



No. 354

August 2022



# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



## Do You Know Sonnie?

What would we find if we  
could use a straight edge  
across time?

Starting at the moment  
when Dr. Sonnie W. Hereford  
III decided to send his son to  
Huntsville City School and  
ending nearly 60 years later?  
Traveling through the life of  
Sonnie W. Hereford IV, the  
only son in a family of six  
children.

*Also in this issue:* Remembering Redstone Park; Searching for a Ghost; Little Gem Hamburgers; Military Years; Madison County Fair; True Southern Recipes and much much more!

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# Do You Know Sonnie?

by John H. Tate

Many people in Huntsville, the state of Alabama, and across the United States know of Sonnie Wellington Hereford IV. The little six-year-old boy who walked into history. While holding the hand of Dr. Sonnie Wellington Hereford III, his father, Sonnie was the first Black child to integrate into the primary school system in Alabama.

Along with Alabama newspapers and television news programs, the Herefords' story can be found in the archives of Notre Dame Magazine, Chicago Tribune, HuffPost, Philadelphia Tribune, The Atlantic magazine, and others. Yes, you may have read many stories about Sonnie W. Hereford IV, but do you know Sonnie?

Sonnie's life is more than just a page in Alabama history. As with all historical personalities, Sonnie also has to deal with the everyday chores of living. This story attempts to put warm

flesh on the cold bones of history. We will take brief snapshots of Sonnie's life since that historic day to aid this endeavor. The reader can judge if you know Sonnie a little better at the end of this story.

When asked about those early school years and some of the troubles he ran into with the other students, Sonnie said, "I was a very good student; I made straight A's. I was an outstanding athlete; whenever we went out for recess and played football or whatever we were playing, I was one of the better ones. If we raced, I was one of the fastest ones. There was nothing the kids could pick on me for. Kids did not know they were supposed to not like someone because of their color at that age. I only had trouble with those taught to hate by their parents or older brothers and sisters."

Sonnie had a powerful sense of self-awareness at a very young age. In his own words, "I understood that I was representing more than myself, and more than my family. Even at six years old, I understood that part of it."

One can only imagine the internal stress of doing well and being a shining example for one's family and even the entire Black culture. When you are doing all you can to be that example and not do anything that would bring a spotlight of shame to you or your fam-

**"Any ship can be a minesweeper. Once."**

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Old Huntsville, Inc. (USPS #8510)  
P.O. Box 4648  
Huntsville, Al 35815  
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Email - oldhuntsville@knology.net  
(Website) www.oldhuntsvillemag.com

Publisher - Cathey Carney

Advertising - (256) 534-0502  
Sales & Mrktg. - Cathey Carney  
Editor - Cheryl Tribble  
Consultant - Ron Eyestone, In Mem.  
Gen. Manager - Sam Keith  
Copy Boy - Tom Carney  
(in memory)

"Old Huntsville" magazine is a monthly publication. Annual subscriptions are \$50 per year for print copy and \$25 per year for digital. Copies can be found in boxes and machines throughout North Alabama.

For subscription change of address, mail new information to the above address.

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ily, there will always be that one person. You know that person, you are down to your last nerve, and they decide they want to jump rope with it.

Sonnie relayed a story in an article he penned for Notre Dame Magazine. He recalls, "... In second grade, I was on the playground and another second-grader named Roger started calling me names. I've never had a quick temper; I merely told him to leave me alone. Roger saw he wasn't getting under my skin, so he threw some dirt on me. That was more than I could take. We got into a fight, and I got him down and sat on his chest. I then scooped up dirt and put it all over him, head to toe. Our principal decided I would be the only one punished for this incident 'because of the amount of dirt Roger had on him'. I guess I had failed to understand the concept, which President Reagan would later refer to as a 'measured response.'" (1)

This writer had the pleasure of knowing Sonnie in the 70s; we attended Ed White Junior High School and Butler High School in Huntsville, Alabama. I am sure others knew who he was. However, I did not learn until after high school that my schoolmate Sonnie Hereford was the same boy who led the way for Black students into the Alabama school system in 1963.

During our conversation, I mentioned to Sonnie that I did not know his role in integrating the Huntsville School System until after high school. He stated, "That is interesting that you say that; because I never really made a big deal about it. I'm not sure I really appreciated it in my younger elementary school days. It wasn't until middle school I thought, 'You know, man, that's kind of something for the state of Alabama.'"

Sonnie stated that even in high school, he only talked

about that 1963 day and the subsequent events, if someone asked him about it. However, for the last twenty-five years, he has traveled the country doing presentations and giving speeches. He now speaks at churches, schools, and civic groups and does interviews with various publications.

As we continue exploring snapshots of Sonnie's life, how his name appears on Facebook offers us another view. His name appears as "Sonnie Hereford du Lac." As Sonnie explains, "The official name for Notre Dame is Notre Dame du Lac, which means 'Our Lady of The Lake' in French. So, I am Sonnie Hereford of The Lake."

Interestingly, as with all of us seeking our own identity, separate from the labels that others assigned to us, good or bad, adding "du Lac" to his name allows him to form an extended individual identity without separating himself from the historical Sonnie W. Hereford IV.


We had a lively conversation about why Sonnie chose Notre Dame as a college for



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his Engineering degree. Sonnie explains, "First of all, those are two separate things. I first chose to go to Notre Dame, then later changed my major to Engineering. Ever since I was a grade-schooler, Lindsey Nelson would be on T.V. with Notre Dame Football Highlights on Sunday nights at 9:00."

"My dad had always been a huge sports fan, especially football. He would let me stay up past my bedtime to watch the Notre Dame Football Highlights. I could see that it was a special place with a special spirit. So, I have been a Notre Dame fan since I was in grade school."

"In high school, when I had to get serious about where I wanted to go to college, not just who had a good football team. When I checked into Notre Dame, it measured up, so that is why I chose to go there."

The biggest smile Sonnie had displayed up to this point came as he told the next part about getting into Notre Dame. His eyes lit up, his voice went up an octave and he smiled from ear to ear.

Leaning back in his chair, Sonnie shared, "Another side story about how I got to Notre Dame. In 1974 my father and I were invited to New York City for the 20th anniversary of the Brown-vs-Board of Ed. That's the Supreme Court decision that struck down Separate but Equal. So, in 1974 the N.A.A.C.P. had a celebration in New York City for the 20th anniversary of the court decision; and I was invited to participate in a panel discussion."

"While in New York, I was invited to be on the Today Show. Edwin Newman interviewed me on the Today Show. It was the Spring of 74; I was the President-Elect for the Student Body at Butler High School. The following year I was going to be the Student Body Presi-

dent."

"One of the questions he (Edwin Newman) asked me was where I wanted to go to college. I got to tell the whole world I wanted to go to Notre Dame. A week or two later, I got a letter from the President of Notre Dame inviting me to apply."

Sonnie said the letter got tossed out some years ago with deep regret in his voice. However, he will attempt to see if the Notre Dame archives still have a copy. After all, the way Sonnie put it, "Of all of the mementos that I have saved, that is one I would really like to have back."

Sonnie originally entered the Pre-med program at Notre Dame; he was to follow his father into medicine. His father even set up a meeting with the Dean of the Medical School he attended, with the thoughts of Sonnie entering as a legacy student. What happened? After all, as long as he had decent grades, it was a sure thing.


As with most of us, Sonnie had to face some real-life issues. He elaborated, "When I got to Notre Dame, I enrolled in

Pre-med. My dad was a doctor; I assumed that was what I wanted to do. As it turned out, I didn't have a good stomach for blood, cutting of tissue, and stuff like that."

"I decided I was doing it for my dad and not for me. In the meantime, I really liked electronics. I liked the model railroad I had set up in my bedroom, and I liked the little kits you could buy from Radio Shack. So, at the end of three semesters, I decided to switch to Electrical Engineering."

Sonnie's Notre Dame class ring means a lot to him; it reminds him of past accomplishments, allowing him to face new challenges. He spoke about the difficult work of getting his undergrad and master's degrees.

What would we find if we could use a straight edge across time? Starting at the moment when Dr. Sonnie W. Hereford III decided to send his son to Huntsville City School and ending nearly 60 years later? Traveling through the life of Sonnie W. Hereford



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IV, the only son in a family of six children, Sonnie was blessed with two beautiful daughters.

The Hereford family name will always be associated with the primary schools in Alabama because of 1963 and 2016. Hereford still lives near Huntsville, wherein 2016, the Sonnie Hereford III Elementary School opened. That building has a plaque, too, embedded in the ground outside. It holds two footprints, one representing Sonnie and one representing his father. It says, in the words of Adam Harris of The Atlantic, "The steps of courage in the past have created the opportunities for those today." (2)

How about in his own family? How about his own personal legacy? Sonnie's eldest daughter, Beth, is a Professor at Syracuse University. His youngest daughter, Catherine, is an Instructor/Technical Trainer at Raytheon. Maren, Sonnie's grandson, the son of his youngest daughter, is part of the music industry in Nashville.

When asked what advice would he give himself if he could go back to the day he graduated from high school? With a look of deep reflection, he said, "I would tell myself to take better care of your relationships. Not just love relationships, but parent-child relationships, friends and other relatives; make more effort to stay close to them. Just in general, taking better care of my relationships."

(1) Notre Dame Magazine, Sonnie Wellington Hereford IV, "My Walk Into History" Spring 2007

(2) The Atlantic, Adam Harris, "The First Desegregation of Alabama's Public Schools" September 29, 2020.

Front page picture provided by Sonnie W. Hereford IV.



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# Don't Get Rattled!

by Elizabeth Wharry



It was August of 1988. That summer had been hot and dry. My husband had a meeting to attend in Charlottesville, VA. Since I wasn't in school yet, I decided to go with him.

The drive down the Blue Ridge Parkway was beautiful and uneventful. When we finally arrived at the hotel, we met up with his colleague Ron, and his family and introductions were made. We ladies decided to meet the next morning for breakfast.

Since the guys would be in meetings all day, we ladies decided to explore the old town. In the course of our rambling, the subject of the hotel came up. We both wondered just how new it was. (I would find that out later that day). Around 1 pm I noticed Beverly and her girls were starting to get tired. We decided to call it a day and went back to the hotel.

I'm not sure what they decided to do, however, I changed, grabbed a bottle of water and headed to the pool. As I got settled, I looked around. There was a rather large snake at the shallow end of the pool. The wooded hillside was behind me and I saw a workman outside. He was putting finishing touches on the landscaping. I felt something brush against my foot. I looked down to see a rattlesnake curling itself between my feet!

Terrified doesn't begin to describe what I was feeling. I knew instinctively to stay still. This was long before cell phones were around. I saw the workman, who was taking a break.

I didn't want to yell, so I modified the song Help. He got the message, and came close enough to see what was wrong. I saw him speaking into his radio. I closed my eyes and prayed. The next thing I knew, there were emergency vehicles and someone saying "just stay still."

Shortly after that, that same voice said "you can breathe now. I have the snake contained". I asked my hero of the moment what type it was. He said that it looked like a timber rattlesnake.

He escorted me to the ambulance, where I was asked a few questions and checked over. Since I had not been bitten, no further attention was needed. I was definitely rattled though!

I asked to speak to the workman who noticed that I was in trouble. The hotel manager said that the guys had knocked off around noon. One of the deputies who answered the call said "You must have had an angel looking out for you!"

Those who think revenge is sweet have never tasted love.

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# A Family Treasure

by Gerald Alvis



It was relatively small for what it represented and was an important part of a young girl's life for us, the boomers, the last generation to make use of it. It was made of wood with a piano type of hinge. Its size varied and it once was a staple, a long time ago, in some of the mom-and-pop department stores of the 50s and 60s. My wife kept hers for quite a while after we married. 3 to 4 feet in length it was, and a foot and half or so wide and deep, it was made of an aromatic wood. By now those who know what it is, have named the type of wood (cedar) and can remember its use. I would purchase things while my wife and I were dating. She would place them in the same type of chest, that many of her peers also kept at the foot of their beds.

There is a touch of romanticism attached to this piece of furniture/storage box that helped a young lady anticipate and prepare for her future and family. More specifically this item held some of the dreams of what it would be like, bringing a physical reality to thoughts of what was yet to be.

It was called a Hope Chest, made of cedar wood which deters insects (moths) from damaging the contents. A girl would begin acquiring items for her one-day home, at an early age. These were various sundry items necessary to start her household. I remember getting some bowls I found at a sale and proudly delivering them, to my then girlfriend. It must have meant a lot, she kept them on display in the kitchen for over 40 years. I didn't understand or fully appreciate but I just wanted to be a part of it. I guess it was my way of signaling at 16, that someday, I wanted my future with her. I'm glad she took the hint.

There was a greater focus on family and helping each other

in bygone years. Something that I work to instill in the coming generations and one of the reasons I write. That's the future I want to see come full circle. If we do that, stay together, raise our families and mean it when we say our vows, the rest I believe we will figure out. That's my hope, that's where I store my dreams. This core group is everything and it starts with the children.

Let's help them imagine a place, a future and prepare them. Though we can't go to each part of their journey, we can still be a part of it. That type of love lives beyond calendars. This example will echo in time.

I find purpose and comfort in this.

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# The Madison County Fair

by *Betty Miller Lewis*  
(Written for *Old Huntsville*  
magazine in 1994)



My sister Shirley and I were reared by our grandmother, Nin Hucks and our aunt, Nannie Hucks in the Big Cove area. The house that we lived in was located where the Huntsville Racquet Club is now located on Wimbledon Road, just off Dug Hill Road.

The biggest thrill of the year for us was going to the Madison County Fair. The fairground was then located on Church Street directly across the street from what is now Moody Mondays and was then the Fairground Cafe.

Each September we eagerly awaited the arrival of the fair. Since there was not a lot of money available, we always had to pick cotton to get enough to go to the fair. We picked cotton for our grandmother's tenants or our Uncle John and Uncle Herman. We had to hurry and "get a bale out". On the days previous to the fair while we were picking the cotton, we would discuss what rides that we liked, the fireworks, what friends that we might see and anything connected to the fair.

Sometimes, our younger sister Lucy would come for a visit and go with us. It would begin on Monday and end on Saturday night. We always went on Fridays. Our bedroom was located on the north side of the house and every night when we would be in bed, we could see the spotlight from the fair

shining across Monte Sano Mountain. I remember being so excited that I could not sleep. The closer to Friday the more excited we would get.

Finally, the big day would arrive and we would be up early. My grandmother and aunt would prepare fried chicken and biscuits to take for our lunch. By 10 o'clock Friday morning we were on our way in our aunt's '32 Plymouth automobile. When we arrived at the fairgrounds, we always went and looked over the livestock first, which consisted of horses, cows, chickens, goats, pigs, geese and other animals. Then we would go the next building and look at the Madison County Home Demonstration Club displays; quilts, canned goods and other crafts.

By this time, it was lunch time and we would head to the car which was parked in the field located on the fairgrounds. We would eat our meal of fried chicken and biscuits and could hardly wait until the midway opened.

Around one o'clock the midway would open and we would find all of the rides that we were not too scared to ride. My favorite was the merry-go-round when I was smaller but I was always too scared of the ferris wheel. I remember only riding it one time. We would walk the midway and watch the gaudy women shuffling on the platforms outside of the girlie shows and see some of the freak shows.

About two o'clock it was time to go to the grandstand acts which consisted of harness racing, clowns, magicians, and singers. After the afternoon grandstand acts were ended, we headed back to the midway.

By this time, dusk would be appearing and we would get on the rides again and just walk the midway. We would always see a lot of people that we knew. About nine o'clock the fireworks would be displayed and oh what a beautiful sight. After the fireworks, we would pile into the '32 Plymouth and head back across Monte Sano (it was then only a two-lane highway) to home, tired, and a little sad that we would have to wait another whole year to go again.

I will have to say that the fair was the highlight of my childhood years, even as a teenager.

My grandmother and aunt were stockholders in the fairground and received a share of the sale when it was sold in later years.



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# RUN THAT SOUND OUTTA TOWN!

by M. D. Smith, IV



Do you remember WHBS Radio, owned by the Huntsville Times, their slogan matching the call sign, "Huntsville's Best Station?" If so, you are an older resident because those call letters changed in 1958.

Rock and Roll had recently appeared in 1955 and proliferated. (The first Rock song was Bill Haley's Rock Around the Clock in late 1954). The Gerald Bartell Corporation radio stations began the "Top 40" format playing the Top 40 songs in Billboard Magazine. His stations became an instant number one.

The Smith Family lived in Birmingham, home of WYDE, playing the Bartell Top 40 format. My mother and father had recently bought WJIG in Tullahoma and were building WBYE in Calera, Alabama in 1957. The song formats were virtually identical to Bartell, but they expanded the weekly list to 50 songs, The "Family Top 50 Hits."

The much larger market of Huntsville was available because The Huntsville Times, owner of WHBS, was losing money with classical music all day long. They owned and made a fortune with Newspapers—they wanted out of radio, even one with more power at 5,000 watts than any other station in North Alabama.

Thus, on February 26, 1958, a newspaper article appeared on the lower front page that said, "WHBS Sale Is Revealed This Morning." It further noted that M.D. Smith, III bought it from the Times Company. He paid \$158,000 for the station and five acres of land.

The FCC must approve the sale of a broadcasting station, and in this case it took from February to late May to get approval. June 1, 1958 was set to be the day Smith would take control. The Times printed another story that day. "Smith Firm Gets Control Of WHBS - The Times Released Control At Midnight."

With summer starting and schools being out, it was a perfect time for Rock and Roll to make a big splash in Huntsville. The waves from that splash

were the talk of the town. Teens flocked to the new "sound-in-town". Young adults were also coming aboard because the Family Top-50 list also contained adult popular songs and stars in those days.

Of course, rock stars like Elvis, The Silhouettes, Everly Brothers, The Coasters and Buddy Holly were heard, but old favorites like Dean Martin, Pat Boone, and The Fontaine Sisters also had top hits on Billboard. WAAY played them all.

Do you remember Catch A Falling Star by Perry Como? How about Sugartime by the McGuire Sisters? And the great ballad, It's All In The Game by Tommy Edwards? If you were a teen or older in '58, you surely do. But, of course, adults of the time liked those songs also.

Not everyone liked the new sound—particularly the past listeners of WHBS and classical music. They hated the new sound. The radio station received phone calls and hate letters the first few months. When the station changed the call letters on July 4 with a massive contest for the person who could guess the day and time of the change-over for publicity and became "WAAY, Your Radio Way in Huntsville," protests reached a crescendo.

I know the newspaper would have loved to print the calls and letters they got to "Run that blasted sound out of town on a rail," and other not-so-nice threats and comments. But they didn't

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mention anything in print other than the July 4 call sign change in the newspaper.

The short article read, "Visitor Guesses Nearest Changing Time." It went on to state, "Mrs. John O. Walker of Washington, D.C., was the winner." She was the closest to the moment the announcer, who opened the sealed letter at 7:00 am, was ordered to use the new call, WAAY, at 9:30 am.

To assure no tie, thirty seconds was added. The winner was announced at 1:00 pm, along with an interview of the winner.

I suppose if you listened much of the day to classical music, and when WAAY came to town, with no other station playing classical, you had quite a jolt to your radio habits.

In addition to the music jolt, we had bright, warm, and friendly announcers, who were required to wear a smile while they spoke with a loud projecting voice. You could hear them outside the soundproof control booth where they ran the show and spun the platters.

Add to that the quick live "one-liners" that might be a wise thought, traffic, or weather announcement, plus the custom jingles that often played during every half-hour and short news summaries just before the hour and half-hour.

The radio show had to move fast to be the liveliest sound around—and the most hated by the old WHBS loyalists.

Eventually, the haters lost their voice being overwhelmed by the station's popularity that seemed to be doing everything a radio station could and every commercial was "produced." What's meant by that was first, two voices were required, like the co-anchors of today. Announcers stood by the recording

microphone belting out alternating lines, each trying to outdo the other in volume and enthusiasm.

The use of music background OR sound effects in commercials was another WAAY Radio signature.

One of the most famous and most successful commercials was the recorded sound of a man bawling like someone had stolen his candy.

"Waaaa, Waaaa," and announcer #1 said, "Who's That Cryin'?" Announcer #2 replies, "That's H. C. Ryan of Ryan's Furniture company."

Announcer #1 "Well, why's H. C. Ryan Cryin'?"

Announcer #2 "Because he's cut his prices in half and he's almost giving his furniture away."

The crying sound was a tad annoying but played 100 times a week, week in and week out, as the specific sales copy changed,

it became their successful audio trademark. Tons of people visited the store and kidded Ryan about it, but they also bought furniture—lots of it.

These are the things the "Run WAAY Outta Town" folks hated, but ninety percent of the rest of the population did not. As a result, WAAY Radio rocketed to the top of the ratings and record sales followed. It made so much money that when my father, at my prodding, bought WAFG-TV in 1963 when it was losing money, if not for the profits of radio keeping Channel 31 above water for several years, it would not have survived under our ownership.

But WAAY-TV survived, thrived, and became a media force over the coming decades.

I'm glad the "Classical Music Lovers" in Huntsville didn't "Run that sound outta town."



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**"I wonder if other dogs think that groomed poodles are members of a weird religious cult."**

**Rita Rudner**



**Ask  
Grandma**  
*by Mimi*

"Welcome to the South," I said. Having had a friend visiting from Seattle and her saying how hot it is down South, I just said, "That is what happens in the South in July and August."

It makes me wonder how we ever grew up with no air conditioner in the house or car in the fifties. However, our house had an enormous attic exhaust fan and windows for cross ventilation in every room. I didn't die of a heat stroke, although, at times, I felt like I might succumb to one.

Now, just as summer is hottest, it's time to get the little ones as well as the big ones school supplies. August is really too hot to send children back to school. The heat index was 105 degrees just the other day. I hope all the coaches have lots of water and Gatorade. Just watching the guys out in their football attire makes me wonder how they will survive the heat, along with the band members practicing their routines.

I can't wait for the first football game, just hope it is at night so we can cool off. I'm looking forward to watching Alabama's first game against Utah on September 3rd in Tuscaloosa and inside Denny Stadium. Who do you think is going to win?

I just opened one of those catalogs that seem to come to me in droves, and on the first page, guess what – Halloween stuff to order. That

might be pushing it a bit. I still have a kitchen drawer full of candy from last year. Wonder if I can recycle it? Why not? Sugar is sugar.

Just wanted to let all of my readers know that there was light at the end of the tunnel. I was turned down for trying to adopt a dog from a private breeder, which really hurt because she said I was too old. But I passed the cat adoption test from a lady in Knoxville. I now have a new rag-doll cat, Miss Gypsy Rose. She turned two at the end of July. She will probably outlive me, but that's okay. I have a son that will be sure to give her a good home. My other rag-doll, Leroy Higgins, is just delighted to have a mail-order bride. Our other cat, a Siamese, hisses and bares her teeth at the new resident.

Lots of things are happening at the end of this month – my birthday, don't worry, I'm not getting any older because I gave it to someone else, but I told my children I would still accept gifts.

Here's a further thought, Parents, are you setting the best example for your children? I hope so.

A heartfelt congratulation to M. D. Smith, IV, for graduating from Seton Hill University in Pennsylvania with another degree. This time he earned an MFA in Popular Fiction Writing. He also just published his thesis novel on Amazon in July. It's a romance story called Love In Turbulent Air. If interested, you can search for the title with his name.

So proud of him. All I can do is write my name on checks, but he says that is ENOUGH. Until next time, enjoy the day.

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# MR. EVERETT, MY NEIGHBOR

*by Nolan Myrick, written in the 1990s*

There was a farm across the river from us, toward Maysville. It belonged to a Mrs. Morrow when we first moved there in 1959. It was fixed up into three apartments. She had the farm up for sale for a long time. People moved in and out of the apartments all the time.

Then someone I didn't know too well from up the other side of Maysville bought it. I went to school with his son, Billy Everett. He was my friend and we had a lot of fun on the school bus. In 1967 he got a red Chevelle and I got a blue Chevelle. His was a Super Sport and was prettier than mine.

Mr. Everett grew cotton and some corn. He worked all the time and helped people around the community. He helped me a lot. I guess I was 17 or 18 then. I can't remember. He had some big John Deere tractors. I had a little 135 Massey Ferguson. He had a family that worked for him name Oliver. Oftentimes at dinner you would see those three John Deere tractors going toward his house. I believe Mrs. Everett cooked for a lot of people at dinner time.

His tractors pulled four bottom plows; my tractor had an old two-pan turning plow. His tractors could plow fast. My tractor just sort of bounced around in the field. It was too weak to do much work, but I had a good radio on it; you always heard loud music when I was in a field.

One day I was plowing at dinnertime and looked up in the road and saw those three big John Deere's going home for dinner. I had about 40 acres to plow and was doing about 5 acres a day. I decided to go to my house and plow some other day. I worked for Eastern Airlines so it didn't affect my living if I didn't plow every day. I stayed gone from that field for four or five days. I had other fish to fry. I did a lot of important stuff besides farming. I drank a lot of Double Colas at Maysville and sat on the bench in front of the store and hollered at a lot of people. You could enjoy yourself in Maysville.

I went back to my field to plow some more. Someone had already plowed it for me. They also had disked it for me. It was ready to plant.

**"Men think it's every woman's dream to find the perfect man. Every woman's dream is to eat anything she wants without getting fat."**

*Jennifer Green, Scottsboro*



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It was leveled off and ready. It never had looked that good before.

I just sat there wondering who had done all that work. I first went to see Bill Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell always knew what was going on. He fought in World War II and he kept me in line and out of a lot of trouble. He said that Mr. Everett had plowed it up and disked it.

I went to see Mr. Everett. He said his help didn't have enough work so he just did mine. I asked him what I owed him. He told me I could pay for his fuel and that would do it. One day he came by the house and said they had used 100 gallons of fuel and I owed him 15 dollars - as fuel then was only 15 cents a gallon. I tried to give him more but he wouldn't take it.

That's the way it was in Maysville. Maysville was a different kind of place to me. We had a house by the Central School but it wasn't home. I just lived all over Maysville. I rode around a lot. I had a 1960 Ford pickup that my Granddaddy gave us. He had Mr. Porter, who painted signs for Coca-Cola, paint a Black Angus bull head on each door. He even had my name painted above the bull head. I thought that was something.

Now that I'm 70 years old I know what he did to me. It had a big engine and I had a big foot. Every time I did something wrong he would know about it. People called him and told on me. He even painted his phone num-

ber on the back of the truck.

Mr. Everett would let me cut hay in a 48-acre bottom he had next to us. I wish sometimes that times were like they used to be. This country sure has produced some good people.

I was at the ball park up here in Fayetteville tonight and we sat with Mr. Everett's daughter. She's just as good and nice as Mr. Everett was. Her grandson stood behind me and offered to help me get in the bleachers. Mr. Everett's family is still helping me. His daughter told me that she enjoys the Old Huntsville Magazine. People need to put their memories in writing before it's too late. Times sure are changing.



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# Man Hides in Well for Nine Years

## Meals lowered to him with rope

From 1893 Newspaper



After living most of the last nine years in the bottom of a deep well, J.W. Owens is back behind the bars at Huntsville to complete a term which would have been served out had he remained there when first taken to the penitentiary.

As it is, he begins his ten-year sentence over.

He escaped from jail after he was sent there on a murder charge 10 years ago.

Owens lived at the bottom of a deep dry well on his farm all the time the law was searching for him. He fixed the well into comfortable living quarters and was never in danger. He remained there day-times and came out at night to be with his wife and children.

Scores of times his property has

been searched by officials, but they never once thought of taking a trip into that 70-foot well.

Owens was at the bottom comfortably reclining on his bunk and smoking his pipe in an underground room he had tunneled out from the well.

Unfortunately, for Owens, he became careless and officers came upon him so suddenly that he was caught in the act of getting into his home away from home.

He was hauled back to prison to start over his ten year sentence.

It was 11 years ago that Owens was charged with murder and given his sentence. He had been a prosperous farmer.

He was discovered missing only one day after arriving to pay his debt. He had simply walked away in broad daylight.

Owens talked freely of his hiding place, which he had taken up immediately upon returning home. His food was lowered to him in a bucket at night.

For the last three years he has spent much time on the surface, even to the extent of helping with the work around the place.

It appeared the law had given up the hunt and believed him gone, but he became careless and it was reported that "he was at home again."

Owens says he will not try to escape this time. He says his family is in good shape and can get along without him, so he will stick it out.

**"Pay attention to the car that is in front of the car that's behind you!"**

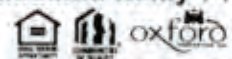
*Seen on bumper sticker in Athens*

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# Cotton Picking

by Catherine Clemons Cameron

We had cotton fields at least a half-mile away. When cotton-picking time came, I rode my bike. Mother and my cousins were walking. One day, I was riding my bike on the highway. I felt sorry for my mother, who was trudging tiredly along. My cousins were walking on the railroad tracks. At the time, Mother was about 40 years & weighed 190 pounds. I stopped and asked Mother to ride, (there was a seat on the back fender) and she accepted. I had barely got the pedals moving before we went into that deep ditch. I thought "I have surely killed my mother".

We lay there, in the middle of the blackberry briars, both of us scratched all over, except where our clothes covered us. I looked at her and asked, "Are you all right?" She replied, "Yes, are you?"

Then we started laughing. We lay there laughing for at least 5 minutes. When we stood up in that deep ditch, our cousins saw us. They said they had been wondering where we had disappeared so fast.

Many years later, Mother would tell this story with glee and explain "I got hold of the handlebars to help her steer."

Mother worked hard helping my Dad scratch out a living, so she didn't laugh or smile a lot. She lived to be 98 years of age and she loved to tell the grandchildren & great-grandchildren this story, always with laughter.

I have an aunt who married so late in life that Medicare picked up 80% of her honeymoon expense.

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# Heard On the Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to our first caller for the Photo of the Month in July. That little boy was none other than **Cecil Ashburn**, who's company Ashburn and Gray built most of the roads here with the exception of the one road named after him! Our correct caller was **Catherine Clemmons Cameron**, who will be 89 in November and loves to read. She recognized that little face right away. Catherine is also a new writer for Old Huntsville so congratulations to you!

Then were you able to find the tiny toothpick I hid in the July issue? It actually wasn't so tiny - look on page 31 and see if you find it in the Southern Comfort ad. It's actually pretty large. Congratulations to **Richard Hale** who was born in Huntsville, lived many years here with his siblings and grandparents. He moved to California years ago but always misses Huntsville. You need to come back! You're the winner, Richard.

**Billy Lawrence** graduated from Butler High years ago and while there played football alongside his older brother **Frank**, on the same team. He graduated in 1962. His sweet wife **Phyllis** called to tell us that Billy will be celebrating 78 years on August 26th so we wanted to be sure to say have a Happy Birthday to Billy!

SO proud of our very own writer **M.D. Smith IV** who recently graduated from Seton Hill University in Pennsylvania with a Master of Fine Arts in Popular Fiction Writing. He spent years on this and even traveled to PA to get his degree. We're very proud of you, MD!

Can you believe the historic Lombardo Building is 100 years old this year? This is where Railroad Station Antiques is located, 315 Jefferson Street and to celebrate they're having a blowout Open House 3rd week of August. Check their Facebook page as it gets closer.

Alot of us have some form of arthritis as we get older. You'd think there'd be a cure for it after all these years people have suffered with it. Generally it's when your body has too much Uric acid and it settles in your joints, causing the pain. Well I have found something that is helping me, that I wanted to pass along. Every morning when I have a couple cups of sweetened coffee I add 2 things: **1/8 teaspoon of Turmeric powder** (a spice) and a dash of cinnamon powder. You can't taste much of the Turmeric, people use it for adding to Indian dishes, but I don't taste it in the coffee. What has happened is that my pain from arthritis is about 85% gone. You can also get the Turmeric tablets in the

vitamin section of your store. The powder works on dissolving the uric acid in your system. Also, if you look up the ingredients in Relief Factor, a really expensive pain relief pill that's advertised alot, the main ingredient is Turmeric. I thought that was interesting....

Check with your doctor to make sure it's OK for you, but it sure has made a difference with me.

Happy wedding anniversary to **Steph & John Troup** of Nashville, TN. Their day is August 15th, same day as John's birthday! Best daughter and son-in-law ever. Happy Birthday to you John!

We were saddened to hear of the death of **Charles Cataldo, Jr.** who was the owner/operator of Alabama Coin and Silver, a company that has been in operation since 1975. He had many great relationships with his customers, many of whom would just stop by and talk with him. Charles was a wealth of information about old paper money, coins, Huntsville history in general. His studies and research made him renowned throughout the coin dealing community. Later in his life he taught Numismatics and Early North American Artifacts at The University of Alabama in Huntsville.

## 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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Charles passed away at the young age of 66 and left a hole in the hearts of many. He is survived by his dad, **Charles Eugene Cataldo, Sr.**; his wife **Rebecca Byrd Cataldo**; daughters **Shannon Marie Cataldo** and **Winter Lynn Welbourne Cataldo**; son **Marcus Baker**; brother **Steve Anthony Cataldo**; sister **Angela Pullen Atherton**; niece **Emma Ross Pullen**; aunts **Sharon Reid** and **JoAnn Mitchell** as well as cousins and relatives who will never forget Charles.

August 24th is a special birthday - my grandson **Hayden Troup** is 22! Party in style!

Mosquitos are the WORST right now, specially at night. If you want to keep them from biting, just wipe your arms down with a fabric sheet like Bounce, that you throw in your dryer. It works pretty well and no terrible spray smell!

**Trey McDowell** is a very well known Shih-Tzu breeder here in Huntsville and operates Lil Cowboy Kennel for many years. His puppies are some of the best anywhere and he offers lifetime pet-sitting for any of the puppies he sells. I know several dog owners who have gotten their furry family member from Trey and they are just the best pups. He loves them from the day he delivers them to their end. Anyway Trey had surgery recently that set him back and we want to wish him a quick recovery. That is why I have hidden a **tiny face of a Shih-Tzu puppy** somewhere in the pages of this issue. If you find it and are the first to call you win a \$50 year's subscription to Old Huntsville magazine. Unlike last month the image is super tiny so NO ONE will find it. And it's not the one pictured on Pet Tips, that's Angel.

Truist Bank on Church and Williams is the best bank ever. I say that because the people who work there are professional and helpful. While there recently I asked about any important events they had for August and there were several! Here they are:

**Ianthia Bridges** - her brother **Carl Ramsey** has an Aug. 4th birthday. And on Aug. 18 **Ianthia** celebrates 25 years with Truist Bank (formerly Colonial Bank, BB&T Bank) - that is an accomplishment!! Also her sister-in-law **Missy Bridges** of Camden, Al has an Aug 25th

birthday. Then her sweet husband **Frazer Bridges** celebrates his birthday on Aug. 26th!

**Lori Deutscher** works at Truist as well and will celebrate her 30th wedding anniversary with handsome husband **Larry** on Aug. 22nd.

**Susan Coulter** has her birthday celebration on Aug. 21st and grandson **Beau** celebrates his on Aug 8th!

**Driving** - there are lots of new folks in Huntsville now. The streets are getting more congested and it's more important than ever to be a defensive driver. Always know what's happening around you, and ALWAYS wait when a light turns green for the intersection to clear because many are running the lights now. It's just a fact. Take care of yourself and your passengers!

The **Farmers Markets** around Huntsville are fun to go to and you can buy fresh local food that really is good and less expensive. Oakwood University, Lowe Mill, Ayers on Cook Avenue, Latham Church on Weatherly, several in Madison and along Hwy. 72 going west - all are open now and the fresh produce is so much better than what's been at the stores for weeks. Shop local and help these people out.

As we are going to press we just heard the sad news that **Jackie Reed** had passed away. She was for over 40 years Huntsville government watchdog and always spoke her mind at City Council meetings. There will be stories about Jackie in upcoming issues, I promise. She will be so missed.

Happy Jul. 12 birthday to **Joyce**

**Russell** - I know she celebrated with friends and family and is as beautiful as ever!

Watch out for your older neighbors who may be suffering during this hot summer.

Remember this - today is the youngest you'll ever be, so make the most of it!

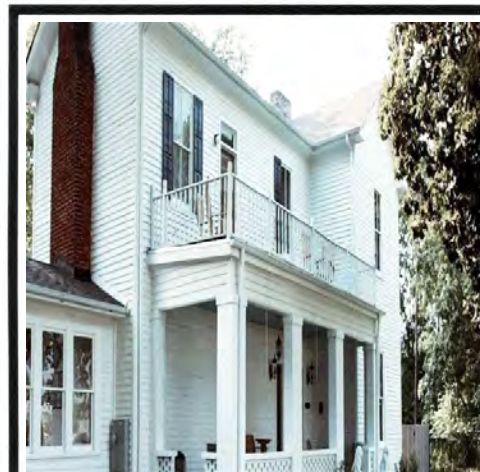


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# Real Southern Fare

## Hot & Spicy

2 lb. smoked sausage  
 2 lg. red peppers, chopped  
 1 bottle prepared barbecue sauce

Boil the sausage til hot, punch hole in skin. While still warm, cut the sausage into one-inch pieces. Place them in a frying pan with 2 tablespoons vegetable oil and fry for 2 minutes. Add peppers and cook for another 2 minutes, stirring often.

Remove to glass bowl, pour warmed barbeque sauce over all. Serve with toothpicks - these won't last!

## Parmesan Pimento Dip

1 c. mayonnaise  
 1 c. Parmesan cheese  
 1/2 c. ripe olives, chopped  
 4 oz. jar pimientos, chopped  
 2 cloves garlic, minced

Combine all ingredients in a baking dish. Bake at 375 degrees for 20 minutes. Serve with crackers or chips.

## Fried Cucumbers Old Recipe

Peel the cucumbers, then cut them in strips lengthwise very thin. Coat strips in meal and salt. Fry until tender. Sprinkle with melted butter and pepper, and serve very hot and crispy.

## Spicy Hoppin' John

1 lb. black-eyed peas, dry  
 1/2 lb. bacon, diced  
 2 medium onions, chopped  
 1 t. garlic powder  
 3 stalks celery, chopped  
 2 c. water  
 2 t. salt  
 1/2 t. Tabasco sauce  
 2 c. rice, uncooked

Cook black-eyed peas and season as directed. In large skillet, fry bacon crisp over low heat. Drain off most of the grease. To that add onions, garlic powder and celery, cook over moderate heat til soft but not brown.

Add the cooked peas, water, salt and Tabasco. Bring mixture

to a boil, cover and reduce heat. Simmer for 30 minutes.

Stir in the rice and cook til rice is tender and liquid is absorbed. Add more water if needed. Check for seasoning and add more if needed.

## Cabbage with Sausage Old Recipe

Boil chopped cabbage in salted water, fry a pound of sausage, put all in a deep dish and cover with the cabbage. Top with 4 teaspoons of butter and sprinkle with pepper to taste. Heat in moderate oven for an hour and serve.

## Savory Glazed Ham

1 5-lb. ham  
 1/2 c. firmly packed brown sugar  
 1 T. cornstarch  
 1/2 t. ground cloves  
 1/2 t. ground ginger  
 1/2 c. lemon juice

Place ham in a shallow baking dish, and begin cook-

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ing it according to the instructions on the package. In a small saucepan combine the brown sugar, corn-starch, cloves and ginger. Add the lemon juice and heat, stirring constantly, til thickened.

Spoon the glaze over the ham during the last 30 minutes of heating time.

### Oven-Roasted Potatoes

1 env. Lipton Onion Recipe soup mix  
 1/3 c. olive oil  
 1/2 t. garlic powder  
 2 lbs. potatoes, chunked into medium pieces

Preheat your oven to 450 degrees. Place all ingredients in a large plastic bag and shake until the potatoes are coated evenly. Pour the potatoes into a shallow, greased baking pan. Bake for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally, til they are brown and tender.

### Phyllis' Hushpuppies

1/2 c. corn meal  
 1/2 c. buttermilk  
 2 onions, chopped  
 1/2 c. flour  
 1 t. garlic salt

Mix all together in a large bowl and place in fridge for 4 hours. Drop by spoonfuls into hot cooking oil til browned. Be careful not to overcook.

### Apple Crisp

4 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled and sliced  
 1 c. dried apricots, chopped  
 3/4 c. plain flour  
 3/4 c. brown sugar, packed  
 1/3 c. chopped pecans  
 3 T. butter, softened  
 Whipping cream

Place apple slices in a buttered square pan, 8x8x2". Mix remaining ingredients, except for the whipping cream, and sprinkle the mixture over the apples and apricots.

Bake at 350 degrees for 35 to 40 minutes til crisp, serve warm with whipping cream.

### Buttermilk Pie

1-1/2 c. sugar  
 1 c. buttermilk  
 1/3 c. Bisquick  
 6 T. butter, melted  
 1 t. vanilla extract  
 3 eggs

Blend all ingredients in a bowl with electric mixer. Pour

mixture into buttered 9" pie pan and bake for 50 minutes at 350 degrees. A toothpick inserted in pie should come out clean.

Cool on counter top until room temperature. This is especially good drizzled with a liquor like Grand Marnier.

### Spiced Pecans

2 egg whites  
 1 c. light brown sugar  
 1/2 t. vanilla extract  
 6 c. pecan halves  
 Ground Cinnamon  
 Ground nutmeg

Beat the egg whites til they form soft peaks, gradually add the sugar and beat on high. Add vanilla and continue beating. Remove beaters and fold in pecans, stirring til all nuts are coated. Spread pecans one layer deep on greased baking pan and sprinkle lightly with cinnamon and nutmeg.

Bake at 250 degrees for 30 minutes. Turn oven off, but leave nuts in oven for another 30 minutes. Remove from oven, cool completely.

Break into small pieces and store in an airtight container. SO good!



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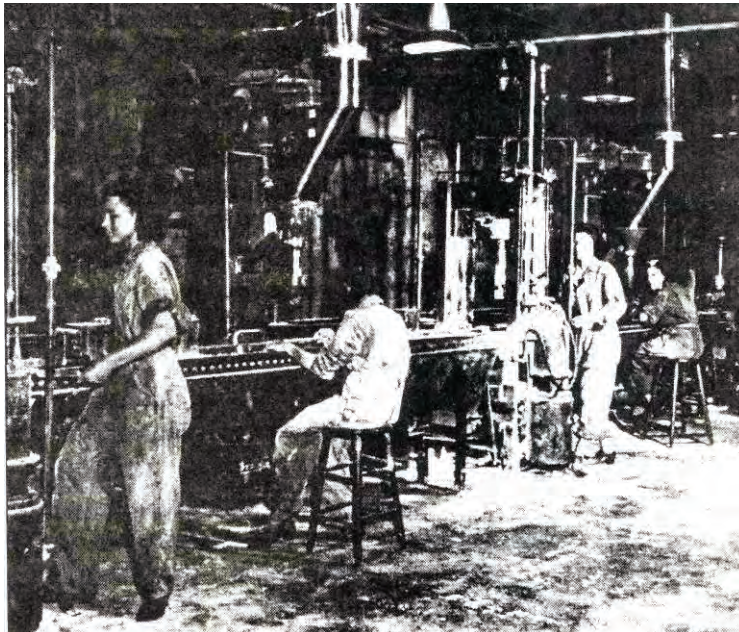
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# WORKING AT THE HUNTSVILLE ARSENAL

by Louise Matthews,  
first published in  
Old Huntsville in 2000



Louise Matthews, lady on left in picture

Soon after I graduated from high school, I applied for a position for work at the new Chemical Warfare Service, an installation being built a few miles outside of town to manufacture different kinds of chemical weapons. Since the nation was in a state of war I wanted to be a part of the Armed Forces, but not to go into the actual joining-up, so to speak.

I started in early September, right after I turned 18. I filled out the application and was into the line of processing within a two day period. We had very little to do to get ready. No experience was necessary, just the will to work. Early on we acquired a profound feeling of doing something for our country.

**"Life is like a safe that has a combination, but the combination is locked up inside the safe."**

*Anon.*

When I first went to work, I lived with my maternal grandparents and aunt who also went to work the same day as I did. We worked close but not in the same area.

We didn't have a car so our access to the Arsenal was by city buses. We had a three block walk to the Clinton Street bus stop. Then we changed buses at the corner of Clinton and Jefferson Street. The bus we had to ride came about every thirty minutes and it was marked ARSENAL ONLY. The fare cost us a nickel on the first bus and we got a change token for the Arsenal bus. Our return at the end of our shift would cost the same for return trip. We got off the Arsenal bus on the Hutchens Hardware Corner and caught the Meridian/Clinton bus home.

We were really "wading-in-high-cotton," to coin an old Southern cliché, when we got our first paycheck. The money we made was astronomical compared to the wages some (me, for one) had been paid for drugstore work.

We were controlled as to the clothes we had to wear, even the type shoes. Even our underwear had to meet the specs! All Cotton! But really who among us had ever been used to any other kind?

We were paid every two weeks and my memory isn't all that good now but I think it was about \$33.00 - \$35.00. That was after the deductions. Oh yes, we had that too, but believe me that was the most I'd ever had in my life. And the check had my name on it!

We changed clothes at the work-site. They were Army issue; coveralls and shoes. The shoes were ours to keep in our locker, but the coveralls were changed every day. Some fit and some didn't, mostly, though, they were usually too big.

We never ran out of work; if we had slack time for any reason a job was found, even if it was cleaning our machine or the floor. We were always told to stay busy.

I didn't have a designated position until after nearly a full year. I worked in all phases of the operation. I drove a tractor bringing the powder from one building to the



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other; carried workers to the cafeteria for a smoke break or just a rest period. We had fifteen minutes twice a day and thirty minutes for lunch and we had to smoke at the cafeteria. Since I carried the workers on the trailer I got to go often, for we didn't shut the line down at any-time. Rules were to be adhered to and believe me, you lived by them. If anyone was ever caught outside with a lighted cigarette you sure could get in trouble.

Once warned - twice aware was a motto I really learned to live by.

I had been caught once with a cigarette and the next time meant a three day layoff, without pay. One day after getting my riders on and turning around I saw the guard coming our way, fast. Realizing I had a smoke in my hand, I had no other alternative but to eat the thing.

We made smoke grenades. They were for camouflage and signaling - for ships, troops and bunkers. Later we made larger ones called "Smoke Pots." The pots were carried to a deep pond on the southernmost section of the area where they were tested in water. The burning time of the pots was much longer than that of the cannisters.

All of the grenades and smoke pots we made produced different colors. Each color had a significance, but we knew very little of the military codes. We just made them to the "specs" given to us.

Shortly afterwards, I was put in the position of inspector for cannisters in the filling room. I worked on the complete cycle of each and was to do the filling, pressing and any other part that would build the completed product. Then I would go to the test area and burn a sample of each cannister to see if the "duration was sufficient" to run the batch.

We were not allowed to write any kind of message whatsoever on the shells. One wartime slogan that was drilled into us was, "A Slip of the Lip will Sink a Ship."

In another area of the Arsenal they started work on a project that very quickly became much more vital and more needed in the war effort than the cannisters and smoke pots.

The Mustard Gas and Phosphorous products were of a different type gas all together. I never worked in those areas but did go there on loan. I was in only

one scary time and it was at the mustard gas area. We had to wear a gas mask at all times. And if the alarm went off we had to "hit the pool." At the time I couldn't swim and the foreman called the order and I wouldn't go so he pushed me in. Of course it was only about waist deep, but to me it could well have been the ocean. I never volunteered again for a call to help out a line in that area.

We had a lot of visiting personnel; writers, photographers and authors who came and talked to us and made pictures. None of our work was made public as long as the war continued. All of our work was in secret.

I stayed at the Arsenal through 1943 and some of 1944. I married in 1943 and when my husband was assigned a naval post I resigned and went to Oklahoma to live for a few months. Then we moved to Florida and after that he was sent to Japan,

I never went back to the Arsenal. Although I tried to keep up with what was going on there, and believed that I would eventually go back when I had the time, I never did. I had a son in 1945 and then, for real I didn't have time, but I'll never forget my wartime contribution to our country with my work at the Huntsville Arsenal.



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# Training My People

by Buddy, as told to  
Margaret Anne Goldsmith,  
Photo by Mike Maples



My name is Buddy, I am a Shih Tzu with an impressive pedigree. My ancestors came from China where they were the favorite among the emperor's and empress's palace pets. We Shih Tzu creatures were bred centuries ago to have adorable pug noses that make us snore. We also need special care and must go to groomers often to have our hair clipped. People often stop and ask to pet us, especially women because we are so cute. If you are a guy, you don't need a fancy car to attract women, just get a Shih Tzu.

My true story began when I was a baby and Ms. Janie adopted me from Mr. Horace who owned my mom and dad. She named me "Prince." Ms. Janie taught me good manners like not to beg for people food, to walk by her side and not bark at strangers. We were both upset when her apartment owners ruled that pets were no longer allowed. I was three years

old and understood but tried to be a big boy. Nevertheless, we both cried when we had to part and Ms. Janie took me back to Mr. Horace and I became an orphan. I was sad and afraid, not knowing what would happen to me, even though Mr. Horace welcomed me back and I got to play with my old friends that live with him.

Then I got lucky, a local couple, Mike and Maggie, wanted a trained Shih Tzu. When they called, Mr. Horace said he had just the right companion for them—ME. When he told me that I was going to be adopted, I was very excited; however, I did not want to repeat my previous mistakes and decided that I would be the trainer instead of letting my new owners train me. After all, it is in my bloodline since my ancestors trained the emperors and empresses of China.

When we met, I realized that Mike and Maggie were nice people, but I had made up my mind about training them. When they changed my name from Prince to Buddy, I realized that they were not sure if they wanted me to be their pet or their friend and I planned to take full advantage of their indecision.

During the long drive from Mr. Horace's house near the Tennessee River to the top of Monte Sano Mountain where Mike and Maggie live, I was scared and clung to Maggie. She was very sweet and understood because she kept saying reassuring words and petting me. I knew I was going to like my new family.

When we arrived, I liked my new house right away because it had a lot of room with slippery wooden floors so I could run fast and slide. I had a nice new bed and there were couches and chairs that with practice I planned to jump on to test Mike and Maggie's patience. Outside there was no yard, just rocks and woods where snakes,

and big wild animals live. I knew I would have to be careful if I snuck out by myself.

My first night with Mike and Maggie I began my training program and tried to climb into their bed, but they made me go to my bed. The next night, when they told me to go to my bed, I picked up one of Mike's shoes and took it with me. They said, "that was sooo cute." I knew that I had them "in the palm of my paw."

I waited a few nights and tried sneaking out of my bed again after they went to sleep and got into the chair next to their bed. The next morning it was too late for them to fuss at me. I kept sneaking out of my bed every night while they were asleep and slept on the chair. Finally, they put a blanket over the chair and let me have my way which gave me confidence in my training ability.

When Mike and Maggie began to feed me the food they bought from Mr. Horace, I did not eat for two days. It was my training technique to get them to give me people food instead of the tasteless food that Mr. Horace said was healthy for me. Then I got so hungry, I ate my food anyway. True to my nature, I did not give up and have been continuing my trick of sitting next to them while they eat. I stare at them with my big brown eyes without blinking which makes them feel guilty and they give in and feed me little pieces of their food. I am doing an excellent job of training them to feel guilty. When they finish their meal and go to the refrigerator for ice cream, they usually drop little scoops of ice cream into my dish. If they hesitate, I give them a little nudge with my paw which usually works.

After I moved in, Mike and I went to training school at a big building on South Memorial Parkway. However, I decided that training was not for me. I used my barking technique whenever the trainer gave instructions and would not be quiet. My training lasted only two days and I was expelled. The teacher said that I had an alpha personality, and that Mike was unable to discipline me. That did not upset me, I was glad to have failed training since it had been my plan to be the trainer in our family. Every day Mike goes to the coffee house to meet his friends and takes me with



him to socialize which is a lot more fun than training school. When the weather is bad and we can't sit on the patio, Mike goes inside. He always leaves the motor running in his truck and either the heater or the air conditioning on, so I am comfortable. He is always thinking about me and so is Maggie. They know I don't like to be left alone and try to plan their day so that one or the other can always take me with them.

I like to go outside, but not when it is raining or cold. I put my head down and fall over like jelly when Mike and Maggie try to put on my leash. Sometimes I run and hide under their bed. They usually pull me out, but I keep doing my jelly trick or I outrun them and hide safely where they can't reach me. Some of Mr. Horace's adopted pets that go back for grooming told me that their people let them stay inside the house when it rains and that they use little dog pads. One silly little girl said that she did not like to get her feet wet and when it rains her people let her walk on her own pet tread mill for exercise. She is too spoiled, even for me!

I use my wiggly worm training trick when Mike and Maggie give me pills or put drops in my ears. It takes both to keep me still. Even though they make me take my medicine, I make it difficult for them. An important lesson in training people is to make them work hard to be good pet owners. Sometimes though I feel guilty because they take such good care of me. They always take me to the doctor when I am sick or have an earache. I am afraid of the doctor and Maggie always holds me on her shoulder and tries to comfort me when I shake like a leaf while getting a shot.

Once when Mike forgot to close the kitchen door, I ran out and up and down the mountain side. They called but I ignored them, I was having so much fun. Then I hid behind a nearby tree and heard them talking. They sounded worried, saying that I may be caught by a wild coyote or taken away by a hawk. When they drove off in Mike's truck to look for me, I was careful and stayed next to the house under the kitchen steps where it was safe and waited until they returned. When they came back it was dark and they went inside but left the door cracked, hoping I would return. I waited awhile to keep them worrying and then I came out from under the porch steps and went into the house. They were so relieved to see me that they did not get mad and I knew how much they loved me. Nevertheless, I may run away again because it was so much fun.

If I am left alone and the bathroom door is open, I pull the toilet paper all over the house and make pretty designs. They do not think my designs are pretty and fuss at me. Then I roll over on my back and make little grunting noises and put my feet in the air for Mike and Maggie to scratch my belly. That wins them over when I have been bad, but they have a hard time remaining mad and give in and scratch my belly.

I like to hide their shoes in my special hiding places. When Mike and Maggie take showers, I sneak into the bathroom and grab their furry bed-

room shoes and hide them. It is important to show them that I am the boss.

Mike lets me sit on top of the couch to look out the window and be the watchman. Maggie never does. When Maggie catches me on the couch she fusses. I run and jump on Mike's lap where I am safe. He likes to take up for me and aggravate Maggie. I really know how to play one against the other. It is part of my training technique. I have trained Mike to give me special teats when I go outside and do my business, but Maggie never does. Mike is getting better trained than Maggie who is a more difficult trainee. I know that I am a handful for Mike and Maggie especially with my training techniques, but they love me and would be devastated if I ran away and couldn't find my way home. I love them as much as they love me. There is nowhere else I would ever want to live except with them.

When people ask Mike and Maggie about me, they say that I am not a problem, that I am just spoiled. But now you know the truth, I am their trainer.

**Reflections**

I remember my first three years when I lived with Ms. Janie. I felt safe when she trained me and made me mind. Living with Mike and Maggie and being their trainer is a big responsibility. It is fun being in charge but also a bit scary. I have learned over my seven years of life experience that there are consequences whatever choice you make even for a little Shih Tzu like me.

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# MILITARY YEARS

by Giles Hollingsworth

Fort Campbell was only 160 miles from home, just barely across the northern Tennessee state line, in Kentucky, so being stationed that close to home was primarily a plus, but it had its minus side too. I'll explain later, but first I'll talk about the convenience of it, and the joy of it.

Even during basic training, soldiers are off-duty on weekends, except for an unlucky few who draw KP, guard duty, or barracks orderly duty. All others are given weekend passes if they want them, and nearly all us did. We wanted passes and we wanted to go home. It wasn't that we were all that homesick, but several guys, like Earl Ledbetter, Joe Moore, and Wilburn Newby had brought their cars up and for a paltry sum you could get a ride to Huntsville and back. (Undoubtedly the origin of Uber). So we went from being "weekend warriors" there in Huntsville at the National Guard Armory to being "weekend travelers", or "weekend civilians".

Every Friday at about 5 pm the exodus began. We loaded up and headed south on U.S. 41. Always excited, always anxious to get on the way. Without fail we would kick off the departure with a celebratory song. If "On The Road Again" had been around then it would have been a natural for us. But instead, Hank Snow obliged us with his blockbuster hit, "I'm Moving On". It was so popular that we all knew most of the words to it and we belted it out ritually as we left camp.

The trip home usually took about four hours. We had to deal with late Friday rush hour traffic through Clarksville, TN, then the weekend Nashville traffic and it was all two lane highways back then.

Fast forward to Sunday night in Huntsville. The majority of us were single, so we were either prowling or had steady dates. Either way we got less than a full night's sleep Friday night or Sat-

urday night. The married men likely fared better but I'm guessing they stayed up late both nights enjoying their families. So on Sunday night at about eleven-thirty our drivers would hit the road again, this time with a bunch of pretty well spent, red-eyed soldiers, this time sedate and ready to listen to good radio songs like, "Tennessee Waltz", by Patti Page, and "Goodnight Irene", by the Weavers or Red Foley and Ernest Tubb. We might be able to catch a few winks, but only maybe, because of cigarette smoke and chatter.

The trip back took take less time than the trip down, maybe even as little as three hours, due to late night, light traffic, so we typically got there at about 2:30 to 3:30 AM, and therein lies the minus that I mentioned earlier: reveille was at 5 am! Try to imagine being forced out of bed way before daylight, with an hour and a half to three hours sleep, having to get dressed, rush outside, stand at attention, in formation, to answer roll-call. Then try to imagine getting through the rest of the day, sleep deprived. Mondays had to be lousy days of performance for two out of three battalions of the 1169th Combat Engineers Group. (I assume the boys from the Pennsylvania battalion got more sleep than we did).

Still we loved going home on weekends. But we also loved being able to walk a short distance from our barracks every night, if we so desired, to the servicemen's club where we could buy beer at a next-to-nothing price and listen to some of the best country music ever heard.

One of my favorites was Hank Williams singing "They'll Never Take

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Her Love From Me". It's amazing how I can hear it now and be right back there listening to it, drinking that beer. Time machines aren't physical things, they're songs.

But alas! Beer, country songs, and perhaps too much "going home freedom" got J.O. Jennings, James Denton and me into trouble. It happened like this: Like several other guys, J.O. and James, surmising we would all soon be off for a tour of duty somewhere, most likely in Korea, both married their Redstone Park sweethearts on their second weekend back home on leave. Then on the following Thursday night, as we three were drinking that good, cheap beer and listening to Hank, they got to talking about going home right then. And after enough beer one of them said, "Let's do it!" I had no wife, no steady girl, and obviously no sense, but I did have about as much beer as J.O. and James, so I went with them. Yes, we went AWOL. And it was so easy! We just walked out through the service gate, stuck out our thumbs, and caught a ride with a man going all the way to Birmingham, right through Huntsville, then right on down the highway by Redstone Park. What luck! But what stupidity!

Needless to say we three became immediately infamous in our section of Ft. Campbell. When the guys with passes came down on the weekend they told us what we already knew - that we would probably end up in the stockade... that our First Sergeant, Sgt. Rice, and Captain Dixon, the Company Commander were that mad.

I'll never know why but we got off light. I guess Cpt. Dixon melted some, because our punishment of two weeks KP was meted out by him. Since we weren't allowed to miss basic training it meant getting up every morning at 4:30, going to the mess hall to help prepare breakfast, serving breakfast. Then doing the same full day of rigorous field training as others, then helping to serve supper, then clean up, which lasted until about 8 pm. It was rough, but I was oh so happy to do it. Whew!

But one puzzling and ironic thing about AWOL in general was that it was like an inevitable thing, bound to happen, sooner or later,

and we just happened to be the first to do it. We were unwitting guinea pigs and fad-starters, because after that several other guys did it. I guess they saw that we survived and KP was their worst scenario, so they did it. Even more ironic, they all got less KP punishment than we did. It just didn't seem fair. But looking at retrospect was not in our best interest.

One other KP story, a rather pathetic one that I hesitate to tell, but I think it should be told. You may not believe it but it's a true story: Even with few of us staying in camp on weekends the mess hall had to be open, so three or four guys had to be assigned to KP, I guess by the luck of the draw. They could, however, hire a replacement. Well, on Thanksgiving weekend a certain young man offered me \$75 to fill in for him. That was a huge sum back then! I was one of the poorest guys there, had been helping to support my family for the previous three years and still was, so I needed the money. Also he was married and I didn't even have a regular girlfriend.

So I accepted. Stayed there. Passed up seeing my family on Thanksgiving weekend. But this guy never paid me! He initially asked for a couple of weeks, then two more, then two more. Eventually I had to give up and realize it was a hopeless case, that I had been took, that it was just one of those bitter pills we sometimes have to swallow. And actually through the years it never bothered me a lot.

But he still owes me. If he is still around he now owes me \$3467. That's \$75 plus 6% interest compounded annually until 2006, and 4% since then.



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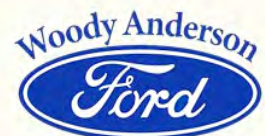
The Ford Motor Company views its situation today less with pride in great achievement than with sincere and sober realization of new and larger opportunities for service to mankind.

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# DASTARDLY ATTEMPT TO BURN THE BUSINESS BLOCK ON THE NORTH SIDE SQUARE

*From 1891 Newspaper*

Monday morning about 1:30 o'clock, as one of the Mercury's compositors was going home after his night's work, and as he passed the storeroom recently vacated by Mr. J. B. Bradford, which since then has been unoccupied, he saw a small light through the front door, way back in the rear. He also could detect a volume of smoke rising. He called a gentleman or two who were standing on the Huntsville Hotel corner and after a slight examination the cry of fire was given.

It did not take many minutes for the fire department to appear, and headed by Fire Chief Baker, the front door was burst open, lanterns were brought into requisition and in the hands of two or three men, the rear end of the store was visited. Just as the corner of the stair was reached from which a door opens into a place reserved for a private office, a fire made of paper and kindling was on the inside, built right on top of the floor.

As soon as it was discovered, the men in the front hollered for the hose, but at that time a member of the department, William Hayden, caught a man's form in a crouching position up in a dark corner of this little space, and immediately laid his iron grasp upon him and drew him from his hiding. Officers Ward and Fulgham were on hand and the man was turned over to them. They got him into the calaboose, while he was kicking, jerking and making strenuous efforts to free himself. Finding the man created a great deal of excitement, but the small gathering set to work and in a few minutes had the fire put out. If the fire had gained any headway no telling what damage it would have done, for the entire block would certainly have been in danger. The villainous fellow arrested would not disclose his name, nor residence.

It is safe to say that when he is arraigned for an investigation of his criminal act he will be fully known and dealt with accordingly.

**"I was a vegetarian until I started leaning towards sunlight."**  
*Rita Rudner*

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- Educated locally at Madison Academy, Lee High School, Calhoun Community College, UAH, & the Alabama Fire College
- Recently retired as District Chief from Huntsville Fire & Rescue after 32 years
- Served 14 years on North Alabama Pop Warner Board of Directors
- Served as youth deacon at Monrovia Church of Christ for 14 years; currently attends Mayfair Church of Christ
- Served 9 years Madison Academy Board of Directors
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# SEEN IN THE PAPERS - 1911

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### Mother of 13 Paralyzed

Mrs. Francis Limbaugh, 67 years old, died at 6 o'clock last evening in Patton Grove as a result of a stroke of paralysis suffered yesterday morning. She was the mother of seven sons and six daughters. The remains will be carried this morning to Monrovia, at her old home, for interment today.

### Death Caused by Rubber Snake

J. F. Holder dashed in front of train when frightened by a companion. Frightened by a rubber snake in the hands of a companion, J. F. Holder, Sr., a young boy of Athens, dashed in front of a swiftly moving passenger train and was killed instantly. Jeff Tomlinson, 18 years old, and young Holder were standing near the railroad tracks, when suddenly Tomlinson drew the imitation snake from his pocket and shoved it towards Holder, who in attempting to escape from the

supposed reptile, dashed in front of the train and was literally ground to pieces. Tomlinson was arrested.

### Woman Starts Panic at her Own Funeral

Decatur, AL Stretching out her hands toward those who had assembled about her coffin, Mrs. Jane Pitcock, an octogenarian, caused a panic at her funeral here according to reports. The funeral sermon had been preached and the lid of the coffin was removed to permit friends and relatives to take a last long look at what they believed to be a corpse. It was then that Mrs. Pitcock regained consciousness. She remained alive for several hours.

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# Searching for a Ghost

by Cindy Stubblefield  
March 2017

Before I start my story, I want to tell you that I was raised to believe there was no such thing as ghosts or the supernatural. That sort of changed when I began working for a business office on Madison Street near downtown Huntsville. Some very strange events occurred that no one could really explain.

I recall one occasion, a co-worker was still at the office late one afternoon

**“My husband and I divorced over religious reasons. He thought he was God and I didn’t.”**

**Renay Johnson,  
Woodville**

and everyone else had left for the day. When she went to clock out, she saw a gentleman in the kitchen, his back to her, looking out the window. When she entered the kitchen she startled him - he looked as surprised to see her as she was to see him - as she thought no one was left in the building.

He was wearing a dark orange suit that appeared to be from the early 1900s. Something made her shut her eyes briefly - when she opened them he was gone without a trace. She remembered that for years later.

With our company, working on Saturdays was pretty common. I remember one particular Saturday two women were working alone in the office. They heard laughter coming from an adjoining room down the hall. When they went to investigate, they found no one but continued to hear laughing. It was really spooky.

On another Saturday I was working with two of my co-workers when we began to hear breathing and loud clinking sounds coming from the paging system. Since we knew for a fact we were there alone, this really made us jittery.

After some inquiring, we began to hear stories of a funeral home that had been in this vicinity - somewhere along Madison Street. But we never could find out any definite information.

If some of the “Old Huntsville” readers know or have heard of this - could you please let the magazine know? It was supposed to be close to the intersection of Lowe and Madison.

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turn to the experts

# Back to 1949

by Dale Lone Elk Casteel

If everyone living in this country today could go back to 1949 and live a year during that time, they would see a very different country than today. What they could learn would cause them do many things differently. They would live in a time when everyone in the family worked to help make a living.

They might even love the simple life and have time to enjoy it. They wouldn't be rushing around trying to get to a mall to shop. They would live a slow-paced lifestyle.

Their children would have learned how to work almost like an adult: chop and pick cotton, pull corn, strip leaves off sugar cane, cut firewood, bale hay, and plow with mules or horses. They would have learned how to make bows and arrows, slingshots, rabbit boxes for catching rabbits and bird traps. They would have learned how to skin a cat, make a flying Ginny and a kite to fly up in the sky and climb a tree to shake an opossum out.

Grownups would not be running up and down the roads to get someplace else because there was too much work to do at home; and not many families had cars. Cooking three meals a day, washing clothes by hand on an old rub board kept the women pretty busy besides canning fruits and vegetables in the summer for the winter, hanging frames to quilt so we could sleep warm during the cold months. My mom's work was never done. She worked every day twelve hours a day.

My dad was a very hard worker. He worked public jobs when he could get them. If not he worked in the fields helping us kids make a crop. There were no chemicals to kill the grass. Everything was done by hand.

We lived in an almost chemical free country. We could breathe without worry of breathing poisons into

our bodies. We could eat fish from any of our rivers without fear of lighting up like a Christmas tree from radiation.

We never worried about tornadoes or other bad things happening. We lived the good life and we knew the reason why – because God is good and God is great and Momma can make a good fruitcake.

It was a great year for me. I turned out to be a good basketball player and had the best looking girl in school for my girlfriend. She was a cheerleader. I was voted the most handsome boy in school. Talk about a young boy's head swelling up. I had to tie a rope around it to keep it from getting any bigger. Boy what a year in my life – 1949.

Then something happened in American that changed that way of life forever. I thought that the good times were over for good. People's simple lives had ended. It was deader than a doornail.

Education hit the country like a bomb falling from the sky. The changes overwhelmed me. I grew up walking on dirt and gravel roads. Now to go anywhere I have to travel on super highways. We now need to have one of those thingamajigs in the car to tell us how to get there. Back in 1949 I argued that they could never get a picture out of the sky to watch television.

When they passed out all those smarts, I was in the wrong line. I tried to figure out how to talk into a thing they called the telephone and my voice could travel thousands of miles in that little bitty wire and hear someone in California. As kids we made our own telephones with two tin cans and a long string but we never got that kind of results.

I must have fallen off the train that headed to get a load of smarts. I try hard to live in yesteryear but that's impossible. I don't think people understand just how much damage they are doing to this earth. The day is coming when it can't support life. Our bodies can only tolerate so much poison. The next train that comes through this country, I am going to purchase a one way ticket back to 1949.

**"All men make mistakes, but the married ones find out about them sooner."**

**Red Skelton**



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# When Will They Come for Me?

by Noel D. Tallon

They came for her yesterday. Nothing said about why or how. It's not unusual They come most every day. Taking or leaving. But when will they come for me?

Wonder how she is. Will she be back? She was a good friend short as it was. We never knew each other before but enjoyed talking old times and present. But when will they come for me?

Today is like most others. What day is it? I forget. There is a calendar on the wall but it's so full of activities, it's hard to tell what today is. Maybe it's Monday. A lot of people don't like Monday. But I liked my job. Looked forward to it. Oh, there they go down the hall. I guess it is not my time. But when will they come for me?

Maybe today is Wednesday. They call it hump day. Not much different than any other day to me. The blinds are closed but the sun must be shining. Who knows what the day holds? But I would still like to know. When will they come for me?

It might be Friday. He and I called that date night. Not a big deal. Just a night out at one of our favorite restaurants and maybe a movie. But now I just lay here and wonder. When will they come for me?

The food. Not the best but palatable. Oh, I remember those biscuits Mom used to make when I was a little girl. Hot cranberries. Melt in your mouth.

Wish I ~ could just have one more. But I lay here just wondering when will they come for me?

It's dark now. Just another day. No one came to visit. But that's OK. They are all busy. Maybe another day. If they don't come for me.

It's another new day. They have come and they are here for me.

If you know someone in a nursing home, visit them this week. Some day you may be there wondering yourself, "When will they come for me?"

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# A Special Week at 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.

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.

**Update:**

I lost touch with my "camper" since he never returned to the camp. I think he enjoyed his time there that summer but felt out of place with the other campers. Several years later I saw him walking down the sidewalk by himself in Downtown Huntsville. I parked my car and walked up to him and greeted him by his name and said, "You probably don't remember me, but...", and before I could finish he asked, "Jim?" I was shocked that he remembered my voice from years past. He was on his way to the Times building where he was working as a disk jockey for a radio station.

I later heard that he went to Auburn and was in the marching band. He was an amazing young man from whom I learned a life lesson!

I worked at the camp during the summers between college sessions for four more years. Each year the highlight of the summer was that "special" week. I made so many good friends over the years and it was a pleasure to see them return each summer. They were the most happy and


easy to please group with whom I ever worked. I was so captivated by my experiences that I couldn't give it up.

After I started my career as a mathematics teacher at Butler High School in the fall of '71, I decided to volunteer as a counselor for that week each summer. In the summer of '80 with the help of the ARC (Madison County Asso. for Retarded Citizens), I took it a step further and became the director for that week, organizing programs, seeking a nurse, and interviewing and recruiting counselors, most of whom were students of mine from Butler. Johnny Evans and Tony Mason were two entertainers who volunteered their time to come out on several occasions over the years. Bill Easterling from the Times along with a local television station would come out to cover the activities. I continued this for ten years. In addition, I served on the Board of Directors of ARC for ten years. I was awarded the distinguished service award by the ARC in '83 and '84, and the Volunteer of the Year in '87.

There are so many memories I could share with you from my years at Cha-La-Kee - some humorous, some heartwarming and some very sad. Many of them are now deceased but I will, until the day I die, cherish my time with the "special friends" I made throughout those twenty-three years.

All of this was because of that one "special" week in 1967.

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# ONE IN THE HOLE

by *Bill Alkire*



My first gun was a double barrel shotgun at 3 or 4 years old. Of course, I do not remember the gun or anything at that junction in my life. I do, however, have a photograph that provides evidence that the event happened. I have provided it here for your viewing.

The following is a story of my first experience hunting squirrels... with a shotgun. Now I had been hunting squirrels for a long time, therefore the incidence below should never have happened. It was decided that Grandfather, my uncle, and I would go to a friend's place and squirrel hunt on the back wooded portion of his farm.

I had run out of 22LR shells for my 22-Savage rifle. Grandfather loaned me one of his 20-gauge single shot shotguns and a handful of shells. We drove to the hunt. We broke up individually to cover more territory. I scouted the area and settled on a spot where the timber had been cleared, except a few Hickory trees.

I walked around the area picking up hickory nuts. The nuts were plentiful. That meant with plenty of food, squirrels should be plentiful as well. There were a few squirrels securing around in the trees. In the center of the area, I had staked out was a large Shell-Bark Hickory tree, most of which was dead. I found a tree stump and sat down to wait for any action close by my position.

A Red-Fox squirrel began barking and flipping his tail at me. I discovered he was in the Shell-Bark tree real close to the stump I was sitting on. Approximately 12-14 inches away from his position on a large limb a nesting hole was visible in the tree trunk. I had a great unobstructed view. I loaded a shell, closed the gun, and checked the safety. I slowly raised the gun, took aim, he was in clear view. His

barking would soon stop! I slowly squeezed the trigger. KA Boom! The squirrel was hit out careened into the hole in the tree.

This young Daniel Boone, however, was knocked off the stump and to the ground. My impact with the ground sent the gun flying about 4 feet away. It felt like my shoulder had been ripped from the socket and my arm hurt all the way to my elbow. Had that shotgun attacked me? No!

In my haste to shoot the squirrel - I forgot I was sitting down - DUMB! I had killed the squirrel - but he was inside the hole in the tree. The shotgun sound brought the rest of the hunting party.

When they arrived, I was still on the ground - everyone had a laugh at my expense. It would have been funny if it had been someone else - not me.

The landowner retrieved a chain saw from his truck and cut the tree down. The squirrel was in the hole, along with large store of nuts. The squirrel was larger than we had expected. The moral of course is to NOT to shoot anything with a shotgun sitting down unless you are prepared for what comes next. Much like life, your choices have consequences.

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# A FAVOR RETURNED

by Bill Wright

It was 1966 when I moved my family to Huntsville to accept a new job. Huntsville at that time was a small town with few activities for a family. Our main enjoyment was to visit Brahan Springs Park on Sunday afternoons and allow the children to play on the playground equipment. Also, they would ride the small train that would circle the pond. We also visited the Super Slide, located on the current site of Parkway Place Mall. On Saturday nights we would go to The Mall (now site of Books-A-Million and Home Depot). Usually on Saturday nights at "The Fountain," located in center of The Mall, would be some entertainment.

One Saturday night we were visiting The Mall and as we approached the main entrance my wife was carrying our one year-old son; I was holding hands of the six year-old daughter and the four year-old son. The main

entrance had about eight doors and in the middle was a plate glass window about four feet wide and twenty feet high. The plate glass window had no markings and, therefore, gave the appearance of an opening.

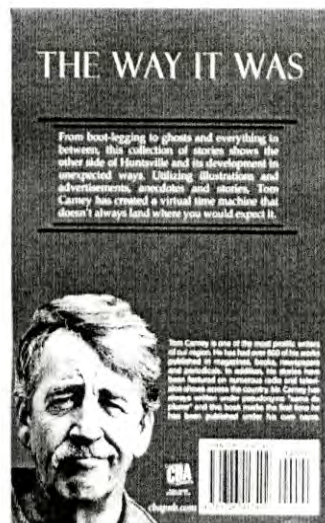
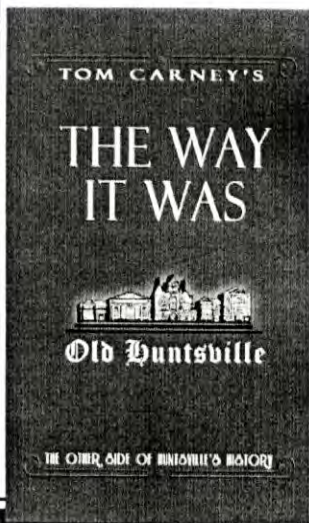
When we reached the entrance doors I released the hand of the four year old son to open the door. Once I did the four- year old son, thinking the plate glass window was an opening, darted to it. He crashed through about the bottom four feet of glass. After that my mind went blank, but my wife told me later that I immediately ran through the small glass opening, picked up the four-year old son, took perhaps one step away and the remaining 16 feet of glass dropped like a guillotine to the spot we just vacated.



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**"THE WAY IT WAS,"**  
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 BY TOM CARNEY



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Mr. Mason, owner of Mason Jewelry located near the entrance, took us in his store and administered first aid to the minor facial cuts. I remember Mr. Mason telling us that when The Mall was under construction, the Construction Manager had walked through the same plate glass window, thinking it was an opening. Mr. Mason was impressed that a four year old child could knock out a 20 foot plate glass window and remarked, "He should play football for Coach Bear Bryant at The University of Alabama."

Fast forward in time by 17 years. The 4 year-old son is now 21 years old and a college student. At work a co-worker is organizing a canoeing trip. Although I grew up on the Gulf Coast I never was a water sports person and only a fair swimmer. I ask what were the dangers and he replied "You can drown or get bitten by a snake." Knowing the oldest son was home for the weekend I agreed to the canoeing trip. He would be the ideal canoeing partner because he was big, strong, athletic and had lifeguard certification.

It was a nice Saturday morning when about twelve of us loaded into canoes. My son and I were in the lead canoe. Everything was fine and I was thinking canoeing was easy and lot of fun. However, looming ahead was a low hanging tree branch which was too low to duck under. I was in the front of the canoe so I reached to lift the small branch and when I did the canoe turned over, dumping us into the water. Although we had water life preservers on, I was wearing sneaker shoes which filled with water and prevented me from getting on top of the water.

My son, realizing I was in trouble, quickly swam over, picked me up and threw me several feet to the canoe, which I grasped. The canoe was half-filled with water. While in deep water, we turned the canoe over and dumped the water. We got back into the canoe and continued our trip down the Flint River.

In later years I have often thought of the coincidence of the two events; particularly my son's quick reaction in the canoeing incident.

Perhaps it was A Favor Returned.

"I don't mind getting older, but my body's taking it badly."

**Bob Hope**

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# The Little Gem Hamburger

by Walter S. Terry

When I was overseas during World War II, I dreamed not of Mom's apple pie or Southern fried chicken; I dreamed of "Little Gems." There were times when I would have hocked my soul for just one Little Gem - juiced up a bit, or course. There are probably other places in the world where these culinary delights are made, but if there are places besides Huntsville, I've never been lucky enough to find them.

Several places in Huntsville sold French fried hamburgers over the years, including "Major Hoople's Owl Club", but "The Little Gem Cafe" (pre-

sided over by chef supreme Tooney Summers) in the front of Mr. Bill Payne's pool hall, East Side Courthouse Square, was hamburger heaven to me. Later my wife and children came to enjoy them as much as me, until we were shattered by its closing in the 1960s. Although there are places like Big Spring Cafe and Mullins Drive-in which would carry on the tradition, I decided to do the same in my own kitchen.

*The ingredients:*

- \* hamburger meat
- \* Wesson Oil
- \* buns
- \* mustard
- \* chopped onions

*The Process:*

Fry hamburger patties in dry skillet on high heat, both sides to seal in juices - about one minute each side. Drop patties in Wesson Oil preheated in deep pan to hot but not boiling vigorously. Oil should completely cover the patties. Let simmer for at least one hour, but longer if desired.

*The Eating:*

Fish out patties, place on bun, juice bun a little by splashing with spatula, if juice is your thing.

Add mustard and chopped onions, close bun.

Have a joyous and ecstatic experience by biting into this mouth-watering morsel.

**"I refuse to think of them as chin hairs. They are just stray eyebrows."**

**Vivian Kruse, Huntsville**

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# PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

## *Spooky Dogs Across the World*



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

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

- Dogs have always been credited with the power of sensing supernatural influences and seeing ghosts, spirits, fairies or deities which are invisible to human eyes. In Wales only dogs could see the death-bringing hounds of Anwyn; in ancient Greece the dogs were aware when Hecate was at a crossroads foretelling a death. Dogs are believed to be aware of the presence of ghosts, and their barking, whimpering or howling is often the first warning of supernatural occurrences.

- There are many instances of black dog ghosts which are said to haunt lanes, bridges, crossroads, footpaths and gates, particularly in Suffolk, Norfolk and the Isle of Man. Some black dogs are said to be unquiet ghosts of wicked souls, but others are friendly guides and protectors to travelers. The Barguest of northern England could also appear as a pig or a goat, but was most commonly a huge black dog with large eyes and feet which left no prints. Packs of ghostly hounds have also been recorded all over Britain, often heard howling as they pass by on stormy nights rather than actually being seen. These hounds generally foretell death, or at least disaster, if they are seen and the proper action is to drop face-down onto the ground to avoid spotting them.

- A howling dog outside the house of a sick person was once thought to be an omen that they would die, especially if the dog was driven away and returned to howl again. A dog which gives a single howl, or three howls, and then falls silent

is said to be marking a death that has just occurred nearby.

- Dogs were feared as possible carriers of rabies. Sometimes even a healthy dog was killed if it had bitten someone, because of the belief that if the dog later developed rabies, even many years afterwards, the bitten person would also be afflicted. Remedies for the bite of a mad dog often included the patient being forced to eat the hair of the dog in question. Dogs were also used to cure other illnesses. One old charm which was often used

for childrens' illnesses was to take some of the patient's hairs and feed them to a dog in between slices of bread and butter; the ailment was believed to transfer to the animal, healing the patient.

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

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

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

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

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

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# A Musical Sensation

by Tom Carney

Probably no man in recent history of Huntsville was admired and liked by more people than Grady Reeves, a noted radio and television personality.

Grady was a storyteller. He could keep an audience enthralled for hours, spinning yarns about people he had met and things that had happened to him. And like all good storytellers, he was not above poking a little fun at himself

In the mid-50s Grady was booking entertainment at the old Coliseum on University Drive. He was always being besieged by entertainers, all wanting a chance to perform.

One young man kept calling constantly, until finally Grady agreed to give him a chance.

On the night of the performance, the young man showed up with his band. The car had guitars tied on top, drums sticking out of the truck and most of their dirty laundry in the back seat.

Grady wasn't too impressed with the boy. The young man had long, greasy, black hair, a pale complexion and wore clothes that even a blind man wouldn't buy.

But Grady, being the nice guy that he was, told the boy to go ahead and get on stage. There were less than 100 people in the



audience that night and Grady carefully watched their reactions to this young unknown.

The audience was restless, not at all impressed by the new singing sensation.

Meeting the young man backstage, Grady, who was always known for his honesty, had a talk with the young performer.

"Son," he said, "I been

watching those people out there, and your stuff ain't gonna work. You might ought to get that truck-driving job back."

The young man didn't take Grady's advice, though, and a few months later recorded his first hit - and Elvis Presley never drove another truck again.

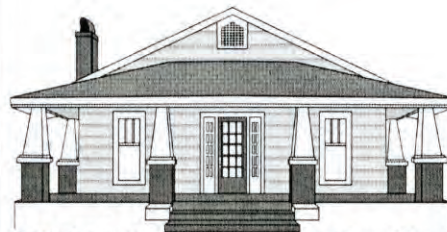


**"Most of the people you see in the lingerie department, you wouldn't want to see in lingerie."**

*Maxine*

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# OLD HUNTSVILLE TRIVIA



1808 - Madison County is formed. There are 2,555 people living in the county at this time.

1817 - Physicians gather at Talbots Inn on the east side of the Square in Huntsville to discuss a terrible outbreak of smallpox. Among measures discussed was a proposal to place armed guards on roads leading into town to prohibit strangers from bringing the disease to Huntsville.

1821 - The first mail robbery in Madison County occurs when the carrier to Bennett's store is robbed. Among the items stolen were the carrier's shoes.

1861 - Vigilante committees are formed to help protect Huntsville in wartime.

1874 - Six newspapers are being printed in Huntsville at the same time.

1876 - New rates are posted for city supplied water. The rates were \$1 for a family of less than 3, and \$8 for a family of 3 to 8.

1905 - The citizens of Gurley are determined there will be no saloons in their fair town. They raised the license for operating a saloon to \$ 10,000.

1910 - Citizens are outraged at the high speed of automobiles on the city's streets. The city fathers passed an ordinance limiting speed limits to three miles an hour.

1919 - The last County Fair is held downtown on the Court-house Square. The same year the Tennessee Valley Fair Asso. purchased land of their own on Church Street.

1929 - More than 10,000 people gather at the "Punch Bowl" in the Big Spring to watch local favorite Sammy Baker take on Tommy Jordan in a prize fight. The event was sponsored by the local American Legion who had their headquarters in a house on Franklin Street.

1931 - Huntsville gets its first airport when a 150-acre field is cleared of brush and rocks. It was located west of Alabama Street between Bob Wallace and Thornton Avenue.

1937 - The first State liquor store opens on Jefferson Street in the Hutcheons Building. Two year old Red Brook straight bourbon whiskey sells for \$1.30 a quart.

## Newspaper Clippings

- The city of Guntersville has a ladies' society called the "Sisters of Silence." It has two members, and they are deaf and dumb.

- The local editor of the Florence paper fell asleep while crossing the river in a ferry boat the other day, and when he awoke he owed the company \$13.70, at \$.10 a trip.

- A very wealthy farmer of Decatur has this Notice pasted up in his field:

"If any man's or woman's cows or oxens gits in these here oats, his or her tail will be cut off as the case may be."

1893 newspaper

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# MONSTER TRUCKS IN ATHENS

by John Michael Hampton

The monster truck made loud noises as it revved its engine. I was enjoying the free show with my family, who were standing less than 100 yards from the monster trucks.

In the summer of 1988, our family went to Athens on vacation like we had done for several years to visit family members living there. The trip down from Nashville was uneventful, and I had even dozed off to sleep for a while in the back seat of my grandparents' 1968 Bonneville Pontiac, while my grandfather drove and my grandmother sat in the front seat.

Once we arrived at Aunt Sue's home in the Dogwood Subdivision on the banks of the Tennessee River, she advised us that the next day there was going to be a free monster truck show in Athens to celebrate the grand opening of the OK Tires store on U.S. Highway 72. It didn't take long for the family to decide to go to the show.

The next morning dawned bright and sunny. It was perfect weather for an outdoor monster truck show. So, we all loaded into two vehicles to head into Athens for the show. I was riding in the back of Uncle Doug's pickup truck, along with my cousins.

There was already a crowd beginning to gather by the time we pulled up to the location of the show. They had spectators standing at the edge of the concrete driveway for the tire store, with a rope separating them from the vacant lot next door. On that lot, ten junk cars had been assembled, sitting next to each other. The monster truck that was at the show was Thumper II, and it was huge!

WAAY TOO EARLY anchors Gary Dobbs and Toni Lowery were there covering the event, and as the camera panned the audience, my cousin and I remembered to put up a three and a one for the camera. The video featuring us was aired on the following Monday's WAAY TOO EARLY program on WAAY-TV 31. The monster truck show started at exactly ten o'clock. The driver started the truck and sat there letting it run for about five minutes before even revving the engine. After that, he revved the engine for about a minute or so, while sitting in the same spot. He then put the truck in drive, and made a couple loops around the vacant lot, waving to the crowd.

He then backed up, lining the truck up so it

would be in line with the row of junk cars that were on the lot. He revved the engine, put the truck in drive, and accelerated, driving over all the cars. He then looped back around, lining up with the cars from the opposite end of the lot, and drove over them again.

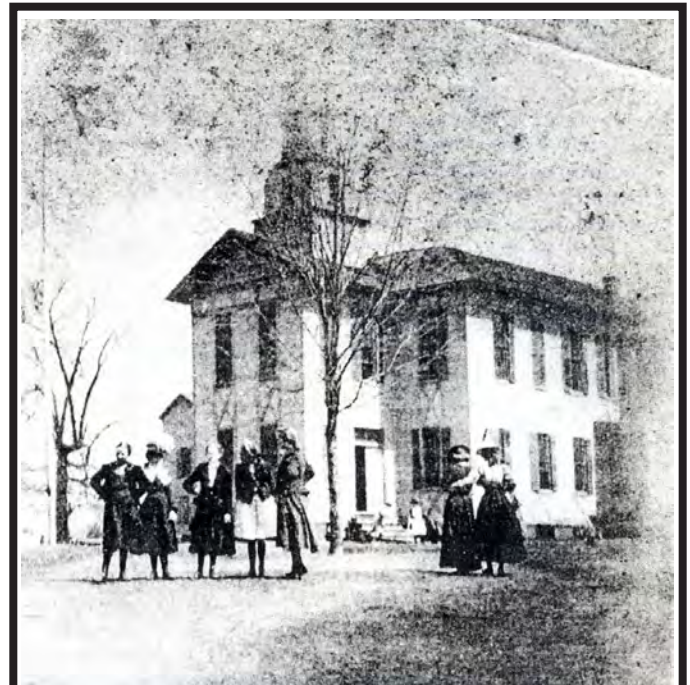
He made one more pass of driving over the cars before the show finale. As a finale, he popped a wheelie, looped around and then stopped the truck alongside the fans. A loud cheer rose from the crowd as a show of appreciation for the show they had just witnessed.

After the show, the driver went inside the tire store and sat down at a table. He signed autographed pictures for everyone who stood in line to get one, at no cost. He was very happy to be in Athens and was very nice to everyone in line.

Many years have passed since this monster truck show in Athens. Monster truck shows are now in arenas, where multiple trucks compete, and people buy tickets to see the show.

WAAY TOO EARLY no longer is on television, and Gary Dobbs and Toni Lowery no longer work at WAAY TV 31. However, I still have those memories, and every time I pass that still-vacant field east of Athens on U.S. Highway 72, I still can see the monster truck show in my mind. I still hear the far distant sounds of engines revving and a crowd cheering.

And, just for a moment, I am a kid again, enjoying the show.



Built in 1882, this school building stood at the present site of East Clinton School (Now Providence Classical). Pictured in the photo are from left to right: Neida Humphrey, Birdie Lambert, Jennie V. Yeatman, Helen Petty and Lena House. Photo was taken on April 10, 1900 by Miriam Wellman.

# My Son the Robot

by Anna Lee

I looked into my son's bedroom to watch him and his two older cousins at play. They were inventive boys. The carpet was covered with toys, but in addition to the usual cars and blocks, there were cardboard and twine and the duct tape they had requested from me.

I left, once in a while hearing their shouts and laughter. After about an hour, they came to show me their final creation. They presented my little boy, a piece of cardboard duct taped to his chest, small colored blocks taped to his arms and feet, and more tape straight across the top of his head. The cardboard was bright with symbols and letters,

put on by magic markers.

"What is this?" I asked.

"We're scientists and we made him into a robot!" one cousin explained..and exclaimed.

My son looked pleased at his new status as a machine. He was enjoying the attention of the older boys.

"That's very clever," I said.

"Just be careful when you pull off the tape and things."

Later the three appeared before me, this time as little boys again. The cousins had been kind to my son when they removed the tape on the top of his head. Instead of ripping it off, they must have carefully lifted it up and then cut his hair beneath it. I guessed that was how they did it, because his blonde hair was standing straight up. Straight up...and very uneven.

His hair looked that way for a month. He thought nothing of it, but we adults had a good laugh about the little robot.

## Why Some People Are Poor

From 1875 Newspaper

\* Silver spoons are used to scrape kettles. Coffee, spices and pepper are left to stand open and lose the strength.

\* Potatoes in the cellar grow and the sprouts are not removed until the potatoes become worthless.

\* Brooms are never hung up and are soon spoiled.

\* Bits of meat, vegetables, bread and cold puddings are thrown away when they might be warmed, steamed and served as good as new.

\* The flour is sifted in a wasteful manner and the bread pan is left with the dough sticking to it.

\* Tubs and barrels are left in the sun to dry and fall apart.

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# Remembering Redstone Park 1942-1962

by Mary Ellen Walter Maxwell

An outsider looking in wouldn't think much of Redstone Park. I have to admit that I can see why. After all, it looked more like rows and rows of WWII Army barracks than anything else I can think of - wooden structures painted white with sidewalks in front of the houses and streets behind. They looked like Monopoly pieces. Some buildings contained four apartments, some had two. Some apartments had three bedrooms, some had two or one. They were all heated with coal oil and each apartment had its own oil drum mounted on its side on concrete supports just outside the back door. These oil drums made wonderful pretend horses, and I rode ours many miles.

I said the apartments were heated, but I should have said that they had a heater; one heater, in fact. It sat in the hallway in the middle of the house and "heated" the living room, but not the bedrooms. It was fortunate that the weather was generally nice.

**"The greatest love is a mother's, then a dog's, then a sweetheart's."**

*Polish Proverb*

On the bright side, the buildings were kept up, people planted flowers and tended their yards, and windows would open and close. We had trees in almost every courtyard, a community hall, outdoor skating rink, fountain (that never seemed to have any water in it), playground, ballpark, basketball goal, creek with lots of little water critters, little wooded hill nearby, three grocery stores, school within walking

distance, cafe, three churches, one part-time doctor, two full-time bootleggers, a house of questionable character and a little post office. All in all, you might say we had a well-rounded community.

And the rent was low. When we first moved there in 1946, I was 5 years old and the rent was \$25 per month for a two-bedroom apartment. We didn't have much money. Nobody did who lived there, but things were a lot cheaper then. I remember the gas wars across the river in Gasoline Alley when gas cost 18 cents per gallon, about the same price as a loaf of bread. Coca-Colas, Double Colas, Nehi Orange - all known as "Co-Colas" - each cost a nickel. Candy bars cost a nickel. And a huge watermelon could be had for 25-50 cents. Mother used to send me to Esslinger Grocery Store for 25 cents' worth of cheese the grocer would slice for me.

More memories of Redstone Park will be forthcoming I promise! It was really a good place to be.

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# Useful Household Tips



\* If you're a gardener, the fall is the time to check to see what survived the very dry weather. Verbena, lantana, hostas, hibiscus - plant those again next year for a low maintenance but still beautiful garden.

\* Items you own such as computers, tools, TVs, printers etc. can be engraved with your name, birth date or other form of ID in case of theft. Many items are recovered but unless you have some sort of identification on it the authorities have no way of connecting it with you and getting it back to you.

\* Heat up left-over pizza in a non-stick skillet on top of the stove, set heat to medium low and heat til warm. This keeps the crust crispy and no more soggy microwave pizza!

\* To keep squirrels from eating your plants, just sprinkle with cayenne pepper. Won't hurt the plant, but the squirrels hate it!

\* Before you pour sticky substances into your measuring cup, rinse it out with hot water and don't dry. Your ingredient, like peanut butter, will slide right out!

\* Use baking soda with a damp rag to remove kid's crayon marks from your walls.

\* To prevent fires from occurring in your clothes dryer, take the filter out and wash it with hot soapy water occasionally. The dryer cloths you use are sealing the filter (prove it by pouring water into your filter) and could catch fire.

\* After shopping, and you get into your car, immediately lock your door. If someone comes up to you and wants to talk to you or ask you some-

thing, just shake your head and go home. There's no need to take unnecessary chances.

\* Put cooked egg yolks in a zip lock bag. Seal, mash til they are broken up. Add the rest of your ingredients for deviled eggs to the bag, mash some more. Cut a small corner off the bag and just squeeze the yolk mixture into your egg halves.

\* Make your own iced Green tea. Just brew about 8 teabags for 2 quarts, pour into your container with Crystal Lite lemonade (about half the container, to your taste) and fill with water. It's delicious and no unhealthy ingredients!

\* Not getting your greens? Make a morning shake of baby spinach and kale, frozen mango, frozen strawberries, vanilla protein shake and greek yogurt for a refreshing and filling start to your day.

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John Purdy  
Loretta Spencer  
Sarah Chappell

# HOUSES AND MORE

by *Charlie P. Lyle*

My dad never believed in owning a home. He said that repairs were too expensive during the Depression days.

Some firsts: First was Huntsville Hospital and the first baby born there was L. Miller, Jr. in about 1928. The first house that I lived in was on Williams Street. The second house was a little white frame house where California meets Whitesburg Drive. My father, mother, brother, grandmother, sister and me all lived there. That house is still there. I would lie on the front yard grass and look at the stars.

We had a Collie named Pal. I was playing in the front yard when a mad dog came into the yard. The dog was going to bite me but my dog, Pal came to my rescue and the dog bit him instead. Pal saved my life but unfortunately he contracted rabies and died.

Mr. Saddler lived next door and he raised chickens. I would stomp through the weeds over to his house and he would give me an egg to take home for mama to cook for me.

From there we moved to a boarding house on Madison and Gates Street. There we played Monopoly. I remember going to the Lyric Theater and seeing serial and space movies. Our next place to move to was on Russel Hill. It was like living in the country. Next door lived some kids that I played with. They had country ways and taught me such things as corn-cob battles and how to drink out of a dipper.

The next move was to North Rose Drive in Westlawn, then to Quietdale on Meridian Street. Then to Big Cove Road where we lived in a house owned by Luke Matthews. The farm had a pony.

After that a business opportunity caused Daddy to move to Mobile. We first lived on Oakland Terrace. A famous boxer named Jack Dubois lived down the street from us. We finally had a house built on Westwood Drive, our first real house. News of Redstone Arsenal was heard as far away as Mobile. Guess what? We moved back to Huntsville and took up residence in a four-plex apartment on Gates Street.

We had the top north one and Xea and Judge Blanton had the one below. We heard the news about Pearl Harbor there.

The Church of the Nativity, Episcopal has a children's playground on that spot now. Huntsville Clinic was on the corner. A friend of mine, Harry Coons, lived a block or two over.

Well the next house was in an area I loved. It was a block from town on the corner of Gates and Franklin Street (a big white frame house). There was just one big problem, it looked a lot like Laughlin Funeral Home which was a block over on Madison Street. One day my folks and I walked into our living room to find several people standing around and when I asked if I could help them, they equally enthusiastically replied, "Where's the body?"

The next move in this area took us to a terribly ugly brick two story house. We rented of course, upstairs owned by Jean and Rube Robinson. Ironically in this area is where Alabama joined the Union. The historic marker is still there.

Since I am coming to near the end of this article, I would like to mention some of my rich neighbors new and old that live on that wonderful Franklin Street. There were the Gerons, Stocktons, Yarbroughs, Lewters, Lowes, Chases, Price, Winston Garth, the Van Valkenburgs and the old Mim's house two houses left.

After that, we moved into a house on Sanders Road in 1957. My mother finally got her wishes for a new house. Ironically, she died in 1957 a few months later and Dad died two months later. A few of our wonderful neighbors there were the Joshlins (Bob is currently the Mayor of Arab), the Robert Lowerys, Margaret Cole, and Ralph and Marge Burt. From there we moved to my present location on Westbury Drive and have lived there for thirty-seven years. This being my last move, thank the Lord. We live close to everything that one could need or want.

One can't help but feeling just a wee bit insecure moving as much as we did but I am here to stay.

Addendum: After the Quietdale move, we moved to 432 Newman Avenue. There we had several things happen to us. One, my brothers buzzed the house while he was in the Air Force. Some of the neighbors that lived there were the Pizitzs, Wardens and the Todds.



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# No Charge For Love



A farmer had some puppies he needed to sell. He painted a sign advertising the 4 pups and set about nailing it to a post on the edge of his yard. As he was driving the last nail into the post, he felt a tug on his overalls. He looked down into the eyes of a little boy.

"Mister," he said, "I want to buy one of your puppies."

"Well," said the farmer, as he rubbed the sweat off the back of his neck, "These puppies come from fine parents and cost a good deal of money."

The boy dropped his head for a moment. Then reaching deep into his pocket, he pulled out a handful of change and held it up to the farmer. "I've got thirty-nine cents. Is that enough to take a look?"

"Sure," said the farmer. And with that he whistled. "Here, Dolly!" he called.

Out from the doghouse and down the ramp ran Dolly followed by four little balls of fur.

The little boy pressed his face against the chain link fence. His eyes danced with delight. As the dogs made their way to the fence, the little boy noticed something else stirring inside the doghouse.

Slowly another little ball appeared, this one noticeably smaller. Down the ramp it slid. Then in a somewhat awkward manner, the little pup began hobbling toward the others, doing its best to catch up.

"I want that one," the little boy said, pointing to the runt. The farmer knelt down at the boy's side and said, "Son, you don't want that puppy. He will never be able to run and play with you like these other dogs would."

With that, the little boy stepped back from the fence, reached down, and began rolling up one leg of his trousers. In doing so, he revealed a steel brace running down both sides of his leg attaching itself to a specially made shoe.

Looking back up at the farmer, he said, "You see sir, I don't run too well myself, and he will need someone who understands."

With tears in his eyes, the farmer reached down and picked up the little pup. Holding it carefully, he handed it to the little boy. "How much?" asked the little boy.

"No charge," answered the farmer, "There's no charge for love."

## PENUCHE

- 2 c. light brown sugar
- 1/2 c. milk
- 4 T. butter
- 1 c. nuts, chopped
- 1/2 t. vanilla

**Boil first 3 ingredients til it reaches 232 degrees.**

**Remove from the heat and cool. Add nuts and vanilla, beat til creamy and it loses its gloss.**

**Pour onto buttered plate or marble plate. Cool and cut into squares.**



## CASEY

Hello my name is Casey. I am almost 4 years old and am a mixed breed girl. About a year ago a kind lady found me at a kill shelter and brought me to the Ark Animal Shelter. I was very frightened when I first arrived but the people here saw that I have a very sweet nature and I have become more trusting. I'm afraid to wear a collar but I get to go on walks every day because the volunteers here use a slip lead to take me out and I don't give them any trouble. I like to go on walks and I love treats and I especially like the string cheese that volunteers sometimes bring me. I'm hoping that someone will notice me and see that I'm a sweet girl who needs a chance for a better life. I would like to go to a forever home that is very calm and with people who will take the time to get to know me and make me a member of their family. If you come to the Ark, will you ask to see Casey? That's me.

**"I don't do drugs. I can get the same effect by just standing up fast."**

**Jeb Brewer, Age 80**

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