to Callie) **Amanda Acklin**. Jane says, "I love you both more than all the drops in the oceans!"

We had a caller the other day with a good question - does anyone remember the **Cedar trees** that were planted along Whitesburg Drive between Drake Avenue and Airport Road? Seems in the 60s I remember them close to where that new retirement home is going up, where the old Fleming home was. If anyone can

email or call the office and give us some history of those trees - who planted them and how many were planted, etc. Seems like Tom told me years ago that the CCC planted them at the turn of the century, but please let me know and we'll publish that.

We have a subscriber from Iowa who's one of our loyal subscribers. **Rolland Thomas** wanted to send out special Greetings to his friends **John & Faye Irwin** who live in Brownsboro! Come visit us Rolland!

For those of you who still treasure **antique furniture**, auctions are the place to find them. One coming up that is featuring Mahogany & Walnut furniture is B&W Auction on Capshaw Road, on March 14th. They told me they've been moving a lot of Sand Mountain pottery too.

The Golden K Kiwanis took a tour of **Hudson Alpha**, Institute for Biotechnology and it was fascinating. While on the tour I met a really interesting guy, **Bob Shanafelt**, who is Materials Manager. He makes sure to keep everything moving and organized. Also said hello to **Chris Partridge** up in the lab area. If you ever have a chance, get a small group together and call Hudson Alpha about giving you a tour - you will

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 girl ran an iconic bar in downtown Huntsville for many years.



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find it so interesting. Huntsville is SO proud that this internationally known company started right here and is doing such important work for thousands of people.

If you've ever heard the **Huntsville Community Drumline** perform you won't forget them, they are amazing. They are a group of youngsters (grades 1-9) who have been getting together to put together percussion & musical events since 2010. It was started by **Angela Wilson** (CEO) and instructed by **Frederick Walker**. You can go to their website to see the upcoming events (huntsvillecommunitydrumline.com).

One March event that sounds fun with the drumline is on March 7th, from 11am to 3pm, at Huntsville's Community Kite Festival at the John Hunt Park Soccer Stadium on Airport Road.

Nell Long lives in Owens Cross Roads with her daughter **Peggy** and even though it's not quite here yet I wanted to let her know we're thinking about her and she turns 100 on July 12th! I can't even imagine being 100 but hope I can see that one day too!

We heard from one of our California subscribers - **Pat Fellows**. She lives in Salinas, CA and likes getting her new issue every month. She loves the history of this area and we're going to have to get some good memories from you Pat!

Brandon Owens has a March

25th birthday and works at Hudson Alpha as well, with **Bob Shanafelt**. So proud of my nephew and Happy Birthday to you!

We had another request from a reader. **Bill Stewart** of Columbia, TN lived here years ago. He wanted to know if anyone remembers the **Parkers Baseball Team** (I think that was the Dallas Mill or Merrimack Mill team?). Bill is 91 and hopes to get some information from the folks that still may be around who played on the team.

Most of us have computers these days and there's more information out there than you'll ever see. But a few links that you'll find interesting are these:

- Want to find out who has AirBNB homes in your neighborhood? Easy to find if you go to www.airbnb.com.

- Need to know what's happening with all the growth in Huntsville? www.huntsvilleal.gov and you'll find out.

- Five Points Historic District is full of information - go to www.fivepointshistoricdistrict.org.

- The Old Town website is www.oldtownhuntsville.org

- History Collections is at www.huntsvillehistorycollection.org.

Lots of good information out there, just helps to know where to go to get it.

Are you into genealogy and ancestry, checking your family

history, etc? Did you know that on the Old Huntsville website there is a direct link to Maple Hill Cemetery and you can find the names of people who have been buried there and where they are buried. The office staff at the cemetery work hard to keep the information up to date.

Old Huntsville website is at www.oldhuntsvillemag.com, look to the left on the first page and look for Cemeteries and click on it, will take you to Maple Hill records. Lots of good information out there.

OK I've done the best job ever in hiding something in this issue. Because it's March we know bugs are almost here, so there's a **tiny tiny beetle** hidden somewhere in this issue. IF you find it, won't happen, call the office and be the first. You get a year's subscription absolutely free. But I'll get NO calls, I'm sure of it.

Beta Sigma Phi sorority has some big birthdays coming up in March: **Linda Drake** on Mar. 22nd, **Vivian Kruse** on Mar. 20th, **Pat Riley** on Mar. 2nd and **Sherry Taylor** on Mar. 6th. Happy Birthday Ladies!

You know how it is with busy lives, you rarely get out in **nature** to just relax. I know I'm going to make an effort to be out and breathe in fresh air - we're all indoors way too much.

Just a daily walk around the block is a good start!

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Loving Low Carb

Chicken Parisian

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

Coat the chicken breasts heavily with a mixture of the paprika, garlic & salt/pepper. Place in crock pot. Mix remaining ingredients and pour over the chicken. Sprinkle paprika on top. Cook on medium-low crock pot heat for about 6 hours.

Chuck Owens' Baked Chicken

- Chicken breasts, with bone & skin
- Melted butter or margarine

- Onion powder
- Garlic powder
- Salt & pepper

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

Zesty Cole Slaw

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

Mix first 6 ingredients well in a covered bowl - give it a few hard shakes to make sure it's mixed well. In a large bowl pour the cole slaw, then add carrots, cucumber and red pepper

chopped to taste. Mix dressing into the cole slaw mix, refrigerate for an hour before serving.

Mashed Cauliflower

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

Mix hot cauliflower with the butter, cream cheese & spices, til of a mashed consistency. You'll think this tastes alot like mashed potatoes!

Ham & Redeye Gravy

Slice country cured ham in 1/2 inch slices. Cut gashes in the fat to keep the ham from curling up. Place slices in a heavy skillet. Cook slowly, turn a couple of times til meat is browned.

Remove from pan and to the drippings add half a cup of hot water. Cook til the gravy turns red, then add 1/4 cup black coffee. Serve hot with ham.

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Garlicky Mushrooms Supreme

1 lb. fresh mushrooms, sliced
 4 T. olive oil
 7 cloves fresh garlic, sliced
 3 T. chopped parsley
 Salt & pepper to taste

Saute mushrooms in the olive oil, covered, about 10 minutes. Uncover and add the garlic, parsley, salt and pepper. Simmer til the liquid evaporates. Be careful not to burn the garlic.

Wonderful Fudge

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

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

Strawberry Delight

Washed whole, fresh strawberries
 Heavy cream

Splenda sugar substitute
 Toasted, slivered almonds
 Slice strawberries into a small serving bowl. Pour in whipping cream to taste. Top with sprinkling of Splenda and toasted almonds. Blueberries are good too but the strawberries are best. Warning - You WILL become addicted to this.

Good Lemonade

Small container Crystal Light lemonade mix
 1/2 c. real lemon juice
 In a 2-quart container mix water, Crystal Light and lemon juice. Serve cold with lemon or lime slices.

Tomato-Cottage Cheese Salad

1 c. Purity cottage cheese
 2 small tomatoes, chopped
 1/4 c. chopped Vidalia onions
 1/2 t. dried basil
 Salt/pepper to taste
 In a large bowl put the cottage cheese. Next layer on the tomatoes, onions and top with basil and salt/pepper. Serve cold.

Baked Almond Custard

1/2 c. heavy cream
 2 eggs
 1 T. Splenda sweetener

1/2 t. almond extract
 Pinch nutmeg
 In a small bowl beat the eggs til light yellow in color, pour in the Splenda and cream and mix well. Sprinkle on nutmeg and place in microwave.

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

Jello & Nut Bon-Bons

2 c. heavy cream
 2 small pkg. sugar-free Jello powder, any flavor
 Chopped toasted almonds
 Combine all ingredients with electric mixer on low speed til blended. Beat til stiff. Drop in tablespoon-sized mounds on wax paper covered cookie sheet. Freeze til firm. Store lightly covered in the freezer.



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The Day "Big Jim" Borrowed My Tie

by John Carriker

There are some times in life that we become part of the story, but only as observers. At times the account can seem to be something that it isn't and what seems to be simple is instead revealing. Hopefully, when you finish reading the following events, you will judge each character differently at the end rather than what you believed at the beginning.

It's a story involving three phases of life. Looking at it from a Biblical perspective it might be called wisdom, knowledge and understanding. It happened around 50 years ago, and it took place in Cullman, Alabama. It touched, at that time, the lives of a former governor, present governor and future governor of the state ... as well as a young man beginning his career in journalism. It's a lesson in judgment and the need to listen to all the story. Then, wait for the seed to produce its fruit before offering opinions.

It occurred in the fall of 1966.

"You sure he said ya'll could come over and have your picture taken with him?" the familiar voice asked in a way that seemed shocked and disbelieving. "I talked to him myself," another answered. "He knows they'll be here and that we'll be coming over."

The first voice was that of Bob Bryan, the publisher of the Cullman Times. The other was that of a well-known law enforcement official in the county. "Okay," Bob conceded, "I'll get my new editor in here and tell him what's happening." A moment later, I was told that Bob wanted to see me in his office (no surprise as I had heard the conversation through the door that was left ajar). He was seated behind his desk while the Cullman sheriff sat in a stuffed chair on the other side.

"Sit down for a second," motioning to the empty chair in front of his desk. "Need to let you know of something that's coming up, and I want you to figure out how you think we should handle it." Bob had the tact and intelligence to incorporate someone in his plans while making them think it was theirs. I was pretty new to the city, employed, recently, as editor of the "Times".

What he shared was a complete surprise to me: "Governor George Wallace and his wife are going to be dropping by the paper tomorrow morning. Main reason for their trip is to visit 'Big Jim' (Folsom)." The sheriff acknowledged that what the publisher said was not a joke. He was a friend of both Folsom and George Wallace.

"Governor Wallace wanted us to go with him and Lurleen over to Jim's house for a visit," Bob added. "They thought it would be good if we could get a picture of the three of them together." Even though I was a newcomer to the state, I was aware of the television episode where "Big Jim" was accused of being intoxicated when he ran against George. Others had spread the word that he was drugged by a trusted associate. The two former governors had been estranged ever since the episode. Either way, be it known, there was now bad blood between the two.

Folsom had served as governor of Alabama for two terms, 1947-1951 and 1955-1959. He had run again in 1966 (the year this anecdote took place), when he faced three other leading Democrats in the primary. However, the primary winner was none of those candidates but the "substitute" for outgoing Governor George Wallace: his first wife, Lurleen. Now they wanted to have a photo with "Big Jim" to use in the campaign, leaving no stone unturned.

The game plan was that the Wallaces would meet at the newspaper before driving over to the former governor's house where they would meet "Big Jim". The conversation would probably center around the general election where Mrs. Wallace would face Republican nominee James D. Martin, a U.S. representa-



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tive from Gadsden. To the public, this would depict a unification of the party. Following the short sit down, photos would be arranged and taken of the three principals together: the Wallaces (George and Lurleen) and "Big Jim".

I don't believe I slept too well that night as I anticipated the forthcoming meeting with, arguably, the most well-known governors of Alabama, much less, the South. I knew very little about Mrs. Wallace up until this gubernatorial campaign and the majority of voters, according to the polls, believed that the primary reason Lurleen was running was to act as proxy to continue various programs and plans her husband had initiated. And I believed the same.

The entourage arrived early the next morning: the principals, publicists, law enforcement attachment and others. Noticeably absent were the national media and the governor's own publicity staff. I would guess that a possible reason may have been that the Wallaces were not sure whether Folsom would be in a cooperative mood or not (that is just an opinion). I remember how exhausted Mrs. Wallace seemed to be; she tired quickly. Her color was somewhat ashen but her smile was genuine.

All the worry was without merit as we drove over in separate cars to the Folsom home. The newspaper photographer and I were in one vehicle. Cannot remember who greeted us but it wasn't "Big Jim". As I recall he was in the main living area sitting in an arm chair dressed casually in light slacks and a tieless white shirt. He arose when Mrs. Wallace entered the room and walked over to greet her. He spoke to Governor Wallace as well and to others in the group, including myself and the "Times" photographer. After a brief conversation between the three politicians, it was time for a photograph.

There was some drama when "Big Jim" said "I can't do the picture taking. I don't have a tie!" It became awkwardly quiet as no one knew what to say. Was he serious? Was he joking? For some strange reason, I undid my tie and said something like, "Here, you can use mine!" He looked at me for a moment with an expression I couldn't read, but, then, he took the tie and fixed it around the shirt's collar. "I'm ready." The photographer took, I believe, only two pictures,

both in the same set pose of Lurleen in the middle (seated) with George and Jim flanking her.

That was it. The parting was quick, and with all graciousness, Lurleen, the next governor of Alabama (in the general election she overwhelmingly defeated Martin) thanked "Big Jim" and left with husband, George. Folsom never again was elected to public office.

By the way, I got my tie back.

A couple of years later I was editing a newspaper in North Carolina and discovered that Lurleen had died. She was 41. Her casket was placed in the state capitol and more than 25,000 mourners waited in line five hours to pay their respects. All public and private schools in the state closed on the day of her funeral, state offices closed as well as many businesses. Although my chance meeting with her had been brief, it had been impressionable. Her poise and composure during the time in Cullman defined her as a lady with strength and resolve reflecting character molded by resolution to put others before herself.

My instincts had been substantiated when it was revealed that she had made her gubernatorial run carrying a tragic secret. She had learned the year before the election she had uterine cancer. She underwent radiation therapy and a hysterectomy, but treatments weren't able to stop the cancer's spread. I understood why this gracious lady looked so tired when I met her two years earlier: she was dying, and she knew it. Mrs. Wallace later discovered her husband had been told as early as 1961 that her physician found cancer while delivering the couple's fourth child. He opted not to tell her, and she did not receive any treatment at that time.

In order to facilitate Governor Wallace's plan further to act as a surrogate candidate in 1966, Mrs. Wallace cooperated with the campaign even as she began the radiation therapy in December 1965. This was followed by a hysterectomy in January 1966. Despite her ill health, Mrs. Wallace maintained an arduous campaign schedule throughout 1966 and gave a 24-minute speech — her longest ever — at her January 1967 inauguration.

Within two years, she died in office. She had given her all.

The evidence of her courage and subsequent death left an indelible mark on my spiritual life and an example to follow in the future: never judge nor evaluate anyone's action(s) until the full story is told. It also demonstrated in life what has been said many times in print: fear plus consequential action to do what is right equals COURAGE.

Lurleen Wallace will be remembered as a woman who won the governorship of Alabama for her husband and died two years later. But history will not forget that she was more than that: she was a lady courageous in her tact and diplomacy... a woman who did not sacrifice her dignity nor commitment to complete the task set before her.

Self-sacrifice reveals a mature spiritual love that is eternal in its nature.

"The first to plead is adjudged to be upright, until the next comes and cross-examines him." Proverbs 18:17



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Remembering My Early Days

by Joe Brewer

I was visiting Huntsville about a month ago and I think it rained the whole time I was there. I was in the Huntsville area to visit some old stomping grounds no matter what kind of weather it was. First I went to Owens Cross Roads where my oldest sister, Edith Brewer Hughes lived until her death a few years ago. I went on to Cave Springs to see if the old school building was still there.

When I started school in 1941 it was a 2 room building with grades 1-3 in one room and grades 4-6 in the other. There was an old building there that resembled the old school, but it seemed too close to the main road than I remember. My sister had told me that a Chad Jones had purchased the property and built a house there.

A teacher I remember was Mrs. Willet, she was a very sweet lady and a wonderful teacher. She must have been 60 at that time and I don't think she ever spanked any of the kids. The other teacher was Mr. Conley and when the kids acted up he would go outside, find a switch and kids would learn not to do whatever they were doing again.

From there I went out east and in a couple of blocks turned back north going by Clarence Hughes place where the Kennedys used to live. Then I went by where Ben Parker lived, close to our home. Then towards Cedar Point. Back towards the school and went by Buddy and Pauline Pruitt's home. There was a Mr. Solomon who lived by the Springs, then on to Cherry Tree Road (Hwy. 431) back towards town.

Near there a friend of my Daddy's

had a store where the road split, I think his name was Howard Clark. His wife was Lela. I found the old Drew Smith place where we lived once in 1939 and 1948. Their home was built out of logs with a kitchen added on later. Near where the Pruitts lived was a small cemetery where a bunch of Glovers were buried. I remember Harold Glover. I remember another family in Cave Springs named Kelly.

A friend of mine named Frankie and I went to a sorghum mill by Mr. Solomon's place and get a stick of sugar cane and chew on one end til it got fuzzed up good, then we'd roll it around the edge of the big iron kettle to get the sweet foam and eat it. Frankie stepped on hot coals that day and it ended our fun. I still love molasses to this day.

Back in those days kids had to make their own fun from scratch, no one entertained them. We had hide and seek, Red Rover, etc. I always liked "Pleased or Displeased". Bet not many remember that. We had mumbly peg. Then we'd get a straw, wet the end, find a small hole in the ground for Doodle Bug Fishing. Just a broom straw with a dab of wet mud on one end, lower it in the hole about 6 inches. It would begin to wiggle and if you were really good you could ease out some sort of bug or worm.

It was a lot more fun than knocking wasp nests down from the edge of barns. I never knew what those little worms were called except doodle bugs. We would chant, "Doodle Bug, Doodle Bug come out your hole, your house is on fire, your house is on fire!" So much fun for a 4-5 year old. Back then poverty was a way of life but we didn't know it. We had good food to eat and friends and lots of activity.

I have come to believe that "poor" and "poverty" can have very different meanings.

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A Gift of Hearing

MADISON, Ala. -- If you've ever been to the Chick-fil-A on Highway 72 in Madison, there's a good chance you've met Steve Spray, affectionately known as Mr. Steve. He's worked there for ten years, developing special relationships with everyone who visits the store.

"He ministers to them every day," said store owner Norman Dull. "He gets the opportunity to talk to people, love on the kids. He's always offering prayer, he's always encouraging and coaching up our team."

He's also suffered from hearing loss for nearly thirty years.

Chick-fil-A made a call to the community in a fundraiser called "Ears for Mr. Steve."

Beltone Hearing Aid Center recognized his contribution to the community and knew they needed to help. On a recent Friday morning, Mr. Steve was called to the front of the store where he was surprised with the gift of hearing. Beltone presented him with a pair of Amaze hearing aids, and they went straight to the Beltone office to get them correctly fitted. Beltone owner Zach Watson said the hearing aids will change how Mr. Steve experiences life.

"We want him to be able to be at Chick-fil-A, have conversations without second-guessing what he's hearing, and with this technology that we're giving him, it's going to give him the best chance to do that," he said.

Zach goes on to say "Steve is such a deserving candidate for these hearing aids. It's rewarding to us to help him. Steve is so appreciative and brought us a 2-page handwritten thank you letter. It's a great feeling to help him, and we feel really honored to help."

When he had his hearing aids in for the first time, Mr. Steve chose to listen to the song "Sweet Memories" by Mickey Newbury.


"It's amazing the difference," he said. "Really, really remarkable."

Mr. Steve said above all else, he feels blessed to work with his work team every day.

"This just demonstrates how gracious and thoughtful and kind they are," he said. He said that he is hearing so much better and everything is very clear.

With his new hearing aids, Mr. Steve is looking forward to hearing his grandson better, listening to his record collection and talking even more with guests and team members at Chick-fil-A.





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A MYSTERIOUS MAN FROM MINT SPRINGS (A RURAL "SUBURB" OF NEW MARKET)

By Jean Brewer McCrady

He was a carpenter, brick mason, blacksmith, molasses maker, mediator of disputes, Justice of the Peace, healer and father of eleven living offspring. Mama was number 8 of the 11. His name was John Anderson Swafford, known as Mr. Swafford to everyone in the greater New Market area and way beyond. To me he was Grandpa Swafford. He was widely known and respected for all of the above things. He was revered for gifts and abilities that no one understood, but all believed in and depended on in times of life-threatening needs. He could stop wounds from bleeding, draw the fire from burned flesh, remove warts and moles and dissolve cysts, to name a few.

When asked his secret for performing these feats, the questions fell on deaf ears. Some claimed that he quoted certain scriptures, others said it derived from his being the 7th son of a 7th son. Only Grandpa knew the truth, and he reserved it to himself.

When Mama was a young teenager, Grandpa built the house you see here, near the corner of Mint Springs Road & Buddy Williamson Road which leads to Plevna on the way to New Market. Then, in that community, it had the status of "mansion".

Today it sits empty with a rusty roof, a porch full of scrap lumber and an abandoned car at the front steps. Young Vera (Mama) was a main helper in its construction and it was her home until age 16 when she married the handsome 21-year-old Gordon Brewer, also of Mint Springs.

One of Grandpa's sources of livelihood for the family was a molasses mill. Sugar cane growers for miles around brought their cane to

be cooked out into molasses, it was common for them to share their molasses as the form of payment. I heard Mama say many times that Grandpa gave away as many gallons as he sold. Generosity was his style. He would invite hungry strangers in for meals, even when there was scarcely enough for the family. He not only gave food to the hungry but shelter to the homeless.

But it was his gifts of healing that he was most widely known for and sought out for. When a child would get hurt, or someone fall gravely ill, the immediate reaction of the family was not to send for a doctor, but to send for Mr. Swafford. As for accessibility to any medical professionals and facilities in Huntsville for these country folks, they may as well have been in another state. But they would manage somehow to get to Mr. Swafford, by horseback, mule drawn wagon, bicycle, or on foot, by whatever means they could.

Model T's and Model A's were a skimpy commodity in these communities in the early decades of 1900s. (Daddy was one of the few who had one, but Mama never admitted that was part of her attraction to him.)

One story of Grandpa's art of healing that I remember best was of a young boy hit in the head by a ball bat while the neighborhood kids were playing baseball in a cow pasture. (Cow pastures always doubled as ball fields in those



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days and places.) The boy's scalp was parted deeply, gushing blood profusely, and the Daddy instinctively jumped on whatever mode of transportation was at hand to go fetch Mr. Swafford. When he got there, he frantically summoned Grandpa to come, come with me quick. My boy is bleeding and it won't stop. Come quick.

Grandpa calmly asked him a few questions about what had happened, where the boy was, and so on, and finally got him to calm down by telling him "the boy is OK, everything is alright, he is not in danger. Go back and tell him he'll be OK".

Reluctantly, the trembling Dad headed home alone and when he got there, he found exactly what Grandpa had told him - the boy in fact was OK. The bleeding had stopped. Much relieved and greatly surprised at what he found, the Dad began to ask questions about how they got it stopped and so on. The folks who stayed behind were just as astonished and began to explain, they had done nothing, it just suddenly stopped on its own and named the time of that occurrence. It was exactly the same time that Grandpa was assuring the Dad the boy was OK, everything was alright.

Another equally confounding story has stuck with me. It was wash day and as usual, in preparation water had been heated in the black wash pot over an open fire in the backyard (also used for cooking out lard on hog-killing day). By some mishap, a young boy fell into one of the tubs of scalding water. As soon as the screaming child could be extracted from the tub he was being transported to Mr. Swafford.

Upon arrival, Grand-

pa took control of the situation and performed whatever it was he did on such occasions, when to everyone's joy and amazement the screaming ceased. The "fire" was gone from the damaged flesh and healing occurred in due time with a minimum of suffering.

Many, many decades later, my Uncle Louis, Mama's youngest sibling, told this story to a group of men gathered at his brother's Hazel Green store. His brother was Uncle Floyd, and his country store, at the corner of Joe Quick Road and Main Street (Hwy 231), was THE place for the bibbed-overalls crowd to gather. They would reminisce, crack jokes, spin yarns and tell real life stories.

When Uncle Louis finished the story about the burned child, one of the men stood up and began to unbutton his shirt, saying "I can personally vouch for that story - I was that little boy," as he pulled back the shirt to expose a burn-scarred chest.

After Grandma Swafford died in the mid-50s, Grandpa moved to Elora, TN, just a ways up the road from New Market. On one of my visits home from out-of-state, the family went to see him. Sitting on the front porch of his unpainted two-room house, I had a personal experience with Grandpa's gift for healing. I don't remember if he noticed the large cyst on the underside of my right wrist and asked about it or if I brought it to his attention. I had heard some of the cousins say he removed their warts, so I might have brought it up. (Sidebar: When I shared this writing about Grandpa with my brother Ray, he reminded me of his own wart story. At my urging, he put it on paper and it's printed separately in this issue.)

There on the porch, Grandpa took my wrist in his hands and gently rubbed the cyst while asking me questions, like how long it had been there, was it sore, did it hurt and so on. It had been there 10 or 12 years and had never bothered me except that it looked ugly and was getting bigger. After a few minutes, he patted my wrist and said, now you just forget about that. And I did. The next time I remembered to look at it, it wasn't there - gone without a trace and has never returned. That was the last time I saw Grandpa Swafford.

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Of Trampolines and Tetanus Shots

by Guy McClure, Jr.

Part 1: My grandparent's backdoor neighbors at one time were the Howie family. There were a lot of them - from teens to tots - so many that they actually had to eat dinner in shifts. The Howies had a trampoline - which, to me, meant they were royalty. I'd watch out the back window and when it was not being used I'd ask my grandmother if I could go jump on it. "Ask Mrs. Howie" she always said, and "Ask Mrs. Howie" I never would - I assumed it was easier to get forgiveness than permission. Plus I figured if Mrs. Howie looked out and saw a kid on a trampoline she would just assume it was one of hers.

One beautiful summer day I am jumping on that magical trampoline - almost reaching the clouds - higher and higher I went until I overshot my target and came back to earth via the springs. I plummeted through the rust covered springs and hit the ground knowing something was wrong. There was a GI Joe sized gash on the side of my face and blood was ever present. I ran home but also knew I had to think fast.

Part 2: Nothing would get my mother more excited than the thought of having to take one of her children to get a tetanus shot. She literally lived for those moments. She would even sing a little song entitled "Tetanus Time" that rings in my ears today. I don't believe it was an actual infatuation with the serum as much it was her fear that she would be branded a bad mother because either I or my sis-

ter would come down with a scathing case of lock jaw. Needless to say, running into my grandparent's house dripping of blood and open wounds required some finesse to hopefully get out of the inevitable.

I walked into the living room to screams of "What happened!?" Mama then marched me over to the trampoline and had me point out exactly where on the tram-



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poline I had fallen. I, of course, found the only pristine spring and pointed to it - ignoring the blood-drenched rusted springs a few feet away.

Part 3: My grandmother and mother cleaned my wounds and I heard Mama say, "Mother, could you call 'you know who' and see if he could 'you know what' this afternoon?" Well that 'who' was Dr. Sammons and 'what' was a shot. Dr. Sammons was my grandfather's friend, my mother adored him and I became faint at the mere mention of his name. Being a family friend, he would sometimes come to our house, we would go to his house, or during the day to his clinic. Therefore he was always available to us and had lots of vials of tetanus serum. The ladies' cryptic conversation may have worked on me when I was a kid, but not now. I knew who and what they were discussing so I just shouted out NOOOOOOOO! That's when she started singing the Tetanus Time song and I started struggling. I was not going to go without a fight this time. If I broke free I might have to start a new life under an assumed name in a foreign place drinking nothing but milkshakes through a straw but it would be worth it. As God as my witness I was NOT leaving that house.

Part 4: So they had drug me through the house and had eventually gotten me to the backdoor when I realized if I put my feet on either side of the door frame they couldn't physically remove me. My grandmother and mother each had an arm and were pulling me but my legs were strong. Panting and sweaty, they at that point got tickled which made me switch from tears to laughter and before I knew it I was in the car - how could they do this to me? When we arrived at the Huntsville Clinic I was a beaten man. I entered the stained glass lobby like a dead man walking. My crushed soul was obvious - no words were spoken between me and Dr. Sammons as he slowly filled the syringe with the spit of Satan,

Epilogue: So the good news is that I've had so many tetanus shots I never have to have another one, ever - and some say that I actually repel rust. But to get back at Mama, I've decided to have carved on my tombstone, "Death by lock jaw - if only there had been a way to prevent it."

Irish Proverb: "Laughter is brightest in the place where the food is."



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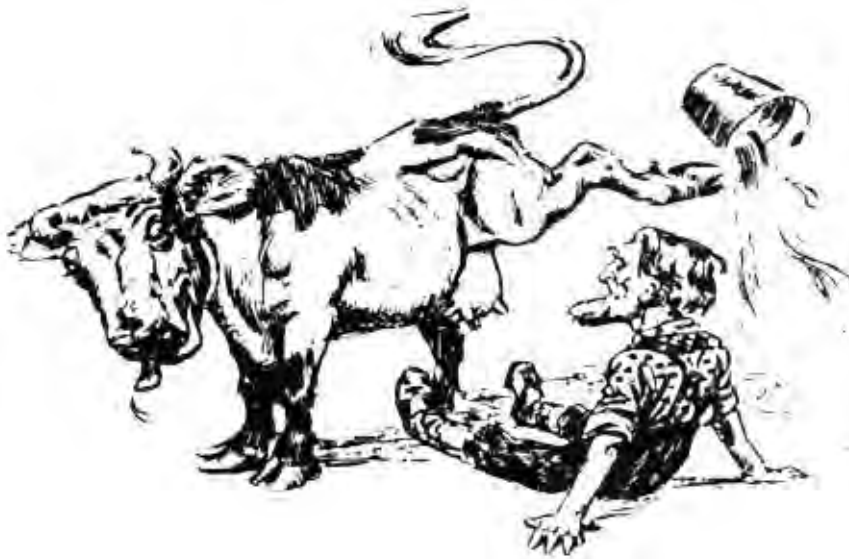
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A Solution for the Garbage Problem

by Ray A. McCrary

Originally Published in Old Huntsville in 1994

Back years ago in our little cotton mill community in Huntsville, life was simple and seemed to have less problems than today's complex society. Our father worked at a regular job, we went to school through the week and did our chores around the house as expected, whether we wanted to or not. Our mothers, grandmothers and grandfathers were at home working in the garden, which consisted back then of almost the whole yard except for a small portion in front of the house which was left to use for playing marbles, mumbly peg, stretch and various other games we played as children.

Canning food, gathering eggs and milking cows were just a normal every day part of life. I remember our canned food was put

up in Mason jars that were cleaned and saved for later use. I guess that eliminated a lot of tin cans. Our milk was also put in washable glass and can containers. That probably eliminated a lot of milk cartons. Eggs came directly from the chickens so I imagine that did away with egg cartons. The chickens also loved to eat bugs in the yard so I think that's why we didn't need any pesticides. Our table scraps were taken up to the hog pens and they took care of that. Diapers back then were cloth so they were washed and reused over and over.

So there weren't any diapers to be put in the garbage. There weren't any cola cans and containers back then, either, because they were all in reusable glass bottles. The milk we had to buy

"Never let your best friends get lonely, keep disturbing them."

Ron Jackson, Madison



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was also in reusable containers. The glass containers which mayonnaise and other condiments came in were saved and used for drinking glasses. I mean, back then a good cold glass of tea was still tea no matter what it was in. The prettiest glasses I remember were the glasses that my grandmother and great grandfather saved from their purchases of Sweet Garrett Snuff.

Back then we just didn't have much garbage. There was one thing we had though that took care of the garbage we did have and that was "Ole Billy." Yes, some of us were fortunate enough to have a billy goat. There was nothing he wouldn't eat. Paper, cans and anything in the yard left unattended, he'd eat or chew into nonexistence. We didn't have to cut the yard either. I think each residence should be allowed one billy goat per family. A family with six or more members should be allowed an extra billy goat as needed to correct the garbage problem. We could then look forward to a once-a-month garbage pickup at a considerable less rate than now.

It took me and my wife a week to decide what to do with our Christmas trees. We heard that the steam plant wouldn't accept them. One was completely dead by the time Christmas was over but we noticed the other one was still green so we elected to plant it and hope it grows roots. As the last shovelful was scooped around it my wife said, "What if it dies and turns yellow?" Well, then, we'll just spray-paint it green. As of now it's still alive and growing so maybe next year we can recut it and use it again.

A dog can express more with his tail in seconds than his owner can express with his tongue in hours.



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SOUTHERN BELLE

by Wenona Moorer

More and more people are getting interested in doing genealogy today. When I first started, I said that I would only do my direct line. But, you find things or people that are so interesting you just have to research them, even if they are not a direct line.

I came across a lady by the name of Adelia Hayes Acklen. Adelia Hayes was born on March 15, 1817 to a prominent family in Nashville, Tennessee. Her father was Oliver Bliss Hayes, a lawyer, judge and cousin of Ruth-erford B. Hayes, 19th President of the United States. Her mother was Sarah Hightower Hayes of Franklin Tennessee. Adelia attended the Nashville Female Academy and at 17 was engaged to Alphonso Gibbs, a Harvard graduate who died of typhoid fever before the wedding. Adelia was a small woman at age 22 weighed no more than 95 pounds. She loved to play the piano and sing. One of her hobbies was flowers. She was accomplished at riding horses. She loved to make them jump fences and most of the time never open gates.

Adelia Hayes was swept up by Isaac Franklin, a wealthy Sumner County cotton planter and slave trader, who was 28 years her senior - the first of three husbands. After seven years of marriage, Isaac Franklin died of a stomach virus while tending to his plantation in Louisiana. He left his widow an inheritance that included a 2000-acre plantation in Gallatin, Tennessee, 8,700 acres of cotton plantations in Louisiana, more than 50,000 acres of undeveloped land in Texas, stocks and bonds and 750 slaves.

Three years after her husband's death, Adelia married Col. Joseph Acklen, a hands-on lawyer from Huntsville, Alabama. Joseph Alexander Smith Acklen was born July 6 1816 in Huntsville. He was the son of Samuel Black Acklen and Elizabeth Hunt Acklen, grandson of Capt. John Hunt, the founder of Huntsville. This is where I became interested. Joseph Acklen's grandfather on his mother's side was Christopher Acklen, this is my direct line. Christopher Acklen was a patriot in the American Revolution. Joseph Acklen at the age of 14 enrolled in the first class of the newly established University of Alabama. Joseph was a United States Attorney of Ala-

bama under Presidents VanBuren, President Tyler and President Polk. He served with the rank of Colonel in the Mexican War 1846-1848. Joseph didn't quite sweep Adelia off her feet; two days before they were to be married, Adelia presented Joseph with a prenuptial agreement. It was one of the earliest prenuptial in Nashville's history. Joseph signed the prenuptial agreement giving his wife complete control of all her business, property and assets. The couple began construction of Belmont on the hilltop site that was given to her by her father as a wedding present. It was built on the highest hills in Nashville. The estate was called Bellemonte, Italian for beautiful mountain. Belmont later became Belmont College.

At the completion of Belmont, the 180-acre plot boasted tree-lined driveways and elaborate gardens along with an exquisite art gallery, gazebo, a bowling alley, tennis courts, a bear house and a pond that held alligators, a water tower, a two hundred foot long greenhouse with a conser-



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Belmont contained 36 rooms and approximately 19,000 square feet of living space. An additional 8,400 feet of service area was located in the basement. The house was filled with fine furniture, painting and marble statues. Money was no object. The Acklens enjoyed traveling to her Louisiana plantations in winter and summering at Belmont. Joseph was a superb businessman and plantation manager, he tripled his wife's fortune by 1860. The couple had six children with twins that died of scarlet fever at age of 2 in 1855. Adelia Acklen loved to throw large, lavish parties. The Acklen's entertained President Andrew Johnson and inventor Alexander Graham Bell.

In February 1862, Nashville was the first major Confederate city to fall to the Union Army. At Adelia's suggestion Joseph fled to Louisiana where he could personally oversee the plantations. According to family stories, Joseph's carriage plunged

into a bayou, forcing him to walk home in wet clothes. This led to him coming down with a fatal fever. Joseph Acklen died on September 11, 1863 at Angola Plantation in Louisiana at the age of 47. They were married 14 years.

On January 1, 1864 Adelia and her cousin Mrs. Sarah Ewing Sims Carter of Franklin, Tennessee went on a 750 mile river trip. They were going from Nashville to her Angola Plantation. The Southern Army was threatening to burn her cotton to keep it from falling into the Union hands. There was almost 3,000 bales of cotton. Adelia hired a gunboat to take them down the Mississippi River. Once they got to Angola they were arrested for not having travel passes. Adelia told the soldier in charge that she was a friend of General Polk. General Leonidas Polk, cousin of former President James K. Polk. She had grown up in the same neighborhood as he and had attended Adelia's wedding to Acklen. Once this was

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Jess Fairington, Gurley

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verified, they were released. Meeting with General Polk, he gave permission to send the cotton to Europe.

Learning that Federal gunboats were in the area for inspection, a meeting was set up with Admiral David Porter and a Captain Ramsey of the gunboats for a permit to take the cotton to New Orleans. Adelia had secretly negotiated agreements with both Union and Confederate Authorities to allow her cotton to be shipped.

In New Orleans, Adelia managed to get her and her cotton on a blockade runner ship to Liverpool, England. Adelia sold her crop for \$960,000 in gold. Cotton prices in the south had dropped to nothing. To get home Adelia bought passage to New York to get past all the fighting. From there she and Sarah returned to Nashville in September 1864. At that time she was the richest women in Tennessee.

In December 1864 the Belmont Mansion was temporary headquarter for General Thomas Wood, Commander of the Fourth Corp of the Union Army. There were Federal Troops camped all around the house. General Thomas Wood requested that Adelia move her valuables to her friend's house in Nashville. The friend was the widow of President James K. Polk. Being the widow of a President, she was treated with great respect by the Union Army.

The Civil War was over in the summer of 1865, Adelia and her children sailed for England on a three week passage to retrieve her money from the cotton sale. She and her children took a European vacation. They went to France and was presented to the Court of Napoleon III. In Rome, Italy she bought statues, went to Switzerland and then back to France, boarding a ship back to New York. While in Europe she purchased five major marble statues. Four of these pieces remain in the mansion today.

In 1867 at 50 years of age Adelia married Dr. William Cheatham, a Nashville physician. The wedding was held at Belmont and 2,000 people were invited. Napoleon III was on the guest list but he couldn't come. Instead he sent Adelia a gift, a diamond tiara which she wore to the reception. In 1880 she sold four plantations in Louisiana as one property. These have formed the grounds of Louisiana State Penitentiary, known as "Angola" after one of the plantations. Adelia and Dr. Cheatham were married 20 years, in 1884 they separated.

Adelia sold Belmont, left Nashville, relocated to Washington with the last surviving daughter. Adelia died on a shopping trip to New York. Her body was returned to Nashville and placed in a mausoleum she had ordered built in 1884. Her first two husbands and nine of her ten children are now buried there

Today the Mansion is owned by "Belmont Mansion Association" and Belmont University. The Mansion is open for tours. It was put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.



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General Patrick's Grave

by Billy Joe Cooley

When the U.S. Bureau of Roads was surveying a route for Interstate 24 between Nashville and Chattanooga, the engineers discovered a grave marked "General Patrick".

Knowing the governmental red tape involved in moving a grave, the chief engineer asked property owner Richard Craig about the possibility of getting permission to move the general's grave, in order to make way for the great highway.

Richard replied: "Absolutely not. The general was one our most revered heroes. Me and him was best friends and he wanted to be buried right here between the great Cumberlands and the Tennessee River."

"Me and the general hunted and fished all over this area for years, enjoying each other's company. I'm afraid you'll just have to build your road around the grave."

The engineer was very moved by this and said he understood the sentimental value. He would change the highway plans. They built an expensive chain-link fence around the grave and spread the eastbound and westbound lanes a half mile apart.

Even now motorists driving to Chattanooga will notice, just after passing the Jasper exit, that the highway splits for a considerable distance. Now they'll know why.

Years later the engineer was driving through the area again and stopped to chat awhile with Richard Craig.

"Well, Mr. Craig," he said, "How do you like the nice chain-link fence we put around the general's grave?"

"It's fine," said Richard, "and don't think for a minute that our townspeople aren't appreciative of your kindness. You've shown the general proper respect that he well deserved."

"After all, he was the best coon dog I ever had."

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George Burns

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Rusty

by Barry Key

In the year of our Lord 1985, for 43 years I had been alive. The top of my bucket list was to own a truck, but year after year, it just wasn't my luck. I can clearly remember it was in December that I made the decision to become a member, of that exclusive redneck culture. Now the decision was made, which make to buy, which make...and why?

I picked up a magazine called Consumer Report, should I buy American made or foreign import. Research for hours nearly gave me an ulcer, was it worth it to join, the redneck culture?

I asked for opinions from different guys, the difference in opinions were a real surprise. Down to different dealers I go, to see if their salesmen were more in the know. The information I got from talking to the owners, was a sizable contrast to the salesmen's boners.

Listening to the salesmen's pitch, I was beginning to think I was rich, they could put me in a new truck without a hitch. How can there be so many makes and models, they are all about the same, except for the "0" to "60" super throttles. How would I choose, warranty, reliability or cost.. ..I don't think I have ever been so lost.

In the end, a midsize Toyota did win, and I went to the dealership with a smirking grin. My Davy Crockett grin caught a salesman's eye, he came across the showroom floor, on the fly. In the negotiation the salesman did mention, model, color, transmission and engine. My choice, an extended cab two door, with four cylinders and five in the floor.

Now comes the part I had been dreading, negotiating the cost I was sweating. Sitting at the table, we drew a line, on one side he wrote a number, the other side I wrote mine. I looked at his, he looked at mine, he made a little chuckle and began to whine.

He said my offer was way too low, the dealership would be losing dough. I said your quote's much too high, I'll

go to another dealer and try to buy. I stood and started to the door, he said come back let's talk some more. His number came down, mine stayed the same, at this point we were playing the game.

We finally agreed on a price, after changing our numbers a minimum of twice. The negotiation over, I had bought a truck, but wouldn't you know it, just dumb luck. The salesman said I can't approve this price, I'll have to ask my manager for his advice. Sitting in his office I heard the manager shout, I think it was for my benefit.. ..they were trying to freak me out.

The manager came out and over to me, said see here son this price can't be. I said that's fine, I wasn't satisfied with mine....since you are renegeing, I won't have to decline. I was angry, face distorted with a sneer, I started for the door expecting to hear... ..come back sir, we'll hold the price for that model's year.

Out the door into my car, oops... ..they had called my bluff, I'd gone too far. On the way home, on the truck I doted, the price was good that they last quoted. Oh well, what will be will be, I settled in my chair and turned on the TV.

As I dozed dreams danced through my head, it was an extended cab with a seven foot bed. My dreams were interrupted with a ring on the phone, it was the sales-



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man, I heard a little groan. We looked at our price again after you were gone, my manager says we have cut to the bone. But, if you are still interested please take note, we can let you have the truck at my last quote.

I confirmed the quote we had agreed on, I will be right down, have the papers drawn. A few hours later, a dream come true, I'm finally driving "my truck", all shiny and new.

Epilogue:

Rusty got his name from spending 3 winters in Pennsylvania on salty roads. He is like one of our family now. We have been together for 240,000 miles and 34 years. We have had some bad times but he has never let me down... .knock on wood.

Rusty, I raise my glass to you and hope we see another healthy 240,000 miles and 34 years.

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Huntsville City News in 1900



- A new roof is being put on the J. H. Crocker dry goods house at the corner of Holmes and Jefferson Street. It is about time.

- Mayor Moore will issue

a proclamation forbidding the shooting of fireworks of any description on the streets until after the holidays.

- All of the new hose for the Fire Department has arrived and the only thing now lacking is the chemical engine which is expected the early part of January. The firemen are in their new quarters and are preparing for any fires that may occur.

- A new industry for the city has been secured for North Huntsville through the efforts of Mr. W. S. Wells. It is a hoop and barrel factory to be established by Messrs. S. H. Allen & Co. and will employ about twenty-five hands.

- The \$1,000 street roller which was purchased some time ago to put the finishing touches on streets after crushed rock had been spread will finally be used on the public thoroughfares. This should have been done much earlier.

- The rainy season has come and caught the approaches to the Colored City School in a very bad condition. Our city ought to take

more pride in its schools.

- Supt. Hamlet of the Water Works says it will be only a short while and the new pouring station will be ready for operation.

- The matter of securing a training school for boys for this city will come up before the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce this evening for definite action. A great deal of interest has been indicated on this subject.

- Frank Miller, of Huntsville, was at the point of death recently after a lingering illness and it was reported that his brother John offered up a prayer for him. In the course of the prayer John Miller said, "Oh, Lord, I am willing to give my life, if it be required, to save my beloved brother." A moment later he fell dead. His brother died that night and the two were buried in the same grave.

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Cat Trivia



- Female cats are typically right-pawed while male cats are typically left-pawed.

- Cats make more than 100 different sounds whereas dogs make around 10.

- A cat's brain is 90% similar to a human's – more similar than to a dog's.

- Cats and humans have nearly identical sections of the brain that control emotion.

If you don't pay much attention to your cat, he will see you primarily as a source of food and otherwise regard you with some suspicion. If the contact between you and your pet is close, however, your cat will see you as a kind of supercat to which it forms an attachment that is often greater than its bond to other cats.

- Most of your cat's methods of communication come from mother-child behavior. Very young kittens express their well-being by purring when they are nestled against their mother.

- A cat will lick a person it knows well. A relaxed grown cat shows its affection for humans by kneading, an activity it indulged in as a kitten to stimulate production of milk in the mother.

- Cats have a great capacity for play that often gives the impression of extreme intelligence. Play serves as practice for all the motions and kinds of behavior necessary for survival in the wild, as well as exploring the environment. When grown cats show some reserve in playing, it is usually because the adults they live with don't play with them as much after they are no longer a kitten. Grown cats, however, love play as much as the younger cats.

- Many cats retain their youthful behavior until they are quite old and delight their owners with their wild playfulness for many years.

- Cats love tuna but an all tuna diet can be harmful because it can cause high levels of magnesium, leading to Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease.

- Cats are nocturnal creatures - they are most active at dusk and dawn when prey abounds and the hunting is best. The construction of their eyes allows them to see well in very low light.

- While most cats hate baths, they are

fascinated by running water and dripping faucets.

- Cats have a longer-term memory than dogs, especially when they learn by actually doing rather than simply seeing.

- It is believed that cats have a lower social IQ than dogs but they can solve more difficult cognitive problems when they feel like it.

- Cats have 1,000 times more data storage than an iPad.

- It was illegal to slay cats in ancient Egypt, in large part because they provided the great service of controlling the rat popu-

lation.

- In the 15th century, Pope Innocent VIII began ordering the killing of cats, pronouncing them demonic.

- A cat has five toes on his front paws, and four on the back, unless he's a polydactyl.

- Polydactyl cats are also referred to as "Hemingway cats" because the author was so fond of them. There are 45 Hemingway cats living at the author's former home in Key West, Fla.

- Original kitty litter was made out of sand but it was replaced by more absorbent clay in 1948.

- Abraham Lincoln kept four cats in the White House. When asked if her husband had any hobbies, Mary Todd Lincoln is said to have replied "cats."

- Isaac Newton is credited with inventing the cat door.

- When cats leave their poop uncovered, it is a sign of aggression to let you know they don't fear you.

- Cats can change their meow to manipulate a human. They often imitate a human baby when they need food, for example.

- Feral Cats are not loners - they usually live as a group near a food source.

- Cats use their whiskers to detect if they can fit through a space.

- Cats only sweat through their foot pads.

- Cats have scent glands along their tail, their forehead, lips, chin, and the underside of their front paws.

- A cat rubs against people to mark its territory.

- When a family cat died in ancient Egypt, family members would shave off their eyebrows as they mourned.

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

THE TEACHER

Floyd Hardin figured that he was one lucky man. He had built up a good business, made more friends than one man had a right to. Yes, Huntsville had been good to Floyd.

One day, Floyd is in his barber shop, just cutting hair the way he always does, when he hears some of his customers talking about all the people that can't read or write. Now, the more Floyd got to thinking about it, the more he began to realize that he had found a way he could really do something for the community.

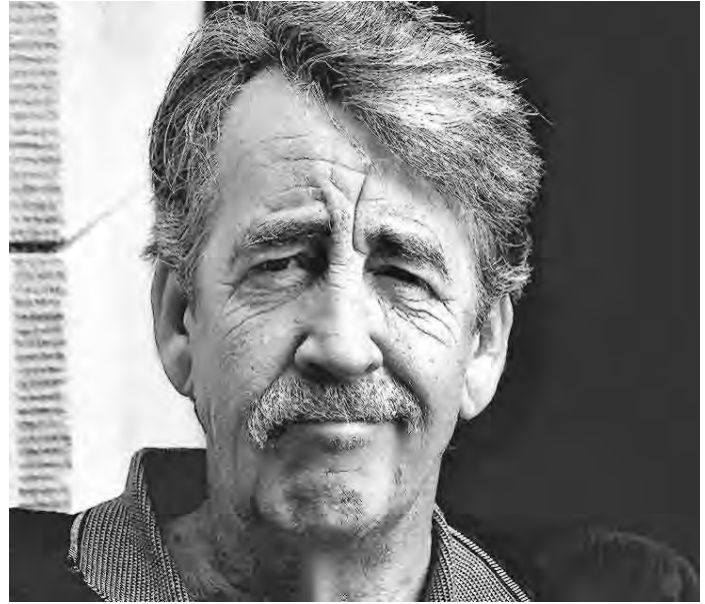
First thing the next morning, he starts spreading the word that he's going to start teaching reading and "riteing" in the back of his barber shop. He went out, bought a bunch of desks, books, paper and pencils and it wasn't long before his barber shop started looking like a school room.

Floyd's night school was an instant success. First night, he had almost twenty people there and he's got them all up there doing their alphabets on the blackboard. Well, almost all of them.

There was this one old codger, he came in late, pulled up a chair in the very back of the room and never opened his mouth. He would just sit there, night after night, listening to Floyd doing his teaching.

It didn't take long before this old guy started getting on Floyd's nerves. Floyd began to take this old codger as a personal challenge on his ability to teach, so he started taking extra special pains to try and reach this old man.

Sure enough, it wasn't just a couple of weeks before the man had moved his desk up to the middle of the room. By this time you could see that the old guy was hanging on to every



word that Floyd said. Come the end of the month, his desk was sitting on the very front row, not five feet from where Floyd was standing and talking.

It wasn't long after that, while Floyd was gathering up his books after class one night, that he noticed that the old gentleman was hanging around, waiting for all the other students to leave.

After making sure that everyone else had left, the old guy walks over to Floyd's desk, hat in hand. "Mr. Floyd", he says, "I surely do want to thank you. I'll be 83 years old come this next winter and I ain't never even been able to write nothing until you started helping me."

Now, you gotta know Floyd to know how proud he was.

He stood there, chest poked out, one hand on his suspenders, and his other arm around the old man's shoulders. He figured that he could teach, but he didn't have any idea that he was this good.

"Old Man", says Floyd, "I'm mighty proud of you. What did you write?"

"I don't know," says the old man, "I can't read yet."



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**"My memory is so bad
that I hide my own
Easter eggs."**

Jere Burlingame, Arab

Potluck: A Five Points Tradition

by Anna Lee

It's a mild winter night and I'm walking to our neighborhood potluck gathering. After the rain, in the dark, the road and the sidewalks glisten and glitter before me, like a kind of magic carpet. In some spots the bare trees weave intricate patterns on the ground, another kind of carpet. Overhead, the weeping willow waves its branches before me. The magnolia stands solid, covering half of its yard in shadow.

Most houses still flash their holiday decorations and lights. It's a festive background for a winter walk.

Each month we neighbors (and sometimes visitors) gather for food and socializing in our old-fashioned residences with their modern twist. It might be a modest cottage, a grand old two-story or a brand new house, every one of them quirky and comfortable.

By the time I get to this month's house, people have filled up the whole space. I say hello, get a name tag, put down my offering. I have brought a bowl of large red grapes, a kind I had never seen before, in the hope that they will offer a fresh appeal among the mounds of sweets that always appear.

And what else will there

"A little lemon juice and soda will remove those messy ink stains after you've been finger-printed."

Martha Stewart

be to eat? You never know. Usually the standard chips and dips, crackers and cheese, candies. Tonight I am surprised to see several trays of salami and exotic cold cuts, enough to make a New York City deli owner proud. Cheeses I don't recognize. Odd dishes, like quartered red beets, ham and okra pinwheels, a colorful corn casserole. At the door a woman arrives, holding a huge casserole of broccoli. "Oh, no," she squeals. "I thought you said potluck dishes, not fingerer foods." No matter, we'll try it all.

Initials greetings are brief. "Back from your trip?" "Is your family still visiting?" Sometimes a name tag sparks an exchange. "I taught your mother in high school." "My sister was friends with your sister." "You must be the grandson,"

Eventually, the dog people find each other, the bird people get together, the remodelers

start comparing notes. Need a pet sitter? I use one who's very devoted, and she's sitting right over there. Roof repairs? I just had some done and I can give you the contact info.

We all like to look at the changes made in a house. Some people take their 6-room bungalows and knock out walls. The living room, dining room and kitchen become one large open space. The backdrop behind the stove gets covered with subway tile, and then the tile goes all the way up to the high ceiling. It's different, sort of like standing in a very large shower.

Over the course of the evening, voices rise and fall. Hugs happen. You hear laughter, then it gets quiet. With an unannounced rhythm, men and women begin to move between rooms, say thanks, say goodbye and leave. "I'll see you next month," they promise.

And they will.

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The Death of Burwell "Burl"

The Day of his Death
was a Dark, Cold Day

by Anna (Gene) Clift Chesnut

My husband, Charles, retired this week and the day before he retired, dark and cold, we had to put down our beloved Boykin Spaniel, "Burl" who had had a stroke three days before. At almost eighteen, no longer eating, drinking or walking, we felt it was time. The vet came to our home so we were with "Burl" until the end.

I think what made this death so difficult was the realization that, at our age, we should not get a new puppy. We might not outlive it! The death of a loved pet is not like that of a human child or family member but the pain is still real.

I've actually had dogs all my life. My dog in Huntsville, a mixed breed, mostly Chow, Jo-Joy, was named for the Jack-in-the-Box that was one of my favorite toys. From that point on I have had a dog, with a few breaks in between. After my husband and I married we seemed always to have a dog, when we lived in places that allowed them.

We still have a dog, Cleo, our Toy Pomeranian lap dog, nine years old, and a cat,

Dr. Watson, sixteen (a medical student living with us, earlier, had had a cat, named Sherlock). Nothing young left at home, anymore, in the way of animals - a constant reminder of our own aging!

I am, now, not only much more aware of our aging but of the aging of our friends. We have lost many in the last few years but somehow with the death of "Burl" my own mortality has become more poignant. Jo-Joy's death was in my youth and mortality was not on my mind whereas "Burl" came to us at a time of life (middle age) when we still had vigor but we were not youthful.

What we did not realize was that as the dog aged so did we and one day we were both old. Now, he is dead! Where are we in this cycle of life? My husband's retirement at 83 and "Burl's" living until almost eighteen was unusual in it's longevity - culminating simultaneously. However, realizing the joy we had with "Burl" and our grandchildren (he was with us before they were born), especially on the farm, is constantly in my thoughts.

With his retirement, "Burl" will enter Charles' thoughts in a new way, also. After all, memories are all, now, that's left of "Burl"; not only a great dog in the field as a flusher and retriever but as a fiercely loyal family dog,

So, I guess, as F. Scott Fitzgerald said in the last sentence of "The Great Gatsby", "We beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past".

** From the poem "In Memory of W. B. Yeats" by W. H. Auden in the "Collected Poems" edited by Edward Mendelson*



**LISTEN TO THE OLDER FOLKS –
THEY’VE BEEN THERE.**

FROM OSCAR AND MARIA LLERENA
WITH LOVE TO THE HUNTSVILLE HIGH CLASS OF 1966

Aunt Essie Goes to Town in 1895

by Cathy Burns



We were sitting on the front porch of the house on Eustis Street, trying to escape the afternoon heat by drinking water with ice in it. I had never had water with ice in it before coming to Huntsville, but I quickly learned that during the Alabama summer just about anything is improved by the addition of ice cubes.

"When I was a girl," she reminisced, "we lived over in what everyone now calls Big Cove. Every so often we would travel into Huntsville to go shopping. Daddy would put all us children into the wagon, hook up the ox,..."

"An OX, Aunt Essie? Not a real ox! You traveled by ox cart!" I hushed immediately when I was impaled by those pale, school-teacherish eyes.

"Yes, an ox, a real OX!" She sniffed. "Daddy had an ox to work the farm and to pull the wagon when we needed to go into town."

"We always stopped at the top of the gap and went to look out over the valley. Daddy would stand, looking in the direction of Huntsville, and always say, 'Some day there is going to be a fine road all the way from our place - all the way into Huntsville!'"

"How we laughed at that," she smiled. "We thought he was

crazy." She settled back in her chair and gazed absently across the street at the crepe myrtles which had just flamed into bloom. A little bit later she turned, fixed me with a piercing look from those pale orbs which marched its way down her rather long, elegant nose; her mouth set in a ruler straight line.

"Now today, you young folks are telling me that there is going to be a way, all the way to the moon."

Her eyes twinkled, and the corners of her mouth turned up ever so slightly. But she didn't laugh or say it was crazy.



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Hershey's Baby Boy

Hi, the Ark named my mother Hershey. When she was found she was pregnant with us, my sister was born then the rest of us were blocked. Hours later Mom had to have a caesarean and 5 more boys came into the world. One was me, I am only 5 weeks old but I'm already really cute. The Ark and that vet saved our lives. Pretty soon I will go to the vet for my shots. Then I can be adopted to my new home.

Mommy is a small dog that looks like a terrier mix. We are really big pups. I guess our daddy was a traveling man. We will all be hoping for a caring home with toys & love.

Please, if you do not want pups or kittens, have your dogs & cats spayed and neutered. It will save many little lives. Just stop and think about what would have happened to us and our mommy if not for the people that found her and the Ark that took us all, and the vet. When you come to the Ark ask see Hershey's pups. That's me and 5 more!

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EGGPLANT, ANYONE?

by Don Broome

Always an avid reader of Mother Earth News and other such magazines, my wife and I decided to have a big garden. With 5 kids to feed it would be nice to have fresh veggies and save money on the grocery bill. I had read an article in Southern Living about using raised beds for planting and how it saves on water and is easier to weed.

Getting 5 kids to help prepare the space was quite a challenge but we finally got it the way we wanted it. We raised the beds about a foot and packed the sides, put newspaper and grass clipping on the sides and in the isles to keep down weeding and were ready to plant. We had actually gotten the kids (well most anyway) to like the idea of growing our own food at home until....

We bought tomato plants, we planted green beans, cucumbers, okra and several other selections and everyone was happy until my wife insisted on a six-pack of eggplant plants. Now I don't mind okra as long as it isn't boiled but eggplant, I put my foot down. Gentleman's agreement between husband and wife meant that the kids may get eggplant but hubby will be at my bro's house that night.

The garden progressed and soon one daughter was going and picking her daily cucumber for a salad and we had a steady stream of tomatoes and green beans. In fact, there was a surplus of everything; except the eggplant. It wasn't that they didn't produce any but they would disappear about the time that my wife was ready to pick it.

We surmised that we had a problem with rabbits and we

watched the garden often in hopes of seeing the theft, but to no avail.

Late summer and the garden is slowing down, I put ammonium Nitrate around all the plants and everything freshened and starting producing all over again. The kids asked me not to "freshen" the eggplants and I didn't.

When it came time to clean up the garden we had an abundance of veggies and my wife was visiting with the people who lived behind us. She offered to share some of our surplus with them. The lady thanked my wife and said that the kids had been generous all summer giving tomatoes, okra and whole bunch of eggplant. In fact they had been given so much eggplant that they had shared some of their bounty with friends.

That evening my wife went to the grocery store and bought eggplants. Guess what we had every night for a week. My wife said my brother was invited. The truth is I didn't know anything about what the kids were doing but it didn't help, my bro was still invited.



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MY HEAVY METAL YEARS

by Elizabeth Wharry



As a young child, there were some expressions that really confused me. I would hear adults talking and picture something literal. For example...money laundering. Was it dry cleaned or put in a washing machine?

When I heard the expression hung out to dry, I wondered how many clothes pins were needed. I guessed that it depended on who or what was being hung out to dry.

Occasionally, my mom would say that she was going to a bridal or baby shower, and I would picture a bunch of women standing in a bathtub with the shower running. I couldn't figure out how her clothes dried so quickly on the way home.

Perhaps the most perplexing for me was the slogan for Canada Dry ginger ale. "Drink Canada Dry". I used to wonder what people in Canada would do if everyone drank Canada dry.

As a teenager, wearing glasses, braces on one's teeth, pierced ears and long hair were all status symbols. Now, in my "heavy metal" years, the status symbols are bifocals, dentures, hearing aids and a full head of one's own hair! The "heavy metal" years - iron in the blood, gold in the teeth, and silver or platinum in the hair...you get the idea!

The other day, I had a bad headache. I followed the directions on the bottle exactly. Take two aspirin and keep away from children. Makes sense.

Here are some thoughts that occur to me on those occasional sleepless nights. Why does funeral begin with fun? Has

anyone ever tried to climb Mt. Dew or make an appointment with Dr. Pepper?

What style cap would look best on one's knee? What color thread fixes a stitch in one's side? Does the crook in your elbow have an arrest warrant? What or who did it rob?

What does a thinking cap look like? Is it the opposite of a dunce cap?

Have any of you ever seen anyone literally laughing all the way to the bank?

I can't speak for anyone else...but I've never seen anyone crack up before. Would it sound like breaking glass?

And finally...here is the answer to the difference between March 17 and April 1. Everybody wants to be Irish!

Happy St. Patrick's day!



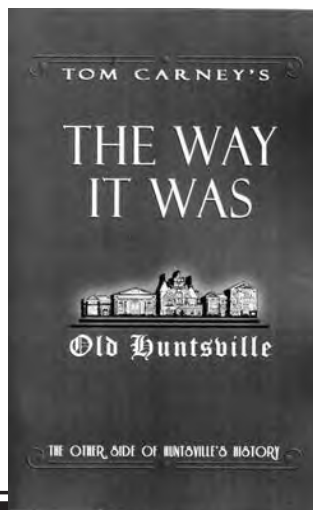
"I almost had a psychic girlfriend but she left me before we met."

Steven Wright

"THE WAY IT WAS,"

THE OTHER SIDE OF HUNTSVILLE'S HISTORY

BY TOM CARNEY



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Household Tips You Can Use!



* To bring the bubbles back to your bubbly, simply drop a single raisin into a glass or bottle of champagne or sparkling wine. The carbon dioxide remaining in the wine will adhere to the fruit and release it back into the drink.

* Put an empty paper towel roll on your vacuum cleaner to get to those hard to find spots, can bend & squeeze for more control.

* Use a muffin tin to serve up the condiments at your next cookout. Place mustard, ketchup, relish, mayo, pickles, onions – whatever fixings you're serving – in each of the muffin compartments. Makes serving and clean up super easy.

* Prevent ash from spreading through the air when cleaning out a fireplace by using a water-filled spray bottle. Lightly mist the ashes before you shovel them.

* Need a tough scrubber for bad stains and spills? Sprinkle salt over the dirty area then scrub with a damp sponge. Works like a charm on soap scum and caked-on globs of toothpaste. Plus, no toxic chemicals!

* Don't throw away the empty cardboard six-pack bottle carrier. Use it to store tools, crafts, glue, pencils, holiday trinkets and other

items. This way everything has a home!

* To keep your summer drinks or white wine cold, drop a few frozen seedless grapes into the beverage. As the grapes thaw, they won't water down the beverage. Then you have a sweet snack at the bottom of your glass!

* Restore the shimmer to your brushed stainless steel appliances by rubbing on some baby oil with a square of folded paper towel.

* Get rid of that "old food" smell from your chopping boards by rubbing half a cut lemon over the surface. Allow the chopping board to stand for 20-30 minutes and then rinse under cool running water for a citrus-fresh perfume.

* Use vinegar to wipe the inside of the refrigerator to help prevent mildew (acid kills mildew fungus).

* To keep your fridge smelling fresh, keep a box of baking soda, a can filled with charcoal, dried coffee grounds or a cotton ball soaked in vanilla extract inside of it.

* When dusting your television or blinds, use a soft cloth that has been dampened with fabric softener - this will reduce the static that attracts dust.

* Keep ants away from your dog or cat's food by placing the bowl in a tray of water. Any ant bold enough to attempt the swim will quickly drown.

* Putting crushed bay leaves under the kitchen sink or at the bottom of doors and windows is a great way to deter cockroaches - apparently they hate the stuff!

* When you load the dishwasher, sort your knives, spoons and forks together into their own spaces in the basket for kitchen utensils, that way it's easier to put them up when they're cleaned and dried.

**"I know what men want.
Men want to be really,
really close to
someone who will leave
them alone."**

Elayne Boosler

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Don't Mess with Somebody Else's Kids

by Betty Hallmark Atkinson



One time my Mother and my twin sister and I were picking cotton in one field, while our brother John was in another cotton field.

We all met at home to eat when my brother said he wasn't going back to the field because of trouble with our neighbor.

Somebody had hit the neighbor's daughter with cotton bolls and she had blamed my brother, who was picking cotton behind her.

Her mother grabbed my brother and she started yelling and threatened to stomp him into the ground if he didn't stop.

After hearing that, our Mother then said she was going to have a talk with the woman and told us to stay at the house; but my twin and I followed Mother, where she went to their house and called the neighbor out on her porch. Out came the neighbor and her three kids, words were exchanged between us and them; and the next thing I knew, we were having a free for all fight.

When it was finally over, my Mother and my twin went back to the cotton field to finish the days work. The neighbor and her kids went to the hospital for medical attention.

A lawsuit was brought against us, because we had been on the neighbors' property when the fight had started. My Mother said she didn't want us twins to have to go to court, so she agreed to pay for their medical bills.

Meanwhile both families still attended the same church sitting on opposite sides of the church. Some many days later, my Daddy heard someone screaming, and it was the neighbor woman, and she was mowing her grass when she ran over a wire that was in the grass. It struck her in the leg, hitting a vein, blood was spurting everywhere.

My Daddy ran to her rescue, then rushed her to the hospital. With the neighbor woman in the back seat, my Daddy applied pressure to her bleeding leg. Her husband was driving with my Mother in the front seat with him. After that incident, all was forgiven between us and the neighbors and they all remained best friends for the rest of their lives.

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Huntsville Times carriers also had reason to be proud when it was announced they had led the nation in the sale of defense stamps and war bonds.

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