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# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

## A Family Saga



**Also in this issue:** Madison County Coliseum; Growing Up in Weatherly Spring; Hot Time in the City; The Green Valley Store; Truck on Fire; an Old Cook's Secrets; Handling Cat Aggression; Pilot Club Recipes and much much more!

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*Domie Lewter*  
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# A Family Saga

by Margaret Anne Goldsmith  
Photos by Mike Maples



Hi, my name is "Fuzzy," and my sister's name is "Warm." We were born in a clay flowerpot filled with English Ivy on the fire escape of the three-story I. Schiffman Building (built in 1845) in downtown Huntsville, Alabama. The building faces the Courthouse, a tall new building surrounded by lovely older buildings that were built over a hundred years ago. Across the

street from the Courthouse is the Greek Revival First National Bank Building and down the hill is a limestone spring called The Big Spring.

A clay pot filled with ivy on the I. Schiffman Building fire escape was a perfect place for our parents to build their nest and for Sister and me to be born. Mom and Dad had a bird's eye view of the Courthouse Square where they could watch the hustle and bustle of downtown Huntsville. Early in the morning the bells would chime for morning prayers at the Church of Nativity across the street and at eight o'clock the town clock would strike. In the evening the bells at Nativity chimed again along with the First Methodist Church bells.

Sister and I liked to talk about how Mom and Dad got their names. Mom is a very modern bird. When she and Dad became sweethearts, she kept her own name, the name her mother and father had given her, "Love." Dad, whose name is "Dove," and Mom joined their names to become "The Love Doves."

They were born a year ago on the banks of the Flint River, 12 miles from Huntsville, and 10 miles from where the Flint flows into the Tennessee River. The river is wild and beautiful at that location. The crops growing in the fields struggle because the land is low, and the river overflows in the winter and spring and often damages

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the corn or soybeans the farmer plants.

Mom and Dad were born to different families on the branches of a large sycamore tree on the banks of the Flint River where great blue herons often nest on neighboring branches. The herons are territorial, but Mom and Dad's parents were friendly and nested peacefully nearby.

Our parents were born during the springtime when violets and bluebells cover the banks of the river along with spring beauties. There were also yellow buttercups in the fields and in the woods the trees were budding.

About fourteen days after their mothers laid eggs, they hatched. Mom and Dad grew big very quickly. After they fledged, which means they started flying, they met each other, since their parents nested on the same sycamore tree. They played together all summer long and fall. At night they listened to the frogs chirp and owls hoot. During the days they listened to birds that live on the banks of the river. They ate seeds and sometimes they ate corn the farmers left when they harvested the crops and tiny insects that live in the soil. Mom and Dad had a wonderful childhood living on the banks of the river.

When summer turned to fall, the leaves changed color to red and gold. Fall was cool with cloudless days and blue skies. During the winter it was cold and sometimes it snowed. As the winter continued Mom and Dad became sweethearts and in February, they decided to become a couple. They took the same name as Dad's parents, "The Love Doves."

They knew by instinct that they needed to find a nice place to build a nest. They decided they were city birds, not country birds, even though they had enjoyed growing up on the

banks of the river. They were adventurous and wanted to live downtown.

One day they decided to leave home and said goodbye to their parents and friends in the way that birds say goodbye, fluttering around each other. Then they flew away, following the river north, then flying over Monte Sano Mountain all the way to downtown Huntsville. The first building they saw was the Courthouse. Next, they saw the Big Spring and flew down to take a dip in the cool water.

As they continued their exploration of downtown Huntsville, they spotted a fire escape landing on the I. Schiffman Building and a big clay pot filled with green ivy. Dad flew over to the pot and scratched around in the soil. He called to Mom to join him and the two decided that the clay pot would be a good place to build their nest. For the next week they built a nest in the ivy filled pot. The ivy was soft so that they did not need to add many twigs to build their nest.

Mom settled into her nest

and waited to lay her eggs. My egg was the first to be laid and several days later Sister's egg was laid. Mom nestled close to our eggs to keep them warm. Dad also sat on our eggs. He would sit on our eggs during the day and Mom would sit at night so that they could both fly away and look for food. Mom would return in the late afternoon about four o'clock and change places with Dad and sit on our eggs all night. In the morning about seven o'clock. Dad would return from having foraged for food and water all night and changed places with Mom.

They continued their routine for about fourteen days. Sister and I were impressed with their excellent parenting.

Soon after they built their nest the weather changed. Spring came late and in March it rained continually with hardly any sunshine; it was cold and windy. The strong winds almost blew Mom and Dad off their nest, but they remained and kept us warm. They shielded us with their bodies while the rain came down and rolled



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off their wings. They never left us alone. When they changed places, they did so quickly and our eggs did not get cold.

When I had lived in my shell for almost two weeks, I had grown big. I started to stretch and when I did my shell cracked and I could hear a little pecking noise above me. It was Mom, clearing away the shell to help me get out. It was in the late afternoon and Dad was there too because they had just changed positions. Both were present to see me come out of my shell. They named me "Fuzzy." Two days later Sister came out of her shell and Mom and Dad named her "Warm." They told us later that we made them feel warm and fuzzy and that is why they gave us our names, "Warm" and "Fuzzy."

When we were tiny chicks, we were covered with fine down and our eyes were still closed. We were so hungry that all we wanted was for Mom and Dad to return in the morning and afternoon to feed us. They fed us crop milk which is predigested food. Mom and Dad would eat and then partially digest their food. Later they would regurgitate it and bring it up into a little crop in their necks beneath their beaks and hold it there.

When they returned to feed us, they would lean down into the nest, and we would put our beaks into their beaks and drink the crop milk. It was warm and kept us full. After we ate, we would feel sleepy and go back to sleep. During our first days we just ate and slept and stayed warm under Mom or Dad as the rain continued. While we were nesting it began to get warm.


The days grew longer, and the daffodils and tulips bloomed. We grew bigger quickly and a week after we hatched, we opened our eyes and were able to stand up in our nest. Then Mom and Dad

did not have to reach under their wings to feed us, we could stand up and feed directly from their beaks.

Our feathers began to grow and sometimes we would flap our wings and move around in the nest. At first Mom and Dad did not leave us alone. After about ten days, they would leave us for a short period of time. They also began to bring us insects to eat which we ate because we were so hungry.

One day Mom and Dad seemed to be gone for a much longer time. I moved out of the pot to the edge of the landing and looked down. I did not know what was below or above and felt a little lump in my throat. I was afraid and moved away from the ledge and told Sister about what I had seen. We wondered what was going to happen next. Mom and Dad were changing their routine.


The next day they came back more often but briefly and when they did, they would give us one insect to eat, but we were still hungry. We got mad at them. Sister and I would peck at their breast and



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their throats. Dad just flew off when we pecked at him. Mom stayed and moved away trying to ignore us and Sister would try to snuggle under her. Sister always was a mama's girl. I am a big boy and tried to be brave. Mom kept moving away from Sister and then she flew away.

It was late in the afternoon; the shadows grew longer, and Sister and I were hungry. I decided that the next time Mom and Dad came and flew away I was going to try my wings and fly after them. I told Sister who said that she was scared. However, she promised that if I went first, she would follow me. The next time Dad flew back Mama flew back too. They looked at us but did not feed us at all and then they flew away. I moved over to the ledge, flapped my wings, and flew after them. It had been just two weeks since I had hatched. I could not believe that I was flying. It felt wonderful. Sister did not want to be left behind. She held her breath and flapped her wings and flew right behind me.

We first flew down to the branches of the oak tree below the fire escape and rested for a while. Mom and Dad flew back and told us how well we had flown. Then we flew to the branches of the crape myrtle trees surrounding the Courthouse and Mom and Dad made nice cooing sounds. The next day we flew down to the Big Spring where we saw other birds including ducks and geese and other doves. We played in the Spring and Mom and Dad showed us how to take birdbaths and splatter ourselves with the cool water. They showed us how to feed ourselves and how to find seeds and insects that they liked to eat. We began to eat like they ate. For several weeks we lived with them at the Big Spring and learned to do what they did.

It was a bright and sunny day when Mom and Dad flew over to us, and we knew they were going to leave. They told us that it was time for them to make another nest and have more baby chicks. They assured us that we could take care of ourselves at the Big Spring with all the other birds that had become our new friends. They fluttered against us, and we knew it was their way of

telling us goodbye, and they flew off. We watched them fly away further and further until they were out of sight.

I looked over at Sister, but Sister was not there, and I was all alone. Then I looked down the spring branch and there she was playing with a little brown dove with a purple spot on the top of his head like Dad's. They were chasing after each other and cooing. The little brown dove would fly up high, flap his wings and then sore down to impress Sister. He was courting her. I called to her, but she just ignored me. I knew she had found a very special friend and that they might become sweethearts.

At first, I felt very lonely with Mom and Dad gone and Sister ignoring me. I looked around and under one of the dogwood trees I saw a beautiful little girl dove. I hopped over to her and bowed like Mom had taught me to do if I wanted to impress a young female dove. I introduced myself and asked her what her name was. She told me that her name was "Hugs," because her parents liked to hug her. I liked Hugs and we played together the rest of the spring.



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***John Glenn, Astronaut***

In the evening we would roost next to each other either on the limestone bluff above the Big Spring or on the back of the Little Lion of Big Spring Park. If the skate boarders had gone home and it was quiet, we always roosted on the Little Lion; it was our favorite place to roost. The summer passed and we became sweethearts.

We knew that one day we would fly away and make nests of our own. We agreed that our first chicks would be named "Kisses and "Snuggles" because we like to peck each other's beaks and snuggle together when we roosted at night.

One day during early winter after the first snow, we decided to leave and fly away to look for a new home. We flew over Monte Sano Mountain and then followed the Flint River south to arrive at the same tall sycamore tree where my grandparents had once lived. We decided to make the tree our home. Having enjoyed city life, we wanted to experience life in the country. We both agreed that the tall sycamore tree on the banks of the Flint River was a perfect place to build our nest.

Thank you. Mom and Dad, "You gave us wings to fly."  
Love, Warm and Fuzzy

*What the Doves taught me:*

1. They shared responsibility. (Incidentally, doves are monogamous.)

2. They protected their offspring no matter what. I was amazed that they remained on their eggs when March became cold, rainy, and windy, rather than seek shelter themselves.

3. They provided food and shelter and showed tough love, when necessary, even though it meant withholding food.

4. They took the chicks' abuse, pecking at their breast and throats when they withheld food when it was in the best interest of the chicks.

5. Although I did not follow the Love Doves to the Big Spring, it is their habit to remain with their young long enough to teach them what they need to know to survive and have families.

6. They knew when to leave and build another nest, etc. A pair normally builds 6 nests a season, which is necessary to keep the population stable.

Good parenting habits for offspring includes a stable family, sharing responsibility, providing proper nutrition and protection, exhibiting tough love when necessary, sharing wisdom in preparation for the outside world and at the proper time - "Giving them wings to fly."

Families are families whether they're human or dove. Maybe we're not so different after all.

*Editors Note: This story was written by Margaret Anne as a children's story, but certainly has a message for adults as well. It will be included in an upcoming children's book by Margaret Anne Goldsmith.*



A friend never defends a husband who gets his wife a lawnmower for her birthday.

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# When the Hillis Family Arrived in Huntsville

by Lawrence Hillis

My grandparents Virgil Hew Hillis and Mary Lou Grissom Hillis were the first of my Hillis ancestors to move to Huntsville. Virgil's parents were John Hillis and Martha Payne Hillis and lived in a farming community near Spencer, Van Buren County, Tennessee. Their families were neighbors, and some of them are buried in the John Hillis Cemetery which was on John's farm site on Baker Mountain. Mary Lou was raised by her grandparents Elisha Grissom and Polly Ann Talley Grissom. Her mother was Sallie Grissom and later married Jake Mooneyham.

I worked on my family tree for years but no one in the family could tell me who Mary Lou's biological father was. There was no birth certificate in Van Buren County. I was working on the Payne family ancestry with Margie Payne Markham, and I was at her house in 1980 while her father was staying with her. We had often talked about my inability to correctly identify Mary Lou's biological father. Margie suggested that we ask her father since he lived on Baker Mountain in 1890 near the Grissoms. She asked him if he knew who Mary Lou's father was and he answered yes. He said his mother told him that his father Alfred Lee Payne was also Mary Lou's father. That would make them half brother and sister.

While there are no records to prove that information, I added Alfred Lee Payne to Mary Lou's family tree. I feel this information to be correct. Why else would anyone claim to be someone's half brother or sister if it were not so. What chance would there be for anyone ever to be able to find that info in the future? That is why word of mouth is very important in genealogy research.

Mary Lou Hillis delivered 6 children in Tennessee and the next 6 in Alabama. They moved to Alabama in 1919 before my dad Lawrence was born. Dad was born near Hazel Green in 1920 in a sharecropper house near the intersection of Highway 431/231 and Walker Lane. They must have migrated to North Alabama to be close to Mary Lou's great grandparents John Wesley Talley and Sarah Sallie Martin Talley who migrated to North Alabama in the

late 1890s and had a farm near Walker Lane. The Talleys are buried in the Plainview Church of Christ graveyard on Grimwood Road.

Virgil and Mary Lou had other children born in Hazel Green. While they lived there, government agents heard a rumor that Virgil had moonshine in his home. One day the revenueurs arrived at his house to search for moonshine. Virgil had one jug in the house and when he saw the agents outside, he put the jug under Mary Lou's long dress while she was sitting in a chair. Virgil allowed the agents to search the house but said in a joking way that they could look anywhere but no one could lay a hand on his wife

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or they would have to answer to him. They did not find any moonshine in the house or under Mary Lou's dress.

Virgil continued to be a farm worker near Hazel Green and five other children were born there. Inez Hillis Thompson was born at Blewder's Knob, Ruth Hillis Isbell was born in the Schrimsher house, Helen Hillis McBride was born on McCoy's Hill, and Eugene was born on the Fowler's farm.

In 1929, they moved to Huntsville and Imogene Hillis Echols was born on the Dilworth farm which was later called the Max Luther Estate on Meridian Street. They lived in a farm worker's house that was torn down to create the Meridian Street overpass.

By 1931, the last farm where they worked was in what is now Darwin Downs east side of Maysville Road. They lived in a house on the west side of Maysville Road. My Aunt Annie told me that one Saturday the fair was in town and her dad told the kids they would go that afternoon when his chores were done. By the time they cleaned up and got ready to go, his boss came by the house either to talk about work or for a social visit.

Aunt Annie said that Papa was too polite to tell their visitor they had plans to go to the fair. His boss stayed for several hours and by the time he left, it was too late to go to the fair. It was the last day of the fair so the children were really sad that they didn't get to go to the fair that year.

By 1935, Virgil purchased a house on the first block of Stevens Avenue near Dallas Street where he operated a woodyard for many years. This lumberyard had been mentioned in a previous Old Huntsville story by Jim McBride. Virgil's three sons helped cut fire wood which he then delivered in a truck. After retirement, Virgil

moved in with his daughter Cherrie Dee and her husband Louis Austin on Virginia Blvd.

My name for Virgil Hillis was "Papa" and I called Mary Lou "Granny" because that was what all of my other cousins called them. My Dad Lawrence Sr. died just before I turned 5 years old, and Granny died 11 months later.

Since I did not get to see "Granny" much before she passed away, my mother made sure that my sister Beverly and I got to visit with Papa Hillis very often. It was always great to see him. He enjoyed playing this game with us kids. He would put his hand on my knee and would ask if I had been a good boy and then he would squeeze my knee until I squealed. He would then say you must have done something bad or you wouldn't have squealed.

He died at age 86 and was buried with Mary Lou at Maple Hill Cemetery. At the time of this writing Virgil and Mary Lou have over 100 descendants.

Papa Hillis loved heavy set women. He thought that skinny women looked sickly. Sometimes his daughters went on a diet to lose weight. Later if they gained the weight back, he would say, "It is good to see

you are mending" which meant he was glad they gained their weight back, but that statement made my aunts angry.



For a while my house was a duplex and Papa's youngest son James Eugene Hillis who we called Uncle Buck lived in the other side of the house when he and his wife divorced. Uncle Buck liked heavy set women also. When my wife Karen and I got married I was running marathons and we were both very slim. After about a year, Uncle Buck said he was surprised that I had not gotten Karen "fattened up" yet. I told him that she wasn't a milk cow who I could put out to pasture.

One time I asked Uncle Buck why Papa Hillis had so many children. Uncle Buck must have been waiting a long time to tell this joke, and he said that his mother was "hard of hearing."

I fell for his set-up like a sucker and asked what did that have to do with getting pregnant? He said, "When Papa and Granny went to bed, he would ask her 'Do you want to go to sleep or what?'"

"Not being able to hear very well, she would say, 'WHAT?'"



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# IT IS BLUEBERRY TIME

by Mary Lou McNabb, "The Blueberry Lady"

These are difficult times. The stock market is on a Pogo stick and the economy has a Hula hoop. But no matter what else happens, it is still Blueberry time! Here's one of my favorite recipes:

## Blueberry Cobbler

3 cups of blueberries  
2 Tablespoons water or fruit juice  
1/3 to 1/2 cup sugar  
2 Tablespoons cornstarch  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 cup biscuit mix  
1/2 cup milk



Preheat your oven to 375 degrees. Place berries and water or juice in an 8x8 pyrex pan. Cover with plastic wrap. Microwave on high for 3 minutes. Meanwhile mix sugar, cornstarch and cinnamon in a small bowl. Remove berries and discard plastic wrap. Sprinkle sugar mixture over berries and stir a little to be absorbed. Return to microwave and cook for 2 minutes on high. While this is cooking, mix biscuit mix and milk making slightly loose dough. Remove berries and drop biscuit on berries and place in preheated oven. Bake for about 20 to 25 minutes.

You may use this recipe combining half blueberries with blackberries or peaches.

Mary Lou McNabb "The blueberry lady" on Dug Hill Road. We closed our "Pick Your Own Blueberry farm in 2015.



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# Truck On Fire

by John Michael Hampton



The flames were coming out from under the hood. I knew that we were in trouble. This story tells of a truck on fire.

Back in 2001, I was still living with my grandfather, mom, stepfather, and uncle on a farm northwest of Athens on Cross Key Road. I worked at the Wal-Mart Supercenter on Madison Blvd. My grandfather was driving a 1971 Ford F100 pickup at the time.

On a Sunday evening in October, grandfather Robert came to pick me up in the truck. Uncle Eddie was riding along with him. They picked me up at the Wal-Mart, and drove back toward home (using County Line Road and then U.S. Highway 72).

As we crossed 1-65 on U.S. Highway 72, a few puffs of smoke could be seen coming from under the hood of the truck. I was not too worried, because the old truck was known to make a little smoke every now and then.

After crossing the interstate, we continued down the hill and across Swan Creek on U.S. Highway 72. As we climbed the hill toward the traffic light that is just prior to U.S. Highway 31, flames were coming out from under the hood of the truck. I knew that we were in

trouble.

My grandfather, who was driving, was able to get the car over to the shoulder of the road. He turned off the engine, and we got out of the car. None of us had a cell phone. Meanwhile, the flames were getting a little bigger and I was scared the truck was going to blow up.

Uncle Eddie somehow managed to get the hood up on the truck. He took off his shirt, and hitting the area of the engine that was on fire, managed to put out the fire, just as a fire engine pulled up to the shoulder of the road.

They made sure the fire was put out. After that, they called us a tow truck and stayed with us until the tow truck arrived. The tow truck took our pickup truck to the car repair shop on Alabama Highway 127.

Meanwhile, my mom Patricia had pulled to the side of the road in her 1993 Ford Mustang. (She had been called by one of the firefighters and had driven to the scene from the house). We got in the car and made our way home, hoping that the truck would be repairable.

The next day, we got a call from the car repair shop. The fire damaged the air filter and the air filter housing, but had not done any other damage. It was able to be repaired in time for my next college class on Tuesday, although my mom had to take me to Wal-Mart and back on Monday for work.

However, as the holiday season approached, we would have an even more scary vehicular fire. I will relate that story closer to the holidays, as I write about a "Christmas Party Fire".



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**Ask  
Grandma**  
*by Mimi*

Happy 4th of July; time to celebrate our country's independence. I saw the cutest fourth of July dresses and shirts for children and adults at the Cracker Barrel today, along with United States flags. If you want your flag to last longer, get a can of Scotch Guard and give the flag two coats of spray on each side. That will extend the life of your flag by twice as much. I do the same thing to my outdoor picnic umbrellas; it keeps them from fading and waterproofs them.

While leaving church today, I learned an older couple who are friends of mine are just getting over Covid. Having had all of their shots, it was just a mild case, but 100,000 cases of Covid daily are still being reported. So please be mindful in crowded spaces and wear your mask. Don't let your guard down!

The News reported this morning that we expect Covid to be with us from now on, just like the flu. So "get prepared" was the commentator's last words. I guess that means a Covid shot every year, just like the flu shot.

Summer is just about my favorite time of the year. No need for heavy outerwear, beautiful weather and gorgeous flowers, but then here comes a news report stating 23 children

were forgotten and left in hot cars last year and died. So tragic! A good idea would be to leave a purse or something by the child's car seat to remind people of little ones in the back and not to forget them as well as your pets.

While celebrating with fireworks, keep in mind that they are illegal in Huntsville. At 7:00 pm at the Village of Providence, there will be free music and fireworks (after 8) for everyone to enjoy. Athens High School fireworks, 8:00 pm.

Point Mallard Park has the Spirit of America Festival, celebrating America's heritage and birthday. It is one of the largest free Independence Day celebrations in the state. There will be games, field competitions, live entertainment, great food, craft vendors, booming fireworks, a talent show, and, to top it all off, the famous Audie Murphy Patriotism Award. Sounds like something to entice us all to attend.

If you are still planning to shoot fireworks, watch the little ones and have a responsible adult do them. Never hold them in your hand to light. Roman candles can blow out the rear end. Sparklers burn at 2,000 degrees. Be Very Careful.

Pets get real nervous when fireworks are shot, so keep them inside and get ear plugs for little ones. I remember one of my grandchildren would get hysterical when she heard the boom of fireworks. She grew out of it.

Enjoy the day and let's all fly the United States Flag.

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# HOT TIME IN THE CITY

by Gary Gee



Once upon a time - when I was working at Redstone Arsenal - I was selected to attend an "Ammunition Course" at a remote facility in Illinois. It was in the middle of a cold winter. At the time - if you had never been there - then you had not missed much. The facility, which closed many years ago, seemed so desolate and isolated that every visitor seemed to have been treated like a long-lost friend. You got the feeling that everyone there was "waiting for the letter from the Pentagon that never arrives". The Club for entertainment at the facility was just a Quonset hut. After three weeks of deprivation, I decided to drive over to civilization, to the big city of Chicago for some excitement.

So, I wheeled into Chi-Town in my little red MGB, smoking a pipe, of course. Then, most sports car drivers seemed to be pipe smokers. It was expected. After arriving in the Oak Park

section of Chicago, I settled into a plush hotel that had new carpet about two inches deep. I noticed that the static-electrical generation from the carpets was the strongest that I had ever run into. A few steps across this carpet on a cold winter day, and then touch metal or someone, and there was a heck of a jolt.

Later, I learned that this area of town had a long-time mafia association. Anyway, I decided to eat in the hotel restaurant.

Well, I was a "big pipe smoker" at the time. And a pipe smoker never gets too far from his matches. I used to have a half-dozen packages in my pants pocket at all times: You see, keeping a pipe lit can be a real challenge, and you have to keep all these matches handy to keep that sucker all fired up.

I walked over to the cash register, where the approaching hostess - probably the best looking female that I had ever seen - asked, "One for dinner?" At that instant, before I had a chance to answer - and for no apparent reason - all six packages of matches ignited, simultaneously. Surprise, Surprise!! Have you ever witnessed the amount of smoke and smell

that igniting six packs of matches produces? On seeing the cloud of smoke coming out of my pants and ascending to the ceiling, the hostess went into shock. She thought that I was on fire. Suddenly, she went weak and almost fainted. She could not speak and neither could I.

At ignition, the natural reaction was to put my hand to my pocket. I got a slight burn to my hand; but that was the only one that I received: The matches were book matches and the covers were closed; so, the openings were oriented away from my leg. The flames were deflected away from my body; and they were quickly extinguished, because as we all know, there is not much air in a pants pocket. It was downright warm though; and the flames burned holes in my pants. The whole restaurant smelled to high heaven, and so did I.

I do not know why - but



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**"Heard your wife left you,  
How upset you must be.  
But don't fret about it,  
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**What you WON'T see  
on a greeting card**

when the hostess and I could speak again - I went ahead and sat down at a table, just like things were normal. By that time, the manager had arrived and received an explanation of what had transpired. Now, remember that this was in the Oak Park area, where everyone and his grandmother were suspected of being on the con. The manager looked suspiciously at me. I could see it in his face: He thought I was a crook. He looked at me as though he was thinking: "Wow this guy has come up with some scam, and I just have to sit down and figure out what it is. Maybe he's one of these guys who knows how to take a fall in front of an automobile; and then hits up an insurance company."

In retrospect, I probably should not have eaten there after all this happened. I certainly no longer had an appetite. I sat down and ordered a steak in shock. I mean, what are you supposed to do when this happens? Anyway, people soon began entering the restaurant in droves for dinner. And if I heard it once, I heard it a hundred times, "What is that smell?" And the hostess and waitresses had to come up with a stupid explanation of how some guy's pants caught on fire, and for no apparent reason. No one believed the explanation. Also, employees were running around spraying the place with air fresheners. This was not your typical eating-out experience. The hotel employees - except the manager of course - had come up with their own "real reason" that they liked for the incident, and I could see it in their eyes: "Man, she surely set that dude's pants on fire!" Even the fainting hostess had a smile on her face.

I told my classmates back in Savannah about the incident; and they all longed for the day that they could go over to the Big City and see the excitement for themselves. And my electronic-wizard-friends back at Redstone made me feel good about this entire thing: They said that those matches could not have ignited, that it was scientifically impossible. And they almost convinced me that this thing could not have happened at all; but they could not explain how those holes got in my pants.

I don't know what caused it. Maybe the hotel employees were right. Well, I had been away from home a long time you know. Anyway, I do not smoke anymore.

And I soon ran an ad in The Huntsville Times: "1970 red MGB (one owner) for sale, \$2,000."

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# GRANNY'S BUMPER STICKER



Granny bought a bumper sticker for her old Buick. She wrote me about it:

"The other day I went to my local religious bookstore where I saw a 'Honk if you Really Love Jesus' bumper sticker. I bought it and put it on the back bumper of my car and I'm really glad I did. What an uplifting experience followed."

"I was stopped at the light of a busy intersection - just lost in thought about the Lord, and I didn't notice that the light had changed."

**"The patient was increasingly worried and concerned about the lack of anxiety in her life."**

*Seen on a patient chart*

"That bumper sticker really worked! I found lots of people who love Jesus. Why, the guy behind me started to honk like crazy. He must really love the Lord because pretty soon he leaned out his window and yelled, 'Jesus Christ!!' as loud as he could. Why, it was like a football game with him shouting, 'Go, Jesus Christ, Go!'"

"Everyone else started honking too, so I leaned out my window and waved and smiled to all those loving people. It was just so much fun."

"There must have been a guy from Florida back there because I could hear him yelling about a 'Sunny Beach' and saw him waving in a funny way with only his middle finger stuck up in the air."

"I had recently asked my two grandsons what that meant. They kind of squirmed, looked at each other, giggled and told me that it was the Hawaiian Good Luck Sign, so I leaned out the window and gave him the good luck sign back."

"A couple of the people were so caught up in the joy of the moment that they got out of their cars and were walking towards me. I bet they wanted to pray, too, but just then I noticed that the light had changed, so I stepped on the gas and took off."

"It's a good thing I did, because I was the only car to get across the intersection. I looked back at them standing there. I leaned out the window, gave them a big smile and held up the Hawaiian Good Luck Sign as I drove away."

"Praise the Lord for such wonderful folks!"

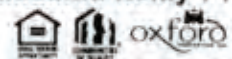
Love to ya'll, Granny

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# City News in 1923

## \* The Bradleyan, a Work of Art - 1923

The Bradleyan, the annual of Bradley school, is out and being circulated among graduates and subscribers now. The annual this year is surprisingly good, and complete, being at once a register of events that have happened and hopes that have been formed for the future, containing pictures and records of the various classes, athletics of all kinds for both boys and girls, which will make it a valued keepsake in the years to come when hopes have been realized or blasted as the case may be.

The Bradleyan is beautifully printed, made up and bound, making it worth a place on any library shelf or center table. The school itself is recognized as one of the most complete and efficient in the state, every provision being made to carry on the best and highest school work for the students attending.

## \* Found Baby on Front Porch

Attracted by the crying of a baby, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Baldwin, living on Randolph Street, investigated and found a 2-day old baby boy wrapped in a quilt lying on their front porch. The finders notified Dr. G. A. Cryer of the presence of the baby at their home and the official turned the infant over to Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Davison, who had expressed a desire to adopt it.

## \* Claims he was Married While Hypnotized

Wm. Dobbins of this city, dragged into the court today on a charge of bigamy, declared his second wife hypnotized him and forced him to marry her against his will.

"I don't know how it happened," he claimed. "All of a sudden I was in the church, saw many people, stood before the altar and was required to kneel. A priest stood before us. I was very much wrought up. Beside me stood my bride, who at every opportunity looked piercingly into my eyes so that I saw glittering before me all the colors of the rainbow. And so I was married a second time. As if in a semi-slumber, I left the church."

The court, however, sentenced him to 2 months in jail and a \$20 fine.

**Never lend your car to someone to whom you've given birth.**

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# Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Did you find the tiny ladybug in last month's issue? I made it larger this time and had lots of calls and 2 were ties. **Judy Hullett** of Huntsville was a winner. Judy graduated from Butler HS in 1960 and is a native of Huntsville. She has 3 beautiful sons **Ken Watson, Danny Watson and Greg Watson**, whom she lost many years ago as a result of a car wreck. She is bossed around by two Shi-Tzu's **Bella and Gracie**. Congratulations to you Judy!

Then our tie caller was **Janet Brinkerhoff**, also of Huntsville, who is married to that handsome "**Brink**" for 55 years. They worked for CAS and retired in 2012. Congratulations to you Janet!

If you looked but couldn't find the little ladybug I hid in

the June issue, check page 38 bottom. You can't miss it! Unless you're getting digital subscriptions (which are in color) you wouldn't see the red color but you can tell it's a little bug. This issue is going to be really tough. I have hidden a tiny **toothpick** and as you know that can be anywhere. Good luck! If you find it and are the first to call you win a \$50 subscription to Old Huntsville magazine!

Our sweet baby of the month was **Billy Lenox**, and is responsible for websites for many companies in Huntsville including this one. **Brandon Owens** remembered that he was the magazine's website developer so was the first correct guess. You win a year's subscription to the magazine - congratulations to you Brandon (who works at Hudson Alpha).

**Nell Long** of Owens Cross Roads has been reading the magazine for as long as we've been around, and we want to wish her a fabulous and HAPPY 102nd Birthday on July 12. Nope that is not a typo - Nell will be 102 on July 12! Her sweet daughter **Peggy Long** told us that her family were pioneers of Madison County and Nell takes great pride in her hometown.

**Don Broome, Sr.** was a name that many in the arts community remember. He owned a framing and art shop for so

many years, in his home, and knew that most artists didn't have a lot of extra money so his framing was at his cost. Towards the end of his business he gave away frames and artwork. Don was a funny, kind, generous man who loved his cats always. He passed away of cancer on June 5 at 75 years old. Don is survived by sons **Donald Broome, Jr. (Beth), Doug Kipp (Kathy)**, daughter **Jennifer Broome**, granddaughter **Maylin Willen (Preston)**, niece **Margaret Murphy**, nephew **Cecil Hedrich** and great nieces **Katie and Rachel**. The family is so grateful for **Margaret, Carol Hovanes, Cecil, Katie, and Pete** for caring for Don and allowing him to die at home, which he requested. We will miss his stories and his spirit always.

My brother **Ken Owens** always takes weeks to celebrate his special birthday on July 31 so we know he's already started. Happy Happy Birthday to a guy who works really hard at

## Photo of The Month

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

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This little guy became a roadbuilder who has a road named after him that he did not build.



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being retired and loves it!

The ladies at Truist Bank on the corner of Church Street are the best to work with. I've been to other banks and the personal service and friendliness and overall professionalism is #1 in Huntsville with **Susan Coulter, Heidi A Costa, Adrianna Lane, Jane Eller, Ianthia Bridges and Lori Deutscher**. Ianthia has some special July dates: her daughter **Brooke Bridges** will be 26 on July 10th and her niece **Carianna Ramsey** will be 15 on July 3rd. Happy Birthday to these sweet youngsters. Then Susan Coulter told me that her grandson **Coulter** had a 9th birthday on June 24th, and Susan's daughter and proud mama is **Brie Coulter Clark**.

Her grand daughter **Vivian Claire Santos** will turn 9 on July 3rd. She is the daughter of **David** and **Ashley Ragsdale Santos** (Ashley is Susan's daughter) Happy Birthday to Vivian!

There are so many summer activities in Huntsville and rather than list them, I'll tell you how to find some of them.

Rocket City Mom - [www.rocketcitymom.com/](http://www.rocketcitymom.com/)

<https://www.downtown-huntsville.org/event-calendar>

<https://lowemill.art/>

<https://hsvmuseum.org/>

<https://www.alapark.com/parks/monte-sano-state-park>

<https://www.huntsvilleal.gov/environment/green-team/nature-preserves/hays-nature-preserve/>

The Hays Nature Preserve features over 10 miles of trails and greenways that follow the Flint River and its associated lakes through low riparian habitat, old fields, and a golf course.

<https://www.huntsville.org/listing/harmony-park-safari>

U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum, 3650 Alex McAllister Drive SW; Huntsville, AL 35801; (256) 883-3737.

It was so good catching up with **Hank Miller** who lived here at Brookdale with his wife **Judy** before moving to be close to his kids and grandkids near Knoxville. Hank was long time member of the Golden K Kiwanis, working as Treasurer and Past President, and did so much work in the charitable work of the club. He misses his friend here in Huntsville and sends love to them all.

The Huntsville Police Citizens Advisory Council (HPCAC) is holding 9 public forums this year and each session includes roundtable discussions between the public, police officers and HPCAC members. The forums are usually held at the Huntsville Madison County Public Library starting at 5:30. If you have questions or comments or just want to get to know your HPCAC members and police officers better, you should attend.

For info on upcoming meetings visit [www.huntsvilleal.gov](http://www.huntsvilleal.gov), then look for HPCAC. For more specific information contact **David Little**, [hpcac@huntsvilleal.gov](mailto:hpcac@huntsvilleal.gov) or call 256-213-4525.

We're all trying to cut down on purchases and save a bit of money here and there. Remember that Huntsville has many local **Farmers Markets** in every area of town and the food

is fresh, good and better for you while we're in the season for fresh veges and fruit. You'll save some money too, and help our local small businesses - a win-win for sure.



  
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## Pilot Club Favorites

### Delicious Fudge

Put 2 cups sugar, three heaping tablespoons cocoa, 3/4 cup sweet milk and 1/4 cup white Karo, and butter the size of a large walnut into a pan. Let come to a boil, then cook slowly until it forms a soft ball in cold water. Remove from the heat and beat vigorously until it holds shape. Pour immediately into buttered dish. Nuts may be added before pouring into dish.

Mrs. Shelby Bragg

### Pineapple Meringue

6 whites of eggs beaten very stiff with a pinch of salt. To this add 2 cups of sifted sugar and beat in slowly and hard. Add a tablespoon of vinegar and 1 teaspoon of vanilla flavoring. Put large flat scoops on a cookie sheet and bake about 225 degrees for 40 minutes to one hour.

When ready to serve add one can of grated drained pineapple and top with whipped cream.  
Mrs. I. Wind

### Date Crumb Cookies

#### Crumb Mixture:

1/2 c. butter  
1/2 t. salt  
1 t. baking soda mixed with  
1/2 c. flour  
1-3/4 c. ground oatmeal

Cook til thick and then cool. Spread half of the crumb mixture on a well-greased pan and cover with the date mixture:

#### Date mixture:

1 package dates, chopped  
1 c. sugar  
1 c. water  
(mix in order given)

Add the remaining crumbs to the top, press down firmly. Bake 45 minutes at 375 degrees.  
Mrs. Vera Howard Hall

### Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

6 medium-sized sweet potatoes  
2 T. butter  
Juice of 1 orange  
1 c. shredded pineapple  
1/2 c. chopped English walnuts

1 dozen marshmallows

Bake potatoes, scoop out shells. Mash potatoes, adding butter and orange juice. Stir in all ingredients except marshmallows. Refill shell with mixture. Cut up marshmallows, place them on top.

Put potatoes in the oven until heated through and browned slightly on top.

Mrs. T. R. Hay

### Potatoes in Sauce

1 T. bacon fat  
1 onion, sliced  
1 t. chopped green pepper  
5 cold boiled potatoes  
1 t. parsley  
Salt and pepper  
1 c. gravy or thick broth

Melt bacon fat in heavy pan and saute onion with green pepper. Do not brown. Slice potatoes thickly and add to onion/peppers. Add the parsley, season to taste, add gravy. Cover pan and simmer til most of the liquid has evaporated.

Mrs. Allen Cobb

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## Lemon Pudding

3 T. flour  
 1 c. milk  
 2 eggs  
 1 c. sugar  
 3 T. butter  
 Juice of 1 lemon and rind

Combine flour, butter and 3/4 cup of sugar. Cream well, then add yolks of eggs, juice and rind of the lemon. Beat egg whites stiff, then add remaining 1/4 cup sugar. Fold whites into mixture and pour into buttered baking dish. Place dish in pan of hot water, bake in oven for one hour at 350 degrees. The top is like cake and the under part is a lemon jelly.

Mrs. Sidney Schiffman

## Old Days Pound Cake

2 c. flour (sifted twice with salt)  
 1 c. butter  
 1-2/3 c. sugar  
 5 eggs (unbeaten)  
 Dash salt

Cream butter and sugar, add one egg at a time, mixing well after each. Add flour last and put in well-greased cold pan. Bake in a slow oven (300 degrees) one hour.

Mrs. Claude Lawler

## Easy Magic Macaroons

1/2 c. Eagle Brand Sweetened condensed milk  
 2 c. shredded coconut

Mix Eagle Brand milk and coconut together. Drop by spoonfuls in well-buttered pan about 1 inch apart. Bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) until a delicate brown. These crunchy, crispy, coconutty macaroons make a tremendous hit!

Mrs. Sam W. Smith

## Scandinavian Cookies

1/2 c. butter  
 1/4 c. brown sugar  
 1 egg, separated  
 1 c. sifted flour  
 3/4 c. chopped nuts  
 Tart jelly

Blend butter, add sugar and egg yolk - blend until light. Blend in flour and roll dough into small balls about one inch in diameter. Slightly beat egg white with a fork. Dip cookies in egg white, roll in chopped nuts and place on a greased cookie sheet, making a depression in center of each. Bake for 5 minutes at 325 degrees.

Remove from oven and press down centers again and continue baking for 30 minutes. Cool

slightly and fill centers with jelly. Candied cherries or small pieces of candied apricots or other fruits may be used.

Miss Bernice Lawler

## Hard Sauce

1/3 c. butter  
 2/3 t. vanilla flavoring  
 1 c. confectioner's sugar

Let butter stand at room temperature until easy to work with but not melted. Cream thoroughly and beat in sugar. Continue to beat until smooth and fluffy. Add vanilla slowly. For a richer sauce, beat in 1/4 cup heavy cream.

Helen McCown

## Flannel Cakes

Take one pint of buttermilk, a little salt, a large teaspoon of melted butter, 1 teaspoonful molasses, 1 teaspoon of soda, sift with enough flour to make a good batter. Beat hard, add 2 egg yolks and the stiffly beaten whites. Bake small cakes on a hot, well-greased griddle. Serve with butter and maple syrup.



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# Good to the Last Drop

by Anna Welikonich  
(Ukrainian birth name) Lee



I have a habit that has saved me money over the years.

I just don't throw away most packages until they are completely empty, and I use up as much as I can of a product.

For example, with something that comes in a tube, like toothpaste, I cut off the bottom and usually get 10 more squeezes out of it.

Or, take lotion. It's often hard to remove that last little bit, so I turn the container over and let the lotion drop down. Then it becomes easy to remove and use.

If it's a liquid, I put some water into the container, give it a shake and get a few more portions out of it.

When the lipstick gets flat, I use a Q-tip to get out what's left.

Produce? I try to use it all. like celery tops. I never cut them off and throw them away. Instead I add them to soups, stews and salads, either whole or chopped. They add a delicious fresh taste.

If there are crumbs at the bottom of a bag of cookies or such, I sprinkle them over yogurt or cereal. So that's my money-saving habit. It's easy to keep up. And, I'm not obsessive — just smart!

**"It's tough to stay married. My wife kisses the dog right on the mouth but won't drink from my glass!"**

**Rodney Dangerfield**

## Brown Bread Pudding

- 1 c. brown bread pieces
- 1 c. milk
- 3 eggs
- 1 T. maple sugar
- 2 egg whites
- 1 T. sugar
- 1 T. whipping cream

Soak bread pieces in half a cup of the milk for about 20 minutes, then make a custard of the rest of the milk, eggs, and maple sugar by just cooking them together over medium heat til thickened,

Pour it hot over the bread. Beat egg whites with a tablespoon of the sugar and the cream, fold into the custard. Bake at 350 for 30 minutes.

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# An Old Cook's Secrets

*from old newspaper*



- Keep your salt in a small bowl. When you season, use your fingers instead of a shaker, you'll be less likely to over-salt.

- Cold water brings out flavor, while hot water seals it in. Therefore, always start a stock with cold water.

- To give your rice a good Mediterranean flavor, add a bit of olive oil and lemon zest to the cooking water.

- For easy clean-up while your pots are still hot, drizzle with a little vinegar, sprinkle with salt, rub with a sponge and rinse.

- Keep a special carafe handy for red wines left over from your dinner table. When you've collected enough, use it for sauces and salad dressings.

- New way with potatoes: Wrap each baking potato (leave skin on) in aluminum foil with a dab of butter, a dash of garlic powder, a grind of fresh black pepper and one or more of the following: chives, dill, tarragon, rosemary, parsley. Bake at 425 degrees for 25 minutes. Great flavor and low in fat!

- Peppermint tea is great for moodiness. Drink it warm and strong, it will relax you.

- Italian chefs use this delicious dressing for steamed vegetables: Mix roasted sesame seeds with plain yogurt. Pour over steamed broccoli, cauliflower-

er, cabbage or use as a dip for raw vegetables. (I would add a bit of garlic or onion powder)

- Take some sweet potatoes and wrap them well in heavy-duty aluminum foil. Wait til you have some good red-hot coals in the grill, then place the potatoes in the middle of them. Ours take about 45 minutes to an hour, and we unwrap them, cut them in half and add a bit of butter, salt and fresh-ground black pepper. You wouldn't believe anything could taste this good!

- Chicken roasted in Pastry? Sure, do it this way. Make a dough of flour and water. Roll out in a large circle. Sprinkle the cavity of a whole chicken with rosemary, stuff with 2 lemons that have been cut in half. Wrap the chicken in the dough and roast it, the wrapping of bread will absorb all of the fat (just toss it out) and will make your chicken extra healthy.

- For extra crispy veggies and lettuce for your salads, do this. Put all the ingredients, cut and ready, into a large bowl, without dressing. Cover the veggies with a couple of layers of damp paper towels, put in fridge for an hour or two before you eat.



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# Courting in the Early Days of Huntsville

by Linda Strange,  
written in 1991



Have you ever wondered where folks went on dates in Huntsville back in the 1930s and 1940s, when Huntsville was still just a sleepy little cotton town? When the boundaries of the city went from Meridian and Washington Streets on the north to Huntsville Hospital on the south?

Well, I started wondering about that very thing the other day and decided to ask some long-time Huntsville residents just where they went on a date.

I called about eight folks and each had a unique version of Huntsville as a place to date years ago. Each person I talked to told me of fun times spent at the old Lyric Theater downtown and also at the Grand Theater, around the corner from the Lyric.

A few mentioned the Elks, an old opera house on the Square that once had good stage shows. Also a few told about the Princess Theater on Church Street.

When asked about restaurants, one place was mentioned unanimously as having the best burgers in town. A place called Swaims, where many took their dates. One fellow said you could smell those delicious burgers when you got within a mile of the place.

Some other favorite hangouts for kids with dates were the old Post Office Cafe downtown, the Central Cafe, Broadway's Restaurant (where Roper's Flowers is now located). Ed. note now closed. Also the Mullins Cafe. Mullins used to be on Stevens Street before moving to its present location on Andrew Jackson Way. Ed. Note - Mullins also closed now.

One guy said you could get a good sized burger at Mullins at that time for a dime. Two other nice places were McKnights and Adcock's.

One fellow mentioned that Huntsville had many honky-tonks during this time. A few were pretty notorious and you didn't take a date there. Mostly you went drinking there with the guys. Places like the White Castle, better known as the "Bloody Bucket", because of all the Saturday night fights there, were all well known. Then, of course, was the Snuffdipper's Ball on Jefferson Street.

A few other clubs mentioned were Galley's and Midway. Steadman's also was a nice place to eat and dance. It was located where the present Big B Drugs was, near Huntsville Hospital.

Almost unanimously the folks I talked to raved about the Monte Sano Tavern. It was located next to the park and picnic area on Monte Sano. Some referred to it as "the Lodge".

For years I thought I was looking at the burned-out

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Shrouds don't have pockets."**

**Ms. Esberg's grandmother**

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ruins of the Monte Sano Hotel in the park, but now I realize those ruins were of the Tavern. The old hotel was located on a bluff overlooking the city on what is now Old Chimney Road. You can still see the old chimney of the destroyed hotel.

Everyone agreed the Tavern was a favorite place to eat, with large oak beams overhead and a huge stone fireplace at either end of the large dining room.

One gal told me that on her very first date she was taken to the old Post Office Cafe. She thought she'd be adventurous so she ordered fried oysters.

Never having eaten any, she had to drown them in ketchup to get them down.

If a girl didn't have lots of dates back then (before the War) something was wrong. There were lots of fellas around town and most were military guys, all waiting to be called up for the War.

Those were very uncertain times. If you were dating a guy, you were never quite sure after a few dates if you'd ever see him again. He may be called up for the War and then never come back to Huntsville. He may move back to his hometown after the War and then you'd lose track of each other.

Even with all the uncertainty though, everyone managed to have a pretty good time in small town Huntsville. Picnics were often mentioned as a fun thing to do, and also swimming. There were lots of drive-in restaurants around during those days. The one mentioned by almost everyone as having the best barbeque in town was Bill's. It was located on Meridian Street near the old Lincoln School.

Everyone's favorite drug store was Torn Dark's on the Square. It had little round ice cream tables where you could go with a date for ice cream and a good fountain coke. It was once on the east side of the Square but then later moved to the north side.

Mr. Dark's motto was "We've been on the Square for years."

One gal said when her steady guy went off to the War, it had been decided

that she would date others while he was gone. Some of her dates in his absence took her to her very favorite eating place, the Russel Erskine Hotel. She said they served wonderful homemade rolls, great watercress salad and the best homemade pies in town.

When her steady came back home and asked her to marry him, she said she'd have to think about it. She told him she wanted to get out of debt before marriage. She owed downtown Dunnivant's \$100, which was a lot of money back then. He promptly paid her Dunnivant's bill so she, running out of excuses and also being very much in love with him, married him immediately. She laughs and tells folks now that she married him because he paid off her Dunnivant's bill!

Back then, it was a more casual time. There weren't as many planned activities as now. With so little going on in town in the way of entertainment, folks going on dates had to think up things to do on their own. It sounds like they did a pretty good job of it. It seems like those were some pretty good times and great memories for a lot of people in early Huntsville.

I kinda wish I'd been there, too!

**"Any idiot can face a crisis. It's the day-to-day living that wears you out."**

**Anton Chekhov**

**IF YOU'RE LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE  
LOYAL FRIENDS, HOLD ON TO THEM.  
THEY WILL BE WITH YOU WHEN THE  
REST OF THEM LEAVE.**



**OSCAR LLERENA**

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OF 1966**

# MY BIRD FAMILY

by Gail Lee



Every year we have a pregnant Robin and her hubby move into a nest on our down spout on my back porch. We try not to disturb the nest from the previous year. Since they are here only a short period of time, we just don't feel they should have to buy their home but only rent. They are busy little creatures preparing the nest for their newborn babies. The mom sits tight on those eggs, only leaving long enough to get nourishment for herself. Meanwhile papa bird watches over his family.

This year we had 3 babies again. They are noisy little things when they know it's meal time. They are tweeting something fierce And stretching their little skinny necks with beaks wide open. Mom and Dad take turns feeding them 24-7 and sitting on them. There's not much rest in between feedings. When you watch the process from beginning to end you can understand the joy parents feel when their young leave the nest.

This year was no different except for one little hitch! The last baby to leave wasn't for sure where he was going and neither was I. He flew into the road and sat there! His safety was compromised but he was assisted by both parents and the owner of this property. Mom and Dad stayed on each side while the property owner, with arms flapping around wildly, tried to shoo him back in the yard. He bolted and flew under a vehicle in another yard.

We watched from a distance hoping the vehicle owner didn't need to leave,

but then this little guy decides to come back across the road, hopped down the back alley and took flight, landing in the chain link fence with wings spread wide. He couldn't get through. Teens think they know everything! Human mom decides she needs to help so I gather my hands around him to guide him through the fence. His parents are having a

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**"Don't accept your dog's admiration as conclusive evidence that you are wonderful."**

**Larry Evans, Huntsville**

hissy fit. (That's southern for con-  
 nption). As I placed him on the  
 ground my dog takes off after him  
 and I'm screaming! Nooooo!!! Fi-  
 nally baby bird is safe as Mom and  
 Dad watch from a distance and we  
 all calmed down.

Those little parents were amaz-  
 ing as they stayed close to their chil-  
 dren and never left them but raised  
 their voices when they needed to. I  
 wish I understood bird language be-  
 cause I bet it wasn't pretty this day!

If you've never watched bird  
 parents raise their young you really  
 should take the time and observe.  
 Humans could learn a lot from ani-  
 mals. We associate their wild quali-  
 ties and instincts with being uncivil-  
 ized.

There are many lessons we  
 could learn from animals such  
 as patience, compassion, and  
 responsibility which I find so  
 many humans these days lack.  
 Having each other's back can be  
 a key to survival as I saw with  
 these birds on a daily basis. It  
 takes two. They helped each  
 other. Working together to raise  
 their little ones. Living within  
 their means and not destroying  
 their surroundings other than a  
 little poop now and then but we  
 all have to deal with that one  
 time or another.

Oh well, such is life's lesson.  
 But keep this in mind. If you  
 are out and about in the Five  
 Points area and you see a crazy  
 woman flapping her arms and  
 screaming at the birds, it's only  
 me. The property owner who  
 tries to help take care of little  
 ones the only way I know how.  
 It's exhausting being a parent!

**"We had a quicksand  
 box in our back yard. I  
 was an only child  
 eventually."**

**Steve Wright**

**"I have a condition that prevents me from going on  
 any kind of diet. It's called 'Being Freakin' Hungry.'"**

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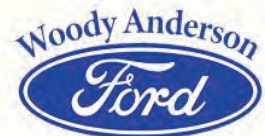
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 culty of any task. It has spared no toil in finding the way of doing each task best. It has dared to  
 try out the untried with conspicuous success.  
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 while has been made available to millions.  
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 than with sincere and sober realization of new and larger opportunities for service to mankind.

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# EAST CLINTON STREET SCHOOL – A PRESSING LESSON

by Judy Chandler Smith



After reading the article about the old East Clinton School on page 17 of the June 2022 Old Huntsville Magazine, my mind darted back to the fall of 1948. Anne Walker Forgey was my best friend and still is, going on seventy-five years now. She knows all my faults and still calls me every morning to say "good morning." We have been through a lot of weddings, funerals, and class reunions and still find time to laugh and enjoy each other's company.

We had just finished the first grade together in Miss Allison's class and were now starting in Miss Matlock's second grade. We both had a habit of wanting to talk a lot, still do, and sometimes we would have to draw a circle on the side of

the blackboard with white chalk and put our noses in the circle for 15 minutes. Then other times, we would have to stand outside our room door for a certain amount of time. Some of the boys even got paddled with her 18-inch ruler.

But as Anne can tell you, because she remembers what I am about to tell you with regret.

Pressure was building, so I stood and raised my hand to ask Miss Matlock if I might be excused to use the restroom. Her words were, "Sit down, NOT NOW." So I waited a little while longer and repeated my question, and her reply was the same. After waiting just a little longer, Anne screamed, "TOO LATE."

I began to cry and was taken from the class to the office, where my mother came to get me. I can remember stomping my feet and telling my mother that I was never going back to that school again. Her words were, "Yes, you are, young lady. No one will remember." Oh, she was very wrong. No one forgot.

Anne still can make me laugh about it 75 years later, but it was a different story back in 1948 when I was a shy seven-year-old.

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**"I'd consider hormone replacement therapy, but I've got a bunch of other things that need to be replaced first."**

**Maxine**

# City News from 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 internment 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 man who had lived here 106 years. During all that time he had not lost more than a year's time from actual labor.

\* It is remarkable how some people can wear good clothes, sport around and enjoy life and not work. We were never able to work that combination.

\* "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. Send for our free booklet "The Truth about CC" that tells all about CC, what it is and why it is so delicious, wholesome and beneficial to you."

CC Company, Atlanta, GA

\* In the Jail - a Concealed Razor found on one Man - both in Jail. John Griffin and Jim Brown were arrested and placed in jail here by Deputy Sheriffs Pierce and Robinson on charges of gaming and public drunkenness. Deputy Pierce also found a concealed razor on the person of Brown.

Griffin it is believed is wanted in Gadsden on a charge of murder and will be held here until officials of that place advised disposition.

\* Good Draft Horse for Sale. We have a good heavy draft horse in good work condition for sale cheap. Address "Horse" care of the Times.

\* Thos. P. Hay, proprietor of the Huntsville Hotel News Stand, this afternoon moved in his new quarters in the building adjoining the north side of R. E. & W. E. Pettus' wholesale house on Jefferson Street in front of the McGee Hotel. Mr. Hay is elaborately fitted up for business and invites all of his friends and the public to call and see him.

\* I have 2 good houses for sale both desirably located. Paul Speake, Elks Building

\* Wanted - board in private family, for young couple, central location desired. Phone 208

\* New 4-room cottage corner 6th St. and Pratt Avenue for rent cheap, apply to J. E. Pierce.

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\* Wanted - good nurse and housekeeper, young or old. Address in care of the Times.

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# QUONSET HUT FOR GOLIATH (OR THE MADISON COUNTY COLISEUM)

by M. D. Smith, IV



The Madison County Coliseum was our city's first sizeable covered entertainment center. It cost \$150,000 to build in 1960. The floor was larger than a basketball court and they played games on it. The Shrine Rodeo also headlined the first year it opened in 1961. Big entertainment acts of the decade appeared, such as Sonny and

Cher, Tom Jones and Herman's Hermits. Dick Clark's Caravan of Stars performed for multiple years, including 1967.

One of the early newspaper ads touted plenty of free parking spaces at the location of Highway 72 at Old Athens Pike. To the west of the site was farmland that one day would be the newest and largest

shopping area in the county, Madison Square Mall, which is now only a memory. (Mid City near there today.)

Because of its unique arched span roof, from a distance, the covered entertainment center for Huntsville and Madison County might have resembled a Quonset Hut reminiscent of those steel huts built around the world in WWII. A Huntsville Times editor nicknamed it Quonset Hut for Goliath when a photo ran of the skeleton beams in the sky. Construction began in December 1959 and it finally opened in April 1961. The official dedication was in October of that year.

The Shriners Zamora Motor Corps hosted a "Gala Rodeo" for the event, and newspaper articles covered the three-day weekend, October 12-14. Adult tickets sold for \$1.25 and \$.75 for children. The Zamora Temple had a large band who performed, along with clowns and free candies for the children.

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I remember my first time under those massive six spans holding up the entire roof. According to Kerman Isom, Job Superintendent for the Birmingham construction company, each arch, when bolted together, weighed nine tons. They were made of wood. Yep. Each curved span, running from side to side, was made of many layers of heavy timber, perhaps Poplar or Ash, laminated together with a continuous curve.

The completed arch was 157 feet across and the largest self-supporting roof in the city. Quite an engineering feat. Each span was made and shipped as two halves and joined at the site. That was the only way to send them by special flatbed trucks from Birmingham.

After the first two spans were in place, a few purlins (crossbeams that span from arch to arch) which held the spans in alignment, were bolted into place. As successive spans went up, more of the eventual total of sixty purlins were put in place. It made the spans very secure and perfectly aligned before putting the roof on the structure.

The twelve foundations to support either side of the massive curved beams were equally impressive. One photo shows a concrete bed deep in the ground, and a curved steel rebar skeleton rising up to meet the span. It would all be encased in bridge-grade concrete, then filled with dirt. There were many

days of rain during the foundation building, and those foundation pits filled with mud, slowing construction considerably. The project took from 1959 to 1961. But even in October, for the official dedication and opening, it was not complete. It was finished shortly after.

It was Huntsville's largest indoor venue, holding 1,850 people (about the size of our current Mark Smith Concert Hall at the Von Braun Civic Center). With such a facility, the city could attract star acts that included those mentioned above, but The Young Rascals, The Yardbirds, Paul Revere and the Raiders, The Animals featuring Eric Burton, Mel Carter, ZZ Top, Leslie Gore, and B.J. Thomas. Jerry Lee Lewis performed in 1966 and 1969. He attracted a sell-out crowd.

The facility continued to attract top recording artists that also appeared with Dick Clark's Caravan of Stars. Former Governor George Wallace spoke to an overflow crowd on Sunday, March 22, 1970.

My most cherished memories were the charity events given free use of the facility. Our TV station's "WAAY 31 All-Stars" played other media teams to raise money for various organizations in the area. I played in a few games and took photos of others in the sixties.

I have a photo at a 1966 basketball game that pictures Dan Akens (News Director), Val Ginter (Technical Director), and Dewey Webb (Sports and Announcer) and an unknown player only there a short time. Pretty decent attendance at this event to raise money.

The Coliseum fell into lesser use because the Huntsville Von Braun Civic Center opened in 1975. But the Coliseum was still inexpensive to use well into the eighties. As a result, stars like The Oak Ridge Boys in 1977 continued to perform at the Madison County Coliseum.

The building is no longer with us. They bulldozed it back to the bare ground after 2000. Now a Sam's Club sits on the site.



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I just start breathing  
again."  
  
Fred Porter, Arab**

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turn to the experts 

# My Hooky Days

by Dale Casteel

My earlier school days were pretty good: I was never a real smart kid, but I did manage to make passing grades. I knew that I had a roaming mind and that it was not focused on my books, (like I should have). But, I was a happy kid, and if you are going to be happy you have just got to let your mind roam a little.

One morning, as I was walking to school (I think I may have been in the sixth grade), the sun was shining and it was such a warm and beautiful day. The birds were singing their hearts out and I just knew that the fish would be biting good today.

I knew that just over the hill from the house was a large culvert and it was underneath Highway 72, with a deep ditch that ran down to the Dement Creek. So, I came up with the bright idea that I could ease off down into this ditch and head for the creek. That is exactly what I did! I knew that this one time of skipping school would not hurt a thing.

Well, the next morning was about like the day before, but I knew that I had to go to school today. However, as I approached that ditch again, I just could not pass it up. It was as if something was pulling me back - down into that ditch. So, here I go, again, back down to the creek. I am telling myself all the while that this is it - the last time that I am going to skip school. Tomorrow, I will go to school for sure.

Now, in the afternoon, I would have to keep my eyes on the sun. I could tell about the time that school was dismissed by the sun. So, at this time, I would ease back up the ditch and head for home. Needless to say, I did not go to school the next day, either. That is right (you guessed it) - I wound up back on the creek bank.

William McElyea was not attending school during this time. He had dropped out the previous year. So, he would meet me down at the creek and we would head for the river.

I reckon I thought that I had lucked upon one of the greatest ideas that I had ever had. What could have been any better? I did not have to be in school, I did not have to work in the fields, and I could stay on the river all day long? Hey, This was the life!!!

On occasion, my daddy would be plowing in the fields next to the ditch. I would really have to be careful to not get caught.

I had been playing hooky for a while when Richard McElyea joined us on our field trips. He was in school and I am sure that he felt like he was missing out on all of the fun.

Now, William, Richard, and I was not getting much book learning, but we were getting educated in the ways of nature and we sure knew how to catch fish. I believe that if we had ever got lost in the forest without a thing, we could have survived. We were having fun and enjoying life. Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn did not have a thing on us.

This would continue for over a month, and, then, one day the truant officer showed up at my house. She asked my mom, "Why has Dale not been coming to school?"

My mom stood up and told her, " I will have you to

**"Speak when you're angry and you make the best speech you'll ever regret."**

**Quinn Jacobs, Gurley**

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know that Dale has been going to school every day, and you need to be out checking on kids that are not going to school." However, she finally convinced my mom that I had not been going to school.

My mom was waiting on me when I came home that afternoon. She wanted to know where I had been all day. I told her that I had been at school. But, I saw right off that was a big mistake. I had done said the wrong thing.

I got myself a good whipping and a good talking to. And, I also got marched to school the next day. This was the most embarrassing time of my life back then.

We had a principal, whose name was Mr. B.L Rich. He looked to be about 10 feet tall. He walked with authority and one would have no doubt of who was in charge of the school.

Anytime one heard him walking down the hallways at Clements High School, the only sound that could be heard coming from the classrooms was dead silence.

He must have liked me a lot on that day, because I had to stay right by his side all the day long.

I remember that he led me around all day by the hair on my head. He must have carried me into every classroom in the entire school. He made sure that everyone in that school saw me. He was making a prime example with me of why one would never want to play hooky from his school. This would be the longest day that I had ever spent in school.

I was sitting beside him in the office, when the bell rang for school to be dismissed. He did not say a word, so I started easing up out of my chair very slowly. He looked over at me through those heavy eyebrows of his and I saw a hint of a smile come across his face.

As I walked out of that school-house that day, I could compare my feelings as that of someone walking out of Folsom prison.

Needless to say, I never played hooky from school ever again. Years later, I realized that Mr. Rich had probably done one of the biggest favors of my life.

"It was a major wake-up call."

**Worry is the first time you can't do it a second time. Panic is the second time you can't do it the first time.**

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# Echoes of the Past

by Gerald Alvis

When you've lived long enough you witness a lot of change. And for those of us who have been fortunate enough to live in 2 centuries we know it continues to accelerate. It seems new technologies keep emerging but in all this I'm reminded of a different past.

Once upon a time air conditioning was not common. Many remember getting their first one installed in their home and what a welcome addition it was!

But before this environmental revolution was an item called a screen door. It was needed to keep the air circulating in the home (with a help of a window or large metal reciprocating fan). Can you hear the creak of the metal springs that bent to push the door back to its closed position? Can you recall and almost feel the double tap "slam slam" that accompanied its unrestricted close. The fans had a rhythmic hum as they swept past our beds as youngsters, helping us to rest and dream. Who else remembers the sound of a percolator on Saturday morning??!

Surely someone else reading this turned an ice cream churn! The metal gears in a wooden tub filled to brim with ice and salt, made a unique grinding sloshy noise that transports many back to a simpler time. Plugged in, no, driven by the anticipation of several kids who took turns when their arms would tire. If someone slowed another would be at the ready, we loved to see the older kids jump in as it became more difficult, signaling the end of the process. The hardest part was, we had to let it "set" for a few more (eternal) minutes to let it harden up! Looking back the ice cream was a wonderful treat but the excitement, the playful chatter and us all pitching in was part of the enjoyment as well.

Sounds gone by aren't limited to the household. If you've gone into a seed and feed or even older general stores the floor was roughhewn oak planks, some parts were worn smooth from the traffic but that's not my point. When even as a boy I would walk my weight would bend the boards slightly causing them to pull

against the nails that made that distinctive creaking noise wherever I walked.

The local barbershop used electric trimmers, but I remember hearing the straight razor being coaxed along a leather strap. Still my most distinctive memory were the voices of solemn old men. I played with my toys or whatever I could find but I remember their tales, voices who lived the history of the Great Depression and WWII.

But in all this discussion about sound gone by, I remember something else. Less noise. TVs had the color bar pattern and that "tone" you are now hearing in your head, when the stations signed off at night. There was a time of climbing and sitting in trees and just looking around or listening to the river I grew up on as I hoped to stretch my line.

I think I miss the quiet, but I hope to keep this alive as it is in my and your mind, these echoes from the past and sounds of the silence.

## OUR WRITERS

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# BLAZE

## (1955)

by Bill Alkire



It was one of those hot summer days when even the sound of Les Crandall's swing squeaking could be heard a quarter of a mile away. The three musketeers Ronnie, Danny and I were bored. It had not rained for weeks. The creeks were so dry there "weren't no" crawfish or lizards to look for; "fishin" was out of the question, and us boys needed something "excitin" to do.

We decided to hike back to the North Ridge of Hoyt's farm. It was wooded and would be cooler, and one could always see some wildlife there, squirrels, rabbits, unusual birds, occasional chipmunk, and there was a possibility of seeing a hawk. Mr. Swick's cistern was not far off the path we had chosen, and we knew we could always get a cool drink of water there if we needed to.

We walked on the East Side of the pasture where Hoyt's farm joined Cecil's place. Cecil was a brick mason and worked out of town during the week, doing construction work most of year, coming home mostly on the weekends. He had the most beautiful horses. One of my favorites was named Blaze (After the horse in Billy and Blaze book reprinted for C. W. Anderson in February 1946, and for the markings on his forehead.)

Cecil was a kind man and always was good to us boys, teaching us important things, like how to talk to, and be kind to animals. He had even let me help feed his horses. He had a great respect for all living things. He had warned us however, that Blaze was not a very tame horse and that one needed to stay clear, "cause he had a real mean streak."

As we walked along the barbed wire fencerow Danny noticed Blaze and a splotched gray/black mare standing under an apple tree. Both horses appeared unusually large this day. The daring started.... Then! ... The double daring ... Then triple dare, as to who was brave enough to ride Blaze. It was decided that Ronnie would go first, then Danny and I would ride last. The trio of brave western cowboy heroes crossed the barbed wire fence. Cautiously Danny and I watched as Ronnie inched ever so close to Blaze. The mare snorted, moving between Ronnie and the two sideline would-be horse riders.

Without warning Danny picked up a rock and threw it...hitting Blaze on his right flank. Blaze immediately lunged forward and with a snorting indescribable sound rose on his hind legs and began to kick wildly. Those front hoofs were like battle clubs. The mare charged toward Ronnie who at this point was petrified with eyes glazed in terror. He ran like I have never seen anyone run. Danny and I crossed the fence out of harm's way...but Ronnie was caught between two snorting, stomping demons. He saw a clear path and ran toward the fence. He lunged in a prone position as if sliding to home plate for the winning run.

His shirt-clothed belly rubbed the stony ground...his back raked the lower barbed wire. The barbs dug deep into his shirt, and flesh, tearing both as he slid underneath. Blood droplets be-

gan to form, and then small streams flowed from the punctured wounds in his back.

Danny laughed like a circus clown! I helped Ronnie to his feet...took green leaves from a bush nearby and rubbed over the slits to help stop the bleeding. Ronnie and I proceeded toward home. Danny ran off toward his house, still laughing that signature hyena laugh.

Ronnie's Mom administered the treatment necessary to ward off infection and stopped the little bleeding that had continued. He still carries those battle scars today. Through the years the telling of this story has changed somewhat from the original event.

Ronnie and I are all that is left to tell the story...Danny died in a freak gun accident a few weeks later.

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# THE STORE

by Shannon D. Byrd



While on an evening stroll around our neighborhood, the old Green Valley store caught my eye just a little differently tonight. Something about it just jumped out at me - beckoning to memories stored up in the wells of my mind. Wanting to capture the scene, I took my cellphone out and snapped a quick photo. Illuminated by a nearby streetlight against a dark blue summer night sky, it may not look like much now; but this little community store was once a very special place, during my childhood.

Let me attempt to properly set the scene. In the early 1980s, Big Cove was a completely different world. We were safe. We knew practically every family from the upper end to the lower end (how we locals describe the north and south sides of the Cove). The Huntsville City limits hadn't crept into our corner of the county just yet. "Hampton Cove" had not been built and there was still very little traffic on Old Big Cove Road. We children could ride our bikes miles from home and play outside all day long with our cousins and friends - at least until dark and the very few streetlights that we had began coming on. This is back before Big Cove had so much as a traffic light - even at the highway. Most of our neighbors were family, and all the subdivisions that you see today were

just bean, cotton and corn fields.

The old store was located right in the heart of the Cove and was a part of the "Green Valley Acres" development - Big Cove's first (some-what) planned neighborhood, which was situated around the manmade Green Valley Lake. It was located at the end of our family drive, which bears my grandfather's name, and caddy-corner across Old Big Cove from my great-grandparents' homeplace. The store was super convenient for local families who needed to grab a couple of grocery items without having to "go to town". My mother used to send me down to the store to pick up a loaf of bread or a gallon of milk. I couldn't have been more than five years old when she started sending me down there. The only threat of danger was that one of the neighbors' dogs might get after me... and they sometimes did.

Many was the time that I had saved up a fist full of loose change and walked down to the store to buy a little brown paper sack full of penny candy. I loved the little chocolate footballs and can still taste them in my mind, though it has been years since I've actually had one. There were so many different little candies to choose from and though it looked like I bought enough to last a few weeks, it was usually gone in just a couple of days.

The store was a meeting place for cousins and friends on their way from one house to another. Even if we weren't going in to buy anything, it was just common ground in the neighborhood. Very many phone calls with one particular first cousin of mine usually consisted of, "You wanna come over? Meet me at the store!" Once there, we walked back to whoever house we were going to play. I'm now forty-four years old and drive past the store every single day that I leave my house, which I built next door to my parents' home,

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**You know the economy is really bad when  
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where I grew up. And most days, I just see the store as it is - a dilapidated old building on the corner. But this evening, this one single nighttime frame has taken me on a tour through faint memories of one of the most special times of my life - the innocence of my childhood. I wish, if only for a day, I could go back to one of those summer days. A time before Nintendo and long before cell phones. A time when we had no worries, no pressures of daily life. Our only function was to eat, sleep, and play. I wept that evening for my children - one of whom has already married and started a life of her own - because they'll never know what we had back then. We didn't even know it ourselves at the time. I don't remember when it happened; but one day, I went outside to play with my friends for the very last time. And my childhood was over.

If you're ever driving through Big Cove and come across this old shell of a building with its busted windows and vines growing up the walls, try to look back about forty years. You'll see a few bikes laying on the ground - maybe a couple on kickstands, and a group of young boys with nothing on their minds except having good, clean, innocent fun. One particular boy, with white-blond hair, a silly grin, and a small gap between his teeth... that's me. If you see him, tell him to take it all in and enjoy every moment. This time will end far too soon.

## REMEMBERING DOUG MILLER AUG. 25, 1956 - JUNE 7, 2022



Doug Miller passed away on June 7th after a two-year battle with cancer. Doug was born in Huntsville, graduated from Madison Academy in 1974, and began his career with the Post Office in 1977 at the Ryland Post Office where he was the Postmaster relief. After 32 years of service, he retired in 2009 as the Plant Manager of the Huntsville Mail Processing Facility. After retirement, he and his family moved to Brownsboro and he enjoyed

life, playing and writing music, and working in their vegetable garden.

Doug was also a musician and songwriter. He loved playing guitar and singing, but writing was his passion. He played in many places around the Huntsville area, playing all types of music. He was also known to bring his guitar to work and play for his employees if they had to work on a holiday.

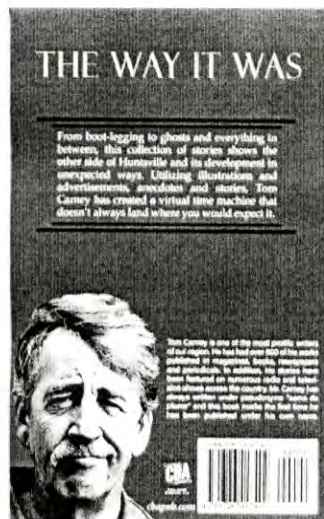
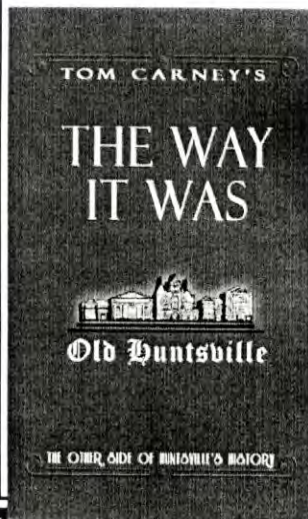
Doug's Dad was Malcolm Miller whom most of our Old Huntsville magazine readers remembered as a fabulous storyteller. Malcolm was so very proud of Doug and would brag about him to anyone who would listen. Doug played for Malcolm when he had his last big birthday party at Tut Fann Veterans Home, before he passed away.

Doug is preceded in death by his parents Malcolm Wayne Miller and Mary Frances Miller (Boyett). He is survived by his loving wife of 35 years, Susan Miller (Houston), sister Marie Bittle of Brownsboro, Brother Tommy Miller (Lisa) of Toney, sister-in-law Karen McLendon of Brownsboro, sons Chris Foster of Brownsboro and Tommy Miller of Huntsville, grandchildren Grace Foster, Houston Foster, and Cooper Foster, all of Brownsboro, and many nieces and nephews. A special thank you to Doug's nurse Natalie, from Caring For Life Hospice.

### "THE WAY IT WAS,"

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BY TOM CARNEY



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# Singing with the Choir

by Elizabeth Wharry

My mother was the choir director at our church for many years. I grew up sitting with the choir. Once I turned 16, I was finally allowed to join.

One Wednesday night during practice, my mother announced that she needed three soloists.

The Bishop was coming the second Sunday in July. The pastor had already handed my mother six of the Bishop's favorite Communion hymns. She went on to say that anyone could audition and the choir would choose the three soloists.

My mother and the organ-

ist had picked out the three hymns. The choir voted for me. A gentleman named John, who was chosen to sing "Bread of Life" and Judith was chosen to sing "Panis Angelicus". My solo was "Let us Break Bread Together".

The second Sunday in July finally arrived. The 11am Mass was packed. The pastor and priest were assisting the Bishop. Finally, it was time for Communion. John did a wonderful job! The organist played a brief interlude before giving me the nod.

I got to the chorus and made the mistake of looking at the Bishop. Instead of singing "When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun, oh Lord have mercy on me", I sang "When I fall on my face with my knees to the rising sun".

I got "the look" from my mother. In order to preserve continuity, I sang the same

thing through the entire hymn. It was not intentional the first time! Judith sang her solo beautifully.

Afterwards, the Bishop came up to the choir loft and commented on the lovely job the choir did. He then asked who the middle soloist was. I sheepishly answered. He asked my name, and I told him. He also warned my mother not to yell at me. I reminded him that he had confirmed me a few years back. He told me that he couldn't remember all the kids he confirmed. I reminded him that my confirmation name was Charity. He remembered, and smiled.

Have a safe and happy 4th of July!

**"My mom and dad have something in common. They both don't want any more kids."**

*Bessie, age 8*

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# PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

## *Handling Cat Aggression: Some causes and solutions*



### **Adding a Second Cat**

Many people adopt a second cat thinking that the resident cat will be happy. This is a risky move. Just because your cat is sweet and loving with you doesn't mean he's going to be sweet to another cat.

Although you can increase the chances that they will get along or at least tolerate one another by making proper introductions, there's no way to predict whether cats will get along with each other. Unfortunately, there's no training method that can guarantee that they ever will. But we're here to help negotiate a truce.

### **Territorial Aggression**

This occurs when a cat feels that an intruder has invaded her territory.

- A cat may be aggressive toward one cat (usually the most passive), yet friendly and tolerant with another.
- Problems often occur when a new cat is brought home, a young kitten reaches maturity, or a cat sees or encounters neighborhood cats outside.
- Typical behavior includes stalking, chasing, ambushing, hissing, loud meowing, swatting and preventing access to places (such as the litter box, bedroom, etc.).
- Female cats can be just as territorial as males.

### **Inter-Male Aggression**

Adult male cats may threaten, and sometimes fight with, other males. This is more common among unneutered cats. They may fight over a female for a higher place in the pecking order or to defend territory.

Cats stalk, stare, yowl, howl and puff up their fur (picture the arched back of the Halloween cat) to threaten each other. If one does back down and walk away, the aggressor, having made his point, will usually walk away as well.

If no one backs down, cats may actually fight. They may roll around biting, kicking, swatting, and screaming, suddenly stop, resume posturing, fight again, or walk away. If you see signs that a fight may occur, distract the cats by clapping loudly, tossing a pillow nearby, or squirting them with water. These actions can also be used to break up a fight. Keep your distance, and never put body parts in the middle of a fight; you could be injured.

### **Defensive Aggression**

This behavior occurs when a cat tries to protect himself from an animal or human attacker he believes he can't escape. This can occur in response to the following:

- Punishment or the threat of punishment from a person.
- An attack or attempted attack from another cat.

### **Redirected aggression**

Cats direct this type of aggression toward another animal, or even a person, who didn't initially provoke the behavior. For example, your cat is sitting in the window and sees an outdoor cat walk across the front yard. He gets very agitated because that cat is in his territory. You pet him; he turns and bites you. He doesn't even know who you are at that point — he's so worked up about the cat outside that he attacks the first thing that crosses his path.

### **Consult with a Veterinarian**

Your first step should always be to contact your veterinarian for a thorough health examination. Cats often hide symptoms of illness until they're seriously ill; your aggressive cat may be feeling sick and taking out his misery on others.



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# The Revenge of Frank Gurley

by Tom Carney

The year was 1914 and the Civil War had been a memory for almost a half-century. Capt. Frank Gurley was in the twilight of his days. A hero and defender of Huntsville and North Alabama, Gurley had tried to live a peaceful existence since those long ago days when he had pledged his honor and life to the Confederate States of America.

As Captain of the 4th Alabama Cavalry, he kept in touch with the remaining men who had fought beside him against the northern aggressors. Gurley felt it his duty to represent these men and do for them all he could in matters pertinent to them.

In the fall of 1914 it was brought to his attention that one D.B.F. Whitaker was on the pension rolls of the State of Alabama Pension Bureau for the relief of Confederate soldiers and sailors. Whitaker was listed on the pension rolls as a private in Company D of the 49th Alabama Regiment.

Certainly a commonplace occurrence for a surviving veteran of the Confederacy.

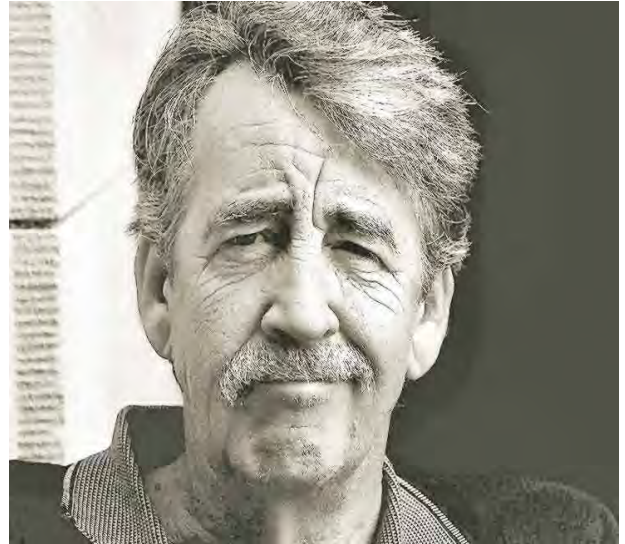
The only problem with Whitaker's name on the pension rolls was the fact that he was also on the pension rolls of the United States of America as having served as a yankee soldier!

In his application for pension relief from the State of Alabama, Whitaker stated that he was an enlisted private from March 10, 1864 until July 3, 1865. Capt. Gurley knew from his men that Whitaker had only served in the Confederate Army a short time and then had deserted to join the Union Army, and now, nearly fifty years later, Whitaker was drawing a pension from both sides of the conflict!

This was an affront to every brave soul who had fought and sacrificed everything for the Rebel cause.

Gurley would not stand by and let such an injustice continue. The wounds of the Civil War were deep and the people of North Alabama had suffered enough without having to endure the indignity of giving a turncoat a pension.

On October 31, 1914, Frank



Gurley wrote to the Pension Bureau in Montgomery revealing all he knew about the Rebel traitor. Three days later Whitaker was sent notice that he had been charged as ineligible for a pension because he was a deserter from the Confederacy and was drawing a Union pension. If he failed to respond to the charges, it would be taken as an admission of guilt and loss of pension.

D.B.F. Whitaker never responded to these charges, was dropped from the rolls and never heard from again.

In some small way Capt. Frank Gurley, C.S.A., had come again to the defense of Huntsville and North Alabama. He had restored to his native land its honor and dignity and driven out the yankee invader from his home.

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# A CHICKEN NAMED HORACE

by Catherine Clemons  
Cameron



My daughter Gail was 3 years old, when our neighbor Horace Hollaway drove up. In his huge hands he held a tiny fluffy yellow chicken. He told Gail that he had brought it to her for a pet because it had no mother to care for it. Gail was really excited about it, since we had no pets, and no small children lived nearby. I had to be her playmate, as we lived out in the country at that time.

We found a cardboard box and I lined it with newspaper. We named it Horace. I thought to myself, this is not going to be fun. I managed to feed it table scraps, with a bowl of water nearby. Gail's dad went to a neighbor, who had a chicken-house full of little chicks and got some food for Horace.

It became a chore for me to clean up behind Horace. We didn't know if Horace was a he or she. Late in the afternoon, Horace was ready to go to sleep. It's amazing that animals are born or hatched with the instinct to tell time. (Remember how a rooster would wake you about daylight?).

When it got older and could hop on the couch, it would come on to my shoulder and under my long hair and it would say "peep," "peep", "peep" and go to sleep. Then I would put him

in his box for the night with it closed. It would let us know when it was time to get up, better than an alarm clock.

Later that year in 1957, Gail's dad Robert had to be gone for a week to North Carolina to train for a new job that he worked at for 34 years.

I didn't drive at that time, so my sister-in-law Ruth Cameron drove me and Gail to my mother and dad's house, about 7 miles away, to stay a few days. She let us out about 1/2 of a mile away so we wouldn't have to open and close the gate to the pasture. She and her husband Clyde fed our other chickens.

Gail was carrying Horace in his box with a string around it and I was carrying our clothes as we walked up a short path by the cotton field. We had no phone, so we surprised my folks. Mother came out on the

porch, astonished as to why we were here.

Gail went running to her and said, "Grandmother, I brought Horace." Mother told me later that she wondered what in the world Horace was.

Horace thrived and soon developed feathers and his bigger red comb let us know that he was a rooster. When he began to use those larger wing feathers and began to fly around the house, I told Gail we would have to put him outside with the other chickens.

At night, we would bring him inside. He would come to the back door and let us know it was bedtime. Yes, chickens can fly, not too high nor very far in distance, like birds do. He was almost grown when he disappeared. We never knew what happened to him. My little girl sure did miss him.

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# BACK IN THE "COULD OLE DAYS"

by M. D. Smith, IV



Of course, we've all had conversations about something in our distant past, and we fondly remember the times and the simplicity of our youthful life. The cost of a Coke was a nickel or maybe a dime if you were born later than me.

I can recall walking down my street with my single-shot .22 caliber rifle over my shoulder on the way to a wooded area to hunt squirrels — and a rabbit if I was fortunate. Nobody cared. I'd have a partial box of 22-shorts in my pocket because they were perfectly adequate to kill a squirrel, and they were cheaper than the long-rifle version needed for larger game.

As a kid, I'd come home before dark for dinner in the summer. I didn't have a watch, and it was the season when we moved eating time for that reason, and my dad would work in the yard until the glow of sunset diminished. Daylight savings time only started by law in 1966.

Now, I am much older. My reflections are not only on my youth and teen life but years not so long ago.

Thirty years ago, I could almost "dance all night". I could still go for a three-mile morning run and ride my bike at noon for an hour on the city and neighborhood streets. I'd think nothing about going to a ham radio convention and standing for hours, walking the many aisles in the VBC. On weekends, I could sometimes take a 40-mile bike ride with the local Spring City Cycling Club.

In 1996 the first hip wore out and had to be replaced — no more running. But biking, walking and swimming were fine. Seven years later, I had the other hip done, damaged it a month later, had more surgery, and it never got completely okay. Lately, I have had to use a cane to walk.

Don't get me wrong — I'm not complaining. But those of you who can no longer do many of the physical things you once did probably look back at the days when you could do the active things you miss. I, too, miss the things I could do not very long ago. I got an email from a friend who is a notoriously bad speller. He mistakenly uses malaprops — a similar sounding and almost-right word, but with a different meaning — like "The police have comprehended two auspicious persons." Instead of the words "apprehended" and "suspicious".

My buddy sent me the earlier line, where he accidentally replaced "good" with "could" in referring to the old days.

When you pass 80, you accept that "body-wise" things will simply not work the way they did in the past. Remember when you could sleep all night, pee with ease whenever needed and hold it if necessary? The time when you could read the fine print in a residential telephone directory without glasses, and you could eat almost whatever you wanted and not gain weight - those were glorious days.

From now on, when I recall the past, twenty or more years ago, I'm going to begin my memories by saying, "Back in the 'Could ole days' when I was younger..."

**A dog goes into a hardware store and says, "I'd like a job." The owner says, "We don't hire dogs. Why don't you join a circus?" The dog answers, "What would a circus do with a plumber?"**

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# A Special Week at Camp Cha-La-Kee

by Jim Thorne

In July of 1967 I was part of 30 counselors and staff at Camp Cha-La-Kee in Guntersville awaiting the YMCA buses. The clients arriving had various degrees of mental and physical handicaps, were sponsored by the Lion's Club. It would be a very special time that I'll never forget.

Soon after the chaos subsided and counselors with their campers in tow made their way to the cabins. I was assigned a blind male thirteen years of age who was very physically capable. Most of my anxiety had diminished by the time I had collected his bag and his baritone ukulele. I had never been around a sightless person and was about to learn a great deal from a very talented and personable young man who was a student in Talladega.

As we headed up the hill to our cabin I grabbed him by the arm to lead him. He very quickly let me know that that was not the way it was done. He informed me that he would hold my arm because it made him feel more secure. I warned him of obstacles on the path (mostly tree roots and pinecones) as we made our way to the cabin area.

The cabins were built with two dorms, one on each end with six sets of bunk beds and a room outside each dorm room with a single set of bunk beds. We were assigned one of the smaller rooms and to my surprise he selected to sleep on the top bunk.

After we set up his bunk and stored his bag I familiarized him with the cabin and the bath house behind so that he could better navigate the area.

Soon it was time for the dinner meal so we headed down to the dining hall. As we walked down the trail with him holding onto my arm, he suddenly stopped and

asked as he pointed, "There's a tree right there isn't there?" Stunned, I replied, "Yes, how did you know?" He explained that he could hear it, meaning that he could hear the sound of our walking bouncing off the tree.

I was totally shocked by that and other things I learned from him in the coming days. When we walked into the dining hall he told me about how big the room was and that it was built with concrete blocks and had a concrete floor. His eating was a bit messy but once I told him what was on his plate and where the food was located on it, he had no difficulty. I was having it pretty easy in comparison to some other counselors.

The next day he participated in all the activities. He enjoyed swimming, boating and canoeing, horseback riding, jumping on the trampoline, and with my help archery. I mentioned he had the ukulele. At the night programs and other times during the week he entertained the group with his playing the ukulele and singing. His signature song and my favorite

was "Red Rubber Ball" which was released the year before. He was a very talented young man.

One of my responsibilities as business manager that I kept during this week was collecting the mail. Mail call was each day before lunch. We would walk down the road to the mail box close to the camp entrance and sometimes had to wait a few minutes for the mail.

During one of those times I asked him about colors and how he imagined them. He could describe them very accurately without ever having seen them. He also described shapes and sounds. Once a bee buzzed by his head and he told me what note and octave the sound was. I think I remember it was B flat - no pun intended!

I enjoyed my association with him and the other campers that "special" week and was saddened when it came to an end.

The buses rolled back in on Saturday morning and with a lot of hugs and tears my new friends boarded them to be taken back to their homes where they would look forward to the next summer.



## BELLA

Hello, my name is Bella. I am 3 years old and am a Terrier Cross Mix. I'm a nice friendly girl and came to the Ark Animal Shelter in May 2022. The people I was living with left me behind when they left. Some kind neighbors brought me here when they discovered I was all by myself at a house. I heard someone say I was abandoned. I have been to the vet and gotten my shots but need to go back again before I am ready to be adopted. The Ark wants to make sure I am healthy and spayed before I go to my forever home. I am a small dog at 26 pounds so will not take up a lot of room at a home. I like to run around and am very active so I would like a backyard to play in, when I am not in the house with my new family. The Ark volunteers are nice but I would like to have a forever home with people who will make me a member of their family. If you come to the Ark, ask to see Bella, that's me.

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# Growing Up by the Weatherly Spring

by Bob Baudendistel

Back in the mid 1970s, life in the southeastern sections of Huntsville carried lots of fun and adventure. One of the most unique places to visit had to be the Weatherly Spring which fed a small pond with its year-round crystal clear waters. What made this cold water spring seem so unique was the fact that it was located well out in the open valley and not back against the foot of a mountain as most all of the springs typically were. Instead, this watering hole seemed to pop up in a wooded area out close to the main channel of the Aldridge Creek.

Back before Bailey Cove Road was extended south of Weatherly Road and directly adjacent to the spring, its waters flowed out across an open channel and into the main creek. As young adventure seekers, we would often go hiking out near the spring and across the open pastures as the spring offered the perfect swim-

ming hole for relief from the hot summertime weather. Wildlife was plentiful in those days as were many larger trees.

I have read some papers about the spring and learned that it had always been regarded as a popular campsite, hangout, and even a more permanent homestead throughout the history of the area. Native Americans who once lived down at the Tennessee River often travelled up through the Aldridge Creek Valley in search of food. The spring offered them a rest stop for water during their travel.

After the first Caucasian settlers worked into the area, the spring was said to be where the Scottish immigrant Peter Weatherly built his first cabin. A stone wall was also erected right at the spring to help retain water for his agricultural uses. Peter later purchased hundreds of acres of nearby land during the public land sales. Clear running water was considered a highly valued resource back in these times, therefore living close to a spring such as this was considered vital.

Another neat piece of history relating to the spring took place during the ravages of the Civil War. The Union Army occupied a camp site way up the valley close to the foot of Monte Sano. Whenever the word got out that

the Feds were marching through the valley towards the river, a young sharecropper who lived on the Weatherly Farm was tasked to go jump in the pond right at the spring, and stir up a bunch of mud from the bottom.

This transformed the pond and its clear running stream into an unattractive mud hole, and so whenever the Feds would come marching through looking for a potential rest stop with a watering hole, they just kept right on going. The Weatherly Family used this strategy throughout the war, as it seemed to work quite successfully.

Beginning in the early 1960s, as new residential subdivisions were being built all around the spring, the City of Huntsville later built Willow Park in the immediate vicinity and included a concrete walkway over to the spring along with several park benches. These efforts helped to preserve the spring and the natural beauty that surrounded it.

The rest of the park area includes a playground, soccer fields, picnic pavilions, and tennis courts. While taking a short walk over to find the spring today, one will still find the year-round flow of crystal clear waters rising from beneath the surface just as the first people to see the spring did long ago.

Old Ad Run in 1994 Old Huntsville Magazine, Issue 42



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# The Missing Buick

by Bill Wright



It was several years ago when I received a request from a relative wanting to borrow my Buick automobile for about 2 hours to go shopping at Parkway Place Mall. I told her that would be okay.

Two hours later I received a telephone call from her. She told me she had finished shopping but could not find the Buick in the parking lot. She said she had walked several parking rows in the area where she always parks, and the Buick was not to be found. I told her I would be there in about 15 minutes.

As I was driving my truck to Parkway Place Mall my thoughts went back in time to years ago when I had another vehicle stolen and it was a horrible experience. In this incident the driver went around a curve too fast and crashed into a roadside mailbox. A witness said he jumped out of my car and ran from the scene. I spent many hours dealing with the Police Department, towing company, impounding lot company and finally the auto body shop.

Additionally, I received a telephone call from owner of the roadside mailbox wanting me to pay for his destroyed mailbox. I explained to him that it was a stolen vehicle, and I had no responsibility to replace his mailbox. I never heard from him again.

When I arrived at Parkway Place Mall my relative was upset, believing like me that the Buick was stolen. I told her we would start at one end of the parking lot and drive each parking row looking for the Buick before we telephoned the police. I told her that as we entered each parking row to push the horn button on the Key Fob so that if the Buick was in that row, we would hear the horn blow. She told me that is what she had done when walking the parking rows in the area where she had parked the Buick and never heard a horn blow.

At that moment I was convinced the Buick was stolen but continued to drive each parking row before calling the police.

We were about halfway done driving the entire parking lot when I spotted the Buick. In its bronze/gold color it never before looked so good in the bright sunlight. It was then my relative remembered she had parked in a different area than where she usually parks. When I stopped my truck behind the Buick, I took the Key Fob to test the horn. When I pushed the horn button the horn blew loud and clear.

I asked my relative which button she had pushed on the Key Fob - she pointed to the button that releases the trunk lid.

**If you have company coming over and don't want to cook, add a few teaspoons of sugar and cinnamon to an empty pie tin, slowly burn over the stove, Your home will smell like you've been cooking all day!**

**"Where lipstick is concerned, the important thing is not the color, but to accept God's final word on where your lips end."**

*Jerry Seinfeld*

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# REMINISCING

by *Iolanda Hicks*

June 2022's issue of Old Huntsville Magazine No 352 was filled with so many wonderful stories and triggered so many memories. "A Quiet Hero", WOW!! What a story of a Dad and a true veteran. My Dad William McNamee too would always have the flag flying and when it looked slightly worn, a new one replaced it.

William was born in Norristown Pennsylvania in 1920, to the grown children of an English and an Irish immigrant. He never missed a day of school and at graduation, he received a certificate officially stating that very fact. He was offered a scholarship to a Michigan University for his cross-country running abilities at Norristown High but chose to enlist instead in the Army in 1939. He became part of the 66th Panther Division under General Patton. Dad layed mines in the Panama Canal, did sentry duty on fog covered nights in England, and got wounded in the European Theater becoming a Purple Heart recipient.

An added blessing was that he missed being on the S.S. Leopoldville, which was torpedoed in the English Channel on Christmas Eve 1944. Over 2000 infantry from the 66th Panther Div were on that converted transport. Over 800 of those American soldiers died that day and made this the 3rd worst naval disaster in US history.

In 1946, William met the love of his life when stationed in Italy, married her and came back to the states in October 1947, passing through the Ellis Island point of official entry. William's wife carried their unborn first child across the Atlantic and SHE was born at his next station of service. Ft. Monroe, Virginia. Two years later, Dad, Mom and me (at 2 years old) crested the hill at Andrew Jackson Way. Dad was assigned to Redstone Arsenal. It was July 4th, 1950.

As I continued reading the Old Huntsville, the stories I read were bringing back so many memories: mine and the stories told by my parents. The

story of the "Lyric" mentioned that "Ghost-space on Washington Street" now staring you in the face when you drive down-town. That brought back the memory of fun times going to the movies on those special Saturdays and passing that little place next door where you could get your watch repaired, a very small jewelry shop. The 5 and 10 on the other side was always a good place to go! Taking my drivers test and getting my license was a scary day for me and just a block before that fun theater was the famed Schiffman Building, Tallulah Bankhead's birth place and the place where I became a genuine 16 year old licensed driver!

"The Old Days" and "Times are Changing" brought back all the times I would get on the bus at nearly 10 years old and go downtown to the library that was located on the north corner next to present day Early Works. Dad's favorite gas station, Pure Gas, was at the now Early Works corner. I also remember the swimming pool at Big Spring Park where The Art Museum now stands and seeing President Nixon from a distance when he was there in the 1970s.

I had a small panic attack a couple of months ago, while taking a short cut down-town, going south. Passing the old Sterchis Furniture Store, now a storage facility, I visualized that ice cream soda shop and pharmacy that was on that next

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**"Yes, I have a good reason for speeding. I need to get there before I forget where I was going in the first place."**

**Old Geezer to Policeman who pulled him over**

corner, now long gone. Down a ways on the right, a Hilton stands where the Hale Brothers Furniture Store stood. This was the first business that gave my Dad credit when he first came to Huntsville in the early 50s. What fantastic Christmas parades we had down-town when I was little! The route was so much different than the parades of these times, I remember sitting on Dad's shoulders and I missed nothing! When my panic attack hit me, I almost felt lost in a city where I had lived for 72 years. I know we have to change to progress but I still remember how it was: peaceful and comfortable. It was quiet then. Now the city is so full of energy!! I know that is the way it should be for growth.

"My Sheltered Memories" triggered where we lived "Back in the day". One day when we were cutting through town to get to 5-Points, I remember Mom pointing out the place we stayed when we came to Huntsville on July 4th, 1950. It was one of those big houses downtown, now a historic landmark and at that time, the owner rented rooms. The one stipulation was no children. Mom said they kept me quiet and hidden until they could find somewhere else to live. I don't know how they did it. I was 2. We moved soon to Hillcrest Court off of Triana. Believe or not, Hillcrest Court is still there with what looks like the same or similar duplexes we lived in back then. When number 2 sister was born. Dad bought a house at 1910 Hastings Road, 3 houses down from Dunegan (sp) Lane, a 2 lane bumpy dirt road (now known as Drake Avenue). Dad would keep fit running up and down that dirt road to the railroad tracks. Later he would go to the garage, at the back of the house, to practice boxing, which he loved.

Parkway City was built on the other side of the railroad tracks. I remember well the day Hutchens Hardware Store, on the first end of that strip mall, had a special grand opening. I met the Cisco Kid - yep, the one from the TV show on Saturday

mornings! Boy was he tall! I was so short and remember barely reaching his waist but I had a good view of The Kid under that Sombrero. Wonderful memories!!

One more story to comment on and then I will close my memory journey. What a neat story the late Malcolm Miller wrote, in 2011, about Tom Carney in "A Lost Treasure". Being a late contributor and reader of the Old Huntsville Magazine, I learned much about the man whose stories I had been reading. What a legacy he has left and how wonderful that his wife, Cathey, so talented herself, has continued to pass on these wonderful stories from the past. I so look forward to every issue and wish that it were published once a week than once a month.

Oh well, I know I am wishing for too much so I am thankful for having something special to look forward to!



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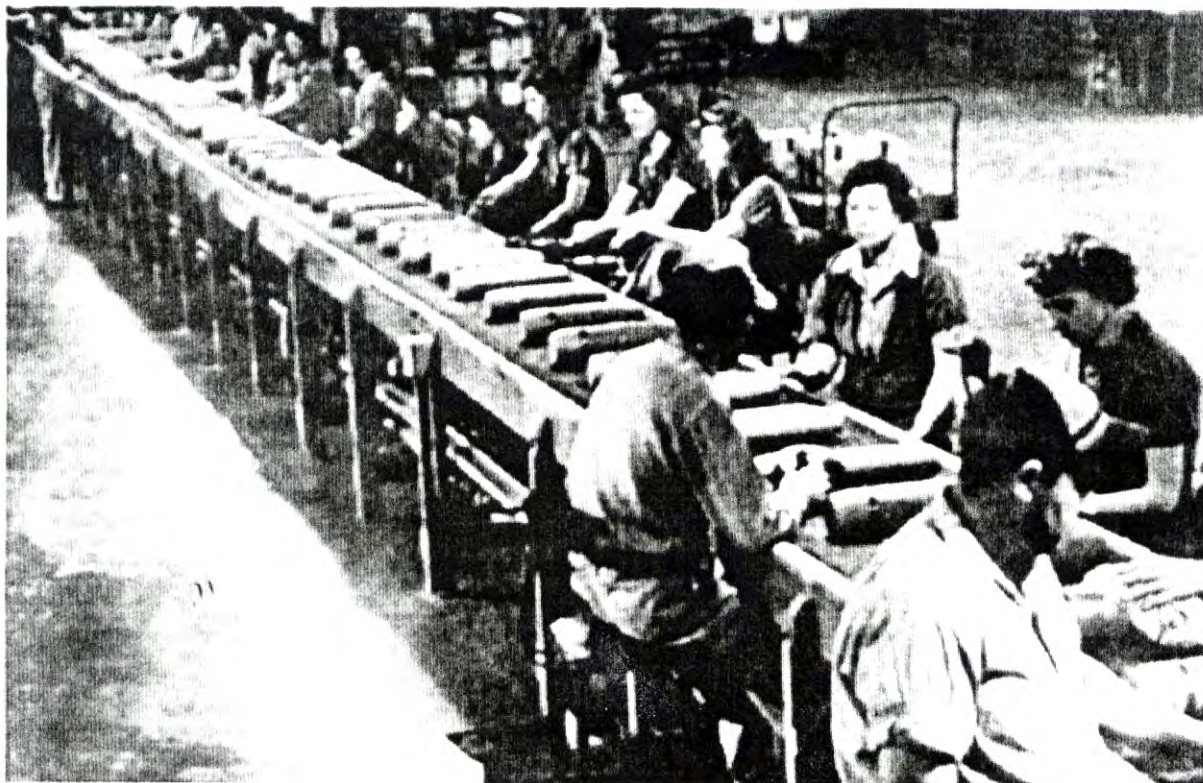
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