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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Life on Redstone Arsenal Before It Was



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Also in this issue: Growing up in Old Monrovia; Habits of Cats: How we Comfort Ourselves in These Days; Appreciate Our Postal Workers; Army Planes Lose Their Way; Supernatural Dogs; Earlene Storey recipes and Much More!

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Life on Redstone Arsenal Before It Was

by Jean McCrady

It was 1936, I was 3 years old, when we moved to a tiny house on a dirt road called Jurden (for Jordan) Lane, now Patton Road. Memories of the four years following that move have never faded, though it was 80+ years later that I began to put them on paper. Then seemingly by accident I came across a book titled "The People Who Lived On The Land That Is Now Redstone Arsenal", authored by Beverly S. Curry, published in 2006. One chapter in that book was like engraved tablets of stone handed down from the mountaintop.

That chapter was a 2005 interview with then 82-year-old Odis H. Golden—one of those people—in his mid-teens when he lived there. He described the Hickory Grove community in the late 30s—the exact time and place where those four childhood years were spent. He told things just as I remembered them and even mentioned the Brewers by name. I learned from Odis that the name of the

road we moved to from Jordan Lane was Neal Road. I also learned whose dog it was that Daddy killed on that road in 1939. Though the dog story was one I had already recorded, it was incomplete till now.

The Jordan Lane house was just south of Neal Road and owned by the Joe Beason family. When we moved out of it, they moved in, built a new house behind it, then tore it down. The Beasons were our kin in a round-about way. Mrs. Beason's sister was married to Daddy's brother. Three of the seven Beason children were still at home when they came to Jordan Lane, but sadly their teenage son Jake didn't live there long.

Coming home from town one night, his car slipped off the muddy dirt road into the ditch and pinned him face down in a few inches of water, where he drowned. The other two were Angelea (Ange), 4 years older than I, and Ray, my age. Ange, Ray, my sister Net and I played together in the Hickory Grove school yard, gathering and cracking "hickernuts", as they were called. The Beason kids had lots of cousins; one of them that I only met recently is Ann Oakes, wife of Mr. Jim Oakes of Huntsville Track Club fame.

A country store stood on the east side of Jordan Lane smack in front of where Neal Road joined it. When we arrived, the store was run by Mr. Howard Gentle. Mr. Odis mentioned it was pronounced "Harrod", ex-

"Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia."

Charles Schulz, Illustrator



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actly as I remember it. The store changed hands and for most of our time there was run by Leon & Inez Fanning, who lived in the back part of the store. Inez Fanning was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. She had coal black wavy hair and wore bright red lipstick, in striking contrast with her alabaster complexion. The Fannings had two girls, Doris and Sue, and they were also part of our play group.

(Sidenote: The Beason/Fanning circle was closed some 40+ years later when Ange's son Jeff married Doris's daughter Inez (named after her grandmother) in 1983. Made stranger by the fact that Ange, living on Russell Hill in Huntsville after the Arsenal evacuation, married Foster Albright of Salty Bottom, near Gurley, and moved to California when their first son Joey was a baby. Their second son Jeff was still at home some 20 years later when they returned to Huntsville. Totally independent of any prior connections, Jeff meets Inez and the 1930s playmates ended up sharing the same grandchildren.)

When we moved from Jordan Lane it was into the Jones house, named after its owner. Until recently I thought this was the well known G.W. Jones, but I learned from Ray Jones, after reading his 2007 book, "The Farm in Jones Valley" that I'd been wrong. He said it must have been Mr. Wynn Jones, who was a pre-Arsenal landowner, but Mr. G.W. Jones was not.

The Jones house was at the end of a short lane just off Neal Road on Squirrel Hill above the store. It had 6 rooms and 3 covered porches. Daddy's parents, Memie & Pap Brewer, came to live with us, much to my and Net's constant delight. Unlike the tenant houses along Neal Road on the way up the hill, the Jones house had either been painted white at one time or was whitewashed.

Our good fortune was due to Daddy's being hired to oversee the farm and the Black tenants that came with it. He was paid \$25 a month plus our rent and dairy and farm products. There was a dairy barn and several milk cows, hogs, chickens and garden. Mr. Jones came from

Huntsville regularly to pick up eggs and cans of milk. Our milk was put in jugs and let down into the well for cooling.

Mr. Jones had a daughter, Evelyn as I recall, and a grandson called Sonny who was about the same age as Net and me. He asked Mama once if he could take us to Sonny's birthday party and to our surprise, she let us go. After we had cake and ice cream at Sonny's house, we went to play on the swings and seesaws at the East Clinton school. So they must have lived in east Huntsville around the Five Points area. How I would love to know if Sonny is still alive! But not knowing his last name, I have no starting point to find out. He would be somewhere in his mid to upper 80s



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now, as I am, and could very well still be with us. I'd be grateful for any tip someone could give me.

Here's another memory concerning this daughter. One day Mama was hurrying along the garden path to the outhouse when something shiny in the plowed dirt caught her eye. It was a white gold wedding band studded with small diamonds and was a perfect fit for her finger, which had never before felt a wedding ring. She was so excited and couldn't wait to show it to Daddy. He relayed the news to Mr. Jones, who upon hearing it was as excited as Mama had been. He said his daughter, who apparently had lived there at one time, lost a ring and it fit the description Daddy gave him. Giving it up was heartbreaking for Mama. Many years later Daddy was able to replace it with a set of store-bought wedding rings.

This house was built on the side of a hill that slopped off toward the barn, and one of our favorite places to play was under the floor. The downhill side was so high off the ground we could easily walk under it without stooping. The ground was a clean swept hard surface and the perfect place to build playhouses by outlining rooms with rocks. Net and I sat in those "rooms" many times crying together and bemoaning the fact that Memie & Pap were old and would soon die and we wouldn't have them anymore. Years later we calculated the age they would have been then. They were in their 50s.

The one-room Hickory Grove school, which Net attended in

1st grade, was on the north side of Neal Road about half way between Fanning's Store (Jordan Lane) and the lane leading off to our house. Neal Road was dotted with small unpainted tenant houses that continued on around Madkin Mountain, where we were never allowed to go. These were the homes of the Black tenants who worked with Daddy on the farm and were our good neighbors in every way.

That was the early years of Joe Louis's 12-year stint as world heavyweight champion, and Daddy was a Joe Louis fan no matter the color or nationality of his challenger. We were the only ones with a radio and on fight nights, Daddy would invite the tenant men to our house to listen to the fight. I can still see them sitting in a circle on the front room floor (because we didn't have enough chairs) with eyes and ears focused on that RCA dome-top table radio. When Joe Louis's opponent would go down to the mat, they would rise to their feet in celebration.

Our closest neighbor was the Walter Cooper family. His wife's name was Ilene and their two children were Muzetti, a girl under 10 years, and Dave, a lap

baby. Muzetti was born with an unfortunate birth defect. Her eyeballs were turned backwards in their sockets so it was hard to look at her. The Matriarch of the family was Walter's mother, known to everybody as Aunt Celie. When I think of her, my mind's eye sees Aunt Jemima on the pancake mix box. There's more to come about her role in our lives.

A standout incident in my memory bank is the killing of a dog in front of the Cooper house. The killing followed a great commotion that started way down the hill and built up to a crescendo as it traveled upward. When there was urgent neighborhood news to spread, it was by the Paul Revere method, only without the horse. The news was delivered by yelling from house to house until all parties were informed and the required action was taken. On this day, the message was, "there's a mad dog coming up the road, staggering and foaming at the mouth, keep all the kids inside, and somebody bring a gun." Daddy got there first with his 22-rifle and a single shot dropped the advancing dog in

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"I haven't lost my mind. Half of it wandered away and the other half is out looking for it."

Jane Stephens, Arab

its tracks. (Daddy's aim with a rifle was masterful. He could pick a squirrel out of midair as it leaped from limb to limb. We ate a lot of squirrels.)

The kids were allowed to visit the scene before the dead dog was removed. Thereafter we would take care not to step on the dark stain in the dirt left by the pool of blood. I didn't know then that "mad" meant the dog had Rabies. I also didn't know whose dog it was until I saw this statement in the 2005 interview with Mr. Odis: "I remember Buster. He lived on the mountain. He had blue tick hounds. Somebody killed one of them once. I can't remember if they shot it or poisoned it. Buster made a big stink about it." One of Daddy's tenant hands was Buster McDonald and he lived 'round the mountain. Undoubtedly the same Buster and the same dog.

It was at the Jones house that I had my first astronomy lesson, coupled with an introduction to poetry. The nightly routine was for Mama to take Net and me to the backyard for our bedtime pee, while she stood by and gazed at the night sky. She used these occasions to teach us our first poem, that I'm willing to bet Grandma Swafford had taught her in a similar setting just a few years earlier. The poem was: "Twinkle twinkle little star, How I wonder what you are; Up above the world so high, Like a diamond in the sky." The 80 intervening years have not dulled the image of that dazzling country night sky, nor increased my understanding of astronomy to any great extent.

Our family gained an additional member at the Jones house. When Net and I got up on the morning of July 30, 1939, to our great surprise, we had a new baby brother. If Net knew Mama was "expecting," she never shared it with me. The birth had happened right there at home during the night, and with no way to call a doctor, I'm thinking the delivery was one of many performed by midwife Aunt Celie. As we stood there trying to comprehend what had happened and marveling at this tiny black-haired being that was our new brother, something happened that would take me 40 years to understand. This was 3 days before my 6th birthday. Daddy took me onto his lap and in a sad tone said, "Our poor little Jeannie is

not our baby anymore." He had no idea what he had set in motion. (See footnote)

Our whole world changed six months later when on a snow covered Groundhog morning in February 1940, the Jones house burned to the ground. After Net and I had left for school that morning, someone at the Cooper house noticed an unusual smoke from our chimney and sounded the alarm, via the message system described earlier. No one was hurt, and thanks to the quick action of the local "fire department", the Black tenants, who helped Mama & Daddy and Memmie & Pap gather and remove our belongings, nearly everything was saved. Mama rolled our 6-month old brother in a quilt and tossed him from the high front porch into Aunt Celie's waiting arms who cared for him at her house the rest of the day.

When the school bus stopped to let us off at Fanning's Store that afternoon, someone boarded the bus to tell the driver, and us, that the Brewer's house had burned and we were now living in the Is house. That was a tenant house between the store and Hickory Grove School. It was years later before I wondered how on such short notice the Is house was available for us to move in to. Net tells me that Mr. Jones moved the Is family into another house that day so we could move in.



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Marilyn Monroe

My first memory of the Is house is the wallpaper. The walls were covered with layers and layers of newspaper (no doubt the Huntsville Times) to block out the cold. Mama and Daddy replaced the newspaper with store-bought wallpaper, and that's when I learned that wallpapering is meant to be a one person job. Common sense would say that two pairs of hands would be better, but experience says otherwise. Anyone who has tried wallpapering with a partner no doubt learned that the nuances of how to do it are unique to each individual. Mama and Daddy never papered another wall.


One big change that came with this move was our loss of Memie & Pap. They went to live with Daddy's brother, Uncle Roy, at a far-away place called Harvest. To us it was the other side of the world. Little did we know that in a couple of years, we'd be their closest neighbor. But before that, with Redstone Arsenal on Huntsville's horizon, another move was on ours. It came in May of '41, just days before my 2nd grade school year ended and it was only for a short time. We moved to Vincent, AL and Daddy worked in an am-

muniton plant in Childersburg that summer. When school started that fall, I was in 3rd grade at Harvest School.

Fast forward a dozen years. I had finished high school (at Monrovia) and business college (at North Alabama College of Commerce) and was a GS3 stenographer at Redstone Arsenal's Ordnance Guided Missile School. Again spending my days on Patton Road, where I had lived and played for four years when it was a dirt road known as "Jurden" Lane.

Footnote: There is a "Rest of the Story" I hope to share in the next issue of Old Huntsville. I referenced this footnote at the mention of Daddy's comment when our baby brother came on the scene. Another piece to this was our house burning.


These events conspired to result in a recurring dream that started in my teen years and lasted until well past 50. A fortuitous event along the way resulted in my eventual understanding of the dream, which ended it. My sharing the dream and the revelation that stopped it just might help someone else understand their recurring dream, and by doing so, put an end to it.



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The Flag and the Salute

by John E. Carsen





Falling on November 11, Veterans Day is a federal holiday designated as a day to honor all who have served in the military. At 11 am on this day a color guard consisting of every branch of the military renders honors to America's war dead at the Tomb of the Unknowns. The President or a Representative places a wreath at the tomb and a bugler sounds Taps. Parades and other observances across the country begin at 11:00 am.

As a member of the Honor Guard of American Legion Post 237 in Huntsville, which celebrates 100 years of service on October 17, I would like to take this opportunity to explain what the 13 folds of the flag at a service signify.

The flag folding ceremony represents the same religious principles on which our country was originally founded. The portion of the flag denoting honor is the canton of blue containing the stars representing the states our veterans served in uniform. The canton field of blue dresses from left to right and is inverted when draped as a pall on a casket of a veteran who has served our country in uniform.

1. The first fold of our flag is a symbol of life.
2. The second fold is a symbol of our belief in the eternal life.
3. The third fold is made in honor and remembrance of the veteran departing our ranks who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country to attain a peace throughout the world.
4. The fourth fold represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in times of war for His divine guidance.
5. The fifth fold is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our country, in dealing with other countries, may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong."
6. The sixth fold is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.
7. The seventh fold is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.
8. The eighth fold is a tribute to the one who entered in to the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.

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9. The ninth fold is a tribute to womanhood; for it has been through their faith, love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great have been molded.

10. The tenth fold is a tribute to father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.

11. The eleventh fold, in the eyes of a Hebrew citizen, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

12. The twelfth fold, in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost.

In the final fold, the stars are uppermost, reminding us of our national motto, "In God we Trust". After the flag is completely folded and tucked in,

it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington and the sailors and marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges, and freedoms we enjoy today.

Typically, after an opening prayer at a departed veteran's service, the Honor Guard will fire three volleys representing Honor, Duty and Country. These rounds are followed by the playing of Taps after which the flag is folded and presented to the family of the deceased along with three spent shells signifying the same three values as the volleys fired.

As Honor Guards ideally consist of seven guns, the three volleys fired is often confused with the 21 Gun Salute, a Naval tradition arising from the seven cannons on warships in

times gone by. Recognized by most nations today, the 21 Gun Salute is reserved for heads of state, and the President and Vice President.

Regardless of the number of guns, or members of an Honor Guard, the three rounds fired, and their significance is not diminished or any less meaningful in honoring the service of the veteran being laid to rest.

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COUNT OUR BLESSINGS - 1949

by M.D. Smith, IV



With Thanksgiving approaching, I have one memory etched forever in the mind of an eight-year-old in 1949.

During my first three years, my parents still lived with my maternal grandmother, Mamie, that I called MeMaw, and grandfather, Kirby, whom I just called Granddaddy. A house only four lots away became available, so my parents bought and moved into it just after my third birthday photo, taken in Granddaddy's combination shop and boy's toy room.

We still ate Christmas and Thanksgiving dinner with them because MeMaw was such a good cook and my mother living her first thirty-three years in her parent's house...was not. My father did not marry her for her cooking.

Let me tell you about my straight-laced, but forever kind, Granddaddy.

K.H. Jones grew up in a large family of twelve children. Everyone did for themselves and many chores as well. So, even married, he still not only polished all the shoes; he also ironed his shirts and suits. He was handy in his basement shop. The large coal-burning heating system and the steam heat always scared me in the basement. When that giant corkscrew would churn more coal into the fire under the boiler, it sounded like a demon to a small child.

With the coming birth of my sister in 1945 and after, I spent even more "nights out" in MeMaw's big feather bed sleeping next to her. Granddaddy had his own bedroom and they shared the middle bathroom. MeMaw would read me to sleep. She read all of the Kon-Tiki great raft adventure (1947) books to me over a period of months.

My grandmother cooked everything on a three-burner Hotpoint electric stove and oven that sat on metal legs. She made jellies and preserved all kinds of foods. Years later, when I was a teen, she replaced that stove with a newer electric one. The Hotpoint dealer



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said they were going to put it in a window to show how long those stoves lasted.

So try to imagine how I was looking forward to Thanksgiving at their house at eight years old. We went about eleven, planning to eat at one o'clock. My sister was only three at the time and occupied by my mother while the men talked fishing, boats, golf and football. My Granddaddy played golf and taught me, but my father never played golf.

MeMaw stayed in the kitchen. The giant turkey in the aluminum roaster, which barely fit in the oven, filled the rooms with heavenly scents. Burning holiday candles in the dining room added to a young boy's appetite. Finally, it was time to serve. The table already laden with hot side dishes and casseroles and the turkey was about to be put on the platter. The last thing to be done was making the gravy from the drippings, giblets and other secret ingredients that MeMaw always put in her mouth-watering gravy for the stuffing and mashed potatoes.

To help, my grandfather went to the back to carry the gravy bowl before the turkey. The family had gathered around the dining table but were still standing. As my grandfather came from the kitchen into the breakfast room, adjoining the dining room, he made a muffled kind of "Ohhhhh," sound, and we heard a crash. Everyone rushed into the breakfast room.

He had partially collapsed in a chair and the gravy all over the floor. He was holding his chest. I was scared to death, and the other's panic didn't help me. Granddaddy took some deep breaths. My father wanted to take him to the hospital, right then and there, fearing a

heart attack. As my grandfather got his wind back, he waved his arm and said he was fine.

"Leave me alone. I just tripped on the rug. I'm sorry I ruined our dinner by spilling the gravy." By then, my mother and MeMaw had cleaned all the gravy and pieces of the gravy bowl from the floor. "Don't worry about the gravy, Daddy." That's what MeMaw called my grandfather. "I've got plenty more in the kitchen and another bowl."

At his insistence, the Thanksgiving dinner proceeded as planned, but everyone would cut a quick eye to Granddaddy throughout the feast to make sure he was okay. I remembered the blessing said before dinner that day, given by my grandfather as he always did. He ended by saying we should, "Count our blessings." It had special meaning because I was thankful I still had him.

The next day, he did go to the hospital with MeMaw and my mother and the doctors determined he had suffered a mild heart attack. That was 1949. He started exercising more, lost weight, played more golf and changed jobs to one less stressful. He lived until 1965 when he died of colon cancer at age 76.

I learned that Thanksgiving, what counting our blessings truly meant.



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For the time being, let's face it; the virus is here for some time to come, so let's make the best of it.

I'm going to order a cord of wood for my fireplace, nothing like a warm fire, soft knitted throw, cup of hot chocolate and a good book on those cold winter afternoons.

Standard time has kicked in, making me tired at a much earlier time - just as I'm getting used to one time, they have us switch again. It gets dark so early.

My grandchildren love to make s'mores - so guess I'll put marshmallows, Hersheys and graham crackers on my next grocery list.

I started knitting a scarf for all of my special friends just after the first of the year, so I should have finished my quota by next month. I think people truly appreciate it when they receive a gift from the heart that a friend has spent time making for you. I know I do.

Let me advise you what I do before the holiday comes. I make one dish a day and put it in the freezer. When the big day arrives, I'm not at my wit's end trying to stay up all night cooking.

I will miss the Christmas parade. I've never missed a Christmas since a little girl, caroling, and Christmas pageants. Maybe next year - until next time, keep Happy thoughts and a song in your heart.



It's almost Turkey Day and we all have many things to be thankful for. I fear this will be our normal for many months to come; wearing masks, distancing ourselves, washing our hands more often and using hand sanitizer. I even have a bottle of sanitizer that hooks onto my purse or belt and it's handy that way.

Be sure to have the chimney cleaned out before using it as a chimney fire can cause havoc when it happens.

Are you staying in touch with loved ones? Call a friend every day. If you can socialize in person, staying safe, or by zoom, by all means, do so.

I miss the smiles when going into a store. Wearing a mask seems to have taken away the feeling of being appreciated. For example, when doing something nice like holding a door open, letting someone go ahead of you in the grocery checkout line, or paying for the person's bill in the drive-through, there

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O'le Dad's Bar-B-Q menu

O'le Dad's Main Course

- Pork plate
- Rib plates
- 1/2 Chicken Plate
- Ribs (Slab)
- Ribs (1/2 Slab)
- Whole Chicken
- Whole Shoulders

Sandwiches

- Pork Sandwich
- Turkey sandwich
- Rib Sandwich

Sides

- French Fries
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The Entertainers

by Betty Hallmark Atkinson

While growing up, my dreams of what I wanted to do with my life kept changing. Thoughts of becoming a missionary minister had me preaching to our neighborhood kids. Now where did that come from? I was brought up in a church where the women weren't even allowed to say Amen out loud in church.

Later on I wanted to be an entertainer, so I would go to school early and play the piano that was in the gymnasium. The kids would gather around to listen to me sing and play and really seemed to enjoy it, so when our school was going to have a talent show, I decided to try out for it.

For my audition I sang "That's Alright Mama", by Elvis Presley. The Principal said that I could be in the show, but would have to select another song to sing, as the Elvis Presley song wasn't appropriate. He had me to do a different one, which he approved of.

When the night of the show came around and it was my time to perform, I came on the stage, sat down at the piano and you know what I did? The entertainer in me came out and I did "That's Alright Mama". Boy how the audience yelled and cheered for me! I didn't win that night, but I stuck to my principles and did what I thought was the right song choice. Luckily I didn't get expelled from school either.

Later on, when my twin sister and I were about fourteen years old, we caught a bus and rode to town to try out for another talent show that was being held at the Princess Theater in Florence, Alabama.

We made it through the try outs, so on the night of the show, we snuck out of the house and made our way back to town. Since my twin was going to be singing lead on a Ray Charles song, "My Babe Don't Stand No Cheating", she decided to dress up in our Daddy's clothes, thinking the look would fit more with the song. Why, I didn't have a clue! Now keep in mind, that our Daddy was over six feet tall and my twin and I were way under

five feet. But she put on Daddy's pants, shirt, coat, shoes and a hat.

When it was our turn to perform, I sat down at the piano, my twin stood next to me and some guy we knew was going to back us up on the guitar. We had rehearsed it as a slow song, but as we started playing, all of a sudden my

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"What a distressing contrast there is between the radiant intelligence of a child and the feeble mentality of the average adult."

Sigmund Freud

twin sister gets down on the floor on her knees. She starts beating the floor with her hands like she's playing the drums and speeds up the tempo of the song. The poor guy playing the guitar, looks at me and we had no choice but to pick up the rhythm to keep up with her. Then my twin jumps up straight in the air from the floor, kicks up her feet and one of our Daddy's shoes goes sailing out into the audience.

Me and the guitar player are looking at her, like she's gone mad, are trying to keep up with her and the song, when someone in the audience throws the shoe back onto the stage. Unfortunately, he got ushered out of the theater, and NO, we didn't win the talent show either.

Now keep in mind, that we had snuck out of the house to do this talent show. Luckily we didn't get caught sneaking back in, so we thought we were safe. Yeah, right!

The next day our Mother was home ironing and listening to the radio like she always did, when a neighbor friend dropped by. They were talking when all of a sudden she heard the announcer on the radio say, "And here are the Hallmark Twins, from Oakland".

While Mother wanted to fall through the floor, her friend was saying, "Listen Mae, they're good ain't they?"

Mother said, all she could think of was that she hoped nobody from our church was listening.

Our poor Mother never knew where or what my twin and I were doing. I guess she figured that because there was two of us, that we would and did look after each other.

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

Op' Heidelberg

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Comfort

by John H. Tate



For many of us, the season that symbolizes the warmth, safety and comfort of home is upon us. Yes, the sounds of Mom cooking in the kitchen all night long, along with the smell of vanilla floating all through the house, has to be the most powerful memory I have.

Remembering Daddy with the large 12-inch-long candy cane, and him using his buck-pocket knife to break off chunks for us kids always brings a smile to my face, but the smell of the mint from the broken candy cane takes me back to that kitchen table.

The memory of Daddy buying cases of oranges and apples around the Holidays, creating a fresh fruit smell, still means "home for the holidays." Oh yes, the fresh-cut Christmas tree. My sister and I helped Daddy cut and drag to the truck. I am sure he did most of the dragging. Just remembering the smell of that evergreen transports me back in time.

Yes, I remember some of the presents I received as a child and some of the gifts I gave; however, there are no memories that invoke warmth and comfort more than the smells I remember from my early childhood. The smell of a turkey cooking in the oven, at the time, I could not tell you that the predominant smell was that of sage; all I knew is it made me feel good.

Smells had such an impact on me that as a young adult, if I were to cook for a date, I would boil a pot of water and throw the spices into the water. So, if I were cooking Italian, I would boil Italian spices; and if I were cooking just a country meal, I would add some vanilla to some water. I did not know it at the time, but Realtors do the same thing because vanilla's smell invoked the sense of home.

As I think of the things that bring me comfort, such as a fire in the fireplace, a cup of hot chocolate, or just hugging my kids, every single physical action is more profound because of related memories related to smell.

During these challenging times, surrounding the Corona Virus, the wife and I enjoy movies from Netflix or Amazon Prime. The smile I have on my face is not just because of a good movie; it is also because I recall popcorn's smell in the movie theaters from my childhood.

Wow, how about that? The things that bring me comfort are the smells of my childhood. Yes, a good movie, warm fire, maybe a good book, and the quiet time with my wife is all great; but add in the smells from my childhood, and I find real comfort.

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HUNTSVILLE NEWS ITEMS IN 1899

* A new roof is being put on the J. H. Crocker Dry Goods House at the corner of Holmes and Jefferson Streets.

* A very large crowd participated in the supposedly mad dog chase near the jail last evening. After one of the officers had shot the canine twice and failed to put it out of its misery, it was chased to the suburbs and some younger men killed it.

* Mayor Moore will issue a proclamation forbidding the shooting of fireworks of any description on the streets until after the holidays.

* All of the new hoses for the Fire Department have arrived and the only thing now lacking is the chemical engine which is expected the early part of January. The fire laddies are in their new quarters and are preparing for any fires that may occur.

* The completion of the Jewish Synagogue is close at hand and when completed, it will be one of the prettiest church edifices in the South.

* The beautiful residence of Mr. J. N. Mazza being erected on Randolph Street will soon be completed.

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

* The \$1000 street roller which was purchased some time ago to put the finishing touches on streets after crushed rock had been spread will finally be used on the public thoroughfares.

* The rainy season has come and caught the approaches to all of our schools in a very bad condition. Our city ought to take more pride in its schools.

* What has become of the beautiful fountains that were supposed to be placed in the park at Southern Depot?

* The interior of W. R. Risen & Co.'s Bank is undergoing a thorough repair and is taking on a new coat of paint.

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

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

An Odd Incident

Frank Miller, who worked as a bricklayer in Huntsville, was at the point of death recently after a lingering illness and it was reported that his devoted brother John offered up a prayer for him.

In the course of the prayer John Miller said, "Oh, Lord, I am willing to give my life, if it be required, to save my beloved brother."

A moment later he fell dead. His brother died that night and the two were buried in the same grave.

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Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Our Photo of the Month winner for last month was **Phyllis Dean** of Union Grove. She guessed that the little guy in the picture was **Cecil Ashburn** and she was right. What's ironic is Cecil worked on nearly every road in Huntsville except Cecil Ashburn Drive. Back when they were building that road **Tom Carney** asked then Mayor **Loretta Spencer** and Councilman **Bill Kling** if Cecil's name might be a good one for that road and after a few meetings and votes, it was agreed. He was so proud of that. Phyllis is a huge War Eagle (Auburn University) fan and is very happy that football is happening now.

Did you find the tiny twig I hid in the October issue? (p. 37). Not many did, I'm doing my job! But

there was a winner, and it was **Jerry Lewis** of Owens Cross Roads. He said he found it right away, and he retired from the Arsenal nine years ago. Congratulations Jerry!

Everyone wants to know who keeps the yards and gardens on Clinton Avenue and Randolph so beautiful - well it's **Charles Petty** and don't be calling him cause we don't want to share! Charles also gave us a good tip - farm raised fish isn't always the best for you - look for wild/organic.

November 11 is **Veterans Day** and it is such an important day and time (11 am) in our history. Check the city website to see what events are taking place to honor our veterans. We love our Vets.

In these challenging times that none of us could have predicted, many just want to be comforted. Something as simple as a fluffy robe in the cold mornings, or an unexpected call from a dear friend, or a simmering pot of bacon, pinto beans and cornbread. So I asked several of our Old Huntsville writers what comforted them. I hope you enjoy the stories they sent for this issue.

If any of our readers have more comforts you'd like to add - send them in - we'd love to publish them. What brings you most comfort in these crazy times?

Earl Poole of Fayetteville called with these two tips: To see if a watermelon is ripe, put a broom straw on top of it (length-wise). If the straw moves, it's ripe. If it stays in one place, it's not ripe.

His other tip was to take a small brown paper bag and stuff it with a couple of plastic grocery bags. Tie a string at the top and hang it under your eaves or ceiling of a porch. Wasps will think it's a hornets nest and will avoid it at all costs!

Because masking is really important now and has been shown to actually protect people from flu and virus, I have hidden a very **teeny mask** somewhere in the pages of this magazine. I will have to make it super small so NO ONE will call me and get a free subscription. Be the first local to call, and be the first out of state to call, and you'll be the winners!

Ianthia Bridges is featured alot in Old Huntsville, but for good reason. She was just awarded the Certificate of Recognition from BB&T (Truist) Bank on Church Street where she works, for 23 years of service. We are so proud of you Ianthia! My absolute favorite place to work, the customer care folks there treat you like you're their only customer. Kind of unusual in these days.

John E. Carson is a member of the Clayton E. MoneyMaker American Legion Post 237 and is a member of the Honor Guard there

Photo of The Month

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

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for many years. Just recently the Post was honored for their 100th year anniversary, and **Councilman Bill Kling** presented a Proclamation from Mayor Tommy Battle to the Post representatives, commemorating this special date. There was quite an event at the Post with food, entertainment and great speakers. The District and State Commanders of the Legion attended, and John Carson talked about the next 100 years. Congratulations to Post 237!

Trice Hinds was a man whom many people knew as an extremely talented artist who has his artwork in many places including the newly opened Sparkman Center. He loved local history and was first Chairman of the Twickenham Luminaries and Home Tour, opening his beautiful home for many annual tours. Trice passed away on Sep. 15 at the age of 85. He is survived by sisters **Gay Hinds Money (Charles)** and **Ann Hinds Meinert (Dennis)**; nieces **Kimberly Rodgers (Chris)**, **Lee Ann Meinert**; nephew **Matthew Hinds Meinert** and grandnieces and cousins. He was a kind, gentle Southern man who loved to talk with people who walked by his home. He loved his cat **Lady Bug**. We will miss Trice and send condolences to his family.

Judy and Barry Key are just

lovebirds, and we found out they will be celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary on Nov. 23. That seems impossible because Judy looks like she is barely over 60. Good genes! When they married Barry was in college and Judy was a senior in high school - they eloped and were married in Centre, Alabama! Happy anniversary to you both.

I found the best car air freshener! I bought 3 of those cinnamon brooms at Publix for \$10. I put 2 in the house and one in my car's back seat. Now when I get in my car it smells like cinnamon and I love it. I did this last year and the scent lasted well into December.

A huge welcome to **Mike Wright**, the new General Manager of WAAY-31 TV. Inside sources say he'll make news like the times the station was consistently #1 in the ratings!

Lung health is more important than ever. A lot of it you can Google and find out what to do, but most people don't take deep breaths. Practice just breathing in for 4 seconds, and letting it out for 4 seconds. Exhaling is as important as inhaling - try it!

We were so sorry to hear that **Kenneth "Vern" Norton** had passed away on Sep. 8. He was a graduate of Butler High School and worked for Lanza Cigar &

Candy Co. for 26 years, then Coca Cola for 19 years. He was one hard worker and loved his family. He leaves his wife of 58 years, **Sherry Gray Norton**, his son **Jeff Norton (Cheryl)**; daughter **Alison Norton Cope (Mark)**; brother **Bobby Norton**; sister **Nadene Hill** and four grandchildren whom he adored.

Now that it's getting cooler many love burning candles. Be sure and watch your pets with candles because if they knock over hot wax that's burning it could be a disaster! Never use water on hot wax but have baking soda close by to smother in case the candle tips over.

Happy Happy Nov. 16th Birthday to **Stephanie Troup**, an RN in Nashville who is the best daughter a Mom could have.

Keith Overholt and the Downtown Rescue Mission feeds hundreds of folks each Thanksgiving and this year is no different. Be sure and stop in their thrift stores to find some amazing bargains and know that your money is going to a great cause. Special hello to Keith's dad **Doc Overholt** whom we admire and love.

Many are struggling right now so be kind to others, no one knows what others are going through. Be good to yourself and think about what comforts you - pamper yourself because you deserve it.



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Sweets from Earlene Storey

Earlene Storey recently passed away at the age of 101 and loved to garden and bake. Here are her favorite recipes, provided by her son Rick Storey

Potato Chip Cookies

2 sticks butter creamed with 1/2 c. sugar

Add:

1 tsp. vanilla or almond
1/2 c. crushed potato chips
1/2 c. nuts
2 c. flour

Roll small amounts and push down with a fork. Bake on ungreased cookie sheet for 12-15 minutes at 350 degrees.

Sprinkle with powdered sugar. Makes 5 dozen cookies.

Hello Dolly Bars

3/4 c. stick butter
1 c. graham cracker crumbs
1 - 6 oz. pkg. chocolate chips
1 c. shredded coconut

1 c. chopped pecans
1 can sweetened condensed milk

In 13x10 pan melt butter, cool slightly. Spread cracker crumbs in pan then spread chocolate chips, coconut and pecans. Pour milk on top. Bake at 325 degrees for 20 minutes or until brown. Slice before completely cool.

Bourbon Balls

1 pkg (12 oz) vanilla wafers finely crushed (3 cups)
1 c. confectioners sugar
1 c. finely chopped pecans
1/4 c. light corn syrup
2 T. unsweetened cocoa
1/2 c. bourbon
1/2 c. granulated sugar

Mix all ingredients except granulated sugar. Shape into 1-inch balls. Roll in granulated sugar.

Store in tightly covered container for three days to mellow.

Apple Dapple Cake

Mix:

1-1/2 cups cooking oil
2 cups sugar
3 eggs
1 t. vanilla

Sift and add:

3 cups plain flour (measure before sifting)

1/2 t. salt
1 t. baking soda

Fold in:

3 cups peeled, chopped raw apples

1 cup chopped pecans

Bake in greased tube pan for 1 hour at 350 degrees.

Make sauce topping of:

1 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup milk
1 stick butter

Mix and cook for 3 minutes only. Pour hot sauce over hot cake and let remain in pan for 2 hours. Then remove cake from pan and turn right-side up. The sauce makes this so moist!

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 1 large can chow mein noodles
 1 cup (or more) Spanish peanuts
 Melt morsels, add noodles and peanuts. Drop by spoonful onto waxed paper.

Turtles

1 (12 oz. pkg) caramel morsels
 4 T. milk
 2 c. chopped pecans
 1 (12 oz. pkg) semi-sweet morsels
 1 T. Crisco
 Melt package of caramel morsels. Add 3 or 4 tbsp. milk. Mix well. Add 2 cups chopped nuts. Drop by teaspoon on buttered wax paper or cookie sheet sprayed with Pam. Refrigerate 60 minutes.
 Melt package of semi-sweet morsels and 1 tablespoon Crisco, mix well. Pour by teaspoon on top of caramel.

Roasted Pecan Clusters

3 T. butter or margarine
 3 c. pecan pieces

12- 1 oz. squares of chocolate flavored candy coating
 Melt butter in 15-inch jelly roll pan. Spread pecans evenly in pan. Bake at 300 degrees for 30 min. stirring every 10 min. Place candy coating in top of double boiler: bring water to a boil.
 Reduce heat to low and cook until coating melts. Cool 2 min. Add pecans and stir until coated. Drop by rounded teaspoon on to wax paper. Cool completely.

Cinnamon Squares

1 c. butter (2 sticks)
 1 c. sugar
 2 c. flour
 1 tsp. cinnamon
 1 egg separated
 1 c. chopped pecans
 Cream butter and sugar. Sift flour and cinnamon together & add to butter-sugar mixture.
 Separate the yolk from egg white, set egg white aside. Add egg yolk - mix well. Spread mixture on greased cookie sheet 15" x 10". Brush top with beaten egg white.
 Sprinkle nuts on top. Bake at 350 degree 15 to 20 minutes until slightly brown.
 Remove from oven and cut while hot. These can be kept in the refrigerator or frozen.

Sugar Cookies

1-1/2 c. sifted confectioner's sugar
 1 c. butter
 1 t. vanilla extract
 1 t. almond flavoring
 2-1/2 c. sifted flour
 1 t. baking soda
 1 t. cream of tartar
 Mix sugar & butter, add egg and flavoring: mix until thoroughly blended. Sift dry ingredients together and stir into butter mixture. Refrigerate dough (in rolls) 2 to 3 hours. Heat oven to 375 degrees.
 Form dough into small balls and place on greased baking sheet. Using some type container with small flat bottom press balls flat, about one quarter inch, first dipping container into flour each time. Bake 7 to 8 minutes.
 Cookies may be sprinkled with granulated sugar or iced. Kids love decorating these!

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HABITS OF CATS

by Ted Roberts

Sometimes when a writer looks at a blank piece of paper he sees a blank piece of paper. He gropes for a subject and all he gets is a blank. I usually holler to the wife. "Hey Shirley, anything newsworthy happen to us lately?"

"Oh, your oldest son, Harry, got married, but he's done that before."

Nothing. But lately in the absence of wars in the Congo, new children born in the family, the house burning down, or car wrecks - there is one category of events that always serves up material - our two cats. They are so predictable, so unpredictable.

Take their nighttime habits - and this one could win a prize at the planetary cat show: We're all laying in the bed watching TV. We're in our pajamas, they are nekkid, as we say down here. They like crime shows with a lot of action; explosions, fires, gunfire. Well, when 9:30 rolls around the male sedately, almost priggishly, heads for the door and with a sniff over his shoulder leaves the room. Bear in mind he carries no watch strapped to his leg as he leaves the room. Why? Maybe because once or twice earlier I ran him out at 9:30 and he remembered.

They have another crazy habit even more mysterious. They love to drink water out of the flower bowls. Bowls of clean water on the kitchen floor and these connoisseurs are lapping water

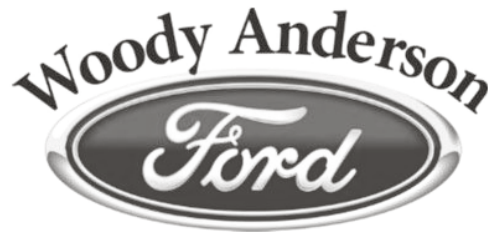
full of fiber, worms and microscopic algae out of the flower bowls. Outside, they also favor mud puddles wherein stray bipeds have relieved themselves. Maybe there are more vitamins in it - maybe we oughta try it. Maybe it's the long hidden remedy to cancer. Ever hear of a cat getting cancer? Or maybe the cure is a diet of mice.

Related to diet is the strange habit of these two free renters. They'll only eat cat food. Hold up a bowl of pate foie gras to their lips and they'll look at you like you're crazy and turn aside. Nothing other than cat food tempts them - not even ice cream.

They really know how to conserve energy. One minute they're sleeping - the next they are streaking across the yard chasing an aggressive grasshopper. They gave up on birds as soon as they caught on to that flying trick.

But maybe their most endearing habit is to jump in any enclosure - like a box. Nothing makes a cat happier than to sit in a box, survey the world and mistakenly think they're safe from any hungry predators. They're wrong, of course, but it's like you locking yourself in your room, hiring a Doberman and hiding under the bed. It makes you feel good.

Well, regardless of my cat's foibles, they're lovable, furry balls of delight. Did I mention they're brother and sister? They're lovable, yet full of the wild.



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It took "Click It or Ticket" to get people to wear their seat belts. I wonder if the current slogan could be "Mask It or Casket."

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My Mother, Earlene Storey

by Rick Storey



My Mother, Earlene Storey, was the hardest-working person I've ever known. She maintained an extraordinary flower garden in her backyard until her 99th year. She would spend many hours each day tending her precious plants, reaping the healthful benefits of laboring in the fresh air and sunshine. She never got acquainted with the word downsize. Mom enjoyed welcoming visitors to her home, sharing extra flower bulbs and advice. She also took impressive arrangements to friends and her Sunday School class.

A couple of years ago, a local TV station did a feature on her working in her garden at age 99. Mom knew the variety of each daylily or rose. A neighbor once said she could plant a stick and it would grow.

Within a group she was typically the quiet one, preferring to listen rather than be the center of attention. If you asked the right question, though, her answer would evoke a colorful anecdote from family lore or her rich, full life in Jackson and

Madison counties. Those stories were much more entertaining to me than the Western movies that ran continuously in the background of her den. Her recollections were always crystal clear.

As an infant Mom had a near-fatal bout of what they called summer complaint. The doctor didn't think Mom would even live, telling my Grandmother Swaim "Mag, you'll never raise that child." Grandmother gave her doses of paregoric and castor oil that kept her alive for the next 100-plus years. Her mother proclaimed: "She's as tough as a pine knot."

Mom was born in 1919 in Jackson County near Scottsboro. She started in humble surroundings in a modest house built by her father Hugh Franklin "Doc" Swaim, a farmer. He was a good carpenter and loved horses. The barn he built still stands. Her Mother, Margaret Carter Swaim, cooked on a wood-burning stove and kept the house plus a 20-year span of children going. Her parents, both born during the Reconstruction era, were hard working and Mom certainly learned from their example. Her folks never owned an automobile and usually travelled by horse-drawn carriage or wagon.

Mom remembered her family always seemed to have visiting company and she had to give up her soft featherbed and take a floor pallet. She recalled her Mother's quilting bees, where the entire main room would be draped in fabric and gossip. She would be amused by the contrast of her father and his friend Mr. Charlie sitting by the fireplace on winter afternoons, one saying something, the other answering maybe 15 minutes later.

Earlene was the youngest of the nine children. As a preschooler Mom learned how to entertain herself. She always said her parents were worn out by the time she arrived. The older ones seemed already grown and out making their way in the world. An older brother named Carter died of Bright's Disease at age 7. She had vague memories of her daddy playing fiddle and the oldest brothers Hugh and Willie having a musical trio that performed at area dances. Typhoid fever hit the family later, taking Willie, her Grandfather Lemuel Carter

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and nearly her oldest sister, Vesta, who we called Aunt Sister.

"Mose, Vickey and I would play football, roll around in old tires and build forts where we threw apples at each other." They had a chicken graveyard where they buried baby chicks in matchboxes, made tiny monuments and performed little funerals. There were lots of live farm animals to make pets of in the country. Her only surviving photo from her childhood shows her and a pet lamb. After it went the way most farm animals go, she would never eat lamb or mutton.

She may have caused a serious injury to her neck jumping from a table to a tire swing and hitting the ground hard. She never told her parents. With her siblings in school Mom spent quite a bit of time with her folks and talking to an elderly couple next door. She also stayed with her Grandmother Carter downtown. She recalled an early memory one day at her Grandmother's when the house started to shake. "I was outside and she thought I was jumping up and down on the porch, as it turned out there had been an earthquake."

Mom's love of gardening began as a preschooler. She was genetically programmed for playing in the soil and instinctively knew how to nurture and grow things. She was hooked, however, when her Mother gave her seed that she successfully grew into vegetables that contributed to the family dinner.

As a preteen she was part of the local onlookers at a famous trial in downtown Scottsboro in 1931. Mom remembered out-of-town visitors and police cars everywhere. It would be more talked about than Charles Lindbergh's stunt flying performance in the Spirit of St. Louis in Scottsboro a couple years earlier.

Mom would happily reflect on those simple days when most people had no electricity or indoor plumbing and went to bed with the chickens. "We did have an icebox, a cylinder gramophone and eventually a radio," she recalled. Her sister's boyfriend paid her a nickel to sing "The Death of Floyd

Collins" and "Ballad of Jesse James."

Mom knew patience, perseverance and the art of listening. She would give most people the benefit of the doubt. If you worked for her in the garden, though, you better do the job right or she would certainly let you know about it. Usually she would be toiling alongside them so she expected them to do as well as her.

One of her sayings was "CAN'T never did a thing."

Mom and I cherished our time together. A few weeks before she passed away, we sat on her back patio and sang a few hymns and "Jesse James." She still knew most of the words, her memory going strong until she couldn't speak.

She made it to age 101. Like her Mom said, tough as a pine knot.

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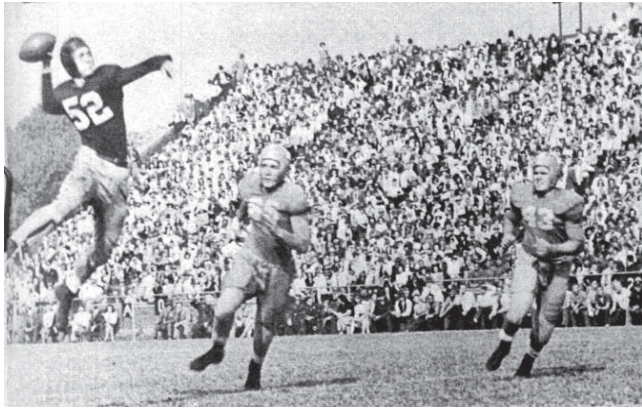


"I'm an introvert. I love being by myself, love being outdoors, love taking a long walk with my dogs and looking at the trees, flowers, the sky."

Audrey Hepburn

Harry Gilmer

by C. Lee Stewart, Sr.



The "Old Huntsville" September issue had an article on p. 34 called "All About Football." It was a very well written composition. However there was one error. Quoting a passage in the article, "One of the great players was Harry Gilmer. Harry was diminutive in size which explains that as a quarterback he had to jump up in the air before he could throw a pass." Harry Gilmer was not as big as they are today. He weighed 165 pounds and he never played quarterback at University of Alabama. He played left halfback in the "T" formation under the great coach Frank Thomas.

It was asserted that Harry said that his famous jump pass gave him complete control of the defense. His greatest game was the 1945 Rose Bowl. He set the all time college pass completion record at that time of 64 percent, and he was named "All American" in 1945.

Tommy, as coach Thomas liked to be called, told his wife Frances "I never thought this would happen. This will be our fourth straight bowl game, Cotton, Orange, Sugar and now the Rose."

Alabama Crimson Tide beat the Southern Cal Trojans 34-14. The score could have been 34-0 or 50-0 but the gratuitous Frank Thomas pulled all of his first and second starting teams out of the game in the last quarter.

Broken legged Nick Terlizzi was on the bench when Tommy called and turned to him and said "Nick would you like to say you have played in the Rose Bowl?" "Yes Sir Coach," the young lineman beamed. "Well, go out there but don't get in mixups and get hurt." Tommy ordered, "Stay out of the way of all plays."

To the amazement of the 83,000 fans, Nick hobbled out on the gridiron. Chuck Clark of the Trojans collected a loose ball on Bama's 28 and ran for a touchdown right through Terlizzi's spot, who was remembering his orders from his coach, to stay out of the way of all plays.

The California sports writers went wild over the Trojans loss. One quote from Dick Friendlich, "San Francisco Chronicle", summed it up. "The beefy but bewildered Trojans were taken in, driven out, whip-

sawed and double timed by a crisp blocking outfit that made every movement with sparkling competence."

Vincent X. Flaherty wrote in the "Los Angeles Examiner". "It was 34 to 14 in June with January weather, and slugging, hard-hitting Southerners might have made it 50-0 if Frank Thomas, the Alabama Coach, had proved himself an exemplary member of the Humane Society by pulling his punches... Southern California had the very dubious distinction of having busted a Rose Bowl record in gaining no more than 41 yards all afternoon."

Harry Gilmer was from East Lake in Birmingham, Alabama. He was drafted by the St. Louis Missouri professional football team to play quarterback. Unfortunately he had bad luck and broke his leg and never made it to the pros.

Some of my sources are: "Coach Tommy of the Crimson Tide", by Naylor Stone, 1954; California Sports Writers; and "The Road to the Top, author unknown.

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It Was Meant to Be

by Ann Gates

Back in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a young boy and girl were growing up in their homes three streets apart from each other. They each were from different kinds of homes and situations. God had a plan. The boy's name was Gary Gates. He was from a large family - 4 brothers and 3 sisters, along with their Mom and Dad. His Dad owned an auto repair business, Claude Gates Garage on O'Shaughnessy Avenue in Huntsville and they were well established in the Five Points area of Huntsville. The girl's name was Ann Hucks. She was adopted by her grandparents and they lived on Ward Avenue. They all attended Fifth Street Baptist Church (which later became Second Baptist, now known as Jackson Way Baptist Church).

In 1960, at 13 years old, that plan began to be set in motion. One starry Tuesday night, through a series of events, Gary and Ann made the decision to "start going steady" (as it was called back then). Even though they were too young to "date", they made the decision to be exclusively each other's boyfriend and girlfriend. That commitment kept them together until the day they married on December 19, 1965, when they were 19 years old. They never broke up; they never dated anyone else and now this year, they will celebrate 55 years of marriage.

Now, for the rest of the story.....

At age 16, Gary surrendered to the ministry, with Ann at his side, committed to serve with him. When they married, at age 19, Gary's college education had begun and seminary was to follow. Two wonderful sons, Shannon and Jeremy, were born and several years later, a beautiful baby daughter Shalynn was adopted.

Now each child is married; Shannon (Teresa), Jeremy (Kristin) and Shalynn (Sylvester) and

there are eight precious grandchildren; Elizabeth (Wes), Emily (Evan), Miranda, Khalil, Khylee, Khelan, Khyrani and Khyrina; and one great-greatdaughter, Morgan.

Gary and Ann have served churches in Alabama, Texas, Georgia and Florida; most recently retiring from Florida, where Gary not only served as Pastor but also served in state mission work as Executive Director of Brevard Baptist Association. Most of Ann's career was in the administration area of the medical field until the last six years of her employment, in which she served as Gary's administrative assistant.

Now, they are living back in Madison County, the place they call "home." They are members of Whitesburg Baptist Church and love spending time with friends and family. Most of all, they still love spending time with each other! Even after all these years...the best place to be, they say, is together! Yes...God had a plan!

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OF MICE AND MONKEY GRASS

by Al Dean



Mice are drawn to our garage. They build nests using any material they can sink their teeth into, including insulation from my car's spark plug wires. They avoid the spark plug wires on the Chairperson for the Preservation of Household Harmony's car, which suggests that the mice that temporarily inhabit our garage possess a greater degree of intelligence than the snakes that treat the Chairperson's monkey grass as their Autonomous Zone.

Our strategy for mouse removal is tried and true: traps baited with succulent, robust, desirable bait; not broccoli, not lettuce, not yogurt and not cheese. Peanut butter! We catch mice until the mice are gone; but we must remain vigilant because every autumn brings another batch.

We have a deck on the back of our house. Around the deck are shrubs, monkey grass and a dogwood tree. In the dogwood tree there is a bird feeder. Sitting on the deck railing is another bird feeder filled with black oiled sun flower seeds because that's what little chipmunks prefer. We do not have any chipmunk traps set up to rid our yard of this relative of the mouse. Why? Because chipmunks are cute and they're outside. If mice stayed outside and didn't eat our cars they might be cute too but being cute is an advantage only when cuteness doesn't infringe upon the Chairperson's quest for household harmony.

We have snakes. The Chairperson doesn't think snakes are cute, even little ones. King snakes hang out in the monkey grass to ambush chipmunks feeding on the black oiled sunflower seeds. The Chairperson is of the opinion that they lie in wait for the express purpose of scaring the bejeebers out of her as she passes by. While not poisonous they're still snakes, and she knows it was a snake that disrupted the garden of harmony and prompted humankind's condemnation to a life of sweat and toil. But there are other grounds for her trepidation.

We were returning from Thursday morning grocery shopping, as I rounded the corner of the

house, I saw a snake slither out of the monkey grass, slide under the clothes dryer vent and slip to safety under the deck. Harmony was rampant, and not wishing to spoil the moment, I thought it wise to keep it from the Chairperson. That afternoon, when she turned on the clothes dryer and it clanged like a baseball bat beating the side of a fifty-five gallon steel drum, harmony vanished. The snake, apparently seeking refuge, had wriggled into the dryer vent and was tumbled to death in the machine. Unconvinced that a snake in a dryer is a rare occurrence, the Chairperson, nevertheless, ordered a new dryer and bravely sallied forth. But the quest for harmony has its share of windmills.

In the waning of summer, she was hosing off the deck and filling the birdbath. I heard a scream. It took a few moments for me to reach the frenzied Chairperson, who at that precise moment was airborne, several feet above the deck. "Snake!" She screamed, "Snake!" "Where?"

She pointed toward a swath of monkey grass. "What color is it?" I asked, attempting to determine the toxicity of the household harmony invader.

"B-B-black!" She shrieked. "Wh-wh-white flecks."

I asked her how long it was. Trampolining across the deck, she shook her head and pointed to the steps on one end and the gas

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grill near the far end trying to tell me the snake was as long as the space between the two. When the force of attraction from earth overcame the power of her leaps - and she was assured that her screams had frightened away the snake. I measured the distance and determined the serpent was twenty-one feet, eight inches long.

Rather than remaining in self-quarantine until winter had driven the snakes underground, she devised a plan. I was away on business; our grandsons had a short break from school. The boys were cute and needed to make a little money, so she hired the two boys to remove the monkey grass. Our son, who once had a landscaping business, could advise them. The Chairperson reckoned as how, because they didn't visit as often as they should, this would provide an opportunity to spend some time with the three of them, eliminate snake habitat, get the shrubs trimmed, and transplant a couple of chrysanthemums.

The boys found digging up monkey grass to be labor intensive. The decision was made to spray it with a toxic elixir that, according to the label: "Kills pesky monkey grass in four hours." The boys applied the monkey grass eliminator at nine o'clock the next morning. At ten o'clock they came into the house and plopped down in the den. The Chairperson found them stretched out watching the World Fishing Network.

"What are you doing?" She asked.

They looked at her with a, what planet are you from expression and said, "We're waiting for the monkey grass to die." After they had washed

their hands and consumed the pile of chocolate chip cookies she had baked for them, she led them outside to trim shrubs and transplant chrysanthemums. The monkey grass didn't die.

Returning home from my business trip it was suggested that perhaps if I just fired up the rototiller and made a couple of swipes through the poison resistant monkey grass, harmony would be restored and life would be good.

The only appropriate response? "Yes, dear."

The rototiller tore into the grass like a mule drawn plow ripping through new ground; however, Mother Nature and the Chairperson remain at an impasse and harmony is precarious.

She still must contend with snakes. Mice still get in her garage. She still has monkey grass. Monkey grass won't die.

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APPRECIATE YOUR POSTAL WORKERS. THEY NEED YOUR LOVE RIGHT NOW.

by Beth Thames, first Published in the Huntsville Times, August 30, 2020



Let's hear it for the postal workers. They're having a hard time right now.

They used to be neighborhood heroes, like firemen who put out a blaze or linemen who climbed utility poles when the power went out. Young children clapped when the mailman went by. My toddler son used to stand next to the window and wave to the mailman, his new best friend. The mailman always waved back.

Back in my own childhood, everybody got mail that included actual letters and catalogs and packages, left in the mailbox once a day, sometimes more. When we moved houses or even cities, somehow the mail followed us, like magic.

"How does it know?" I used to wonder.

The mail was a given. It just appeared like the dawn or the sunset. My mother got her women's magazines and I got letters from my Japanese pen pal in Kyoto and my Aunt Bet-

ty, who always sent letters on that tissue-thin airmail stationery from wherever she was living overseas with my Navy officer uncle. My father got bills and a gardening catalogue. Everybody got a TV Guide, flyers and store ads. The mailbox was always full.

We took the mail for granted, the way you do when you get used to something. We never thought about what mailmen had to put up with, since we were on the receiving end.

Along with freezing rain and scorching heat, mailmen have to deal with lonely people who want to chat, and with mailboxes so crammed full that nothing else can fit in. There are birds' nests where the catalogs go. There are dogs who pursue the carrier, their teeth bared for the bite.

We had such a dog. He was an energetic Sheltie, a

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"They can open everything up next month, but I'm staying in til January to see what happens to you all."

Greg Jeffreys, Athens

dog so happy to be alive that he begged visitors to throw the ball a thousand times, to rub his head until their hands got tired, to let him sit at their feet. He was sweet and trusting to all, except the poor mailman, his sworn enemy. If we left the screen door unlatched, our dog would give chase.

Mailmen are trained for that, as well as for livestock wandering over the road and snakes slithering in the grass. But now they have to deliver during a pandemic, which nobody knows how to do. They get just close enough to hand off the mail to people out on their porches, people fearful of the virus. They sanitize their trucks and their packages and wear a face mask in the oven of an Alabama summer while hurrying to the next house before taking an ice-water break.

In spite of all this, our mailman still nods and says, "Good morning," the way he always does, and gets back into his little white truck to deliver cards and bills and catalogs up and down our street. And now, when the postal service is under attack, I appreciate what he does even more. Mailmen have, after all, been at it for a long time, since the founding of this nation. Once they rode ponies and carried the mail in big, leather saddle bags, and then they walked miles with canvas mail pouches. Now they drive in trucks, the letters organized in neat stacks and folders.

My postman is sometimes a postwoman, taking over the route for a few days. Though she doesn't know our names the way our regular postman does, she knows what to do. One day she extended her arm and placed the mail in my hands with her gloved ones, looking away over her shoulder as she did.

She explained that she took special care with older customers along the route, then said, "No offense, ma'am."

None taken. She's too young to remember the time before UPS and Fed Ex took over package deliveries, when the mailman brought books, Christmas gifts and boxes wrapped in twine. The mailman knew more about his customers than the neighbors did. He still does.

He knows when we get our credit card statements and the dates we'll be out of town. He knows the name of our daughter who lives around the corner

and the candidate we're likely to vote for. We don't know much about him except that he shows up, day after day.

Instead of bashing the postal workers, we should thank them. Their work is necessary and essential. My mailman had a knee replacement and hobbles down the walk to give me the mail because that's his job. He warns me about falling down my steep garden hill, muttering that I could have a nasty fall if I'm not careful. He's part mailman and part older brother.

Our conversations are measured in minutes. He admires my new car and says his wife has one like it. He looks at the sky and comments on the weather. He wishes me a good day and goes on his route, sometimes delivering until after dark.

Today, postal workers are doing more work with fewer people. They're being criticized by politicians and ordinary citizens. At the end of the day, I hope they go home, put their feet up and have a cold drink. Maybe they count the days until retirement. I think I would.

We have a long, wooden bridge from the street to our house. When I hear the mailman's truck, I go outside and walk down the planks. I try to meet him halfway.



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THE THIRD FINAL GOODBYE

by Tommy Towery



“It’s terminal, you know?” the voice said over the phone.

That was the moment when I found out I was about to lose the best friend I’d had since high school. Our friendship had endured almost 50 years. It had withstood graduations, moves, marriages, children, divorces and even wars.

It was a somber moment in my life.

Bob Walker and I met in a Lee Junior High school typing class. In the next few years we had some unforgettable times and exciting memorable road trips. In 1962 Bob and I went with his mother to help out with his sick grandparents in Gulfport, Mississippi. I found the Gulf Coast and Gulfport was vastly different from my hometown of Huntsville, Alabama. To me it seemed like “Sin City” with its all-night coastal bars, pretty cocktail waitresses, slot machines and other gambling devices in smoky back rooms. Bob and I ran around for a couple of days and nights on the coast, doing nothing special, but enjoying the “wild” life of the coastal town.

We saw each other almost every night after we returned. On our high school graduation night we partied until three in the morning.

When I said goodbye to Bob that graduation night, I truly feared that it was a final farewell and I would never see him again. We were young and the world was big. The next morning I saw my childhood days and my hometown disappear in the family car’s rear-view mirror as I left for college.

Five years later the country was deeply engaged in the war in Vietnam. By then Bob was an Army helicopter pilot and I was in Air Force navigator training in California. He visited me on his way to fight in the war. In my 20-year career in the military I never felt the awareness of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse like I did the day Bob left for Vietnam. I took his picture as he was leaving, afraid it might be the last photograph I would ever have of him. With great regard I said what I feared was a final goodbye to Bob for the second time in my life.

That departure was closer to a final goodbye than I had ever imagined. Years later I found out about his Purple Hearts, his Air Medals and the time he was shot down by enemy fire three times in the same day.

We both moved around and lost touch again and



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**“No matter what happens in life,
be good to people. Being good to
people is a wonderful legacy
to leave behind.”**

Taylor Swift

did not see each other until our 25-year high school class reunion. We quickly reverted back to our youthful habits and activities. We cruised the strip, ate at the hamburger joints. We drove to the sites of dilapidated drive-in movies and laughed at sneaking our friends inside by putting them in the car's trunk. For that weekend, we were once again as close to teenagers as we could be and reminded of why we were best friends.

Bob moved to Florida, and we talked and visited as often as we could for almost the next 20 years. It was not until a month before the next scheduled class reunion when I found Bob would not attend because he was undergoing chemotherapy for breast cancer.

Phone calls became more frequent after his cancer scare. One day I got a call from his girlfriend telling me Bob had been in a car wreck and was in the hospital. He had not been hurt bad but a follow up MRI showed his cancer was ac-

tive again and worse - he had a brain tumor. An operation was in vain and he was given six months to live. I swore to myself my last visit would not be to attend his funeral. I got a flight to Florida as soon as he was well enough to have visitors.

I knew Bob had gone through a lot since I had last seen him and I tried to prepare myself for how he might look. I was still shocked when he came to the door to greet me. Bob's full, dark head of hair was gone and he was almost as bald as I was. He had that "old man" baldness look like my own dad had in the last few years of his life.

We were happy to see each other again and I tried hard to forget it might be our last get-together. We visited during the day and that night went to a biker bar in Daytona Beach and shot pool. Our bodies were 60 but our minds and hearts were 17 again.

When we went to say good-

bye I faced him and looked him straight in his eyes. "I'll talk to you next month on your birthday," I told him.

His simple reply of "Okay" was about what I expected. He had never showed much emotion all the years I had known him.

I started to leave and Bob reached out and pulled me close to him in a big bear hug. I hugged him in return and we patted each other's back.

"I love you man!" he said as we embraced. "I love you too man," was my reply. I drove off into the night content with my visit.

As in the previous two times we had said final good-byes, there was no room for tears in this last goodbye to my best friend. But this time I knew it was different. This time I knew it was for real. There would never be a fourth final goodbye.

I was right, because Bob passed away two months later. I still miss him.

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November Comforts

by M.D. Smith, IV



Sit. Relax. Take a slow, deep cleansing breath, and let's think about comforts. You know, things that feel soooo good to you and your body. They make you smile. Circle the ones you like below and "have at it."

- Big bowl of homemade vegetable stew or Brunswick stew.
- A new fluffy kitten, you rub against your face and cuddle in your arms.
- Grandma's feather bed and down comforter at night on a winter's evening.
- Your favorite furry housepet, recently bathed and smelling good, cuddled next to your shoulder as you read a romance novel that's just getting good.
- You and a partner just cuddling under a fleece blanket, settling down with a fresh bowl of popcorn. Only the faint sound of soft music playing in the other room and the occasional pop from the crackling fire you recently lit.
- Four generations of family gathered around for a long Thanksgiving weekend in Grandmother's six-bedroom house. Everyone getting along, hugging and kissing, telling stories and laughing. Holiday smells, the pumpkin candle you remember as a kid – the turkey roasting to a golden brown.
- A hot chocolate with tiny marshmallows with just a squirt of whipped cream on top with a sprinkle of cinnamon as an excellent Nicholas Sparks movie begins on the TV. Cover your feet with a down quilt and rest them on a soft ottoman.
- An old fashioned bed warmer with hot rocks put in your bed to warm the spot in the cold sheets for your cold feet.
- A warm heater to back up near when you first get dressed.
- Prop your feet on a soft ottoman with your favorite glass of wine while you listen to the dreamy ballads of Frank Sinatra or Johnny Mathis.
- Chocolate chip homemade cookies before they are completely cool and are chewy.
- Getting out of bed on a chilly morning and having your big fluffy robe and rabbit fur-lined slippers ready.
- After dinner, someone surprises you from behind and give you an incredible neck and shoulder rub to relax you after a hard day. Got a black-out eye mask to sleep late if you want to?
- Good: A hot tub to warm your blood and to relax from soothing jets of water. Better: Sharing a hot tub with a partner and a back rub while you are relaxing.
- A neighbor surprises you with a homemade Lemon Icebox or Key Lime Pie.
- A hot cup of coffee with all the special fixings as you play a game of checkers with a young grandson. You are going to let him win, but have to put up a struggle first.
- After standing on your feet at your job all day, sinking your feet into the hot wax outfit by the sofa. A gift from your daughter.
- Call an old friend you haven't talked to in months, and tell them you were thinking about them and the fun you had in the old days.
- Get out all your old Christmas Tree ornaments and examine each one with an unforgettable memory. Write them down. Later in the month, decorate the tree, even if you haven't in a few years.

Are you smiling yet? Then what are you waiting for? Christmas?

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FISH: Throw back the first fish you catch, then you'll be lucky the whole day fishing.

- It's bad luck to get married when the fish aren't biting, according to the custom of some locals.

- A fish should always be eaten from the head toward the tail.

- Dream of fish: someone you know is pregnant.

- If you count the number of fish you caught, you will catch no more that day.

- It's bad luck to say the word "pig" while fishing at sea.

LADYBUGS: The bright scarlet ladybug is a luck-bringer, probably because it is traditionally associated by its color with fire. It is a sign of good fortune if one lands on a person's hand or dress. It must, however, be allowed to fly away of its own accord and must not be brushed off. It is permissible to speed it onwards by a gentle puff, and by the recitation of the rhyme which runs,

"Ladybug, ladybug, fly away home.

Your house is on fire and your children are gone."

- The deeper the ladybug's color, the better luck it brings. The number of spots on its back are also important. The more spots, the better the luck!

- If a young girl catches a ladybug and then releases it, the direction in which it flies away will be the direction from which her future husband will come.

SPIDERS: "If you wish to live and thrive, let the spider run alive."

- There are numerous superstitions concerning the humble spider:

- If you see a spider spinning a new web, you will shortly get some new clothes.

- If one drops onto your face or clothes - particularly a tiny "money spider" - then your finances will improve.

- You'll meet a new friend if you run into a web.

- A spider is a repellent against plague when worn around the neck in a walnut shell.

DOGS: Greeks thought dogs could foresee evil.

- Usually superstitions about dogs are about health. My grandmother believed if you have your new born baby licked by a dog, your baby will be a quick healer from injury.

CRICKETS: A cricket is a lucky house spirit that takes its luck away when it leaves.

- A cricket can tell of oncoming rain, death and visits from ex-lovers.



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GROWING UP IN OLD MONROVIA CIRCA 1930-1940

by W.L. "Dub" Hoover



Let me tell you about the place where I was privileged to spend my early years. My family settled on Old Monrovia Road in 1936 as sharecroppers and stayed for six years, moved away for one year, then back for one year. We then moved north to Blake Bottom Road and became farmers with sharecroppers of our own. My parents were still young and needed to progress financially. Now let's go back down to Old Monrovia Road where it intersects with Indian Creek for the rest of this chapter of my life.

This was during the Great Depression. Times were difficult for my parents as well as other grownups, but not so in the wisdom of a four-to-ten year old kid. The Lord pitched in to ease the pain for grown ups and to the delight of us kids. Here is what he did: He planted and cared for an abundance of so called "wild" food-bearing plants. There were many types of plums, blackberries, grapes, cherries, mulberries, persimmons, black walnuts, hickory nuts, scaly bark nuts and apples. He filled the trees with squirrels and the fields with rabbits. He filled Indian Creek with a variety of fish, turtles, crawfish and bullfrogs. He filled the

air with birds, honeybees and butterflies. There were flower blossoms everywhere for honeybees to gather nectar and fly it to beehives, or in our case a hollow tree, which we would latter rob of their honey.

The Lord made all this abundance so it required very little labor. Sounds a lot like another place we've heard about; The Garden of Eden. The only work involved was the harvesting, which the family would do and the preserving, which my Mother would do. What a life for a kid with a great Christian family, worshipping with other Christians at Mount Zion Baptist Church.

Now, to describe the physical or geographic aspects of this vibrant farming community that was Old Monrovia. The farm my family was a part of belonged to Mr. Lawson and his wife Mrs. Wille Wall who are grandparents of Rebecca Wall and Jean Lemley. This was not your average farm. It had a general store to provide the common necessities, a sawmill for making lumber from logs, a gristmill for grinding corn into meal and chicken feed, a wood shop to make Adirondack chairs, hoe handles, farm and household items, a blacksmith shop for forging horseshoes with other iron tools and products.

Before my time there was also a cotton gin on the property. My Dad operated the gristmill, sawmill, and wood shop and sharecropped cotton and corn. Farming was done with mule power. The first chore every morning and the last thing in the evening seven days a week was going to the barn to feed and groom the mules. That too was Dad's job. As I said earlier, life was wonderful for me as a six year old kid. It was a different story for parents of that day, but they toughed it out and provided well for their families. And with absolutely no actual or expected assistance

"Don't let them take your temperature on your forehead as you enter the grocery store, it erases your memory. I went in for toilet paper and came out with two cases of beer."
Jack Drake, Gurley

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from the Government.

Glory Be!

There were two Government "assistance" programs available back then. There was the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). These were not welfare programs. They were work fare. My family did not partake of either.

We were off the electric power grid until about 1939. Mr. Wall, or someone, tapped the waters of Indian Creek by installing a large 20-foot tall water wheel (in the picture), harnessing that energy to power what would now be a Delco Electric System to provide electricity to the mills, shops, store and the farm owner's house. Until TVA brought electricity to the area, we used oil lamps and wood burning stoves.

We got our first refrigerator and learned how to make our own ice. Before, we had to wait for the ice man's truck

to come, loaded with sawdust to keep the blocks of ice from melting. We had a large square plaque hung on our house door displaying four numbers: 25 pounds, 50 pounds, 75 pounds, and 100 pounds. We would turn it so the top number would tell the ice man how much to deliver that day. He could see the number from his truck and only have to make one trip to the house.

Monrovia School and Mount Zion Baptist Church were valued integral parts of this glorious vibrant community. Many of the school teachers were members of Mount Zion, so when we were at school it was a little like being at church. All the churches in the area, both black and white, held their baptismal services in Indian Creek, a main lifeline of the community. These waters also provided a popular swimming hole for the greater Monrovia Community.

When at the age of eight I ac-

knowledged my faith in Christ, I did not walk the aisle of the Church building; I walked the bank of Indian Creek and right into the water where I was baptized by Mt. Zion's Pastor Tom Garrison. He later joined the Army as a Chaplain where several German soldiers surrendered to him along a path.

The most important person in my adult life, Barbara Tipton, is not featured in this story because she did not show up until 1941 at the young age of six. I didn't notice her then, but when she showed up in high school with much more maturity, WOW, did I notice her then! I began trying to get her to notice me. Finally we noticed each other and after that, neither of us seriously dated anyone else.

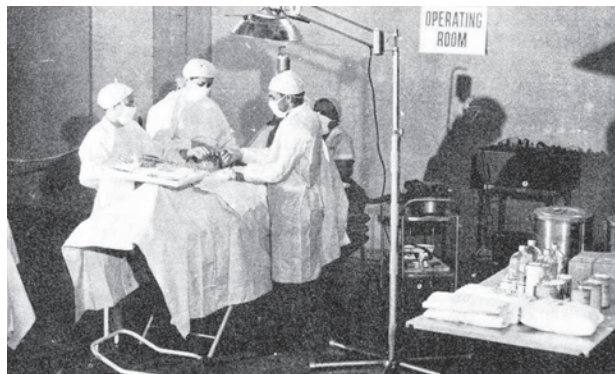
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GALL BLADDERS

By Charlie Lyle



Many years ago in Huntsville there was a doctor who lived during the Depression on through the 60s. The doctor was an honorable and successful man whom many people respected. He was beloved by all of his patients.

The name of this man was Dr. Whitaker.

The doctor was so successful that he owned a hospital called 5th Avenue Hospital, which is now where the Rehab Hospital stands. In later years the name of the street was changed to Governors Drive.

What made the doctor so interesting was the fact that he absolutely detested gall bladders. He disliked them so much that many of his patients believed that he wanted to remove as many as possible. Thus many people called the hospital "The House Built By Gall Bladders."

There are many people to this day who believe that after being examined, were told that their gall bladders needed to be removed.

One day, a lady was at the hospital being checked out. After the lady was examined, she later went in for the consultation. Immediately thereafter, she was told, "Yes, your gall bladder needs to be removed." The lady excitedly replied, "But Dr. Whitaker, you took my gall bladder out a year ago."

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Supernatural Dogs Throughout the World



Dogs have always been credited with the power of sensing supernatural influences and seeing ghosts, spirits, fairies or deities which are invisible to human eyes. In Wales only dogs could see the death-bringing hounds of Annwn; in ancient Greece the dogs were aware when Hecate was at a crossroads foretelling a death.

Dogs are believed to be aware of the presence of ghosts, and their barking, whimpering or howling is often the first warning of supernatural occurrences.

There are many instances of black dog ghosts which are said to haunt lanes, bridges, crossroads, footpaths and gates, particularly in Suffolk, Norfolk and the Isle of Man. Some black dogs are said to be unquiet ghosts of wicked souls, but others are friendly guides and protectors to travelers. A four-legged apparition of northern England could also appear as a pig or a goat, but was most commonly a huge black dog with large eyes and feet which left no prints.

Packs of ghostly hounds have also been recorded all over Britain, often heard howling as they pass by on stormy nights rather than actually being seen. These hounds generally foretell death, or at least disaster, if they are seen and the proper action is to drop face-down onto the ground to avoid spotting them.

A howling dog outside the house of a sick person was once thought to be an omen that they would die, especially if the dog was driven away and returned to howl again.

A dog which gives a single howl, or three howls, and then falls silent is said to be marking a death that has just occurred nearby.

Dogs were feared as possible carriers of rabies. Sometimes even a healthy dog was killed if it had bitten someone,

because of the belief that if the dog later developed rabies, even many years afterwards, the bitten person would also be afflicted. Remedies for the bite of a mad dog often included the patient being forced to eat the hair of the dog in question.

Dogs were also used to cure other illnesses. One old charm which was often used for children's illnesses was to take some of the patient's hairs and feed them to a dog in between slices of bread and butter; the ailment was believed to

transfer to the animal, healing the patient.

In Scotland, a strange dog coming to the house means a new friendship; in England, to meet a spotted or black and white dog on your way to a business appointment is lucky.

Three white dogs seen together are considered lucky in some areas; black dogs are generally considered unlucky, especially if they cross a traveler's path or follow someone and refuse to be driven away.

Fishermen traditionally regard dogs as unlucky and will not take one out in a boat, or mention the word "dog" whilst at sea.

The sight of a dog eating grass, rolling on the floor or scratching itself excessively are all said to be omens that rain is imminent.

A howling dog at night means bad luck or somebody close to you will be very sick or worse.

According to Matt Greening, a dog with seven toes can see ghosts.

In Australia, if one dreams of a white dog wandering through their home, a past spirit who lives in the house is trying to make contact.

In South American countries dogs wander at will, many having no owners but everyone feeds them and helps take care of them, they are said to be revered and good luck to the person who offers food to the dog.

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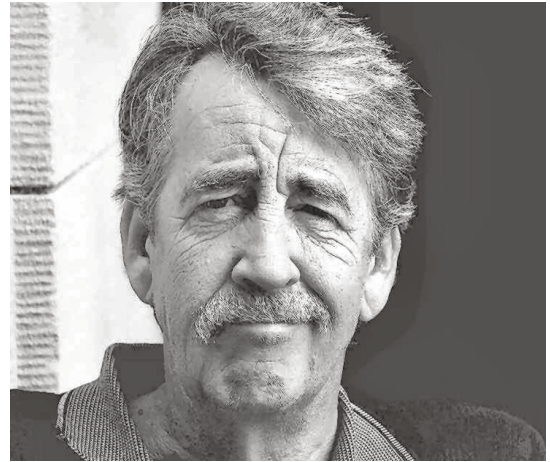
An Excerpt from

“The Way It Was, The Other Side of Huntsville’s History”

A book of local stories by Tom Carney and other local authors

Alabama Birdman

William (Will) Lafayette Quick



An amazing part of Huntsville’s early history can be found inscribed on a brass plaque at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Oddly enough, though millions of people a year see and read the plaque, few people in Madison County know the facts.

The inscription tells the story of how the first airplane flight in Alabama (and possibly the world’s first monoplane) took off from a farmer’s pasture in Madison County around 1909. This flight signalled the real beginning of the aviation industry as we know it today.

William (Will) Lafayette Quick was born near Shiloh, Tennessee, in 1859 and later moved his family to a small community outside present-day New Market which became known as Quick’s Mill. An industrious man, he set up a grist mill, blacksmith’s forge, sawmill and machine shop in the late 1800s and began to dream of flying.

Quick had begun talking of what he called aerial navigation before the turn of the century. Although he had never heard of anyone trying to fly before, he decided to attempt to build a flying machine.

He was convinced by his study of the birds, bats, insects, and other flying creatures that man-made flight was possible. Although Quick had no formal education, he had the vision, skill and drive needed to fabricate a machine that would fly. He was adept in carpentry and had a thorough knowledge of machinery and propulsion.

In around 1900, Quick began what would become an eight year design and construction project. With meticulous attention to detail, he built his first prototype of a monoplane, then chose his son William to fly the plane.

The flight lasted for only a few seconds. William achieved an altitude of a few feet, but then ran out of pasture. Unfortunately, while trying to turn the monoplane, he clipped the ground with a wing. The wing was damaged, the propeller broken and the landing gear torn off, but the

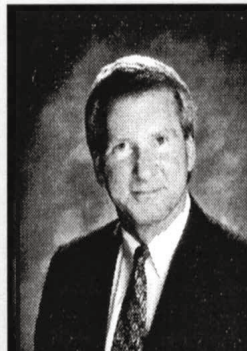
plane remained mostly intact.

Quick took the plane back to his shop and there it stayed for some 60 years, gathering cobwebs, forgotten by family and friends alike.

That event marked the beginning of the Quick family’s career in aviation. Eight of Quick’s children became pilots. Some were barnstormers and others were pioneers of the crop dusting industry.

In 1970, the Experimental Aircraft Club discovered the remnants of the dilapidated monoplane in Will’s old shop. After the club obtained the consent of the family, the plane was restored to its original condition with almost all original parts. It is now on public display at the Huntsville Space and Rocket Museum. Although the flight lasted only a few seconds, it was a major accomplishment in aviation, and in Huntsville history.

“Flatulence: The emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller.”



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My Comfort Zones

by Barry Key

With the world turned upside down, and I am more or less self-quarantined, I tend to rely more and more on comfort zones to pass the time of day/week/month. As a result of being housebound by the virus, I have become a creature of habit. When I wake in the morning, first thing I do is turn on the TV and coffee pot. While the coffee is brewing I do my personal hygienics. Then I lay back in my recliner, cover up with my Alabama throw, sip on my first cup of coffee and for a short period of time, forget about COVID19, California burning, the major city riots and the floods in Texas. I think the smell and taste of the coffee sends me into a sleepy state of euphoria.

If the weather is mild, Judy and I will sit on our screened porch and watch the local news while eating breakfast and drinking our second cup of Java. In October (having breakfast on the porch) the air has a little nip, but watching a beautiful sunrise in the clear, blue October sky blots out any unpleasant apprehension of feeling the chilled air.

If I do become chilled, I will go into the den and back up to the fireplace. There is a no more relaxing feeling than standing in front of a warm fire as it heats up the back of your pant legs and shirt. Within a couple of minutes my eyelids begin to sag, a couple of yawns, then I'm back in the recliner under my Alabama throw dreaming that Alabama just defeated Auburn for the national championship.

When Judy and I get "cabin fever" we go for a drive into the mountains of northeast Madison and north Jackson Counties. If the autumn leaves have changed, the red, yellow and orange colors rival those that you experience in the Smoky Mountains. The Flint and Paint Rock Rivers originate in these mountains and have a beautiful, soothing sound as they flow over boulders headed to the mighty Tennessee. There is nothing more calming than sitting on the river bank with your feet dangling in the water pitching pebbles at the colorful fall leaves as they float by. Sharing a small picnic lunch adds sentimental atmosphere to the ambience of the surroundings.

Great exercise and another escape of the virus world is the hiking trail that runs around the south side of Bishop Mountain, from Guntersville Dam to Honeycomb Campground. The trail runs along the lake edge as it goes

though Hambrick and Pumpkin Hollows and along bluffs that overlook the Tennessee River. Wander off the trail and you will find evidence of hillbilly entrepreneurship. There are cliffs, caves and an old cemetery and home places that time has forgotten. As you walk the trail look for various kinds of animal life: squirrels, rabbits, geese, ducks, beaver, mink, otter, turkey, deer and if real lucky, grizzly bear.

Judy and I love to travel throughout the U.S. and try to take three or four trips each year. This past year has been very disappointing, but we have found that if we look, there is adventure right in our own back yard.

By the way, I was just kidding about the grizzly bear.

"He who laughs last didn't get it in the first place."

Rodney Dangerfield

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A Leading Lady of North Alabama

By Marjorie Ann Reeves



Virginia Carolina Tunstall was born during 1825 in Nash County, North Carolina, being the only child of Anne Arrington and Dr. Peyton Randolph Tunstall. Her name came from the two states of her parents' birth. At the age of three, she lost her mother then at six years old, her father sent her to stay with her mother's sister in Tuscaloosa, which was the capital of Alabama at that time. Her aunt's husband was Henry Collier who was a young lawyer at the time and later became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Alabama. This began her attachment to the state of Alabama.

She lived with them until her aunt became ill then she was sent to her mother's brother, Alfred Battle's plantation to live for several years. Turning twelve the family moved to Tuscaloosa where her primary education began. Her father's brother, Thomas B. Tunstall who became Secretary of State of Alabama, also took part in her education, teaching her poetry, music, letters, philosophy and politics. He instilled in her pride of family by teaching her the heritage of her family name by reading Scott's tribute to Brian Tunstall, a knight, and told stories of Sir Cuthbert Tunstall, Knight of the Garter. Her father and his brother Thomas took her to plays and balls. When she completed her studies in Tuscaloosa she was sent to the Female Academy in Nashville.

Virginia met her future husband, Clement Claiborne Clay, Jr. before she left Tuscaloosa and when she returned. Clay Jr. worked for his father who was the Governor of Alabama, Clement Clay, Sr. Because

her family was so involved in politics, she and Clay Jr. ran into each other often becoming romantically involved over time. She and Clay Jr. were married at her Uncle Henry Collier's home with many members of the legislature attending on February 1, 1843. Afterwards they moved to Huntsville to live in the "Clay Castle" with the Clay family. During the 1853 election, Virginia campaigned with her husband when he ran for Senator and won. Soon they were living in Washington where Virginia became the Alabama Archives belle of the ball in demand at social events. She spent her life with men in charge of the affairs of this country being close to President Pierce and President Buchanan. During this time, she and her husband became close friends with Jefferson Davis and his wife Varina.

Sadly the states' politicians escalated their disputes splitting the country. When the states began seceding, the Southern politicians left Washington to go back to their home state. Clay Jr. resigned giving a beautiful speech to the Senate and left for Alabama. When the Confederacy organized, Clay Jr. ran for Senate in the Confederacy and they moved to Montgomery then Richmond where Virginia continued to be the belle of the balls. She knew and understood the language of politics and was able to communicate with all the leaders and their wives. She supported her husband's work and the South. After service in the Senate for one term, he was sent to Canada by President Davis. Virginia went back to Huntsville visiting family and friends in other parts of the South as well. When Huntsville was captured by the Yankees in 1862 she was a refugee for the rest of the war.

After General Lee surrendered to General Grant, Clay Jr. along with Virginia surrendered to the Federal soldiers in Georgia where from there they were sent to Fort Monroe along with the Davis family. Virginia and Varina were released but their husbands were held prisoners without trial. Being so well known in Washington, she did not hesitate to call on politicians

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to get her husband released. She would call on anyone whom she thought could help with the release. She kept asking President Johnson not to allow Clay Jr. or Davis to be tried in a military court for she was very afraid they would not receive a fair trial and be hung as others had experienced. After a year of campaigning Clay Jr. was released but Davis continued to be held.

Having nothing left after the war, Virginia borrowed money for material to have a new dress made to receive her husband from Fort Monroe. Clay Jr came back in grave health and while nursing him she continued to work on getting Mr. Davis released. Clay Jr. was able to petition the government to get some property back and they moved out to their home in Gurley, Alabama, called Wildwood. Mr. Davis was so grateful for the Clay's work in getting his release that he arrived at their home late at night in a storm to thank them. "I'll never forget the rejoicing that went on when the Clays saw Davis," stated a Confederate Veteran that led Mr. Davis to Wildwood.

Virginia's husband died January 3, 1882. As a widow, she took two nieces on a trip around Europe. On November 29, 1887 she wed Judge David Clopton. The announcement in a newspaper Huntsville Independent stated "Marriage of a Distinguished Gentleman to a Brilliant and Gifted Lady," tells of the wedding at the Church of the Nativity of the Hon. David Clopton of Montgomery to Mrs. Clement C. Clay of Wildwood, Madison County. Judge Clopton's family and the Clays were friends in Washington in earlier days. They were married five years before David Clopton passed away in 1892.

Over the years, Virginia attended Confederate Veterans gatherings, being acknowl-

edged with standing ovations. Often the veterans would stand in line to shake her hand. She was much loved by everyone she met because she was always a gracious lady and extremely entertaining. She served as a Huntsville and Gurley community leader. In her seventies, she began working on her book, "Belle of the Fifties" with Ms. Ada Sterling. Virginia was a suffragist long before it was organized into a national movement. She was president of the Alabama Equal Rights Association for four years from 1896. At 91 years old, she delivered the welcoming speech as past President to the Equal Suffrage Association of Alabama meeting in Huntsville in 1914. Virginia was an organizer of "Ladies Memorial Society" which joined with the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1898.

At a May meeting of 1905, there was a motion made to change the name of the chapter to Virginia Clay-Clopton which was chartered in 1907. The chapter contributed to students, Confederate Veterans, knitted sweaters for Madison County soldiers and served their community in any way the ladies could. In October of 2020, the Virginia Clay-Clopton chapter will celebrate its 113 year anniversary of serving its community.

Katherine Glover, Atlanta Journal reporter, wrote "She had a remarkable vividness

in her choice of words, picturesque that brings an event before one and her quick expressive gestures that greatly heighten the effect." Virginia was described as: she never, ever gave into defeat. She responded with intelligence, good judgement, faith, flexibility, creativity and a powerful will to live a good life while helping others less fortunate than herself. She was known as an unusual conversationalist endowed with natural wit.

According to Edward Betts she was the most brilliant and distinguished woman in the whole South during her time.

Ada Sterling said, "I have come upon no record of any other woman of her time who has filled so prominent a place politically or whose belleship has been so long sustained."

Everywhere she went she was well-honored, she was a leader in society to help others. She passed away at her closest friend Mrs. Milton Humes' home in Huntsville on January 23, 1915.

"My young grandson called me and asked me how old I was, it was my birthday. I told him I was 80 years old.

He was quiet for a moment, then he asked, 'Did you start at 1?'"

Pam Rice, Grandma



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Army Planes Lose Their Way

by Tom Carney

Heavy storms on the night of March 15, 1938 almost caused a major tragedy at Huntsville's new airport.

The airport, located on Whitesburg Drive, was in reality nothing more than a meadow with a wind sock and a small office. With no lighting, it was woefully inadequate to meet any type of a night time emergency.

The first sign of impending danger came as Huntsville's citizens began to hear the drone of airplanes circling overhead, searching for a place to land. With no lights, any attempt at landing would result in a catastrophe.

The group of planes, flying a training mission, had been caught by a pulverizing rainstorm and were miles off their course, when they were drawn to Huntsville by a huge electric arrow atop the Russel Erskine Hotel, and the lights of the city.

The roar of their planes brought alarm from the citizenry.

At least one family thought a tornado was coming and took refuge in the basement of their home, staying there until a radio announcer's voice informed them otherwise.

Quick thinking by the two state highway patrolmen stationed here played a major part in the safe landing!

Patrolmen S.T. Barrett and Franklin Moore heard the roar of motors, and, looking aloft, saw the cloud-laden sky filled with the circling planes.

Hastening to the local radio station, they had an appeal broadcast for citizens to drive swiftly to the unlighted landing field and turn their automobile lights onto the broad open expanse, which was little more than a pasture.

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dashed to the field that night to help break the darkness, and to aid the fliers in their precarious attempts to land.

The Army birdmen, one by one, commenced to land while breathless citizens looked on. The first plane taxied back up the field late that evening.

Finally, after two very tense hours, the last plane landed. It was this pilot's escape that provided the biggest suspense of the entire event. Just before touching earth, the ship was caught by a strong gust of wind. It whirled completely about, but the pilot kept his mind alert and settled to safety. He dropped a flare before circling to come in.

"The boys did something proud," said their commander, Captain D.M. Allison. "But it certainly was a great relief to see the last ship land and start back up the field—right side up."

Immediately after the planes had landed, Capt. Allison was surrounded by Huntsvillians offering assistance.

The Army fliers spent the night at the Russel Erskine Hotel, having experienced what could have been a tragic landing, but for Huntsville's speedy answer to a distress situation.

Throughout the dark hours, multitudes of spectators visited the field. Still more suspense came during a heavy rain storm, accompanied by thunder, lightning and gale-force wind. Again, quick thinking by concerned citizens saved the day when the winds threatened to wreck the fragile aircraft.

Capt. Allison was liberal in his praise of the cooperation given the Birdmen by Huntsvillians.

"On behalf of myself and my men, I want to express our heartfelt appreciation for the quick response and the splendid cooperation we have received all the way through."

The aviators, already behind schedule, were forced to depart Huntsville early the following morning, amidst the well wishes of an admiring population.

In 1972, one of the pilots returned to Huntsville on a visit to the Space and Rocket Museum. While here, he toured the site of the old airport and reminisced about the arrow on top of the Russel Erskine Hotel that had guided him to safety.

"Thank God for radios and Tin Lizzies," he was quoted as saying. "They saved a lot of lives that night."

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Rev. John Henry Drake (1827-1888) Circuit Riding Preacher

by William Sibley

John Henry Drake was the son of Elijah Drake and the grandson of Captain John Drake, an officer in the American Revolutionary War.

After uniting with Big Cove's Mt. Pleasant Cumberland Presbyterian Church, John Henry enrolled in Cumberland University, studying for the ministry. After completing his ministerial studies, John Henry returned to Big Cove and preached at his home church and established the private Drake School.

He officiated at countless funerals and weddings, including the 1878 wedding of my paternal grandparents, John William Sibley and Anna Milligan Miller.

The people of Big Cove loved John Henry and honored him by calling him "Parson Drake." Parson Drake married (1) Nancy Worthem and (2) Mary Ann Anderson. He was the father of ten children, and several of his descendants were ministers and educators. Grandsons Burns Drake and Lewis Drake were Presbyterian ministers.

Great-grandson and great-granddaughter (siblings) Burns Thomas Drake was a long-time principal of Grissom High School. Tom's sister, Dr. Mary Frances Drake, was a professor at the University of Tennessee.

Parson Drake's son, James King Drake, served on the Madison County Board of Education for 15 years. Parson Drake's brother, Albert Wade Neiland Drake, had three gen-

erations of his family to serve as pastors of the Big Cove Free Holiness Church. Those pastors were the Revs. Emmett Neely Drake, his son; Edward Mitchell Drake and Mitchell's son, Edward Oakley Drake.

As a circuit-riding preacher, Parson Drake found it necessary to spend a night or two at an elder's home because of flooded creeks, making travel impossible. Also there was the fear of attacks by wild animals and rabid dogs.

Each Sunday Parson Drake delivered at least two different sermons at two different churches - one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Those churches would not have preaching services the following Sunday, but Parson Drake would preach at other churches. He preached in Madison, Jackson and Marshall Counties.

It was a sad day on March 31, 1888 when Parson Drake died at the age of 61, of pneumonia brought on by very cold weather when the minister was riding his beloved horse "Post-boy" home from church.

Parson Drake's son, James King Drake, had a "bugle-like"

musical instrument which he blew on happy and sad occasions. Mr. Drake's son, Herman served in WWI and son, Marvin, served in WWII. My mother remembered hearing the loud, chilling, but happy sounds of Mr. Drake's bugle, which meant that his sons would be coming home.

Also, my father, Romie Sibley, a soldier in WWI, would be coming home. Mr. Drake probably blew his bugle announcing his father's death.

The era of the circuit-riding preachers was a good time for religion in the United States. When I was a young man watching television on a Sunday night, I saw a very clever former circuit-riding Baptist preacher who was about 100 years old and had been preaching for more than 80 years.

He told about a time when frigid weather made it necessary to spend a night at a deacon's home. The deacon had him sleep upstairs, far from the downstairs heater; and told him that it was not healthy to sleep close to the "far" (fire).

The "good old deacon," however, did sleep close to the fire.



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Huntsville in 1911

* It is a great pity that the Hotel Monte Sano will not be a reality this summer. Our people should come together and help complete the car line to Monte Sano, that being one of the necessary adjuncts to Huntsville's future success.

* R. Lee Penney, aged 46 years, died yesterday at 1:50 o'clock at his home on Madison Street after a short illness with a complication of diseases. He was buried this afternoon, the funeral having been conducted from the residence at 2 o'clock by Rev. H. E. Rice, assisted by Rev. R. S. Gavin and interment was made in Maple Hill Cemetery. A widow and three children, Misses Julia Mae and Josephine and one son, Richard, survive. Following were the pallbearers: Lee Ford, George Wilson, Will Macon Strong, T. W. Jones, Frank Power, Dr. Bushong, S. R. Butler and W. E. Pettus.

* Mr. Theo. Hereford, Deputy Sheriff, had a very exciting race last night after a man who stole a cow in Madison some time ago. He had the good luck to capture his man about 4 o'clock in the morning after running after him all night.

* For sale - a handsome eight foot walnut store wall case - phone 208 or see Edwin Hall.

* An argument for the good health of Huntsville speaks for itself in the little fact about the old negro who had lived here 106 years. During all that time he had not lost more than a year's time from actual labor.

* The flooding on Clinton Street and Randolph seem to be getting worse. Our city people are trying to see if drainage is blocked. Several homes have reported basement flooding.

* Next time you drive into town, you'll be wanting during your stay a real good drink. Something to quench your thirst. Drink Coca-Cola. No matter how thirsty you are, or how tired you are or how particular you are, you'll like Coca-Cola because it hits that dry spot - relieves fatigue and tickles the palate all the way down. Delicious - refreshing - wholesome.



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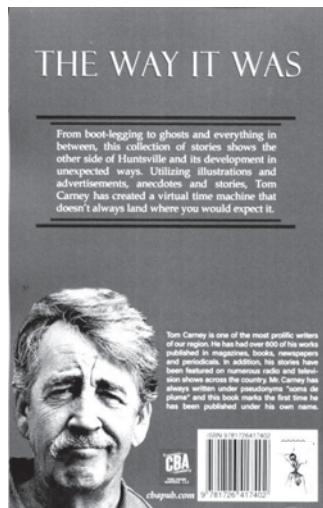
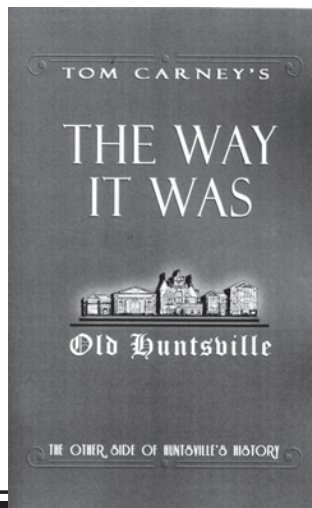
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When life was simple...



This 1875 Photo is taken from the bluff at West Side Square downtown Huntsville. There had been days of heavy rain and the Big Spring had flooded most of the town at that time. Remember back in those days, anything out of central Huntsville was considered "out of town."

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