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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

German POWs in Huntsville, Alabama



Huntsville residents know that there was once a prisoner-of-war encampment in their midst.

During World War II, an elite regiment of 250 German paratroopers was captured and brought to North Alabama, where they were housed in a hastily constructed camp at Redstone Arsenal.

After the war's end, the camp was completely demolished and all records pertaining to it were "Classified". Almost half a

century later, personnel files of the POW's were shipped to Germany where they remain sealed under tight security. The only trace of the camp's existence are the memories of the men who worked or were once imprisoned there.....

Also in this issue: Remembering Dr. William McKissack; Your Arthritic Pet; Mike Vaccaro; Life of Dr. William Burritt; Leon Lipscomb Grocery; The Story of Desmond Doss; Household Tips; Unusual Recipes and Much More!

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German Prisoners of War in Huntsville, Alabama

First Published in Old Huntsville Magazine in 1999

by Tom Carney

The area along Dodd Road on Redstone Arsenal looks almost serene today. Off in the distance the remnants of a long ago dirt road meanders aimlessly through the tall grass and overgrown brush while a rabbit sits in the middle of a small clearing, basking in the warmth of the early morning sun. Occasionally you spot a stray piece of broken concrete or a piece of wire that, in your imagination, might have been part of the barbed wire enclosure.

Regardless of how hard you search though, there is nothing to tell you that the area was once a prison camp for German prisoners of war.

The 6th Regiment of the 2nd Fallschirmjager (Paratrooper) Division, under Major Freiherr von der Heydte, was considered by many military experts to be the premiere airborne

force of the German Army in World War II. Often jumping into the midst of raging battles from an altitude of less than four hundred feet, the regiment was constantly in battle as the German High Command shifted it from one front to another in an attempt to stave off the inevitable defeat.

Part of the regiment, under the temporary command of SS-Hauptsturmführer Otto Skorzeny, was used to rescue the Italian Fascist premier, Benito Mussolini from atop Gran Sasso, a 2,130 meter peak in Italy, where he was being held captive by Italian forces after they had negotiated a surrender with the Allies. Afterwards the regiment was transferred to the Russian front where the unit suffered 60% casualties in the bitter hand-to-hand fighting before being ordered back to Germany to rest and regroup.

Many German citizens thought joining the Fallschirmjager as the same as committing suicide but others, drawn by its elite spirit and bold exploits, eagerly signed their names to the enlistment papers. Typical of the young men who joined the regiment was Karl Spitzenpfeil, a native of Oberfranken.

Spitzenpfeil, born in 1922, grew up in a country where the youth were immersed in the Nazi dogma. At the age of 11 he joined the Hitler Youth and in 1940 became a member of the

A good memory is what enables you to remember a mistake each time you repeat it.



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Labor Front. That same year he officially became a member of the N.S.D.A.R (Nazi Party). Perhaps drawn by party ideology as much as glamour, Spitzzenfeil joined the Fallschirmjagers in 1941.

In 1944 the regiment was transferred to Normandy, France to be held as reserves for the expected Allied invasion. Ironically, though designated as reserves, the 6th Regiment was the only German fighting force fully prepared when the invasion occurred, on June 6.

The regiment was in the middle of live-fire field exercises with troops deployed and artillery dug in when suddenly Allied paratroopers began dropping into the middle of the training grounds. One of the first Allied soldiers to hit the ground was Reverend George Woods, who later became a priest at the Church of The Nativity in Huntsville.

The same troops who were firing at Father Woods would soon know Huntsville well.

Using a combination of armor and overwhelming air

superiority, the Allies rolled over the makeshift German defenses. Within days the 6th Regiment was reduced to small pockets of men fighting desperately to survive against overwhelming odds. A German private, George Remer, later recalled the battle.

"We couldn't move. Every time we tried, airplanes spotted us and artillery would fire at our positions. We were fighting tanks and airplanes with rifles. The worst thing was the thirst and the smells - we had run out of water days before but to move was almost certain death - we had to stay in our holes with dead cows and bodies lying just feet from us."

Although the Germans had been taught that surrender was the ultimate disgrace, reality soon won out and the Allies began taking vast numbers of prisoners. Among the captives were 272 soldiers of the Fallschirmjager. After being relieved of their weapons and helmets the prisoners were marched to the beach where they were loaded into the emp-

ty hull of a cargo ship destined for Glasgow, Scotland,

In Scotland, the prisoners were transferred to a temporary POW camp that held almost 135,000 captives. No preparations had been made for the large number of prisoners and as a result the camp was hastily thrown together with an unruly and disorganized mob held behind the barbed wire.

The noncoms of the 6th Regiment POW's immediately set about restoring order among their troops. While other units deteriorated into leaderless masses, the 6th Regiment set themselves apart by the rigid military discipline they submitted to willingly, a trait that would follow them throughout their captivity. According to



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the Glasgow News, the regiment, when ordered to board a Liberty ship destined for the United States, infuriated its guards when it formed ranks and marched, goose-stepping, to the embarkation point while singing German military anthems.

After disembarking in New York the POWs were shipped by train to Camp Forrest, near Tullahoma, Tennessee. Private Heinz Pabel described the train ride.

"We laughed and jeered at the flimsy construction of the wooden houses. All the cities we passed through seemed built haphazardly with no plan in mind. How could a country like this defeat the Reich? But as the miles grew longer we began to realize the vastness of the country and our bravado turned into hopelessness."

Camp Forrest had originally been authorized, in 1942, as an internment camp for Japanese civilians. As the war in Europe grew in intensity, however, it was decided to convert the camp to a German POW camp with the capacity to hold 3,000 prisoners. By June 1944, the camp held almost 22,000 prisoners. Much of the overcrowding was alleviated by the establishment of sub-camps throughout Tennessee and Georgia where they were employed in non war essential jobs.

Upon arrival at Camp Forrest all POW groups went through an informal classification. Class 1 was considered suitable for employment with

minimum control; class 2 was employment with guards and class 3 were to be segregated from other prisoners and not allowed employment away from camp. Normally the last classification was reserved for the elite, such as paratroopers and submariners who might have an influence over ordinary troops.

The submariners were transferred to Anniston, Alabama and the remnants of the 6th Regiment, apparently the only paratroopers at Camp Forrest, were ordered to the newly established Camp Huntsville.

A company called Chambers Construction of Athens had been awarded a contract on July 24, 1944 to construct the basic camp which consisted of three wooden buildings and a barbed wire enclosure with guard towers at each corner. A sick bay was located in one end of the mess hall, although seriously ill patients were sent to the University of Alabama campus in Tuscaloosa where McFarland Hall had been converted for use as a POW hospital. The enclosure was approximately 600' by

400', fronting on Dodd Road. A motor transport pool was located across the road.

Two weeks later 250 of the 6th Regiment POWs arrived and were immediately separated into groups of six. Each group was then assigned a tent with a small wood burning stove and given a "kit" bag in which to store personal belongings.

Almost from the beginning the POWs seemed determined not to appear defeated.

"They were haughty," said one former guard. "You could give them an order and they would look at you like you were nothing. I've seen them stand at attention in the hot sun for hours without flexing a muscle, waiting for one of their people to give them an order. But an American couldn't even get them to pick up a cigarette butt."

The camp quickly took on the appearances of a regular German army camp. Reveille at 6:00 in the morning, formation and roll call at 6:30 and breakfast at 7. The prisoners

"Giving up smoking is like visiting a Nudist Camp - you don't know what to do with your hands."

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worked from 7:30 until 4:30 when they would fall in for another roll call. After dinner there was usually another formation, this time called by the Germans, to take care of camp business, mail call and other items relating to the welfare of the prisoners.

In one instance, when a POW was accused of stealing from a tent mate he was tried by his own comrades, before the entire camp. After being found guilty, he was ordered to walk sentry duty four weekends in a row (inside the barbed wire).

After helping to complete the construction of the camp, the POW's were assigned to work in a rock quarry where they broke rocks with a 12 pound hammer for eight hours at a stretch. More important than the gravel used in road building was the cooperation gained by such labor. While most POW's initially resisted being assigned to work details, a month's hard labor at breaking rocks caused all but the most fanatical to volunteer. After the first several months, the stone quarry seems to have been used primarily as a punishment detail.

About half of the prisoners were assigned regular jobs such as kitchen detail, barbers, sanitation and grass cutting. The other half were "temporary workers." They would stand in formation every morning while civilian "foremen" would tell the guards how many prisoners they needed that day for certain jobs. The guards would then inform the German noncoms, who would order the appropriate number of people to "fall out" and board the trucks. Most of these POWs were used

in road construction and spraying for mosquitos in the malaria infested marsh lands of the Arsenal. Each prisoner was paid 80 cents a day, in canteen script.

Many stories persist today about German POWs being used to manufacture chemical weapons at the Arsenal - there are many people still living who actually saw them in the workplaces. The truth, however is much simpler. Although the POWs were elite soldiers, they were still virile young men who would go to great extremes to be around the fairer sex. Often when sent to the area on a garbage detail the men would loiter as long as possible hoping for glances of the female workers. In several instances POWs actually posed as janitors until they were discovered and sent on their way.

At one point the loitering become so bad that the Base commander was forced to issue an order detailing exactly what chores the POWs were allowed to perform.

The POWs favorite job assignment was the garbage detail. Not only did they get to travel all over the base but it gave them the opportunity to "organize" items such as reading materials, radios and odd pieces of clothing.

In a typical case of government bureaucracy, the prisoners were not allowed to purchase any type of reading material but could receive it if someone sent it to them. Many

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of the POWs took advantage of this by writing relatives who lived in the States. An aunt of Karl Spltzenpfeil, who lived in New York, sent a large box of books along with packets of flower seeds which were planted along the camp walkways.


"All the prisoners were treated correctly," Spitzenpfeil later said, although probably with a certain amount of exaggeration. A former guard laughs at the story of POWs getting two cases of beer each for their birthdays. "The truth was they would trade us cartons of cigarettes they had gotten from the canteen and we would trade them in town for beer. For every three cases we would give them two and we would keep one."

In all POW camps there was a constant struggle for the "souls" of the POWs. Prisoners who would renounce Nazism and agree to cooperate with the authorities were deemed "progressives" and offered better working conditions as an incentive. They were also sent to re-education camps. In most camps becoming a "progressive" was viewed as be-

ing a traitor and was severely dealt with, often with a beating in the middle of the night. An ex-POW from another camp, now living in Huntsville, later told how the "fanatics" terrorized the prisoners, sometimes administering beatings for offenses as simple as talking to a guard. As far as is known, no one with the 6th Regiment ever applied for "re-education."

Oddly, few people in Madison County even knew there was a German POW camp in their midst. All news of the camp was censored and even the guards were under strict orders not to talk about it. In one case two POWs actually walked off from a work detail and hitchhiked into Huntsville where they went to an evening movie and then went next door to a restaurant to enjoy a large meal. When it came time to pay the bill they calmly told the restaurateur to call the base so they could turn themselves in. Even though they were clad in prisoners uniforms with large white letters painted on the legs and sleeves, no one had thought it was unusual.


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of 250 prisoners the camp had grown to hold over 1200 by March of 1945. Small groups of prisoners were continuously being transferred in and out but the total number appears to have remained at between 1100 and 1300 until the camp was closed down.

As the days turned into months the prisoners began to realize the hopelessness of their situation. In Europe, if a prisoner could escape, he at least had a chance to make it back to his own lines. In America, a prisoner had no chance whatsoever. Even more bitter was the realization that with an Allied victory they would be able to return home, but as a nation defeated. Most of the men were torn between wanting to go home and wanting the war to continue. Though there were no escapes from Camp Huntsville, in nearby Camp Forrest there were four escapes and seven suicides as the war entered its final days.

Henry Gibbons, a former guard, described the end of the war. "We received orders to double the guards around the fence but they didn't tell us why. The base sent over a detachment of M.P's and we posted them next to the gate. In a little while an American officer drove up and entered the camp where he stayed for a few minutes and then left. Shortly afterwards the POWs lined up in formation and one of their officers gave a speech. I couldn't understand him but they told me later what he said."

"The Fuhrer is dead. He has fallen in the defense of the Fa-

therland. You are reminded that you have taken an oath as a German soldier and shall be expected to act accordingly."

"For the first time," Gibbons continued, "those boys really looked whipped. You could just see all the hot air going out of them."

The elite 6th Fallschirmjager Regiment had finally been defeated.

If the POW's had been expecting a quick return home, they were to be disappointed. Almost immediately new regulations went into effect. Whereas before officers and noncoms, under the Geneva Convention, could not be forced to work, after the surrender all POWs were required to work regardless of rank. The recalcitrants

who refused were placed on a special diet, called the "Camp Forrest dinner," consisting of milk and herring. Huge quantities of herring had been shipped to the States by Great Britain in partial payment for war loans but when the United States troops refused to eat it, a large amount ended up in Camp Forrest from where it was shipped to other camps.

A few days of this diet usually persuaded even the die-hards that work in the rock quarry was an acceptable alternative.

An event that was to have even more far reaching effects occurred on June 5, 1945 when all the POWs were assembled and ordered to fill out new forms. This form, unlike oth-



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"If by 'Crunches' you mean the sound bacon makes when you eat it, yes I do crunches."

Sam Keith, Huntsville

ers they had already filled out, asked for information on political organizations they had been a part of.

Karl Spitzenpfeil, as many others did, while not realizing the implications, acknowledged being a member of the N.S.D.A.E (Nazi party).

Preparations to close Camp Huntsville began in September of 1945. For the first time the men of the 6th Regiment were separated with many being sent to the Midwest to help with the harvest and a few to a camp outside of Chicago.

The last group of POWs left Huntsville at the end of October after helping to demolish the camp. Lumber from the buildings were stacked in neat piles, later to be used for other construction on the Arsenal. The tents were returned to Army warehouses and even the gravel walkways in the camp were completely erased.

The United States government marked all the records concerning the camp as "Classified," thereby effectively erasing it from history. Almost a half century later personnel files of the POWs were shipped to Germany where they remain sealed under tight security.

For Karl Spitzenpfeil, the war was far from being over. After leaving Huntsville he was sent to Nebraska where he helped to harvest potatoes. At this time they were slowly beginning to return POW's to Germany with the "politically correct" being sent first. Others who had acknowledged being members of the Nazi party suffered a different fate.

In January of 1946 Spitzenpfeil was sent to San Francisco where he boarded a ship bound for England with most of the other POW's from Camp Huntsville. There, they were joined by another 900 members

of the 6th Fallschirmjager Regiment who had been held in other POW camps.

They were held in England for another two years after the war helping to repair war damage, "doing penance" for having once been Germany's elite.

In 1982 Karl Spitzenpfeil returned to Huntsville for a visit. After touring Redstone Arsenal and seeing the site where he once broke rocks, he asked to be taken to the site of the camp.

There was nothing left of the camp to stir his memory. All traces had long ago disappeared. Spitzenpfeil stood for a long moment staring at the site before finally turning away.

"It's good," he said. "It's good that it is gone."

Karl Spitzenpfeil died in 1996 in Michelau, Germany.



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The Lawnmower

by M.D. Smith, IV



Yes, I am talking about the old manual push lawn mower of the 40s and 50s. They were workhorses, never broke and only needed a blade sharpening every now and then.

I was nine years old in 1949, looking for ways to earn money to spend on a weekend. You already know of my pulling broad-leaf weeds in the yard, three for a penny. Takes a lot of pulling to make much money. On the other hand, when our yardman didn't

show up, which was often, I was offered grass-cutting for \$.50. That was a real fortune for a boy of nine, but it was hard work.

If you've never pushed a manual reel mower, in tall grass, let me tell you, it ain't easy. Especially if you are a small boy, the lawn mower is rusty and needs oil. Our mower was kept under the back porch steps, that was not entirely out of the rain. So the old metal parts, blade and cutting bar would rust.

This particular Saturday in October, I got the job and set out. The method to carry it was flip the handle over on the reverse side, and that was neutral, like coaster brakes on a bike. I had flipped it over and lugged it up the driveway to our sloping yard. Then flipped into the cutting position and gave a mighty push. Nothing. Didn't budge. I could see the spiral blades would not turn. I kicked the blade assembly on the top, and it grudgingly moved a little bit. Another couple of kicks and finally I was able to push it hard enough for it to move and cut a few blades of grass. Some of the grass simply lay beneath the blade and cutting bar and did not cut. After just a few feet, I concluded there was no way I was going to have the strength or endurance to cut the grass with that rusty old thing. I went into the house and found my father.

"Daddy, the lawn mower is so rusted, I can't mow the grass. It'll barely turn."

"Let me have a look, Son," as he got out of his den chair and put down the newspaper

Housekeeping tip: Always keep a few get-well cards displayed on your mantle. That way when visitors drop in they'll think you've been sick and that's why your house is not clean.



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where he was reading the funnies.

Down in his elaborate and well-equipped workshop, he concluded no one could do a decent job on the lawn with this mower, even if they had the strength to make it run.

"Son," as he always called me, "Not only am I going to oil this mower, I'm going to sharpen the blades and cutter bar."

I watched intently as he took the bottom cutter bar off the mower, and with a small tooth flat file, proceeded to sharpen the spiral blades on the mower. Then he put the cutting bar in his vise and ground it until it would almost cut paper. Finally, he oiled the gears, wheels, and spindle the blades were part of and reassembled the whole thing.

Carefully adjusting the cutting bar to touch the blades lightly. Too light and it would not cut grass properly. Too heavy and it was hard to push. "Okay, it's good to go," he said to me and placing it on the floor, turned it over to me. "Be careful of those blades, they are all really sharp now and you could cut a toe off if you aren't careful."

I was not sure how you'd do that but nodded my understanding.

The tall grass cut like a dream. I'd never before or since cut grass that easily. I think it was better than new. I smiled the whole time. Later that afternoon, I enjoyed a double feature and a Three Stooges cartoon at the theatre with my money. I could afford popcorn and a coke.

Before I close, a sidebar about sharp blades on a push

mower. My first cousin only had partial fingers on his middle and index fingers. A year or two earlier he'd been cutting his lawn, which had a steep side. He'd parked the mower on the top of the hill and went to the bottom for some reason. His little brother got hold of the mower and proceeded to push it off the crest, and it started down the hill. It was rolling towards him, and he reached out to grab it. Whoops, there went the ends of two fingers.

So, yes, an old push mower can cut toes or fingers off. Particularly if it was sharp as my father made those blades.

"Man struck by lightning faces battery charge."

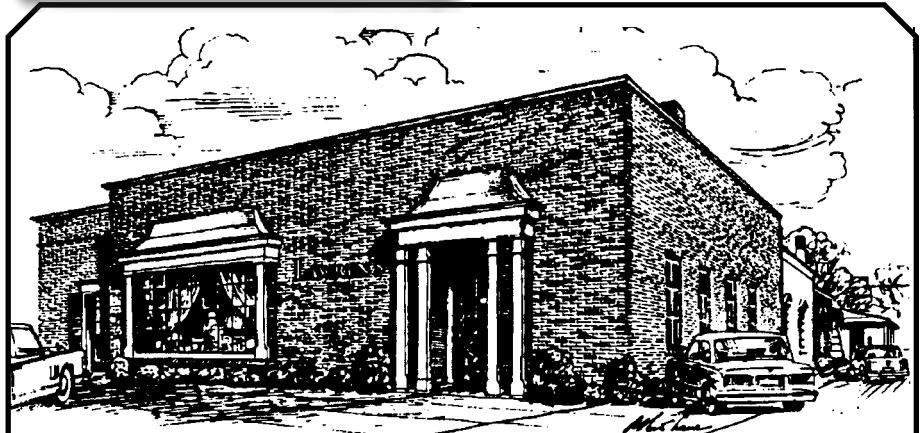
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Billy Kruse, Huntsville



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by Mimi

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Easter is just around the corner. Seems like Spring is bursting out all over. This is my favorite season of the year. New birth, lovely bulbs blooming, and what a good time to think about spring cleaning. Those closets could really use some TLC. Charities would love any donations given to them.

You know you're getting older when you light the candles on your birthday cake and a group of campers form a circle and start singing "Kumbaya."

One I really like is the Thrift Shop at the Humane Society. All the money taken in from the sale of donations goes to feed and house the animals. They have some really wonderful volunteers that are glad to help you find anything you happen to be looking for.

Someone asked me today when do I recommend planting. I use the rule after tax day, usually the last freeze has passed by that date. Last fall I hated to see a couple of ferns, impatiens and coleus die, so I brought them inside and placed them on the sun porch. It was so nice seeing the impatiens bloom all winter and having green plants to look at.

Now is the time for parents to talk to their children to see what they might be interested in for summer. A few things my children and grandchildren liked doing was T-ball, softball, baseball, swim teams, day camp and overnight camps were their favorites. Bible school at many churches have great programs. For younger children, older children can offer to be a teacher's helper. Older children might consider enrolling at the aquatic center to take a life saving course.

Pools are always looking for lifeguards. Hospitals offer a volunteer program for high school children and the Humane Society would really appreciate having kids to walk the dogs and play with them. These are just a few I remember my children getting involved in.

Just remember to keep your children busy so you don't have to listen to the words they love to say... "I'M BORED!" Busy children don't have time to get bored and into trouble.

Enjoy the lovely flowers and take time to smell the Roses!

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The New Physician

by Louie Tippett

As a child I never cared to go barefoot on a dirt road, a sidewalk or even grass. For that matter going barefoot is not a thing I do as an adult. The day I cut my left ankle (nowadays if using correct medical language it would be called a laceration), was when I met the new physician. Our family physician was Dr. Hamm at the Huntsville Clinic downtown Huntsville.

The afternoon I ended up at the clinic, my two sisters, Betty and Bernice, and I had been playing hide and go seek which we often did together since we had no close neighbors. I was running across the yard with my shoes on to beat them to the home base when I stepped on the old broken mason jar lying in the yard.

At that time in my life, my dad worked for Dr. William Burritt and we lived beside Dr. Burritt on Monte Sano mountain. Our home was a two story apartment with a garage below. Dr. Burritt stored old lumber, doors and windows in the first floor garage. The lumber and doors stored there came out of his father's home.

The twenty room antebellum home of Dr. Amatus Robbins Burritt was demolished in 1949 when Dr. William Burritt donated the property to the city of Huntsville for the construction of the Madison County Health Department. The address was 208 Eustis Street which today is a parking lot. The Episcopal Church of Nativity is located across the street. Dr. Burritt and his family attended this beautiful church which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built in the Gothic Revival style by noted architect Frank Wills in 1859.

Enough rambling in history, I must get on with the original story of the new physician in town! Mother and dad left my 2 sisters with grandmother & granddad. They lived at the corner of Monte Sano Boulevard and Governors Drive in their home, which we called the Red House.

Our family physician, Dr. Pat Hamm's office was downtown on Franklin Street at the Huntsville Clinic. When we arrived Dr.

Hamm had already left for the day. The new physician who had just arrived in town was at the clinic. His name was Dr. Robert Sammons and had just arrived that afternoon without his family or a place to live. Can you believe, I was his first patient in Huntsville! He used a few of his choice words about me being more careful while he was suturing the laceration.

After he finished suturing my ankle, mother, dad and I left the clinic and went home. At first it seemed like the bleeding had stopped but it started showing up on the bandage surface. It continued to bleed through the bandage so mother decided it was best to take me back to the clinic to let Dr. Sammons recheck it. We returned to the clinic. Dr. Sammons said he was spending the night at the clinic so he would be glad to have me stay too so he could keep an eye on the wound.

Just want to add this little fact to my story. After I became an adult and married my sweet wife Jane, she and I would go to Aunt Eunice's Country Restaurant on Andrew Jackson Way on Saturdays for country ham, biscuits and gravy.

It was on one of those Saturday mornings that Dr. Sammons and his wife Jane came in for breakfast and sat with us.

This wonderful Medical Doctor continued to be our family physician until he stopped practicing medicine.



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WAR DEPARTMENT WANTS STABLES CLEAN!

From 1916 Huntsville Newspaper

Dr. Husman, government veterinarian representing the War Department, was in Huntsville this morning in conference with Dr. Grote, the Health Officer.

The object of his visit was to get all livery stables and coach stables thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Last year the government lost hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of horses and mules because of infectious diseases, such as influenza, etc., which are preventable diseases.

The department therefore is endeavoring to get all stables thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and kept so.

Dr. Husman has requested the health department to look after this matter and Dr. Grote assured him that every patriotic stableman in Huntsville will cooperate.

Rules for the cleaning and disinfection will be issued by Dr. Grote as suggested by the War Department at once.

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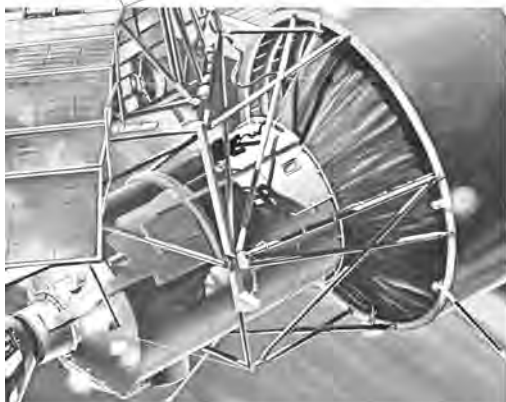
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My \$100 and Mama

by John H. Tate

Did you ever see the look of fear on your mother's face, with terror in her eyes looking into your own, and she recognized that it is because of you her life is in danger? Such a thing happened to this writer when I was seventeen.

I worked part-time at Winn-Dixie/Kwik Chek on Jordan Lane in Huntsville, Alabama. The store's Meat Department Manager, along with other entrepreneurial endeavors, also had a little used-cars lot just over the Alabama/Tennessee State Line in Fayetteville, TN. He knew I desperately wanted a car; he said he had one for sale just a couple of blocks from the Winn-Dixie.

At lunchtime he drove me to look at it. The inside looked nice with black on black leather, and the maroon outside body color really looked good. He did tell me it was a 1963 Tempest LeMans. All I cared about was that it was a car, it ran and all he was asking was \$100 for it.

I did not pay any attention to whatever reason he gave for why the car was there, or why he only wanted \$100. Whatever story he told me made sense to my eager young mind. After all, on Friday, which was payday, I was going to own a car.

The store was so busy Friday, I only

"My decision-making skills closely resemble those of a squirrel when crossing the road."

Belinda Talley

had time to pick up my check after school, run to the bank and cash it. I gave the Meat Department Manager the \$100 and he gave me the keys. However, I could not leave the store until nearly eleven o'clock that night. One of my co-workers drove me to get the car, but I was not experienced enough to drive an unfamiliar car at night, so he drove the car to my house and I followed in his. At the house, he told me the brakes were shot, plugs seemed to be fouled and the points might be sticking. I said ok but had no clue what he was talking about.

The next week, I learned how to change the sparkplugs, gap the points and change the oil. I bought new brake shoes too. I was surprised there were no instructions in the box for the brake shoes, but the guy behind the counter said it was no big deal and gave me some pointers. I got up early on Sunday morning to work on the brakes; after all, I was taking my mother to work that afternoon.

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I finished an hour before it was time to leave. Sure some things could be a little tighter, but everything was back in its proper place and when I took it around the block, it stopped each time.

When it was time, Momma was in the front seat and my younger sister in the back seat. There was a sense of real excitement in the air and I was feeling good. We came to the first stop in front of the U-Totem Store at the corner of Oakwood Road and Jordan Lane. The stopping distance was just a little longer than I like, so I made a mental note to pump the brakes at the next stop. We headed south on Jordan Lane, I pumped a couple of times and stopped successfully at the corner of Jordan Lane and University Drive.

The light turned green to go straight, we started up the Jordan Lane hill, headed toward Holmes Avenue. "Funny," I thought to myself, "This is a big hill." But I was not concerned - after all we had stopped at the other two stops.

As we topped the hill and started down the other side, we picked up speed. I pumped the brakes quietly a couple of times; after all, we didn't need to upset mom. When she yelled, "Are you going to slow down?!" I pumped the brakes with a lot more determination. That is when I saw it - the cars were stopped at the light at the corner of Jordan Lane and Holmes Avenue.

But there was hope; the light turned green, we were still half-way down the hill; the coming traffic had started to cross Holmes, but the car in front of us was just sitting there. Thinking quickly, I looked for an escape. Could not pass on the left because of oncoming traffic, could not pass on the right, there was a little sub-compact with a mom and four kids in the car.

As the car at the light has started to move, I thought I could speed up and get in front of the compact car on my right, and slip by the car at the light.

We almost made it - the impact was pretty loud. That's right; my 1963 Tempest LeMans went up the rear of that 1972 Ford Custom 500 sedan. The '72 Ford had less metal than the '63 Tempest.


Our front left caught the Ford, collapsed the trunk into the backseat and the backseat squeezed forward up against the back of the front seat. Other than bumps and bruises, the older couple in the Ford were not seriously hurt. Although they never did find the driver's glasses.

The few seconds it took seemed like a lifetime. In the middle of everything, trying to hold my mom in place and trying not to hit other cars, for a brief second, my eyes met Momma's. The fear, fright and the awareness that I had put her in such danger was overwhelming. Our car was finally stopped by the telephone pole on the northwest corner of Holmes Avenue and University Drive.

Mom had a nasty bruise on her right cheek and some bumps and cuts on her legs and arms. Little sister in the back seat got bounced around, but no serious injuries. No one in either car had to go to the hospital.

All these years later, what I remember most is my mom telling me not to buy the car and as a defiant seventeen-year-old boy, me telling her it was my \$100; but the memory of the look of panic and fear she had as she searched my eyes for help has never left me.


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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Our winner for the March Photo of the Month was **James Henley**. James identified the picture as that of **Carol Record**, who managed and operated the Kaffeeklatsch Bar downtown for over 30 years. Some of the best music in the country. James is a native Huntsvillian and works at Redstone Arsenal. Congratulations Henley!

Then of course we had a winner for the hidden beetle. Now I did a great job with hiding that little bug and if you didn't find it - check the back page, left side - see it now? One of my best hiding jobs ever! The winner was Cristy Johnson of Hazel Green, who works with HEMSI in Huntsville. Thank you Cristy and our first responders for the work you do every day to help people of our city! And you win a free year's subscription to the magazine. I have hidden a tiny egg in this issue and that's all I'll say.

I'm on my eighth year of regular visits to the **Downtown Y** and love it. It's what I do for myself, to keep myself healthy. The folks who work there are the best - two of them are **Jeremy Sanders** and **Kevin Johnson, Jr.** whom I talked with today. They give you great advice if you're trying to strengthen certain areas. If you get a chance visit the Downtown Y and do something good for yourself!

A friend who works for Huntsville Hospital asked me to remind readers that it's very important to throw away your old medications. I looked thru mine after she mentioned it and found pills going back to 2010. DON'T throw them in the toilet, she said pour them out of the bottles they're in, into one sack, and save them for the drug turn-in that happens several times a year. She said after a year or so past the expiration date, they're useless to you.

Here's my **dieting tips** - eat what you want but less of it. Try to eat healthy. If you eat a small amount when you're not very hungry you'll not binge like you do when you feel like you're starving. Drink water during the day.

Ricky J. Taylor is a name many music lovers know - his full 6 piece ensemble will be playing at **Tangled String Studio** at Lowe Mill on April 10, 7pm, to celebrate the release of Ricky's new album titled "The Edge of Light." The group's original music captivates audiences with their unique multi-genre, multi-instrumental sound that combines folk, traditional country, bluegrass and even chamber music. If you would like to get tickets go to www.tangledstringstudios.com. It will be a great show!

So much to say about staying healthy. In case of any emergency - weather. flu whatever - you do need a plan and you need to be prepared with 2 weeks of supplies. Why? What if you're not able to get out and go to the store? You need to have a small supply of what you use, to be on the safe side. I didn't think about cat litter til the other day - I bet you can think of other things. Canned goods, dog food, batteries, medications, first aid supplies - whatever it is you would need. Being prepared is not a bad thing and you know you'll use the stuff eventually, even if there is no emergency. Definitely a different world than years ago.

Evelyn McCraw Howie was 90 years old when she passed away March 1. She married her love **Vim Howie**, it was love at first sight. Upon settling in Huntsville in the late 50s, the Howies were founding members of Trinity United Methodist Church. Their religion instilled the desire to promote racial equality in then-segregated Alabama, despite threats from some in the community, as well as the KKK. Dr. Howie was a leader in his refusal to have racially separate waiting rooms for his pediatric patients.

As a proud self-described "Yellow-Dog Democrat", Evelyn inspired every one of their children to

Photo of The Month

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be active in politics and important issues in their communities. The family grew to be very large and continues to grow!

Surviving her are **John Howie and Emma Jones, sons Jackson and Noah Howie, Sean and Chelsi Jones and great granddaughters Jasmine, Michaela and Zoe Jones; Carol Howie, her family Mitchell and Melanie Howie and great grandchildren Ashton Poling, Allesandra and Collin Howie; Mitch and Debra Howie, children Schuyler, Turner and Cailin; Helen Howie and Gary Clark, children Kelsey Clark, Adam Oliver, Kit and Wes Naramore; David Howie; Don's loving wife Aletha Howie and children Houston and Maggie; Sarah and Randy Boxley, sons Vim and Howie Boxley; Trish and Bob Kessler, children Joseph Howie, Nicholas & Rachel Bulpitt and great-grandson Jayden Hunt.** She was a loving, beautiful woman who fiercely loved her family, and she will never be forgotten.

Thanks to **Lucy Brown and Gay Fleming Parker** for the information we requested last month about the Cedar Trees that were planted years ago along Whitesburg Drive. Per Gay, in the 1930s a garden club planted the cedars from Drake Avenue to Airport Road along the eastern side of Whitesburg Drive. Also in the '40s her grandfather, Aaron Fleming, planted a long row

of Elm trees from Airport Road to Lily Flagg on the east side of Whitesburg. He wanted to honor the military veterans. Then in the 1970s her dad, Walton Fleming, planted a second row of cedars because he knew the road would be widened and might take out the existing cedars. We love our trees!

The Golden K Kiwanis want to say "Thank You" to our men and women of the **Huntsville Police Department** who put their lives on the line every day. Thank you doesn't seem like enough but you are so appreciated.

There are several events happening around town that are beginning soon. Some of them are Lowe Mill Concerts on the Dock starting April 17, each Friday with great outdoor concerts; Greene Street Market starts first Thursday in May for fresh veges and crafts; Burritt on the Mountain offers classes in jewelry making, blacksmithing, stained glass, etc.; Historic Lowry House has plays and interesting events.

The annual Biergarten at the Davidson Center is a wonderful German meal you can get each Thursday til November 2020; Huntsville Museum of Art has wonderful art displays and you can find more info at hsvmuseum.org/art/; and Downtown Huntsville is having many upcoming events. The Botanical Gardens is fascinating to

visit any time of year; Trash Pandas Baseball starts soon, so much to do!

For you newcomers to Huntsville, there are beautiful areas around us you have to visit. The small city of Guntersville has great restaurants and a lake and beautiful landscape. Decatur has a beautiful historic district and their annual garden tour is one you don't want to miss in the summer. Ditto Landing in South Huntsville has a large pavilion you can rent.

Many gardeners I've spoken to are SO ready to get their hands in the dirt and start planting. Last year I remember when I just needed to get away from it all, I went to Bennetts Nurseries on North Parkway to get a plant or two - I ended up just walking around and breathing in the fresh air and looking at the variety of plants. It was actually therapeutic and I felt so much better just walking through there. Amazing how nature does that to you.

And speaking of nature, try to get outside more this year. When's the last time you stood barefoot in the grass? You always have shoes on right? Just appreciate what's outside, maybe feed a few birds, listen to them in the morning. Might actually make you feel better than checking on emails or news!

Have a good Easter with your families and please remember to shop LOCAL! They need us.



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Cucumber Sauce

- 2 medium cucumbers
- 1 t. horseradish
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/2 t. dried dill
- 1/2 c. sour cream
- 1 c. mayonnaise
- 2 t. minced onion
- Dash cayenne pepper

Peel cucumbers, cut in half, remove seeds, chop or grate. Mix with remaining ingredients, adding sour cream last. Keep refrigerated in a covered jar. This is delicious on any seafood.

Sweet Potato Balls

Cream boiled potatoes very smooth and fluffy with butter, dash salt, little sugar and a little sherry. Dip out a large kitchen spoonful - push a marshmallow into the center, shape into a ball & chill. Roll in crushed corn flakes. Bake in 400 degree oven only til heated and lightly browned.

Lemon Kiss Pie

- 4 egg yolks
 - 1/2 c. sugar
 - 3 T. lemon juice
 - 1 c. heavy cream, whipped
 - Whipped cream for top
- Cook in double boiler til thick. When slightly cool, fold cream whipped into the mixture. Pour into prepared shell and top with whipped cream.

Bishop Whipple Pudding

- 2 eggs
 - 1 c. sugar
 - 2/3 c. flour
 - 1 t. baking powder
 - 1 c. dates, chopped
 - 1 c. pecans, chopped
 - 1 t. vanilla
 - Powdered sugar and whipped cream
- Beat eggs, add sugar; then flour sifted with baking powder. Fold in dates, nuts and vanilla, spread in buttered pan in 375 de-

gree oven, bake about 20 minutes. Break into pieces, sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serve with flavored whipped cream.

Annelie's Clam Dip

- 1 container French onion dip
- 1 can minced clams, drained
- 1 t. garlic powder

In bowl mix the onion dip with the minced clams. Stir well, add back about half of the clam juice depending upon the consistency you desire. Add the garlic powder and salt to taste.

Crusty Fried Fresh Corn

Place 4 tablespoons butter in a large frying pan and let melt. Pour fresh sliced corn over the butter, and let cook over low heat about 20 minutes. When ready to serve, use a metal spatula to flip the corn onto a plate, with brown, crusty side facing up. Add some salt & pepper and enjoy while it's hot!

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Caramel Sugar

Caramelize 2 cups sugar in a heavy skillet, add 1/4 cup boiling water, stir til smooth. Strain & cool. When brittle, pound in cloth bag until it is a powder. This is very good for decorating many desserts, as well as baked ham.

Caramel Topping

- 4 c. sugar
- 1-1/2 c. water
- 1/2 c. cream
- 1 t. cream of tartar

Mix first 2 ingredients and boil til golden brown and spins a thread. Cool slightly. Stir in cream & tartar til thoroughly mixed.

Yum Yums

- 1/2 lb. melted butter
- 1 box light brown sugar
- 1 c. white sugar
- 4 egg yolks
- 2 c. flour
- 2 t. baking powder
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 4 beaten egg whites
- Powdered sugar

Mix the butter, sugars and egg yolks together. In a separate bowl mix the flour, baking powder and salt. Add the liquid ingredients to the flour mixture.

Add the pecans and fold in the beaten egg whites.

Bake in greased and floured pan, spreading thin, for about 20 minutes at 350 degrees. Cut in squares while warm, and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Creme de Cacao

- 3/4 c. sugar
- 1/4 c. butter
- 2 t. cornstarch
- 2 sq. unsweetened chocolate
- 2 T. light corn syrup
- Dash salt
- 1/4 c. heavy cream

Combine above ingredients and cook over medium heat, stirring til blended. Be careful not to have heat too high which could cause scorching.

Add 1/4 cup cream and bring to boil, stirring constantly, til thickened to the right consistency.

Remove from heat, stir in 2 tablespoons Creme de Cacao liquor. Serve warm over ice cream, cakes or puddings.

Butter Creme Mints

- 1/4 lb. butter
- 1 egg
- 1 lb. confectioners sugar
- 1/8 t. salt

Cream butter, add half of the sugar, add egg and remaining sugar with salt. Use more sugar if necessary to make dough stiff enough to stand. Drop on parchment paper with spoon or run

through pastry tube. Allow an hour to dry.

Lemon Tease

- 3 oz. lemon Jello
- 1 c. boiling water
- 3 T. fresh lemon juice
- 16 oz. whipping cream
- 9 oz. cream cheese
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 t. vanilla
- 2 pkg. Lady Fingers

In first bowl mix jello with boiling water til dissolved, add lemon juice and set aside. In second larger bowl whip the cream til stiff. In third bowl mix cream cheese, sugar and vanilla.

Mix in the jello mixture, then fold into the whipped cream.

Arrange Lady Fingers around the sides of a greased springform pan and on the bottom. Pour in the jello/cream cheese mixture and refrigerate for 5 to 6 hours before serving.

Pretty when top is decorated with thinly sliced fresh lemons.

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Remembering Dr. William McKissack

by Lawrence Hillis

I believe if someone saved your life, he would be one of the most important people in your life. Dr. William McKissack also known as "Dr. Bill" is that person in my life.

My parents Lawrence and Edith Hillis were having a birthday party for me on January 11, 1954 when I turned four years old. Even though it was winter, it was not bad weather so we were playing in the backyard. We had just adopted a collie pup and since he was so small I named him "Baby". I was young so I didn't realize that the dog would not always be a baby.

A neighbor gave us a dog house and we were taking turns crawling up on top of it and jumping off. In those days, kids would just make up games to play. I don't think kids would be jumping off dog houses these days, they would be too busy playing games on their cell phones. Oh come to think about it, there are hardly any dog houses anymore. Most dog owners keep their dogs indoors these days.

That is when the accident occurred. I don't remember exactly

who all was at my party. Most likely they were my Ward Avenue friends David and Ted London, Steve Whitlock, Anna Sue De Young, Jimmy Summit and of course my sister Beverly. After several trips climbing on top of the dog house and jumping off, I climbed on top and must have been lying down and not jumping off so someone pushed me off head first. Mother said someone gave us the dog house and they had their dog tied to the house with a large nail. The bad thing is the nail rusted in half and had a sharp point on it.

As I came down, my mouth must have been open and I ripped my tongue on the nail. Blood started gushing out and Mother took me directly to the hospital. I imagine it was very difficult putting stitches in a young kid's tongue. They only managed to put two stitches in my tongue before giving up. But the bleeding did not stop. While lying on my back, I remember the blinding lights and I was crying so much and everything was blurry. I don't know why they did not use anesthesia to put me to sleep to get to be able to get more stitches in to stop the bleeding, but they told Mother to take me home.

Mother took me home and since I was still bleeding, she put me on a blanket in the floor. My Dad was a bread salesman and for some reason he knew Dr. McKissack and went to his office to see if anything else could be done. He came to our house and looked at me and said "He is bleeding to death". He told Dad to wrap me up in the blanket and meet him at his office. Some way Dr. Bill was able to get 2 more stitches in



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my tongue which stopped the bleeding and saved my life. I could not eat much for weeks and lost a lot of weight.

Once a week for almost a year, I went to his office and got some type of vitamin shot. My tongue was sore so I did not eat much for the next year. This stunted my growth and I did not grow much for a couple of years, so was behind in the growth pattern.

Since my tongue was sore for almost a year, I did not talk much and when I started trying to talk, people could not understand what I was saying. This lasted for several years. I went to speech therapy at a clinic and started making progress by the time I was 7 or 8 years old.

A few months after the accident, I was in Dr. McKissack's office with Mother and she brought up the experience and said, "I just want to thank you for saving my son's life."

He looked at her and said, "No one has ever thanked me for something like that before, but I have to admit he would have surely bled to death if I had not been able to put in more stitches."

During my life I only know one other person who had stitches in their tongue. A guy at work said he was attending elementary school and during lunch he opened a can of chocolate pudding and licked the aluminum can top and cut his tongue. He said before they drove him to the hospital and while he was still bleeding, one of the teachers took him to several class rooms to show the other kids and told them what a stupid thing he had done. I am glad that I was not exposed to that humiliation.

Dr. McKissack came to our house one year later on January 10, 1955, the day before my 5th birthday. My Dad had a stroke when he got home that night from work. There was nothing Dr. Bill could do that day for Dad and had to pronounce him dead. Through the years while I was a child and we went to his office for his care, he was very hesitant to charge us the going rate. Dr. McKissack's wife was Mona McKissack and worked in the office part time. Many times as we were leaving his office, Mother would ask Mrs. McKissack how much did we owe and she would say, "the Doctor will tell you later."

Dr. Bill knew our financial situation and would hardly ever admit that we owed anything. That embarrassed Mother a lot so when she got sick she did not want to impose on "Dr. Bill" and would not go see him.

However Mother had a bad history with migraine headaches. These were not just bad headaches, they would be accompanied with severe nausea and she would be sick for days. Dr. Bill would come by no matter what time

of the day or night and give her medication. Again no need of asking, he was not going to admit that we owed anything. He remained our doctor until he retired in the late 1980s.

By the time I was fifteen I started cutting Dr. McKissack's grass at his house on Lincoln Street. Many times it was awkward talking to Mrs. Mona when I told her I was finished with the yard. She asked how much she owed me, and I remembered what they had done for us so I would always say about \$2.00 and she would say, "No, that is not enough."

Back in 1960s, her yard was about a \$6.00 yard and she would always demand that I take the \$6.00. Once I had been in their office a week earlier and they did not charge me. So I said please keep the \$6.00 and apply it to my bill. Mrs. Mona said that cannot be done. She said the doctor's work finances and home finances were separate. So she made me take the \$6.00 and the next year increased it to \$8.00.

By the time I got to UAH in 1968, the McKissacks started planning vacation trips. They asked me to stay at their house while they were gone. The first time that I stayed there, they said it was the first vacation trip they had taken in 15 years. Mrs. McKissack would leave cokes, chips and cake for me to eat. They had thousands of books and magazines in the basement and she told me that I could look through them. It was neat to look at magazines that went back to the 1950s. I thought it was a lot of fun staying in their large two-story historical house. Of course they paid me over my objections. I didn't want to take anything for all they had done for me. They would tell me to put it in my college fund.

In 1975 I told Dr. Bill that I was working on my family tree, and he said he was a member of the Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society. He asked me to meet him at the next monthly meeting at the Huntsville Public Library on Fountain Circle and he would introduce me to the members. We were sitting in the back row and one of his patients stopped by to tell him that he was having a problem hearing. Dr. Bill said for him to come by his office and he would take a look at the problem. The man kept telling him how bad it was and Dr. Bill kept telling him to come by his office. When the conversation ended, Mrs. Mona told Dr. Bill that he was a little rude to the man. Dr. Bill said, "Well I can't exactly clean his ears out right here."

Dr. McKissack spent long hours at the office, at the hospital and of course the house calls. He did not take office appointments. It was first come, first served. For example, if you were in his office at 3 pm and he was called to the hospital, he might be gone for a couple of hours. I have been there as late at 8 and 9 pm. If you were the last to leave, he would say, let's go home and have some supper.

The McKissacks were not only generous to my family, I know of others whom he helped. They did not have children so they were generous benefactors in many causes around town. They financed the foot bridge over Gallatin Street leading from the hospital to the building across the street. There is a plaque on the bridge recognizing his gift. Dr. Bill was a board member on several institutions around town. One was the Security Federal Bank. In the photo, Dr. Bill is the one wearing the bow tie.

I will always be appreciative to Dr. McKissack for saving my life. The McKissacks were not interested in becoming rich. They had a heartfelt feeling for their fellow man and the community. I will always remember how he ministered to my family.

Spring and the Church Experience

by Anna (Gene) Clift Chesnut

When I was young and going to the First Presbyterian Church on Lincoln Street in Huntsville, my view of life was limited by having grown up in the same small town all my life. My father, having died of a heart attack when I was four years old, left my mother and me as a very small family.

I was fortunate, however, to have a mother who required every Sunday attendance at church. Whatever one might think of the religious experience, it is a discipline and with proper guidance a good one. In Sunday school we children had to read the centuries old scriptures and try to glean some moral lesson. The problem with children is that most do not have enough life experiences to fathom the depths of any moral teaching.

Even though I had read and heard many scriptures and even had to memorize First Corinthians, Chapter 13 by heart, it was not until I was forty-four and had a life changing experience, like Saul (who later became Paul) on the road to Damascus, that I understood the depths of its meaning.

My husband, a fully retired academic physician at 83 as of this week, having been half time for the last few years, decided with

his free time to go back to school and get his PhD in English Literature. He had to start from "scratch" as his first BS in Biology did not count for literature; therefore, he began with BA studies, then, went on to a Master's Degree, which he received this last December. His PhD work begins as this story goes to press. The Bible, which he reads every night with its teachings in both the Old and New Testament, is quite prevalent in much of literature in many forms, often very subtle.

Going to a Bible Study class each week at the Episcopal Church in Seattle, where we now belong, my husband and I are amazed at how many opinions by the participants there are with each scripture lesson, all valid for their particular life experiences. Having traveled extensively all over the world, one learns that all people dress each day and then go out into their various jobs to earn a living or to just survive. That is the life experience in all its varieties.

First Corinthians, Chapter 13 might be a good literary place to start a discussion by all of us just as a point of reference for trying to live in a civil society. Even loving one's neighbor as one's self, while not always easy, might do a little to change the world. As children, we see through a glass, darkly, but then with maturity, face to face.

As T. S. Eliot said in *The Wasteland*, "April is the cruelest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead land...."

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Snakes!

by Barry Key



Snakes....Friend or Foe? There are numerous types of snakes in Alabama. To some, all snakes are poisonous. The truth is in Alabama there are only four venomous snakes. Their common names; rattlesnake, copperhead and cottonmouth which are pit vipers and the coral. Although people encounter snakes fairly often, I would say that the majority of people in north Alabama have never seen a poisonous snake in the wild. Of all the time I have spent outdoors, I have never seen the "true coral snake" in the wild.

The most common snakes that a person will encounter in north Alabama are the garter, coachwhip, hog-nose, king snake, black racer and the common water snake. All of which are non-poisonous. Snakes have a bad reputation and are fair game to almost anyone that has a hoe, ax, gun or club, regardless if they are poisonous or not. These snakes are helpful in keeping down rodents and insects in your area. However, if you are bitten by a non-poisonous snake (a very, very rare occurrence), you should have medical treatment and make sure your tetanus shot is up-to-date.

Back in the late 1940s or early 50s one of my mother's relatives who lived in north Marshall County just a couple of miles south of New Hope, Alabama was pulling weeds out of her flower garden. A small non-poisonous snake bit her on the finger. She more or less brushed it off as being similar to a bee sting. She nearly lost her hand due to infection.

Dalford and I were frog gigging a farm pond on Grassy Mountain one night. We heard this thrashing in the water. When we got to where the commotion was, it was the largest cottonmouth snake I had ever seen. The snake had attempted to swallow a very large catfish, tail first. The catfish's dorsal and pectoral fins were open (standing

straight out) and was longer than the open circumference of the snake's mouth. This was preventing the snake from completely swallowing the catfish. The snake was twisted around the fish doing alligator rolls and violently thrashing back and forth. The snake was desperately trying to disgorge the partly swallowed fish. After watching a few minutes, the snake and fish disappeared under water and we never saw them again.

I was fishing about 100 yards offshore just above Guntersville Dam at Thanksgiving. I noticed something swimming toward me. As it came closer, I realized it was a snake. I watched as it passed the back of my boat and disappear. I walked to the back to see where the snake had gone. It was a large rattlesnake and was climbing up the leg of the motor. I retrieved my paddle and pushed the snake back into the water several times. The snake was adamant about getting out of the water... possibly because it was so cold. Each time I would push it under, back up the motor leg it would come. After several minutes, the snake finally relented and swam on to shore.

When we were living in Chattanooga, my son was very active in the Boy Scouts (he rose to the level of Eagle Scout). The troop he was in had an excellent scoutmaster. One weekend a month, winter and summer, the troop would go on a weekend camping trip in the mountains of east Tennessee or north Georgia. In addition to the scouts working on their merit badges, the scouts would



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compete in different action games and physical skills. On one of the trips, after dark, Greg saw a friend walking up a trail and decided he was going to scare him. Greg found a bush to hide under. As he was crawling under the bush, a copperhead bit him, twice, on his right arm. After spending several days in the hospital in Cleveland, Tennessee, he made a full recovery. Greg went on to become an Eagle Scout and is now a scout master over his own troop.

My company transferred me to Page, Arizona. The power plant where I worked was on the Navaho Indian Reservation. Our secretary was a very outdoorsy, young Navaho girl. One Monday morning she did not show up for work. When we inquired with some of her friends, we found out she had been bitten by a rattlesnake and was in the hospital. She and some other friends had gone rock climbing. She was climbing on the face of a cliff and had reached up to a ledge to pull herself up. When she put her hands on the ledge she felt a sting. She thought she had put her hand on briars or a wasp. When she pulled herself up to where she could see over the ledge, she was looking straight into the face of a rattlesnake. By the time they got her to the hospital she was having convulsions. Luckily, she made a full recovery.

While in Page, I was invited to go quail hunting in southern Arizona. When I inquired about the menu I was told the first night, hamburgers, the second night quail and the last night fried rattlesnake. I wasn't sure about rattlesnake meat as an entree. In the 70s while working in Huntsville, a co-worker brought in a can of rattlesnake meat for us to try. The small can of rattlesnake meat had cost about \$5.00 and didn't taste near as good as a .25 cent can of Possum Sardines. In three days of hunting quail, we killed 5 rattlers, which was more than enough meat for the seven of us. I did try the fried snake but in my opin-

ion a fried tongue from one of our leather boots would have been more flavorful and tender.

Remember, if you are bitten by a snake, forget everything you saw John Wayne do....and DO NOT cut an "X" across the fang marks and suck the blood out. DO NOT drink alcohol or any drink containing caffeine. Also, the latest medical recommendation is to NOT apply ice or a tourniquet. DO attempt to identify the snake and depending on the location of the bite remove all jewelry and shoes or boots, clean the wound with an antiseptic and position the wound as low as possible below the level of the heart. Remain calm and immobile as much as possible, while seeking medical attention.

Since January 2010, there have been 25 recorded deaths in the U.S. due to snake bites. Only 2 of those deaths occurred in Alabama. In the same time period, there have been approximately 270 deaths by lightning. Moral of my story....when in the outdoors, watch the sky more than the ground.

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The History of Grandmother's House Restaurant

by Wenona Moorer



The house was built by the current owner's grandparents, George and Vinnie Craft, circa 1928. The original house was preserved as much as possible with a modern kitchen added to the rear of the house. It is furnished with antiques that have been in her family for many years and other items of interest that have been collected and are displayed in the hallways and dining areas. When Madison County was formed in 1818, the southeastern corner was a part of the Cherokee Nation. White settlers were already entering the area even before Madison County was established.

Under the Treaties of 1817 and 1819 the Cherokee ceded to the United States large sections of land. For example, all of their land to the north of the Tennessee River was ceded under these treaties along with other lands in Georgia and North Carolina. There is a log house on the property that was built during this period, the early 1800s, that is registered as a Historical Landmark by the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

A pioneer of this region and forefather of the Craft family, Ezekiel Craft, was born in Dublin County, NC on June 10, 1772 and began service in

the Revolutionary War at 16 years of age in 1778. He was wounded several times while serving. Ezekiel and his brother Archealous were early pioneers in Claiborne County, TN. Ezekiel Craft farmed and took an active roll in his community.

In 1801 when Claiborne County was established and the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions was



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formed he was selected as the first county's Registrar and served as the Constable there. Ezekiel and John Hunt, founder of Huntsville, both lived in Claiborne County, TN where Ezekiel bought some property from John.

In 1808 he left Tennessee and moved to the Mississippi territory, to an area now know as Madison County, AL. He was the founding pastor of Meridian Line Baptist Church and minister of the Big Cove Church.

On April 12, 1820 he was appointed Justice of the Peace and became a member of the first county commission of Madison County established in 1823. Ezekiel Craft was the great grandfather of William Frank Craft. William Craft and Joanna Craft acquired land here in 18 Dec 1897 and built a home on the West side of the property. Mr. Craft established a farm here; corn, cotton, hay and livestock were raised.

The property where this home is located was bought by George R. Craft, son of William Frank Craft, on February 16, 1928. This property was located on Old Highway 431 and was called the Florida Short Route at that time. Mr. George Craft believed that electricity would be available at this location in time whereas getting electricity to the back of the property away from the main road was doubtful. George R. Craft was the grandfather of Wenona Moorer, the grandmother of Grandmother's House.

The name of the restaurant, Grandmother's House, was derived from the fact that this was in fact her grandmother's house. Wenona is a sixth generation descendent of Ezekiel Craft, a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution [DAR). The DAR honored him through a grave marking ceremony, in Moon Cemetery at Owens Cross Roads, on May 1, 1999.

The Madison County Commission proclaimed May 1, 1999 as Ezekiel Craft Day in Madison County in recognition of Ezekiel Craft's service as a revolutionary War soldier and as one of the first County Commissioners of Madison County. They honored the accomplishments and contributions which his descendents have made to the growth and progress of Madison County.

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Mike Vaccaro - Behind the Scenes at NASA

by John E. Carson



If you search Michael J. Vaccaro in connection with NASA, you will likely find the same name of the first Director of the

Goddard Research Center; the first incarnation of the Marshall Space Flight Center and NASA. But this is not the same man who passed away in Huntsville on November 5th of last year and was laid to rest in Hampton Cove on Monday, November 11th, 2019 - Veteran's Day.

The Michael James Vaccaro we knew and loved did indeed work with NASA and the Apollo astronauts as well as Skylab. He was Deputy of the Manned Systems Integration Branch, often working behind the scenes designing and testing environments and equipment for the astronauts. He was also my friend.

In the five years I served with him on the Honor Guard of American Legion Post 237 in Huntsville, Alabama. Mike shared many stories with me of his life, his service and his days with the space program.

Born October 9, 1927 in New York, Mike was one of many children. His father owned a business supplying ice. At a young age he answered the call to join the Merchant Marine,

whose services were greatly needed in WWII. From there Mike joined the Navy and served throughout the end of the global conflict. After 15 years in the Navy, he chose to continue serving and the Air Force, ultimately rising to the rank of Colonel.

Because much of Mike's work was and still is classified, there were many things he could not share with me. One of the stories he could share though was about his friendship with the legendary news anchorman, Walter Cronkite.

Tapped by his boss to show the newsmen around the Marshall Space Flight Center and the Skylab project, Mike Vaccaro hit it off with the visiting Cronkite who was an enthusiastic and inquisitive fan of the space program. Mr. Cronkite asked a lot of questions. In an interview with the Huntsville Times in 2009, Mike Vaccaro was quoted as saying that Walter Cronkite would have made an exceptional astronaut. Indeed, on subsequent visits, Mike Vaccaro and Mr. Cronkite

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Huntsville's LeeAnna Keith looks back at a radical wing of the Republican party that agitated for the abolitionist cause before and after the U.S. Civil War.

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Released January 2020

Author of "The Colfax Massacre"



would spend much time in the lunch-room of MSFC chatting about the space program like old friends.

Another story Mike shared with me concerned the time he and another man spent several days in a small mock-up. Cut off from all communication with the outside world, the men were testing the feasibility and effects of astronauts living aboard a space capsule. Though Mike and the other man went separate ways, they continued a lifelong friendship and stayed in touch over the years.

In addition to the many pictures I took of Mike as the Honor Guard Photographer, some of my prized possessions are the pictures of him at work at the MSFC, including Mike in a spacesuit and one where he is seated next to Werner Von Braun at a press conference.

The few number of words available to me here limit what I can share about this remarkable man. But this much I know; Michael James Vaccaro spent 75 years serving his country and his community. A Past Commander of the DAV and Chaplain, Mike also served on the Honor Guard of the American Legion Post 237 for over twenty-five years. He stayed active until he left us at age 92; independent and driving his own car, he never got old.

In addition to all of that, Mike served as the Vice President of the non-profit, Rescue Me Volunteer Group, dedicated to matching rescued shelter animals with veterans suffering from PTSD/TBI and other issues. It was through Mike's efforts that Rescue Me is a success today.

In addition to the many friends and people he helped over the years, Mike Vaccaro leaves behind an important piece of history for not only the Rocket City but the entire Space Program as well.

Mike, The honor was all mine.

"If we die, we want people to accept it. We're in a risky business and we hope that if anything happens to us it will not delay the program. The conquest of space is worth the risk of life."

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by *Suzi Bailey*

Pumpkin, the Cat of Consolation on Chickamauga Lane

I met Pumpkin in 1996. Some people would say he was a "stray" cat, but I've come to understand that he is actually a "wandering minister" who chooses certain people or families who need a special gift of love. Folks who live on my street, Chickamauga Lane, know Mr. Pumpkin the cat because he is a very friendly fellow. He stops by regularly to visit anyone who welcomes him, sometimes even when they don't!

One summer Pumpkin sauntered inside my neighbor's house for a "visit" and no one saw him enter. They were packing up and leaving for a 10 day vacation. After a week of searching for him, we thought he had disappeared. When our neighbors returned they found Pumpkin inside their house and he was okay. He'd survived on left-over dog bones and got water from the toilet to drink. Thankfully, they'd left the toilet seat up. Pumpkin revealed his impeccable manners by using only ONE bathroom rug on which he'd relieved himself. My kind-hearted neighbors were happy to only have that one rug to toss in the garbage and we were all delighted that Pumpkin was safe and unharmed.

Pumpkin appeared in my life six years ago just when I needed a "furry friend". It was the winter of 1995/1996, and a very sad time for me. My dear dog Pepsi died on February 10th, 1996. For the first time in 16 years I was returning home from work with no one waiting "just for me." However, there was this big orange cat visiting in my cul-de-sac that winter. He would hang out in my garden and my neighbor's children named him Pumpkin.

After Pepsi died, a friend mentioned to me that the sweet orange

cat at the top of my hill was "much too skinny under all that hair for a cat his size." Since I had never had a cat in my life before, I knew very little about them. I had been distracted by my grief and hadn't even noticed how skinny he was or that he never seemed to go home. Then the light bulb went off in my head. This cat didn't have a home. I hurried to the store to buy cat food.

The charming, gentle Pumpkin quickly became part of our family. We appreciated his intelligence, gracious manners and funny antics. I began to look forward to coming home from work, because Pumpkin was always right there waiting for me. I also feel Pumpkin helped me get through one the most difficult times of my life.

A year later, my neighbor Sally's beloved dog died. She told me that Pumpkin began to visit her more often and she believes that Pumpkin also helped her during her time of grief.

During the summer of 1998 my step-daughter, Savannah, found a kitten and brought him home. Pumpkin was not pleased with Pippin, the new boy cat. Pippin was a bit aggressive to say the least. We



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tried everything we could think of to help the two cats get along in the same home, but nothing worked.

It broke my heart when Pumpkin went in search of a new home. He found Tom and Sandy, who lived at the other end of Chickamauga Lane. Perhaps not coincidentally, Tom and Sandy had also recently lost their family dog and they too had never had a cat of their own. I think it must have been "time" for Pumpkin to find Tom and Sandy. He was great joy to them for the three years they lived here.

Last year Tom and Sandy had to move out of state and we all decided together that it would be best not take Pumpkin with them, since ministering to the folks on Chickamauga Lane appears to be Pumpkin's chosen vocation in life. After Tom and Sandy moved away, Pumpkin picked the Muskgrove's to be his newest "home base" family where he is welcomed, fed and offered laps to nap on.

I can't extend enough praise and thanks to them for caring for this beautiful, magical, marvelous cat. He also visits Helen who lives a few houses down from the

Muskgroves. Helen has said, "I think that cat has ESP!" The Muskgroves and many of my friends have made this comment about Pumpkin:

"There is something very special about him... his eyes, his face... he just looks so wise. And he seems to always know what we're thinking and saying!" I take walks down the street with chicken treats for Pumpkin. He gets along perfectly with my new dog Abby. (Abby was "trained" by Pippin to respect ALL cats, which Pumpkin appreciates, I'm sure.) Even though it's been many years since he lived with me, he knows my whistle, and will come running to greet me, talking and "chirping" the whole way to my feet where he immediately flops down and rolls over for a scratch.

I send my thanks to ALL the kind folks on our street who stop to speak to Pumpkin, who invite him in for visits and offer him special treats. He is a missionary to human beings, the "Cat of Consolation" on Chickamauga Lane, a furry friend who blesses all who have the opportunity to know him. With love and thanks to all of you who are kind to and care for animals.

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The name between the two rusty
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THE PAST HAS A WAY OF HANGING ON

by Jean McCrady

Like rotting charms hanging from a time-rusted chain between Huntsville and Arab are more than two dozen structures (like this one and worse) that once housed businesses. They remind us that the past is reluctant to go and that it is/losing the battle for survival. One end of that chain is anchored to the Whitesburg Bridge at Ditto Landing which straddles the Madison/Morgan County line at the bottom of the Tennessee River. The other end is hooked to the Arab City Limit sign on Hwy. 231 in Marshall County.

These many icons of an extinct business world are hanging on, in various stages of decay. Some are boarded-up with sheets of faded and peeling plywood, signaling there was planned abandonment. Some expose their innards to passers by through missing windows. Some have sagging roofs, unsupported by posts no longer there. Others have remnants of names on faded signs, like the one above, and like the memories of those who once patronized them. Most are attempting to hide their time-scarred faces and decaying bodies behind years of neglected vegetation. Even so, a few seem to stand hopeful of someday being resurrected and restored to life.

One has to wonder, where are the people who own these relics? Who are they? What future plans do they have for these ghosts of yesteryear? One is also reminded that, in their day, these businesses supported families, created savings for their owners and were a source of daily provisions for their communities. They gave structure and meaning to the lives of those who owned and operated them and provided apprentice opportunities for up-coming generations. Importantly, they served as valued social gathering places for their patrons.

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So what happened? One by one these once-thriving businesses were displaced by 'progress'. Sam's Club, WalMart, Dollar General, and Amazon claimed the lives of the Mom 'n Pop country stores, family retailers, and specialty shops.

The two-tank filling stations, with attendants who pumped gas, cleaned windshields and checked under hoods, gave way to the franchised convenience store stations with multi-rows of self-serve pumps. Family auto repair shops could not deal with computerized vehicles, nor compete with Midas, O'Rielly's and Auto Zone.

On the human side, what was it like for these self-made business owners to walk away from their shop or store for the last time? On that day, did they know it was the last time they would turn that key? Did they abandon merchandise or equipment along with the premises that housed them? Did they plan to go back and salvage what they could, but never had the heart to do it? Did they plan to re-open, but the time never came? What did they do next after walking away? What are they doing now?

Was it, or is it, a heart wrenching moment for them to drive by and witness the ever-worsening demise of what was once a vibrant force at the center of their lives?

These business has-beens and others like them are evidence that the past strains to hang on. Perhaps there's some good in that. Sometimes it is reminders from the past that make the present bearable, and the future hopeful. It helps us believe that what once was can again be, in a different or better form.

Maybe today someone who is on the verge of walking away from their past - who is about to turn that key for the last time - can believe there is another door somewhere waiting to be opened for the first time. While the past hangs on, the future pulls us forward. We can never stand still in the present.

“Any man who thinks he can be happy and prosperous by letting the government take care of him had better take a much closer look at the American Indian.”

Henry Ford

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

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The Story of Desmond Doss

by *Anders Michael Kinney*

Prior to the movie *Hacksaw Ridge* coming out, very few people had probably ever heard of Desmond Doss. Corporal Desmond Doss was the first conscientious objector to be awarded the Medal of Honor. Born in Virginia and raised in a religious household as a Seventh-day Adventist, Desmond had a fervent belief in the Bible.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked, Desmond was working at the Newport News Naval shipyard and could have requested a deferment—but he wanted to do more for his country. When he joined the Army, Desmond assumed that his classification as a conscientious objector would not require him to carry a weapon. He wanted to be an Army medic. As luck would have it, he was assigned to an infantry rifle company. His refusal to carry a rifle caused trouble among his fellow soldiers. They intimidated, scolded, assigned him extra tough duties and declared him mentally unfit for the Army. His company commander tried to court martial him. However, his stature in the unit began to turn around when the men discovered that this quiet medic had a way to heal the blisters on their march weary feet. If someone fainted from heat stroke, this medic was at his side, offering his own canteen. Desmond never held a grudge.

Private Doss served in combat on the islands of Guam, Leyte, and Okinawa. In each military operation, he exhibited extraordinary dedication to his fellow men. While others were taking lives, he was busy saving lives. When the cry "medic" rang out on the battlefield, he never considered his own safety. He repeatedly ran into the heat of battle to treat a fallen comrade and carry him back to safety.

The only remaining barrier to an allied

invasion of their homeland was the Maeda Escarpment on Okinawa, known as, Hacksaw Ridge to the Americans. The men in Desmond's company were trying to capture the imposing rock face. After the company had secured the top of the cliff, the Americans were stunned when suddenly enemy forces rushed them in a vicious counterattack. Officers ordered an immediate retreat. Less than one-third of the men made it back down. Soldiers rushed to climb back down, all but one. The rest lay wounded, scattered across enemy soil— abandoned and left for dead, if they weren't already. A lone soldier disobeyed orders, charging back into the firefight to rescue as many of his men as he could, before he either collapsed or died trying. His determination and unwavering courage resulted in at least 75 lives saved that day, May 5, 1945, which was his Sabbath.

Eventually, the Americans took Hacksaw Ridge. Okinawa was captured inch by bloody inch. Several days later, during an unsuccessful night raid, Desmond was severely wounded. He even gave up his own litter for a more seriously wounded soldier. After all, that's what he read in his Bible.

At the age of 87, Corporal Desmond Doss died on March 23, 2006 in Piedmont, Alabama, after being hospitalized with difficulty breathing. Desmond is buried in the National Cemetery in Chattanooga, Tennessee.



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from 1896 Huntsville Newspaper

Owing to ill health I will sell, at my residence, one crushed-raspberry colored cow, aged six years old. She is a good milker and is not afraid of anything. She is a cow of undaunted courage and gives milk frequently and happily.

To a man who does not fear death in any form she would be a great boon. She is very much attached to her home at present, by means of a trace chain, but she will be sold to anyone who will agree to treat her right.

She is one-fourth shorthorn and three-fourths hyena. Purchaser need not be identified. I will also throw in a double-barrel shotgun, which goes with her. In May she generally goes away for a week or two and returns with a tall, red calf with long, wobbly legs. Her name is Rose and I would prefer to sell her to a non-resident.

You may keep this in your paper till you sell the cow. We are all pretty well and hope your paper is self-sustaining.

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April's Fools

by Elizabeth Wharry



Growing up, one of the days we kids looked forward to was April first. It was a free pass for silliness and jokes. None of the pranks were played too maliciously.

Even my mother would play along. Her gags were pretty predictable. She would

switch the salt and sugar, or substitute skim milk for whole. When it fell on a Saturday, she would wake us up at our usual weekday time. My brother had bought a dribble glass and mom would put colored water in it. One of us kids would go along with the jokes.

Even my grade school teachers would get in the spirit. Most of them had two favorite pranks. One was to assign a tremendous amount of homework due the next day, or assign a complicated essay...due April 31. Occasionally, there would be a gag test. All the questions would be total nonsense. We kids thought we were clever by using disappearing ink! I had a teacher in eighth grade who would occasionally call me Josephine. That year, all the papers I turned into her were signed Josephine.

Among my classmates, we

would offer each other "peanut candy" which was actually a can full of spring loaded snakes, or gum. Since I didn't chew gum, I didn't get pranked. It looked like regular gum, but was actually hot. I did get caught by the fake chocolate, though.

Another popular joke was a game called Mirror. One person was handed a quarter whose edge was coated with pencil. The challenge was to keep up with the person who had a clean quarter. Lines were drawn on one's face. It was always fun to watch. That was usually pulled on one of the kids in the younger grades.

Keep smiling!

"I've learned that silent company is often more healing than words of advice."

Penney, age 34



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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Your Arthritic Pet



Did you know that pets become geriatric at age 7? Larger breed dogs tend to have shorter life spans and are considered seniors when they are approximately 6 years of age. Learn how to care for your elderly pet.

Many pets have a high threshold for pain caused by arthritis, but as a pet ages, the likelihood of developing some form of arthritis is common. Pets with arthritis develop pain in the joints and often require medication or natural supplements to help alleviate the soreness and pain they feel. Prevention of arthritis in elderly pets is often impossible. It's important to remember that in most cases, degenerative changes to a joint cannot be reversed so the goal of treatment is to slow the progression of arthritis and manage pain.

Signs of Arthritis in Pets

- Favoring a limb or moving much more slowly
- Difficulty sitting or standing
- Sleeping more
- Seeming to have stiff or sore joints and hesitancy to jump, run or climb stairs
- Weight gain
- Decreased interest in play
- Attitude or behavior changes (including increased irritability)
- Being less alert

Signs of arthritis often are similar to signs of normal aging, so if your pet seems to have any of these symptoms for more than two weeks, the best thing to do is to have your veterinarian examine him. Then he can advise you as to what treatment plan would be best to help your pet deal with the pain.

Arthritis Treatment

- Healthy diet and exercise to help maintain proper weight.
- Overweight dogs are a common sight in most vet clinics, and that extra weight is hard on painful joints. Even los-

ing just a few pounds can make a world of difference for your dog. Discussing nutritional needs and weight loss with your vet should be a number one priority after an osteoarthritis diagnosis

- Over-the-counter pet treatments, such as pills or food containing either glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate, vitamin C or Omega fatty acids. Glucosamine is by far the most commonly recommended supplements for arthritis in dogs. A naturally occurring substance, glucosamine is believed to help heal the damaged cartilage

found in arthritic joints.

- We all know a massage can make you feel like a million bucks, relieving tension and loosening sore muscles – and dogs are no different. Canine osteoarthritis can trigger muscle soreness and discomfort; massaging your dog's muscles near the affected joints (hips, knees, shoulders and along the spine most commonly) can bring immediate relief. Massage is a treatment you can do on your own, in the comfort of your own home, any time you want.

- Many vet clinics and hospitals now offer hydrotherapy, or water treatment. The most common is an underwater treadmill, and it's gaining popularity as a treatment of choice for joint problems and surgical recovery. Water increases buoyancy, taking pressure off your pet's affected joints; this makes movement easier and less painful. Keeping arthritic joints moving and maintaining a healthy range of motion are the primary goals of osteoarthritis treatment, so hydrotherapy might be just what the doctor (of veterinary medicine) ordered.

- Diets with special supplements may also help decrease the discomfort and increase the joint mobility.

Do not give human pain medications to your pet without first consulting your veterinarian. Some human products, including over-the-counter medications, can be fatal for pets.

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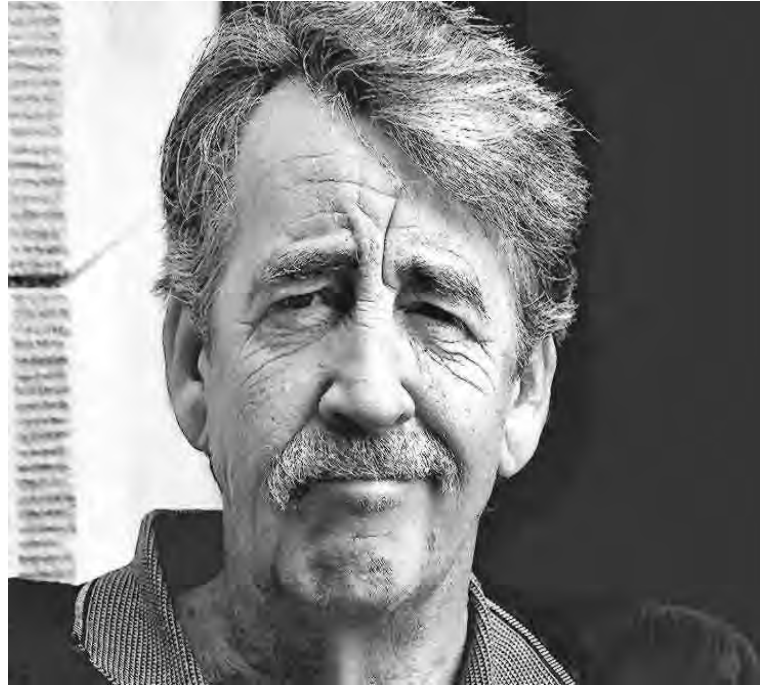
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From the Desk of Tom Carney

JOHN THOMASON'S WILL



I, John Thomason, knowing that my remaining days are few, take pen in hand to render my last will and testament.

I ask that Horace Cauthren, my good friend of thirty-two years, be the executor of my wishes. He is to be paid the normal fees as is customary for such situations.

He is to pay all debts owed by me from funds on deposit with the Bank of Scottsboro.

To my wife, Mary, who has remained steadfast at my side for sixty-three years, I leave a lifetime of memories and love along with my sorrow at the many times I have caused her anguish. She knows well of what I'm saying.

It is my hope that the good days will heavily outweigh the bad days.

In addition, I leave her our home and farm, with all its furnishings, implements and livestock that she might live her remaining days in a comfortable manner in which she deserves. I will be forever grateful that she didn't leave me.

In addition, I leave her all my stocks and bonds currently on deposit with the Chattanooga Trust Bank, in addition to any other monies due my estate, that she may continue to derive income from such.

For my oldest son John, I leave the amount of ten thousand dollars to be paid up on the tenth anniversary of my death, or on the occasion of his mother's death, on the condition he visits her every week and continues to maintain the relationship of a loving son.

If he fails to do so, the money shall be given to a church of the executor's choosing.

For my son, Perry, who has caused his mother and I so much grief for so many years, I leave the amount of three thousand dollars which is in a metal box, buried somewhere on the farm in a location known only to me.

If he can find the money it is his to keep.

It is my hope that after weeks of grubbing in the dirt he will realize the folly of chasing his foolish dreams.

In addition, a sum of seven thousand dollars shall be paid to him only after the completion of ten years full-time employment, in a manner consistent with the morals of the community.

If he fails to do so, the money shall be given to a church of the executor's choosing.

John Thomason, this day of July 4, 1923

"I'm not heavy, but I do come from a family where gravy is considered a beverage."

Erma Bombeck



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Remembering Years Ago

by Gwendolyn Joop

Today, I spent several hours reflecting on my childhood. Born on June 13th, 1961, the youngest of 6 siblings. At the age of 5, I was an aunt. My siblings were a lot older than myself. Once I entered 1st grade I was the only child left at home and was a latch key kid. My Mother didn't worry. She always informed everyone she was not scared of the redheaded devil. Really, not for sure that was a compliment.

Keep in mind I wasn't a bad kid. Gave a new definition to the word inquisitive and mischievous!! I vividly remember asking my Mom how did the sun get in the sky? She politely replied "God put it there." "Which ladder did he use?" Always a question with an answer followed by another question. God Bless my poor late 93 year-old Mother...

Only 8 years old when the Apollo 11 spaceflight landed on the moon. Commander Neil Armstrong and pilot Buzz Aldrin. Every night I would go wave at the moon to say hi and congratulations. Only to return to my home with my older siblings and parents laughing. That's Hollywood. No one is on the moon. Would stomp my small foot and ball my fist up and fly into my siblings. Of course, I would land on the other side of the room like a mosquito, but would go back for more. Never being detoured of waving at the moon every night!

We lived on a gravel road and when the crew would grade the road it was the equivalent of riding over boulders. Remember, I was a rough and tough 100% Tom Boy with a boy's bicycle. My cousins my age would be playing with dolls and pretend-

ing to have babies. Personally, I was not happy if I didn't have a basketball, football, softball, etc. playing with the boys.

My best friend Dale lived about a mile down the dirt road. Not a paved street. Sometimes we would get a bit rough and one or both his parents would yank us up and beat our bottom. We did not have a phone at home but somehow, by the time I walked back home, my Mom already got the memo I got in trouble and that was equal to another bottom being beat. I'm 58 years old and to this day have not figured out how she found out so fast. Maybe they had smoke signals or pigeons. Wait a minute. Possibly they simply put the flag up on the mailbox. That is all the scenarios I am able to come up with.

Most little girls got bathed for cleanliness; I was the exception to the rule. Mine was mandatory. In elementary school girls had to wear dresses back in the day.

Every morning I had a nicely pressed dress and clean underwear and socks. My Mother knew I would be rough housing it with the boys and my panties would shine!!! Carl was my best friend on the playground. When someone messed with him, he didn't have a chance to take care of them. I took care of the problem....

My Mother told me to always respect adults and never talk back. That was a lesson I definitely took to heart. Didn't care to land on the opposite side of the room. My Mother knew I was rough and tough. Very wise woman. She knew she could swat my bottom with a belt or open hand and it would not phase me. However, that little keen switch on my legs was unbearable...

One day I disobeyed her and she sent me to get my own switch.. I thought - GREAT!!! Returned inside with a switch about the size of my small index

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finger. She cut her eyes at me, never speaking a word. She came back with the entire tree. Learned quickly not to try that one again. My Mom also taught me it was better to tell the truth than lie. Did not mean I would not be punished. The punishment would not be as bad. This is the lesson closest to my heart. Learned to own up to your mistakes. Learn from them and move on. I'm not perfect. However, every morning I wake up with the attitude to strive for perfection each and every day.

Children were not allowed in adult conversations when I was a child. However, I could be playing basketball and would be requested to be in the center of the adults. They wanted me to do the Chubby Checker Twist and sing the song. Lyrics I could learn in a day and by the 2nd day the dance. Never having a bashful bone in my body, I would oblige. This went on a couple of weeks. Then one day again I was requested. However, this time I held my hand out for them to put money in my palm. No money, no dance. I was an Entrepreneur before 1st Grade.

There are not enough words in the Webster Dictionary to describe the love I have for my Mother and the thankfulness for her ruling with an iron fist. Trust me. The discipline didn't scar or kill me. Timeout would not have worked on a rough, tough and hard-headed child as myself.

My heart goes out for ALL School Employees. You have no authority over kids. They think they are the adults. This is not just their fault. Don't give me the one parent sob story, it was just me and my Mom and she did a fine job.

Witness on two occasions with my own eyes. A 9 or 10 year old boy at a toy store, rolling around the floor like Moe on the Three Stooges and screaming at the top of his lungs. I politely asked the adult to either give him what he wanted or beat his butt. However, shut him up....

Next in the checkout line at Publix. A 5-6 year old was screaming because he wanted a candy bar. He turned and kicked his Mom in the shin and called her the "B" word. I got in front of him and told him never to kick his Mom or scream at her. Then I thought I was going to have to fight the Mom. She

was mad at me. Told her when he grows up and gets shot or gets thrown in jail remember this day and what I said. You are the adult!!!!

Hopefully, my story has touched a young parent or grandparent. There is a big difference in disciplining and beating to injure a child. Americans, it is time we act like adults and learn to teach 1-12th graders you are NOT the boss. Praise them when they do great things. Make sure they get punished for what they did, don't let it go.

God Bless America!!!!



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Tips You Can Use

- Be kind to yourself! In your bathroom, install a dimmer switch. That way, when you get up in the morning and stumble your way to the bathroom, you won't be blinded by the first light you turn on. Use the dimmer for low light til your eyes become accustomed to it.

- All of us have moods - both good and bad. When you're feeling especially good, make a list of what made you feel good. Make another list of things to do to cheer you up when you feel low. Then when a bad day comes along, read your list and see if anything on there can make you feel better.

- Before you spend a ton of money on bathroom and kitchen cleaning supplies, test out a few all-purpose cleaners. Most of them work very effectively on grease, grime and mildew, at a fraction of the cost of those specialized cleansers.

- If you are traveling and want to try out the hotel's hot tub, remember these few words of advice. Don't stay in more than 15 minutes at a time; make sure the water is treated, because bacteria can grow in warm water. Don't ever submerge in the tub - your hair can get caught in the drain, and several people have drowned that way.

- When lifting anything heavy, remember to keep your head up and lift with your legs - keeping your arms as close to your body as possible.

- Stay away from breaded fish products in your grocer's freezer. Many of them are mostly bread and cost about 4 times as much as fresh fish you could easily bread yourself.

- When using nuts, always store them in the freezer to keep them from going rancid. Use Ziploc freezer bags for best results.

- You may think it's a good idea to line your oven and refrigerator shelves with aluminum foil to keep them clean, but you'll prevent air from circulating and properly cooking or cooling your food.

- Advice to men - if you are getting backaches and don't know why, try moving your wallet to a different pocket. Many men get backaches from sitting on wallets all day. Also, loosen up that collar - a tight one can reduce your circulation and restrict breathing. Worn, untied shoes can cause knee, ankle and lower back problems.



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Johnny Carson



Chewy

The Ark named me Chewy and I'm an 11 pound boy. They think I'm an Affenpinscher (Monkey Terrier). I'm not housetrained yet and need a bit of training. When I got to the Ark I was full of fleas, had dermatitis, skin infection and was bare from the back down. It really hurt. But the Ark and their vet really helped me and now I have fur, even may need a trimming soon. I love to play and when food is around watch out! If you think you have love to give me I'd really like to be part of your family. When you come to the Ark please ask for me, Chewy.

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News From The Year 1961

News From Huntsville and Around The World

Tanks Face Off In Berlin

Soviet and American tanks confronted each other today across the border between East and West Berlin in a dispute over border transit rights. The confrontation, which lasted 16 hours, began when Soviet tanks wheeled into position at the Friedrichstrasse crossing point on the Berlin boundary. U.S. tanks then took up position 100 yards away on the other side of the crossing point. The Soviet tanks were the first to withdraw, easing the tensions but apparently leaving unresolved the issue of the right of U.S. officials to cross into the Communist sector of Berlin.

The confrontation of the tanks developed after the United States challenged the right of East German guards to check on the credentials of American officials in civilian clothes crossing into East Berlin under a military police guard. In Moscow, the American Ambassador protested the East German action violated the Berlin occupation agreement.

Ty Cobb Dead of Cancer

Ty Cobb, the first player ever elected to Baseball's Hall of Fame, has died at the age of 74. He had suffered from prostate cancer, diabetes and heart disease.

Cobb still holds 16 major league records. He was known as one of the meanest competitors in the game during his 22 years with the Detroit Tigers and Philadelphia Athletics. He was chosen for the Hall of Fame in 1936, beating out Babe Ruth by seven votes.

The so-called Georgia Peach was feared by rival players for his deadly use of spikes on the basepaths. He won 12 batting championships and stole more bases (892) than any other player.

Hemingway Commits Suicide

Author Ernest Hemingway was found dead this morning at his Ketchum, Idaho home. He had been wounded in the head by a shotgun blast. Some friends described Hemingway as despondent; others thought him in good spirits. His wife issued a statement saying Hemingway accidentally killed himself while cleaning the firearm.

Hemingway won the Nobel and Pulitzer Prizes, influencing two generations of writers. His novels included "The Sun Also Rises" and "For Whom the Bell Tolls."



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Gus Grissom Becomes Second American in Space

Air Force Capt. Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom became the second American in space today, in a flight that was marred when his Mercury capsule sank in the Atlantic with valuable films aboard.

Grissom was launched from Cape Canaveral at 8:20 a.m and landed 302 miles away in the Atlantic Ocean 16 minutes later, after a flight that took him 116 miles into space.

Minutes after the landing, explosive bolts blew out the side hatch of the capsule before a waiting helicopter could hook on and lift it upright. Grissom had a sinking spacecraft below him and he had to swim for more than two minutes before a second helicopter plucked him from the sea. The recovery helicopter tried in vain to retrieve Liberty Bell 7 for a few minutes. It was later found and is now on display at the Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center.

Grissom said the dunking left him "a bit uneasy," but doctors said he suffered no harm.

There was jubilation in Huntsville, Alabama as they received word of the successful flight.

Chubby Checker Leads Twist Craze

Once reserved for gyrating teenagers only, the rock and roll dance craze, led by Chubby Checker's irrepressible hit "The Twist," has even shimmied its way up the social ladder. In recent weeks, throngs of Jet Set socialites have jammed the dance floors of such once-staid bastions of New York cafe society as the Stork Club and Peppermint Lounge, not only to twist but to jerk, pony, wiggle wobble and frug till the wee hours.

Onlookers watch in much amusement, but are then spotted trying the dances themselves.

Checker, 19, has embarked on a European tour and one can only wonder if the new dance sensation is headed for the British royal palace.

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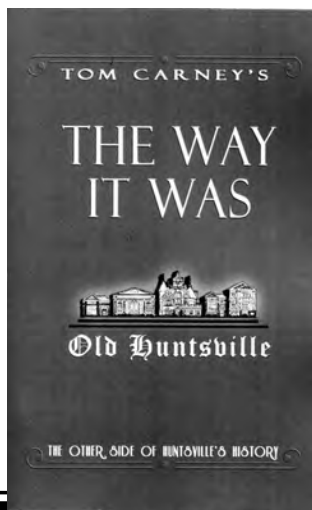
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SPORTS - A WAY OF LIFE

by Hugh Michaels

Years ago I developed a love for sports. I don't know why - my family had very little interest in it.

I remember many nights I would sit down near a window and listen to a ball game or a "prize fight". My sister would object because it would keep her awake. Therefore, I had to develop a way to let her sleep. I would place a towel over my head. The house where we lived had two beds in each room (6 beds). My sister chose the room near the radio.

I would pour water on a line, which led from the radio to the ground. This helped the sound.

While listening to the radio, I developed a liking to the St. Louis Cardinals and the Pittsburgh Pirates. The most popular players were Stan Musial and Ralph Kiner. Musial of the Cardinals and Kiner of the Pirates.

I loved to hear Harry Caray of the Cards announced the game, especially when a player hit a homer, he would go "bananas."

Boxing was another sport which I enjoyed. Every Friday night, a group of boys would visit some person's home to listen to a "prize fight". This group of boys were my "buddies" or friends. They are all gone. Death has got all of them.

Some of the boxers whom I enjoyed were Joe Louis, "Rocky" Marciano, "Sugar Ray" Robinson, and Billy Conn.

It was fun listening to Don Dumphy. He would tell you what was happening in the ring. I never missed a sporting event while I was in the Air Force.

While I was in college, Jacksonville State, I met a young man who was very interested in sports. He was an Auburn fan. He talked me into going to an Auburn Football game. I will never forget that day. Excitement was at the very peak. Everybody needs to go to Auburn one time. There will never be another Auburn! I was an Auburn fan forever.

I remember being a fan of Harry Gilmer. He was a quarterback for Alabama. Harry would jump into the air when he threw a pass.

Sometimes, I would walk into our pasture and pretend I was an announcer. I would make sure no one was around. I would be another Harry Caray.

One of the biggest disappointments I ever had in my lifetime was not getting to play basketball in High School. I had no way to get home after practice or after a game. On two occasions, I walked from B.B. Comer Bridge to Langston. The distance was approximately 12 miles. The weather was cold. I would run and walk fast. I was scared - I mean really scared.

I got home at 1 o'clock. I had to get into bed at 2 o'clock and catch the school bus around 6 in the morning.

I enjoyed coaching young men in basketball and softball. My garage is full of trophies which I collected while coaching. I refereed basketball. I coached my son and that was fun. He was a good softball player. My heart would beat another beat as he rounded third base.

I coached Hillwood Men's Softball team. We won the League Championship 3 years in a row. It was a great thrill to see my son Greg blast a homer over the center field bleachers.

When Greg was not playing ball, he would be hunting or fishing. That was his number one interest.

Sports has helped to make him a fine man. It thrills my heart to have a young man to tell me how much I have helped him run the right path.

Thank God for sports.

Right or wrong, my experience has made me a better man.

Huntsville has always had outstanding youth programs. Thank God, I was part of it.



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Nothing But Net

by *Patty Trigg*

Danny threw me the ball as we had practiced. I stepped with my right, faked a left then twisted back to the right and then rounded the player who was blocking my path. The floor was wide open, we were behind one point and I was off to score the winning point before the clock ran out and the buzzer sounded.

The crowd came alive, standing, stomping, yelling and screaming. With only seconds to go I narrowed my concentration. I became aware of my heartbeat and felt the steady rhythm as it pulsed in my ears. The sweat rolled down my face and my back. I was aware of the rivulets that ran down my arms and fell from my elbows to the floor. Even with the headband across my forehead that kept the sweat from running into my eyes, I still saw the beads of sweat that clung to and dangled from my sweat soaked hair.

With each step forward I was intensely aware of the feel of the ball in the palm of my hand as I pushed back as it rebounded from the floor. Each tiny little bump that made up the familiar texture of the ball's surface brought a sense of welcomed control. The sound the ball made as it touched and then lifted from the floor of the gymnasium and reverberated off the walls guided me down the floor to my intended target.

As my eyes focused on the net, I felt the room, the noise and the people fade into a gray nothingness. In my mind's eye I visualized the path of the ball going through the air and into the center of the net. As I arched my body for the shot, I pushed off from the floor and released the ball. As I followed through with my body motions, I watched the ball sail through the air with the grace of a bird in flight. The ball fell through the net with a perfect swoosh.

Simultaneously, the grey fog that surrounded me began to clear and my awareness of the game returned. As I looked at the Scoreboard, the first thing that I heard was the one second indicator tic to zero and then the buzzer sounded.

Next thing I remember was the roar of the crowd and riding on the shoulders of my teammates and classmates as we celebrated together the edge of your seat victory that was ours.

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Jay Leno

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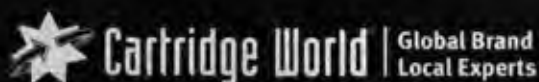


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When life was simple...



Around 1910 some of the employees of Dallas Mill gathered for a photograph. Many of them were only children. During that same period Judge Betts and James Ballentine, who were both running for the same office, fought a duel on Huntsville's streets. Both were lousy shots and no one was injured.

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